

Social Studies Learning Fest

Exploring Perspectives and Understanding Society

Keynote Lecture
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The COVID-19 Pandemic: The Responses of Government and Citizens

- A crisis of a generation, not just for Singapore but the world.
- How have the government and the citizens of an open, first world economy and small city-state responded?
- What are our constraints?
- What are the implications for the outlook on governance, multiracialism, and globalisation?

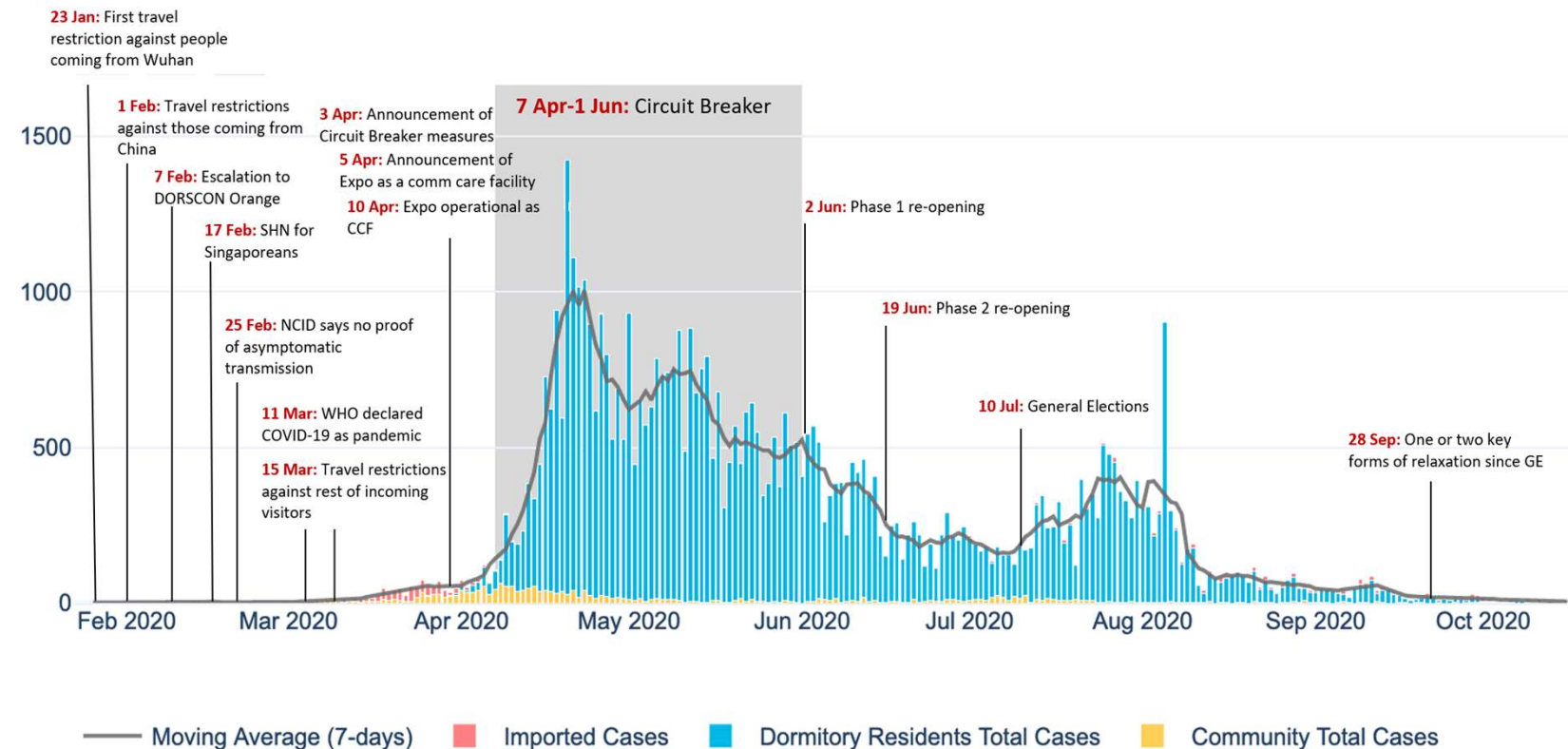
Overview

- The Government's response
- The citizen's response – the good, bad and the ugly
- The key policy choices
 - Governance**
 - ❖ Lives vs Livelihoods
 - ❖ Health vs Privacy
 - ❖ State Action vs Citizen-initiative
 - ❖ Short-term responses vs. Long-term sustainability
 - Globalisation**
 - ❖ Nation-based Solutions vs. Global Sustainability
 - Multiracialism**
 - ❖ One-nation approach vs a segmented, targeted approach

The Government's Response

Key Milestones in Govt's Response

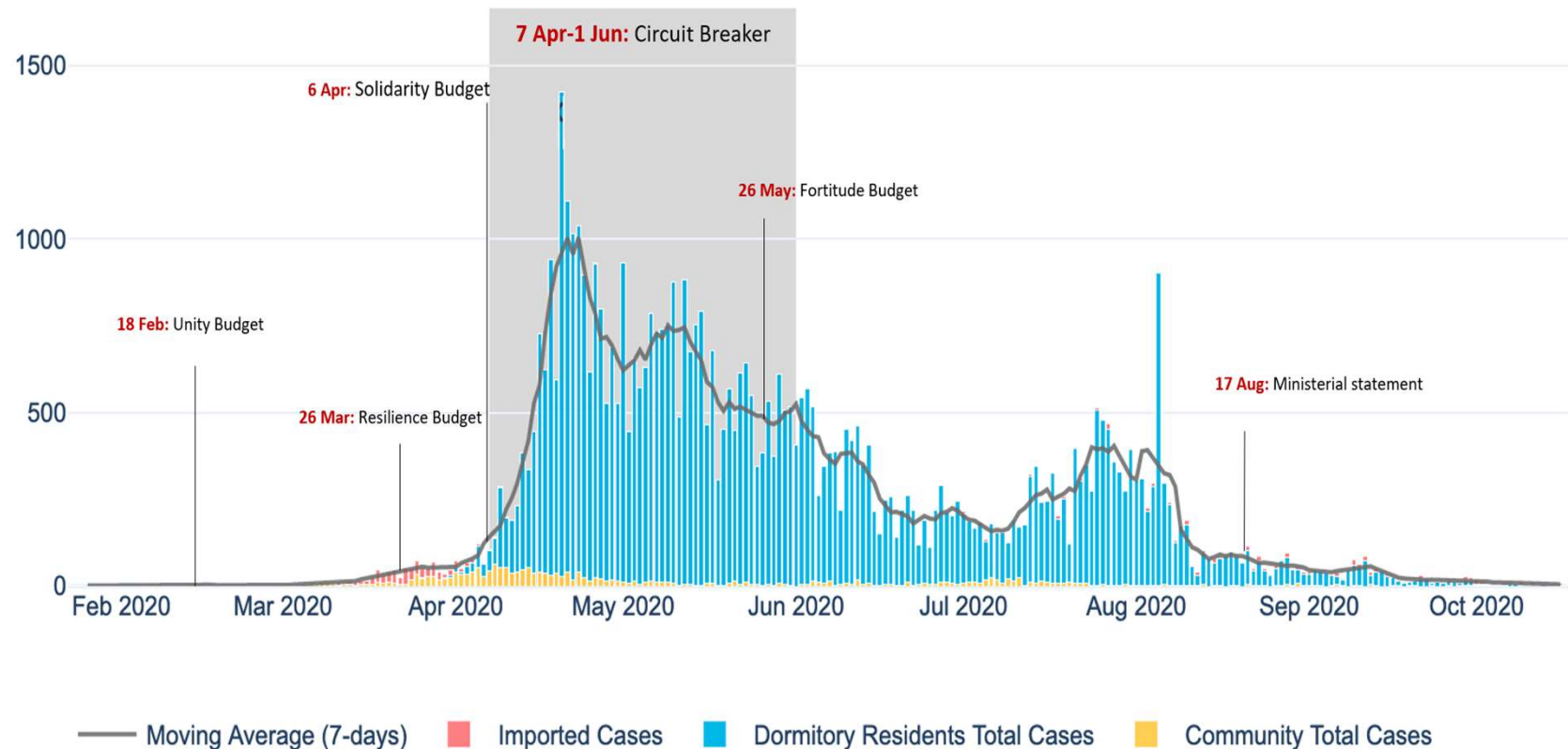
Epidemic Curve



Graph retrieved from <https://covidsitrep.moh.gov.sg/>

Key Milestones in Govt's Response - Budget

***GDP estimate downgraded from -3 to 0% to -7 to -5 %**



Graph retrieved from <https://covidsitrep.moh.gov.sg/>

Economic Effects of COVID-19

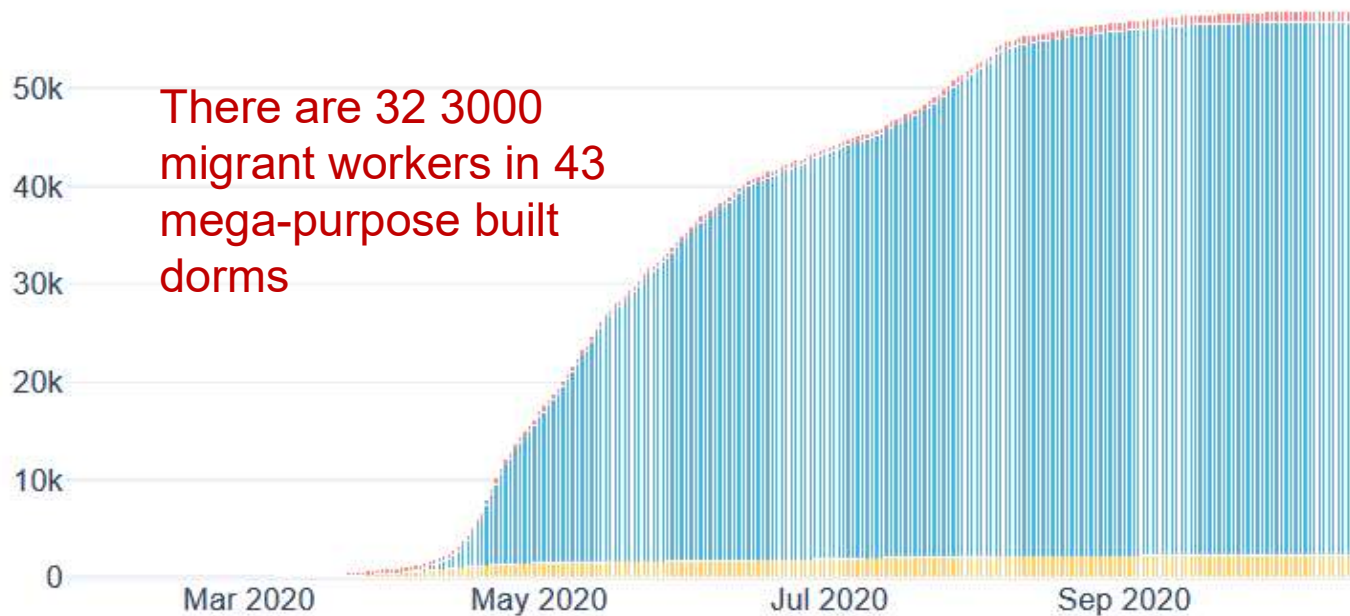
- Number of jobs lost because of COVID-19:
 - 8 900 in manufacturing
 - 13 600 in construction
 - 22 900 in F&B for Q2.
- Aviation, Tourism and Retail, hardest hit as to be expected
 - SIA cut 4 300 positions
- Unemployment rate : Total (2.8%), resident (3.8%), citizen (4%)
- -11.6% in productivity rate in June 2020. A lot has to do with effect on foreign workforce.

Economic and Social Effect of COVID - Infections in Migrant Population

Total Cases

Sum of Community, Dormitory, Imported Cases

1M 3M ALL



Economic and Social Effect of COVID - Infections in Migrant Population

- Preparation of community care facilities (5 April~)
- Start of lock-down of dorms and deployment of Forward Assurance and Support (FAST) Teams (21 April)
- Announcement to set up new quick-build dorms for short to medium term and new purpose-built dorms for medium to long term (1 June)
 - ❖ Current: ≥ 4.5 sqm per resident, 12-16 beds per room, 15 workers to a toilet facility
 - ❖ New: ≥ 6 sqm per resident, ≤ 10 single deck beds per room, 5 workers to a toilet facility

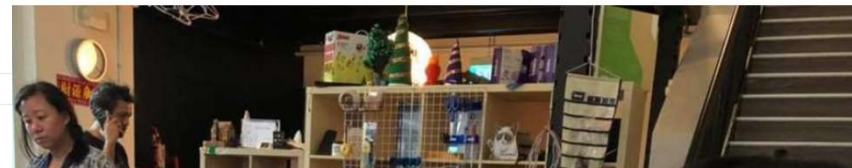
Public Response

Public Response

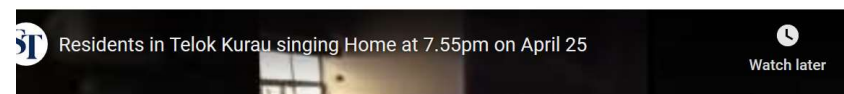
- The good – civic self-help to share essentials; laptops for students; support migrant workers, rally the nation together through the arts, WIMBY movement.

Heroes Unmasked: They fix donated laptops to give to students from low-income families for home-based learning

By ALIF CHANDRA



Coronavirus: Popular song Home sung across Singapore to thank front-line, migrant workers



Public Response

- The good – adaptation to work from home, school from home, citizens and businesses going digital. This is resilience

Singaporeans are adjusting to working from home, new poll shows

Overall productivity of employees rose from April to June; not all sectors adapting well

Nearly 75% of Singapore firms accelerating digitalisation due to Covid-19



SINGAPORE

Pupils and teachers adapting to home-based learning

While it cannot replicate the classroom experience, some educators have seen better participation, quality of work from students

Iffah Rostam | Wong Yang
© Jan 08, 2020 06:00 am



Public Response

- The bad – challenges in compliance with public health and safety rules and restrictions with SHN defaulters and flouting of safe distancing; slow adoption of contact-tracing (Safe Entry and Trace Together).

Four sentenced for flouting Stay-Home Notices, quarantine order



Wan Ting Koh
Reporter

Yahoo News Singapore 20 May 2020



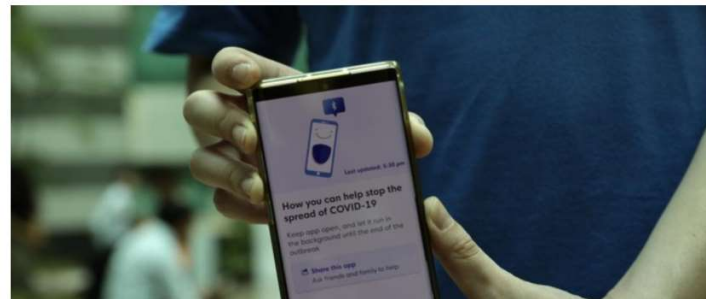
Singapore

COVID-19: Restaurant ordered to close after crowds seen along Lorong Mambong in Holland Village



Given low adoption rate of TraceTogether, experts suggest merging with SafeEntry or other apps

By MANDY LEE



Public Response

- The ugly- shunning of frontliners, hoarding of essentials, saying that COVID was retribution by god.

SINGAPORE Coronavirus: Nurse gets shunned, 'dirty looks' from others

Tatiana Mohamad Resli
Feb 17, 2020 06:00 am



When Ms Nurul Ashikin sat down for lunch at a foodcourt recently, she was shunned.



Singapore

No need to rush for supplies, says Chan Chun Sing, amid reports of surge in demand



Coronavirus: MHA investigating religious teacher for 'xenophobic, racist' posts



Singapore and the International Community

- Government sent aid (e.g., test kits and/or medical supplies to China, Indonesia, Philippines, Brunei)
- Singapore stresses commitment to support WTO (18 Sept)
- Singapore rejects vaccine nationalism at Singapore Summit (14 Sept) and co-chairs Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access (Covax) Facility with Switzerland, on June 25.

Singapore co-chairing global initiative to secure Covid-19 vaccine doses for the world: Heng Swee Keat



DPM Heng Swee Keat attending the Joint Finance and Health Ministers Meeting on Sept 17, 2020. Health Minister Gan Kim Yong also took part in the meeting. PHOTO: HENG SWEET KEAT/FACEBOOK



Fabian Koh

PUBLISHED SEP 17, 2020, 11:56 PM SGT



SINGAPORE - Singapore and Switzerland are jointly chairing a global initiative to support equitable access to a Covid-19 vaccine, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat said on Thursday (Sept 17).

Policy Dilemmas

Key Policy Dilemmas in COVID Response

Article:

“Yuval Noah Harari: the world after coronavirus”

March 20 2020, Financial Times

- Totalitarian surveillance vs citizen empowerment
- Nationalist Isolation vs global solidarity

Key Policy Dilemmas in COVID Response

Singapore's record thus far:

- Deep Knowledge's COVID-19 Regional Safety Assessment – Singapore, 10th safest place to live during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Parameters for assessment - Quarantine Efficiency, Government Efficiency of Risk Management, Monitoring and Detection, Health Readiness, Regional Resilience and Emergency Preparedness

Key Policy Dilemmas in COVID Response

Position	Global Region	Country/Region	Quarantine Efficiency	Gov Efficiency	Monitoring and Detection	Healthcare Readiness	Country vulnerability	Emergency preparedness	Total Score
1	Europe	Germany	145.5	185.92	138.24	103.73	89.74	99.5	762.64
2	Asia & Pacific	New Zealand	175.26	156.83	144.31	78.76	94.41	108.13	757.7
3	Asia & Pacific	South Korea	149.45	183.31	127.07	85.6	94.23	111.13	750.79
4	Europe	Switzerland	146.95	174.3	131.61	99.88	96.98	100.31	750.02
5	Asia & Pacific	Japan	139.69	185.39	137.31	103.42	82.2	101	749.03
6	Asia & Pacific	Australia	150.15	182.32	130.21	83.7	88.83	109.63	744.83
7	Asia & Pacific	China	137.13	177.79	136.09	76.61	84.7	132.46	744.78
8	Europe	Austria	123.1	188.11	123.35	86.77	94.73	109.75	725.81
9	Middle east	United Arab Emirates	125.1	162.46	142.35	72.32	99.87	121.25	723.36
10	Asia & Pacific	Singapore	145.03	156.97	146.94	83.63	99.27	90.88	722.72

Country	Germany	New Zealand	South Korea
First restrictions	Mar 22- start of lockdown measures. Ban on public gatherings, non-essential business, social distancing measures.	Mar 25- Alert level 4, start of lockdown.	Mar 10- School delayed start announced Mar 21- National ban on large scale gatherings Mar 23- Social distancing, no non-essential travel. Apr 8- Seoul closes bars and clubs.
	Late Apr- in person classes May- shops, restaurants, museums can be open as long as there's safe distancing.	Jun 8- Alert level 1, end of lockdown.	May 1- Reopening. Relaxation of restrictions.
Second restrictions	Ban on large scale gatherings at least until Oct 31. Oct 21- Alpine region of Germany goes into lockdown for two weeks.	Aug 11- Lockdown of Auckland	Jun 22- Second wave declared by KCDC director. Aug- 22 Tougher restrictions. Ban on large scale gatherings
	-	Sept 23- Auckland moved back to Alert level 2, the rest of New Zealand moved to Alert level 1.	Oct 19- Easing of restrictions again

Conclusion

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- Singapore has to settle at its own unique solutions, to be true to its identity and respond to its constraints.
- Also, while there is no one single set of values, there are some key ones that we cluster around – law and order; safety; fairness; family; no free lunch but concern for the poor and vulnerable.
- Government and public sector value system – sustainability, forward-planning, integration with the international community based on mutual interests and benefit.

Q&A Time

Appendix

Key Policy Dilemmas in COVID Response

What can a small city-state do, afford to do, not do?

- **Governance**

- ❖ Lives vs Livelihoods
- ❖ Health vs Privacy
- ❖ State Action vs Citizen-initiative
- ❖ Short-term responses vs. Long-term sustainability

- **Globalisation**

- ❖ Nation-based Solutions vs. Global Efficacy

- **Multiracialism**

- ❖ One-nation civic solidarity vs a segmented, targeted approach