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THE DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORY IN SINGAPORE: THE ROLE OF THE STATE AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

TOKPO CORONATION EDWARD

Abstract:

The meteoric rise of the Asian Tigers- Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore has become a reference point in the global development discourse. This paper interrogates the development trajectory of Singapore, the role of political leadership and the state in driving development in the South East Asian City-State. Designed as a desk study, the paper found that political leadership is fundamental in a country's drive for development. It also discovered that much as liberal scholars advocate the non-involvement of the state in economic and social development, the state remains a key player in development, especially in emerging states. Finally, upon careful study of Singapore's success story, the paper draws some lessons for Nigeria to put her on the path of socio-economic and political progress.

Key words: Development, Asian Tigers, development trajectory, foreign direct investment

Introduction:

While several countries in the Global South continue to gravitate in concentric and vicious circles of poverty and underdevelopment and are therefore grappling with the struggle to meet the basic needs of their populations, countries in the Global North are living in prosperity and self-actualization. The literature suggests that the highly industrialized North controls about 95% of the entire world's production and manufacturing. They control 4/5th of global income, while the entire South controls the remaining 5% of global income (Mimiko, 2012), Jean-Philippe (1999). The North is characterized by functional socio-economic indices, while the South is characterized by dysfunctional socio-economic indices (Odeh, 2010).

The Republic of Singapore, a city-state with a main island and 55 smaller islands that covers just 697 square kilometers South of Malaysia is located in Southeast Asia, around 85 miles North of the Equator, South of the Malaysian Peninsula, East-West of Sumatra, Indonesiawith a population of 5, 781,728 in 2016 (Rodgers, 2017). Singapore attained political independence from Britain and merged with Malaysia in 1963, but broke away in 1965. Modern Singapore was founded as a trading post of the British East India Company in the Strait of Malacca in 1819 on the major sea route between China and India and had its initial economic success as an entrepot due to the island's location, harbor and free port status (LePoer, 1989). According to Saddiqui, (2010), Singapore started as a distribution center to promote British imperial interest in the region which was to see the free flow of goods and unhindered international trade and investment.

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At independence, the country was faced with a plethora of challenges ranging from over-population, unemployment, housing deficit, racial tensions, infrastructural deficits, poor sanitary condition and therefore largely underdeveloped, poor and backward. The decision to withdraw from Malaysia compounded her economic woes as it lost its economic hinterland (Omar and Weng, 2007; Sim, 2015). Suffering a Great Depression and three recessions between 1929 and 2009, Singapore had entrpot trade as the main source of income, and trade accounted for more than 1/3rd of GDP in Singapore (Abshire, 2011; Saddiqui, 2010). The period immediately after independence saw a drastic change as the Peoples' Action Party (PAP) showed its commitment for industrialization as a key priority.

Average per capita incomes stood at $511 when Lee Kuan Yew took over as Prime Minister in 1959 at the age of 35, and unemployment rate was estimated at 10 percent (46,000) of the labour force (Burton, Montagnon, Brown and Grant, 2015). According to the Library of Congress Country Studies, cited in the CIA World Factbook, (2016), the economic prospects of the new city-state at first looked bleak. The government responded by exercising a greatly expanded, more intrusive role in the economy. From then on, the government no longer confined itself to such traditional economic pursuits as improving the infrastructure, but began to engage in activities that could have been the domain of private enterprises. The implication of Britain's departure was that 38,000 jobs, representing (20 percent of the work force) were lost at a time of rising unemployment and rapid population growth; a consequent reduction in GDP and increase in Singapore's defence spending to compensate for British withdrawal (Menon, 2007; LePoer, 1989).

The state encouraged local businesses to exploit the opportunities in the international economy while creating low cost production sites for foreign investors. Government provided subsidies to investors in some sectors, created an environment to improve credibility and reputation. Government's strategic trade and investment policy direction engendered mutual trust and created a synergetic social capital which enabled investors to take calculated risks and long term commitments (Saddiqui, 2010; Velde, 2006). Under Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore moved from a poor and backward country to a highly industrialized country in a generation, with the people having some of the highest standards of living and quality of life, with high life expectancy rates at birth currently at 84.9 years.

According to the Singapore Government office of Statistics, the country has low maternal mortality rates at 10 deaths in every 100,000 births (2015 est.), under 5 child mortality rates at 2.48 of every 1000 live births (2015 est.), GDP per capita in excess of $87,000 dollars (2016 est.), quality housing, quality and affordable healthcare, high literacy rates of 97 percent for people 15 years and above (2016 est.), adequate power supply, massive industrialization, good roads, sea, air and dry ports as well as a network of rail roads (www.singstat.gov.sg/statistics/latest-data; CIA World Factbook, 2016).

Interestingly, Singapore's development was not achieved within the context of liberal democracy, as Lee Kuan Yew ruled the country in an authoritarian and autocratic fashion, and was severely criticized for it. This corroborates and further deepens the debate that liberal

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democracy is not the only viable path to development, especially in socially differentiated and complex societies.

The Asian Tigers' blueprints for development have become reference points, as several countries have adopted the strategic development frameworks that worked for them to form their own development blueprints (Gundy, Barbara, Marc and Guang.; 2004).

Conceptual Clarification/Theoretical Foundation

Scholars have highlighted the "interventionist" role of the state in pursuing economic policies in industrialization, foreign investment, trade, et cetera (Khan, 2001). This paper approaches the development trajectory in Singapore from the perspective of "free market statism". According to the University of Iowa Centre for International Finance and Development, economic development has been discussed along with other terms such as Westernization, modernization and industrialization with the aim of promoting the economic and social wellbeing of the people (Umezulike, 2014). Mansell and Wehn noted that economic development has been understood since the World War II to involve economic growth, namely the increases in per capita income, and the attainment of a standard of living equivalent to that of industrialized countries (Mansell and Wehn, 1998).

Development models are competing and in some cases, also contending. Classical development theorists classified long run economic growth as a highly non-linear process, characterized by the existence of multiple stable equilibria, one of which is a low-income level trap (Adelman, 1999).

Several scholars have conceptualized development variously. This paper adopted Michael Todaro's conceptualization of development as "a multidimensional process involving qualitative and quantitative changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of absolute poverty" undertaken essentially to lead to a better state of life (Todaro, 1981:56; Todaro, 1985:85).The term development includes not only economic growth, although that is crucial, but also human development—providing for health, nutrition, education, and a clean environment.

This study focuses on four key elements of socio-economic development: Human capacity development, per capita incomes, employment and poverty reduction. The development trajectory in Singapore aptly captures Todaro's conceptualization of development which happened within the context of free market statism. Essentially, like most other East Asian countries, Singapore's development model combined the fine elements of a market economy alongside significant state intervention and regulation in almost all spheres of the society (Chikozho and Mapedza, 2017).

While Singapore's historical circumstances at independence were similar to many third world countries, it is unrealistic to expect other nations to become as economically successful by simply replicating the Singapore model (Rastin, 2003). From a theoretical perspective, a

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significant aspect of the Singapore model that deserves interrogation is statism. Statism in political science is the belief that the state should control the social, political and economic policies to some degree (Levy and Jonah, 2006). Statism is also used to refer to economies with huge government intervention and regulation. This assumes that the state has a legitimate or necessary role within the framework of a market economy, by intervening in the market to promote economic growth and enhance employment (Jones and Barry, 2001). The pioneering Economic architect of Singapore, Goh KengSwee described Singapore as "a Socialist economy that works". Singapore of today can be described as a free market economy.

In the early 20th century, many notable legal scholars; Morris R. Cohen, Louis L. Jaffe, Robert L. Hale amongst others who were critical of Laissez-fairism, pointed to the role of the state in fortifying the free market (see Cohen, 1927; Hale, 1923; Jaffe, 1937). The 1990s saw several intellectual attempts to explain East Asian 'econmic miracle'. A Neo-classical school of thought emerged to explain the Asian economic miracle as an explanatory power of the market mechanism. But since the neo-classical model could not adequately explain the growth model in Singapore, same period witnessed the emergence of theorizing economic development, rooted in neo-statist model which seeks to explain the role of the state in the growth and industrialization process, directly and explicitly (Sung, 2006). This neo-statist model places the state as having overaching impact on social and economic development.

The Enabling Policies and Strategies

Menon, (2007), and Sinding(2009) noted that Singapore faced enormous challenges, ranging from low wages, high unemployment rates made worse by a rapidly expanding population, labour and social unrest, a decaying war-ravaged infrastructure, inadequate housing, poor education and health facilities and slow economic growth in the period immediately after World War II. Singapore has since become arguably one of the most recognized success stories of post-colonial development in the Global South (Wong, 2016).

The fundamental transformation in Singapore was a result of Lee Kuan Yew's Government commitment to policies designed to meet its broad economic objectives of job creation and employment generation, educational development, fiscal discipline, affordable housing, sustainable development through tax policies that address investment gaps, and export-oriented growth through foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows (Umezulike, 2014; Phang, 2007). The government of Lee Kuan Yew exerted a strong focus on education as the main strategy to improve the workforce, essentially to undertake the role of a bureaucracy that would service the objectives of socio-economic growth. The resulting competitive nature of its society, along with government economic policies, greatly contributed to rapid economic growth in the following decades. This camewith ahigh GDP per capita, toppling global economic giants such as the United States, and a double-digit annual GDP growth rate for about three decades (Wong, 2016; CIA World Factbook, 2016).Singapore is now competing with developed nations and multinational corporations in terms of costs of production, investment incentives and proximity to markets (Tan, 1999).

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The Specific Policies and Strategies

The development of a country is largely predicated on the formulation and implementation of sound policies. The example of Singapore is existential evidence of this reality. The leaders of independent Singapore began with a general belief in the effectiveness of planning. A coherent, clearly-defined development strategy emerged in the late 1960s as political leaders and planners perceived the imperative of the world economy's new flows of trade and foreign investments.A consequential strategic economic plan laid out the policy framework of Singapore.

The Strategic Economic Plan

The Strategic Economic Plan set out the policies and programmes for the country to realize the vision of attaining the status of a first class developed economy within 30 to 40 years. Under this plan, Eight strategic areas were identified to help propel the country's socio-economic and political progress as follows: Developing the manufacturing and services sectors of the economy; creating a conducive environment for innovation and investments, enhancing human resources and capacities, maintaining competitiveness with other countries and companies, becoming internationally oriented, promoting economic redevelopment, promoting national team work; and reducing vulnerability (Metropolitan Economy Report, 2004). Consequently, a committee was formed to provide an overview of the economic landscape over a period of 20 to 30 years; define a clear vision for the economy and analyze its implications; initiate a national planning process, which is consultative and evolutionary in character and help build a shared vision among labour-business and government on national economic aspirations.

The Economic Development Board

As Lester Thurow noted, no country has ever developed faster than Singapore. To realize the plan to establish an institutional framework to promote ease of doing business, the Economic Development Board (EDB) was established in 1961 with a mandate to attract foreign capital to bridge the capital gap and encourage the inflow of foreign investments (Coghlan, 1996; Formal, 2013). The Economic Development Board which replaced the Industrial Promotion Board was perhaps the most strategic policy action of the government of Singapore. The EDB went on to establish an industrial base in Singapore with the development of the Jurong Industrial Town and its ready-made factories. As a complementary measure, the Economic Expansion Incentives Act was passed in 1967, which gave the EDB powers to grant pioneer status to multinational corporations with tax benefits up to five years. Consequently, production costs were slashed by as much as 20 percent. This policy attracted a huge inflow of foreign companies and capital into Singapore. Some of the chemical multinationals includes Exxon, Shell, Hewlett, Seagate, et cetera (Tan, 1999; Library of Congress Country Watch of Singapore, 2004). To date, Singapore has 5000 multinational companies (Tan, 1999).

A strategic policy initiative by the EDB was to continuously review tax incentives to include domestic companies. This effectively reduced production costs by as much as 33 percent. The successes recorded with the establishment of the EDB also led to the establishment of other supporting institutions such as the Development Bank of Singapore (DBS), Sembawang

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Shipyard and Singapore Airlines (Tan, 1999). The period also witnessed the emergence of nationalized industries in the financial and transport sectors, culminating in massive capital inflows, job creation and employment generation.

Table 1: Table showing unemployment rates in Singapore from the late 1970s to 2017

Year	Unemployment rate (%)
1970s	3.5%
1990	1.4%
1986	2.45%
2017	2.2%

Source: World Bank, 2017

By the end of the 1970s, unemployment rates had dropped to about 3.5 percent, while the manufacturing sector continues to grow to about 25 percent of GDP. Unemployment rate in Singapore averaged 2.45 percent from 1986 until 2017, reaching an all-time high of 6 percent in the first quarter of 1986 and a record low of 1.40 percent in the second quarter of 1990. Singapore's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate came in at 2.2 percent in the September quarter of 2017, the same as in the previous three quarters but slightly above the preliminary estimate of 2.1 percent(World Bank, 2017).

A 'guided liberalization' policy encouraging same with various concessionary measures to spur the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) was introduced. The policy outcome gave rise to massive spending in strategic sectors of the economy e.g., education spending, rising from $600,000 dollars to $10 million dollars in 1960, industrial growth, manufacturing, technological innovations, development of the services sector, man-power development in and outside the bureaucracy as well as income redistribution among the various layers of the Singaporean population. Despite the economic liberalization policy of government however, the government maintained stringent fiscal control on money supply to keep inflation down and engender price stability (LePoer, 1989).

Investments in Education as Bedrock for Overall Development

The fundamental strategy for socio-economic development in Singapore was to invest in education (formal and vocational), which would drive all other sectors of the Singapore economy and society. The ideological underpinning of Lee Kuan Yew's strategic investment in human capital (education) was predicated on his belief that "demography, not democracy, would be the most critical factor for security in the 21st century." By this, he emphasized his belief in the supremacy of the quality of human capital. Human capital development is a prerequisite for socio-economic transformation in any society. According to Barro, (1991), Mincer, (1995) and Adedeji and Bamidele, (2003), the causal factor responsible for the impressive performance of the economy in most developed and emerging economies is the significant commitment to human capital development. The Government of Singapore showed commitment to the

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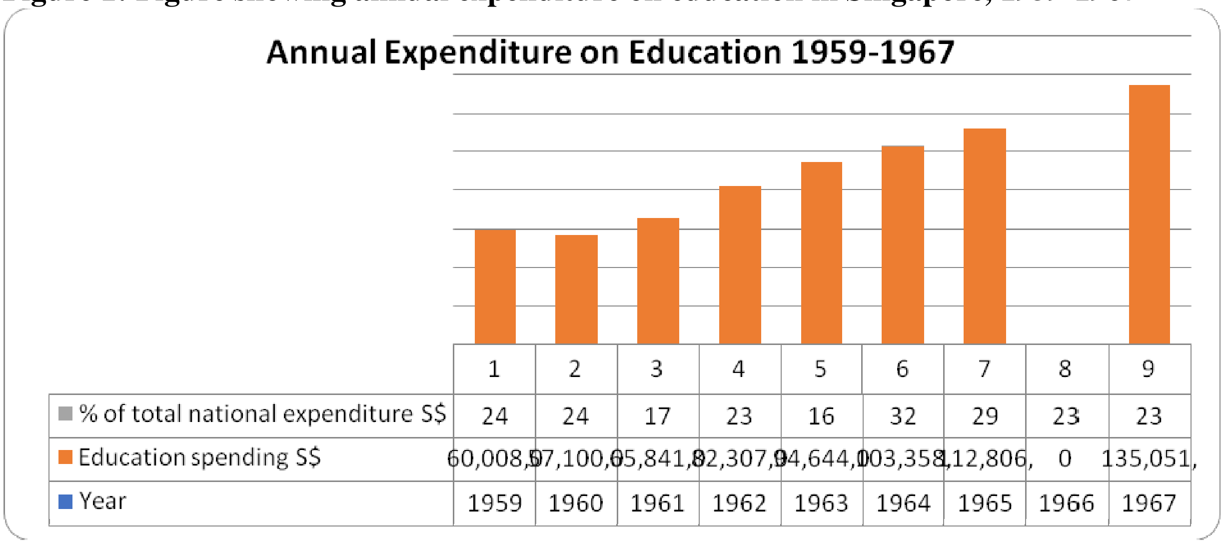
development of human capital through massive investments in education and ICT. All the indices indicate a progressive growth in all facets of educational development in Singapore.

Figure 1: Figure showing annual expenditure on education in Singapore, 1959-1967



Source: Department of Statistics, Yearbook of Statistics 2015

Between 1959 and 1967, the government of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew made huge budgetary provisions to fund the education sector. Specifically, S$60,000 (Sixty Thousand, Eight Singapore dollars) was spent on education in 1959. In a period of eight years, education expenditure rose to S$135,051 (One Hundred and Thirty-five Thousand, Fifty-one Singapore dollars) in 1967 (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2015). The high education expentitures translated into high literacy level of the population.

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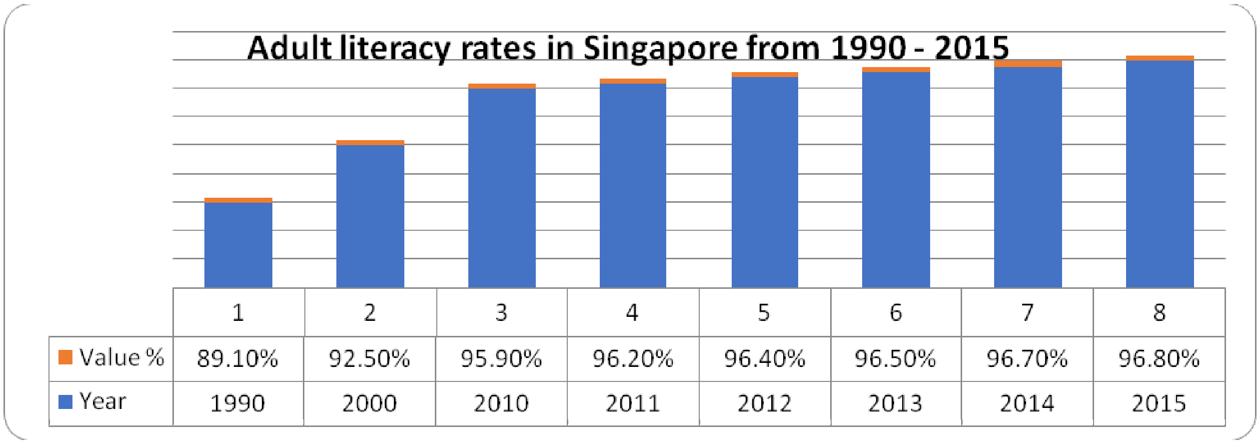
Figure 2: Figure showing adult literacy rates in Singapore from 1990 - 2015



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Value %	89.10%	92.50%	95.90%	96.20%	96.40%	96.50%	96.70%	96.80%
Year	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015

Source: World Data Atlas-Singapore, 2017

Literacy level in Singaporeis one of the highest in the world. The adult literacy rate of Singapore increased from 89.10% in 1990 to 92.5 % in 2000, and 96.8 % in 2015, growing at an average annual rate of 0.75%,and justifying the huge spending in the sector (World Data Atlas, 2017).

Lee Kuan Yew believed that the people's innovativeness, entrepreneurship, team work, and their work ethics give them that sharp keen edge in competitiveness." This informs his massive investment in human capacity development through education, skills training and providing the environment for socio-economic prosperity (Juma, 2013). In 1981, the government formed the National Computer Board to train the work force on the skills in an economy moving towards the services sector in information and communications technology (ICT). Policies were initiated for foreign investors to bypass the bottlenecks of the government bureaucracy (Formal, 2013).

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) provides essential leadership in producing quality human skills. The MTI was actively supported by the EDB and the Ministry of Education (MOE), with the EDB being in charge of providing the necessary skills for transfer of technology and the MOE providing the long-term investments through revising the system of education. In 1979, the Ministry of Education created a new system of education in which it intended to provide the necessary workforce in the science and vocational fields. The idea was initiated to build a highly skilled man power base from the universities, and at the same time, ensuring that technical training was available to those who could not excel in the formal education system.

The education system was designed to select only its best students to attend the universities, and thus, would most likely make up the bulk of its higher skilled workforce while graduates from the vocational schools would make up the semi-skilled manufacturing workforce. Thus, this very selective system of education would ensure that the high-skilled workforce in Singapore's

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economy has been selected through the process of a competitive education system, which makes them more attractive to the foreign investors (Singapore Metropolitan Economy Report, 2004).

The Transportation Policy

The Development Team designed a Transport Master Plan, which eventually led to the implementation of the 1971 Concept Plan. This plan gradually expanded the transportation infrastructure up to the 1980s. Consequently, Singapore's road system was expanded from an abysmal 800 km in the 1960s to over 3000 Km by 1990. The plan was designed to develop and connect the network of expressways, with the completion of about 80% of the expressways by 1980 (Singapore Metropolitan Economy Report, 2004). To address the problem of congestion, government enacted legislations to dissuade people from using their private vehicles, but rather use more of the public transport vehicles. The Government equally increased import duties on imported private vehicles up to 45 percent of the market value of the vehicle from only 10 to 30 percent in the 1960s (Singapore Metropolitan Economy Report, 2004). The Government also established the Mass Rapid Transport System (MRT). The establishment of Singapore Airlines, air, sea and dry ports as well as the rail systems added further vent to the massive transportation infrastructure.

The Anti-Corruption Strategy

Like many other countries, corruption was a major impediment in Singapore. Corruption was entrenched during British colonial rule in Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew adopted a stick and carrot approach to combat corruption. After three decades of running Singapore, he achieved one of the best miracles of the contemporary world.

In the 1980s Lee Kuan Yew enacted salary increments for senior level government officials and politicians. This was a pragmatic way of keeping the high level of corruption at bay. The salary increment policy was enhanced repeatedly in 1973, 1979, 1982, 1989 and 1994 to bring the salaries at par with the well-paid private sector (Corruption.net/Singapore, 2015). He was severely criticized by the public and the media. Just as the case in Nigeria, it was said that his pay was higher than that of the US President and senior members of the civil service earned more than four times of what their US Federal counterparts earned. Lee Kuan Yew remained focused, and today, the average per capita GDP (PPP) of Singapore is much higher than that of the US and is the third highest in the world (Patvakanyan, 2015).

Government officials and their families were deprived of immunity. Agents of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPID) had unfettered access to bank accounts, property belonging to government officials, their children, wives, relatives and even friends. Officials of the CPID were given express permission to investigate any official suspected to be living above his means. The courts were given the power to confiscate automatically any income derived from corrupt means (Patvakanyan, 2015).

A massive anti-corruption war was waged against corrupt individuals. Public officials and close allies of Lee Kuan Yew were also not spared. In 1984 the Commercial Affairs Department

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(CAD) was created as a unit of the Singapore Police to deal with white collar crimes. Glenn Knight, a prosecutor par excellence, was appointed as its first Director. Knight himself was charged with corruption on May 1991. He pleaded guilty to cheating the then Managing Director of Trans-Island Bus Services Ng Ser Miang to invest in the Batam Island Country Club on the Indonesian island of Batam which had been planned by Knight and his wife. He was fined the sum of $17,000 dollars and a day in prison. In 1998, Knight was again charged to court for misappropriating money totaling $4,200 when he was still the CAD's Director. He was sentenced to a fine of $10,000 and another day in jail (Corruption.net/Singapore, 2015). Cabinet Ministers were also not spared in the anti-corruption war. For example, TehCheang Wan who was the Minister for National Development from 1 February 1979 to 14 December 1986 was investigated for corruption by the CPID for accepting two bribes of $500,000 each in 1981 and 1982. Lee Kuan Yew approved an open investigation on his alleged corruption in November 1986. Teh committed suicide on 4th December, 1986, before being charged for the offences (Corruption.net/Singapore, 2015).

In 1985, rumor went around that Lee Kuan Yew and the then Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had gained an unfair advantage by getting a discount on their purchase of flats from a developer on whose board was Lee Kuan Yew's brother, a Non-Executive Director. Monetary Authority of Singapore investigated and reported that there was no impropriety. The developer had given 5–10 per cent to his buyers at a soft launch to test the market.

Lee Kuan Yew asked that the matter be taken to Parliament for further investigations. In the debate, even opposition members of Parliament, including two lawyers, one a leader of the opposition, said that such discounts were standard marketing practices and was not improper.

Lee Kuan Yew said, "This open debate made it a non-issue in the general elections a year later. Leaders must be prepared for such scrutiny to keep the system clean."

Many legal reforms were made to assist in identifying, prosecuting and convicting corrupt persons.The anti-corruption laws were amended to put the burden of proof of innocence on the defendant or accused if he/she had more assets than his income as reported in his income tax returns, from his employment or business could have given him. He had to disprove the presumption of guilt that they were gained by corrupt means."

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Table 2: Average Ranking of 12 Asian Countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, 1996-1999

SN	COUNTRY	RANKING (From least to most corrupt)
1	Singapore	1
2	Hong Kong	2
3	Japan	3
4	Malaysia	4
5	Taiwan	5
6	South Korea	6
7	Philippines	7
8	Thailand	8
9	China	9
10	India	10
11	Indonesia	11
13	Pakistan	12

Source: Transparency International (1997: 65; 1998: 195; 1999a: 13; 1999b: 2)

The anti-corruption war in Singapore set the country on a trajectory of socio-economic growth. Transparency International's perception index above puts Singapore as the least corrupt among Twelve Asian countries studied.

With strong political will, the framework for anti-corruption was rooted in four pillars such as; effective anti-corruption laws, effective anti-corruption agency, effective adjudication and efficient government administration (Patvakanyan, 2015). Lee Kuan Yew was also the most criticized politician in Singapore. Eventually he was proven right and only then people appreciated his wisdom.

The Role of the State and Political Leadership

Leadership is central to the quest for development in any society. Political leadership gives direction, focus and life to development. A leader must be visionary, confident, courageous, diligent, flexible, honest, impartial, responsive, transparent, accountable, tactful, diplomatic, etc.

Prime Minister Lee did not accentuate ethnic rivalries but went ahead to forge social cohesion in the ethnically divided city-state which effectively mobilized the people for the task of development. When Lee Kuan Yew took over as Prime Minister in 1959, the per capita income of Singaporeans was merely $400 dollars and rose to $12,200 dollars in 1990, and it stood at $87,100 dollars in 2016 (CIA World Factbook, 2016). Former U.S. Secretary of States, Henry Kissinger described Lee Kuan Yew as one of the seminal figures of Asia (Umezulike, 2014). Lee Kuan Yew transformed a poor country to one that is one of the most prosperous.

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According to the IMF Country Report (2016), the tiny nation, whose main industry was manufacturing at independence, saw its GDP per capita skyrocket under Lee Kuan Yew to one of the highest in the world, behind just oil-rich Qatar and private banking center Luxembourg.

Prime Minister Lee operated as an autocrat and he was heavily criticized by many for his authoritarian style of leadership that stifled political dissent and press freedoms (Nafis, 2015; Jim, 2015). His firm grip on power and maintenance of stability gave little scope for corrupt financial practices. The orderliness that Singapore became known for was attractive to foreign investment – billions of dollars poured in, ensuring the country's success. Lee's style of leadership and his success has demystified the belief that liberal democracy is the only path to development. He maintained a tight grip on domestic finance by preventing the internationalization of the Singapore dollar and limiting the operations of foreign banks. Lee championed free trade, which helped Singapore attract a free flow of foreign investment and multinational giants such as General Electric, etc (Nafis, 2015).

The Role of the State in Singapore's Development

The idea that the state should play a central role in socio-economic development dates back to the mercantilist period. Prior writings by Adam Smith, David Ricardo and other liberal and neo-liberal scholars de-emphasized and downplayed the role of the state. The role of the state in East Asian development has occupied a center stage in the development literature. Charlotte Ng, (2008) conceptualized the development state as not only referring to the collective economic and human development, but also describes the state's essential role in harnessing national resources and directing incentives through a distinctive policy-making process. Ng's conceptualization of the developmental state drew from Chalmers Johnson's account of Japan's Weberian ideal type of an interventionist state that joined private ownership with state guidance (Ng, 2008). After World War II, the rapid spread of the liberal ideology tended to sweep away the hitherto robust role of the state in managing the economy and society across various regions of the world. Singapore however survived the massive onslaught of liberalism. The state in Singapore has therefore continued to play a significant role in virtually all strata of the society. The developmental state in Singapore is an empirical reality as the state has continued to play profound roles in facilitating socio-economic and political development.

The dynamic character of the Singaporean developmental state can only be understood, appreciated and situated within the context of a comparative analysis of other East Asian economies. Singapore's state intervention is more profound, extensive and intrusive. As a matter of fact, Singapore's state-led development model challenges the notion that private enterprises rather than the state are more efficient in resource allocation to its productive sectors. The Singapore model of state-led development demystified that conception and transplanted it with a new found belief in the ability of the state to efficiently allocate resources and engender development.

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Kim Song Tan and Bhaskaran, (2015) observed that the ruling PAP governments near complete dominance in politics has enabled it to mobilize resources to create the pre-conditions for strong GDP growth and increased savings (Tan and Bhaskaran, 2015). On their part, Henri Wai and Chung Yeung, (2017) observed that the dynamism of the development state in Singapore and other East Asian economies due to greater desire for democracy, culminating in adjustments of the state to adapt to a new political economy in which the state could no longer wield autonomous power in governng the market and directing the growth trajectories of national firms (Wai and Yeung, 2017).

In the 1960s and 70s, the bureaucracy and state institutions in Singapore revised investment incentives in order to lure new investment away from labour-intensive sectors towards higher value-added ones. The bureaucracy began to exercise extensive control over prices of the factors of production, provided land, invested heavily in human resources development, supplied funds and other incentives for technological development (Ng, 2008).

State-led development in Singapore manifested in the direct involvement of the state in virtually all sectors and facets of the economy; from transportation to commerce and industry, to ICT, education, technological and human capital development. The government of Lee Kuan Yew directed investments into strategic sectors of the economy by making deliberate policies, and establishing technology innovation centres and fiscal policies (Ng, 2008).

Due to the success of Singapore's state-led development, many global institutions and individuals have recognized the profound impact of state policies in economic growth and social development in the country. Cheng-Han, Puchniak and Varottil, (2015), noted that "for the past eight years, the World Bank has recognized Singapore as having the best regulatory and economic environment in the world for doing business".

Concluding Remarks: Lessons for Nigeria

The socio-economic and historical background of Singapore provides a context for a country like Nigeria to learn and tap from its experiences. The most profound and significant lesson Nigeria can learn from Singapore is that despite its small landmass, population and lack of natural and mineral resources, Singapore developed her economy and society very rapidly within a period of 40 years from a third world country to first world country. The paradox is that Nigeria which is richly endowed in human, material and natural resources continues to gravitate in concentric cirlces of poverty and underdevelopment.

Leesons for Political Leadership

One of the most significant reasons for Singapore's rapid growth and development was the complex balance maintained between state intervention alongside a free market system, and the role of a transparent, committed and focused leadership. Lee Kuan Yew demonstrated "creativity

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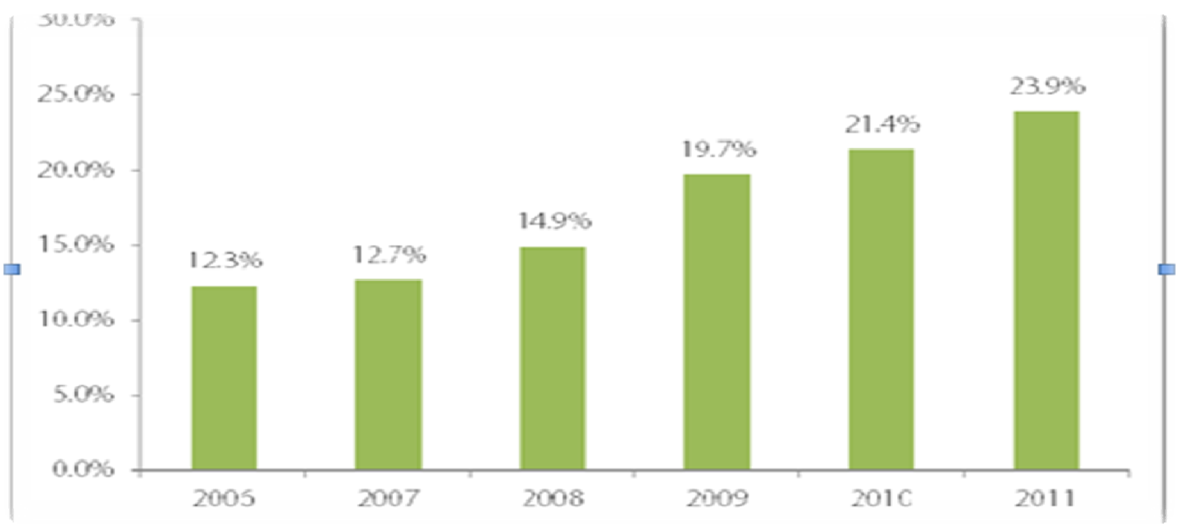
of leadership, willingness to learn from experience elsewhere to implement good ideas quickly and decisively through an efficient public service." In addition, he argues for a leadership style that can "convince the majority of people that tough reforms are worth taking, that decide a country's development and progress" (Juma, 2013). Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP's quintessential roles in Singapore's development was recognized by scholars like (Juma, 2013; Hussain, 2015; Alam, 2015; Umezulike, 2015). His capacity to manage an ethnically diverse country with poor natural resource base was also aptly captured by Graham Allison, Robert Blackwill and Ali Wyne in their book, "Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights into China, the United States and the World. Former U.S. Secretary of States, Henry Kissinger also described Lee Kuan Yew as one of the seminal figures of Asia.

One of Nigeria's major obstacles to development is poor leadership. From independence in 1960, Nigeria has produced profoundly inept, un-focused and patently corrupt leaders that lack transparency, accountability, creativity and selflessness. The logical outcome is rising unemployment, poverty, low life expectancy, poor education, poor healthcare, poor electricity supply and high misery index.

Figure 3: Figure showing unemployment Rates in Nigeria 2005 - 2011 (%)



Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2011), adopted from (Edet, 2015)

The above figures indicate a steady rise in unemployment at 12.3% in 2005 to 23.9% in 2015, representing an increase of 100% over a period of six years. Regarding Human Development Index (HDI), for Nigeria HDI value for 2012 was 0.471 which is in the low human development category. Nigeria is positioned 153 out of the 187 countries.

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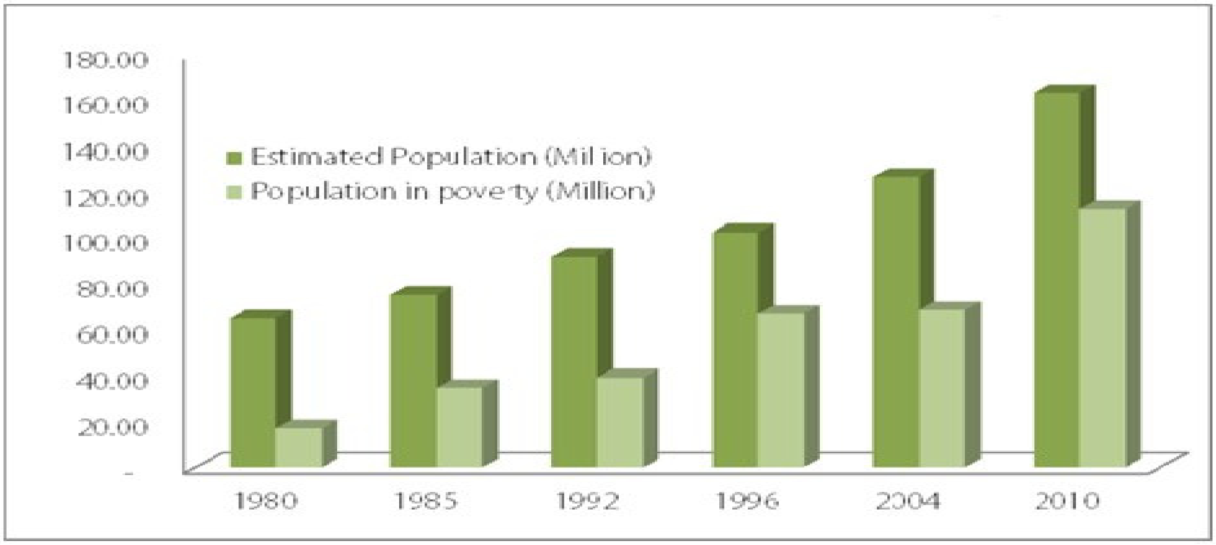
Figure 4: Figure showing estimated Population in Poverty in Nigeria, 1980 - 2010 (Million)



Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2011), adopted from (Edet, 2015).

Despite its enormous resources, poverty has continued to increase in Nigeria. The population of Nigerians living in poverty has risen from about 62 million in 1980 to 158 million in 2010 (Edet, 2015).

The Lee Kuan Yew pattern of leadership is imperative for Nigeria if the country must make any meaningful progress. The leadership recruitment process must not be predicated on ethnic and religious sentiments if Nigeria must make profound and significant socio-economic progress.

Policy Inconsistency in Nigeria

Secondly, the policy environment in Singapore contributed to the growth and development of the economy and society. The export-oriented industrialization, fiscal policies (tax incentives to attract FDI), education policy, transport policy, road and railways, human capital development policy, the establishment of industrial parks, et cetera coordinated by the EDB, were significant springboards for Singapore's development. Policy consistency and complementarities bolstered investments in Singapore.

On the contrary, Nigeria is characterized by policy inconsistency. A two- time former Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister for the Economy in Nigeria, OkonjoIweala, stated that Nigeria is suffering from policy inconsistency. In a similar evaluation (Chinedum, 2014) also identified policy inconsistency as one major obstacle to sustained growth in Nigeria. Nigeria's policy inconsistency and lack of complementarities continue to militate against the country's development. The Singapore example is a comprehensive roadmap that Nigeria can learn from. Some policies take longer periods to yield results. Incessant change of government has been a

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characteristic cause of policy change in Nigeria. The country should take a cue from Singapore and adopt enduring policies to drive socio-economic growth and development.

Anti-Corruption

Fighting corruption in Singapore was holistic and devoid of half-measures and selectiveness. Close associates of Lee Kuan Yew, friends and colleague MPs were investigated, prosecuted and jailed. He also subjected himself to investigation by Parliament when he was accused of using his influence to secure a concession in a property deal. He was eventually found not to have committed any breach against the law. The anti- corruption agencies in Nigeria, the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), (Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC) and Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) could be collapsed into departments under the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for the purpose of cutting cost and curbing inter-agency conflicts. These anti-corruption agencies should also be subjected to double-blind checks by judicial and legislative committees while they report to the Presidency.

Singapore's war against corruption indicates the critical role of political will, addressing the causes of corruption and correcting past mistakes, establishing and adequately funding an independent anti-corruption agency and fighting corruption impartially (Quah, 2001; Quah, 2003; Quah, 2017). The fight against corruption in Nigeria must be holistic and must not spare anyone who is found to be corrupt.

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