

## *Acknowledgements*

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

**1.1 Aims of Project**

**1.2 Gaming's Influence on Youths**

**1.3 Singaporean Youths' Political Involvement Status**

**1.4 MMORPGs Influence on Youth's Political Involvement**

## 1.1 Aims of Project

This project strives to encourage greater political participation of Singaporean youths. Political participation is crucial as it allows democratic citizens to communicate with the government about their opinions and places pressure on them to enact a response (Eremenko).

Concurrently, we will have identified gaming as a key influence on the youths of today (Section 1.2), and, specifically, how it possibly impacts on their political involvement both positively and negatively. Henceforth, we will provide strategies to mitigate the fault factors of its influence causing youths to be apathetic, and tap on the assets that may increase their political participation.

## 1.2 Gaming's Influence on Youths

Gaming is predominant among Singapore youths. Studies show that youths spend in average 20.2 hours gaming weekly (HyeKung Choo, 2010). In fact, the prominence of gaming among Singaporean youths is substantially greater than that among American youths (13.2 hours per week), where gaming is pervasive with 88% of them playing video games at least occasionally (DA, 2009). These show that gaming is significant among Singaporean youths. Moreover, most pathological symptoms<sup>1</sup> are displayed

---

<sup>1</sup> Impulse control problem, social incompetence, hostility, academic underperformance, and damages to social functioning.

by a small percentage of Singaporean youths (see Table 1.1), distinctly showing that it affects their general behaviour and attitudes.

<b>In the past year,</b>	<b>Total sample(n=2998)</b>		<b>% Yes</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
Has your school work suffered because you spent too much time playing computer- or video-games?	12%	34%	14%	9%
Have you ever skipped your studies or co-curricular activities to play more computer- or video-games?	7%	9%	9%	5%
Do you need to spend more and more time and/or money on VGs to feel the same amount of excitement?	9%	15%	13%	6%
Have you played VGs to escape from problems, bad feelings or stress?	30%	24%	34%	26%
Are you thinking about computer- or video-games more and more?	17%	25%	23%	11%
Have you stolen a VG from a store or a friend, or stolen money in order to buy a VG?	3%	4%	3%	2%
Have you tried to play VGs less often for shorter periods of time, but are unsuccessful?	13%	28%	14%	13%
Have you become restless or irritable when trying to cut down or stop playing computer- or video-games?	22%	23%	25%	19%
Have you ever lied to family or friends about how much you play VGs?	10%	16%	13%	7%
Have you ever needed to borrow money so you could get or play computer- or video-games?	4%	5%	6%	3%
Average number of symptoms reported		2.1	2.5	1.8
Pathological gaming prevalence(displaying at least 5 symptoms)	8.7%	12.6%	4.7%	

TABLE 1.1: Pathological Symptoms among Singaporean Youths Involved in Video-games (VGs)

## 1.3 Singaporean Youths' Political Involvement

### Status

Singaporean youths are generally not politically involved<sup>2</sup>. TNP<sup>3</sup> statistics show a trend of Singaporean youths being political apathetic (See Figure 1.1) (Tay, 2011). Ministers have also raised this area of concern publicly (See Figure 1.2) (Wee, 2011). Such media and governmental attention shows that it is an area of concern in Singapore.

<sup>2</sup> Political involvement, formally known as political participation is defined as "directly affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies." – Oxford University Press Online Resource Centre

<sup>3</sup> The New Paper Young Voter's Survey 2011

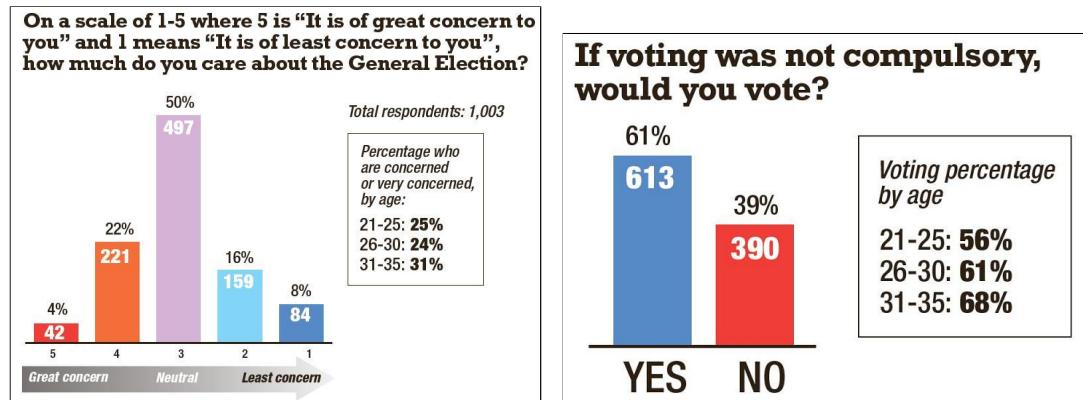


FIGURE 1.1: Survey results on whether youths are politically apathetic



**"Political apathy is a luxury you can have when things are going okay."**

Vikram Nair, Member of Parliament

**"More can always be done to empower the youths."**

Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Defence

(Wee, 2011)

FIGURE 1.2: Quotes from ministers on political apathy of Singaporean youths

Although the situation is not alleviated, political activism among youths is increasing, with the rise of youth-initiated bodies and individuals that participate in public affairs and concerns. E.g. Youth for Ecology, a group advocating environmental issues by holding dialogues with peers publishing a paper on the political cause, and students helping out in Meet-the-People sessions.

## 1.4 MMORPGs Influence on Youth's Political Involvement

MMORPG<sup>4</sup> are played for much longer periods of time than other games which youths have a great tendency for intensive play (Smahel, 2007). As such, we will study gaming's influence on youths' political involvement with MMORPGs which youths are more exposed to.

This is further substantiated by findings that gaming is of higher cognitive and behavioural salience for youths' in the same report. These show that MMORPGs will be a representative study as the young have increased exposure to it and that it specifically affects youths' lives to a larger extent than other age categories.

Many players involve themselves in politics of the gaming world that are akin to the real world (Sovig, 2006). It can be inferred that gameplay politics create an environment for the political involvement of youths that clearly simulates real world politics, shaping the political involvement patterns of youths in general.

---

<sup>4</sup> Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game

# **Chapter 2**

## **Impacts**

### **2.1 Positive Impacts**

2.1.1 Developing Critical Thinking Skills

2.1.2 Developing Management Skills

### **2.2 Negative Impacts**

2.2.1 Less Time for Political Involvement

## 2.1 Positive Impacts

### 2.1.1 Developing Critical Thinking Skills

In MMORPGs, the main aim is overthrowing the enemy. Chat features (see Figure 2.1) are necessary in games for players to discuss battle plans. Such debate is similar to that in collaborative learning, where a group of people come together to discuss and achieve a common goal. Discussion fosters the development of critical thinking through clarification of ideas, and evaluation of others' ideas (Gokhale, 1995). As such, MMORPG games are able to cultivate critical thinking skills, an essential political skill. Moreover, education for active citizenship is most effective if students are able to try it out themselves, through a pedagogy that fosters critical thinking (UN, 2013). Thus playing MMORPG helps foster critical thinking skills, which promotes political activism.

```
[07:50] <Psykolog> do i want to know wha
[07:50] <Psykolog> t
[07:51] <V3hemenc3> fight the vampires
[07:51] <V3hemenc3> chances are they only have like, 3 vampires
[07:51] <V3hemenc3> and the thralls are weak
[07:51] <Dragonzilla> No. It would probably annoy you to no end.
[07:52] <V3hemenc3> tell us nonetheless
[07:52] <Psykolog> how do I setup
[07:52] <V3hemenc3> also your avatar is like a cross between a dragon and a poro
[07:52] <Dragonzilla> It's a Zergling
[07:52] <V3hemenc3> i don't see it
[07:53] <V3hemenc3> also, setup
[07:53] <Dragonzilla> Carbot Animations.
[07:53] <V3hemenc3> just cover your field
[07:53] <V3hemenc3> should be easy enough
[07:53] <Psykolog> flesh golems in the frontline, zombies everywhere, wolves and skeletons ready to fight
[07:53] <V3hemenc3> wolves are your scorers
[07:53] <Psykolog> and
[07:54] <Psykolog> 4 vampires
```

FIGURE 2.1: Screenshot of chat between League of Legends gamers, discussing on how to defeat vampires in the game

### 2.1.2 Developing Management Skills

MMORPG players are required to take up a role and optimise their capabilities. Players are engaged in strategic planning and management skills which can be applied in actual political situations. Playing in pre-defined roles influences players' characteristics or behaviours(Andrew Ee, 2012). Taking up various leadership roles<sup>5</sup> trains their management and visionary skills as players need to organize members based on their abilities, foresee future challenges and counter them. For example, being a guild leader in WoW<sup>6</sup> requires the player to manage his manpower, take administrative control of operations<sup>7</sup>, and organize raids to gain EXP<sup>8</sup>, equipment and boost the guild's reputation (Figure 2.2).

Through such leadership positions, players are able to gain management and organization skills which are essential in the political field. Having put their management skills into use in-game, it stimulates the experience of taking up political roles, encouraging political engagement.

---

<sup>5</sup> in-game

<sup>6</sup> World of Warcraft

<sup>7</sup> Such as giving ranks, privileges, recruitment of new guild members etc.

<sup>8</sup> Level-based experience points



FIGURE 2.2: Example of various functions available to guild leaders in organizing its operations in World of Warcraft

## 2.2 Negative Impacts

### 2.2.1 Less Time for Political Involvement

MMORPGs elicit high time investment from users (Yee, 2006). A study has found that adolescents in Singapore spend an average of 20 hours per week on gaming, of which those who displayed symptoms of pathological video gaming averaged over 37 hours of gaming time (NIE, 2011). These results show that the average Singaporean youth spends significant amount of time every week on gaming alone, leaving less time for other activities, including politics.

Although additional hours devoted to gaming might not directly result in a compromise in the time spent in being politically involved, having less time

would result to them unable to commit to more in-depth political activities. Youths also have short attention spans (Graber, 2014), which mean they are less likely to commit to content-heavy political issues, given a reduced amount of time. This can be substantiated by our survey results (Figure 2.3).

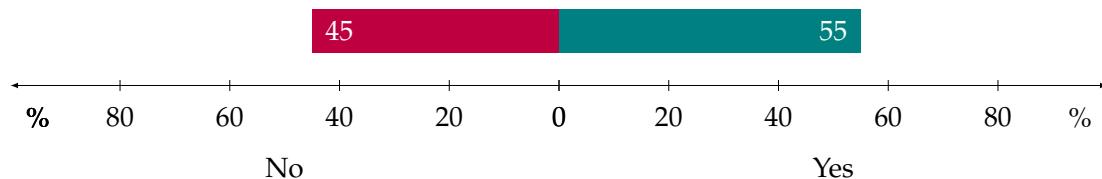


FIGURE 2.3: Survey results on whether playing games translated to less time and lower participation in political activities

Young PAP<sup>9</sup> Executive Committee Member Mr James Chen agreed to this, saying that everyone has a limited amount of time, so if one spends more time on gaming, they would definitely have less time for national issues (Appendix C.2).

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<sup>9</sup> People's Action Party

# **Chapter 3**

## **Current Strategies**

### **3.1 Reaching everyone for active citizenry @ home (REACH)**

3.1.1 Aims

3.1.2 Limitations

3.1.3 Evaluation

## 3.1 Reaching everyone for active citizenry @ home (REACH)

### 3.1.1 Aims

REACH aims to gather Singaporeans' opinions regarding issues of concern in various social and political areas<sup>10</sup>, and promote citizen involvement through developing ideas for the government's considerations.

PSW<sup>11</sup> is formed to encourage citizenship participation, where citizens aid in the government's policy formulation process. Discussion forums are available online for citizens to express their concerns and provide ideas regarding current affairs.

### 3.1.2 Limitations

REACH has three main limitations:

1. PSW only caters to interested citizens.
2. Citizens may lack contextual knowledge, resulting in unconstructive comments in discussion forums (Figure 3.1)

---

<sup>10</sup> Areas of concern: Ageing and health issues, Education and human capital excellence, Economic and employment opportunities, Physical and environmental sustainability, Population and integration issues

<sup>11</sup> Policy Study Workgroups

3. PSW requires critical thinking skills and sufficient knowledge regarding the political area of which policies are reviewed so as to provide constructive feedback.

Dalek Singapore 30 Aug 2014, 1.15PM  
Now I wonder. Who else will the SMRT charter to next?  
Religious groups? Private Corporations? NGOs? Sporting fans?  
Like | 0 people like this Report Abuse Reply

Lau KS 30 Aug 2014, 6.25PM  
Maybe the pink dot events, the next one might have 30, 000 people.  
Like | 0 people like this Report Abuse

Lau KS 30 Aug 2014, 6.28PM  
Who knows, maybe if they have C.O.E. for trains, someone might buy it.  
Like | 0 people like this Report Abuse

Dalek Singapore 30 Aug 2014, 8.41PM  
{Maybe the pink dot events, the next one might have 30,000 people.}  
Lau. Exactly.  
That is the point. SMRT started with one charter, now they will deal with the charters they will be faced with as I mentioned. Is it all about money?  
So if I am a Millionaire with money to throw, I can charter 1 car during peak hour to ride all by myself, if I pay SMRT \$1000 for the ride?

FIGURE 3.1: Screenshot of unconstructive feedback on portal forum in REACH

### 3.1.3 Evaluation

Youths require basic knowledge regarding various political areas before being able to get actively involved. Having a general idea helps them gain

interest as they will feel more politically involved. To gain the attention of the youths, youthful elements should be included instead of pure political discussions or critical thinking.

Portals require good publicity to maximise extent of its reach to the youths and ensure that it is an effective platform of communication. Referring to Figure 3.2, the portal forums have low receptivity with less than 10 comments on each article. This is due to the low participation of citizens, which boils down to the publicity of the portal to gain citizens' awareness.

MOE MINATUI OR Need for Secularity in Programmes



In response to recent discussions on a relationship workshop by Focus On The Family, the Ministry of Education (MOE) explained why the Relationship Mo...

0 comments & replies

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MOE Scales Down Recruitment of Teachers



It has just become harder for graduates and mid-career professionals to land jobs as teachers in schools, even if they have done a stint of relief tea...

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Growing our Singapore Educators



To help grow and bring out the best in Singapore's teachers , the Education Ministry (MOE) will be providing the necessary support and guidance to hel...

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"Just as we bring out the best in every child, our education system must also bring out the best in all our teachers," said Education Minister Heng Sw...

1 comments & replies

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Pilot Programme Reaches Out to At-Risk Youth



As part of a pilot scheme, social workers are going into schools to work with at-risk youth, and help lower the chances of these youth dropping out. S...

4 comments & replies

[READ MORE >](#)

FIGURE 3.2: Lack of receptivity amongst citizens

# Chapter 4

## Stratagems

The main objective of the strategies is to increase political activism through political-knowledge education, fostering political interest, and creating opportunities for political involvement. The proposal addresses both the schooling adolescents and the young working adults (See Figure 4.1).

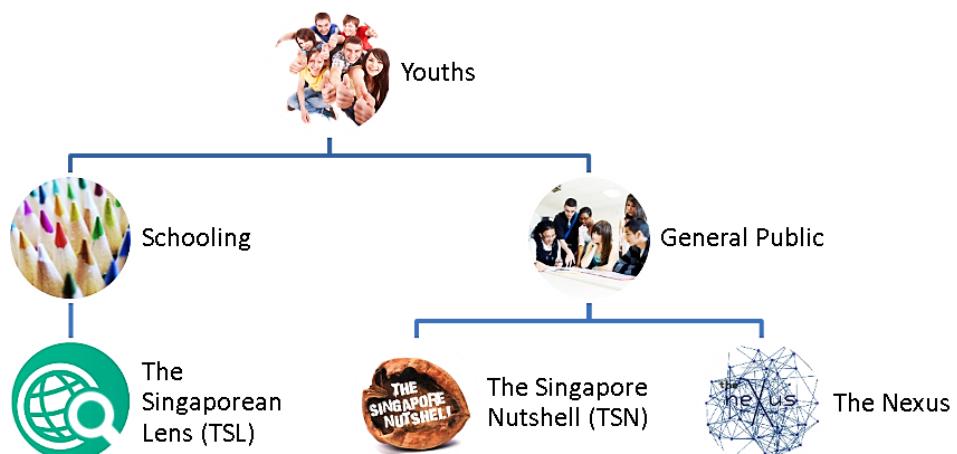


FIGURE 4.1: Overview of Strategies

The proposed main driver is MCCY<sup>12</sup> as it actively engages the youth sector, the target audience of this project. Also, MCCY strives to nurture youth leadership, parallel to our goal of encouraging political participation in terms of leading and influencing political matters (MCCY, 2014).

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<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

# Chapter 5

## The Singaporean Lens (TSL)

**5.1 Rationale**

**5.2 Objective**

**5.3 Logo**

**5.4 Implementation**

**5.5 Element One: Political Knowledge Specialisation**

5.5.1 Feature One: Specialisation Choice

**5.6 Element Two: Shadow Governance**

**5.7 Element Three: Transposition into Offline Involvement**

**5.8 Co-Drivers**

## 5.1 Rationale

TSL aims to harness the potential of gaming to develop political capabilities among the young, while retaining youths' interests by engaging them in a means that they are familiar with. Since gaming has a strong influence on youths, it will be an extensive and appropriate tool in engaging them politically. Primary research has also shown support for gaming methods from a political perspective (Figure 5.1).



**“It is a good idea. If youths are very into gaming, the only way to engage them is through games.”**

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An Interview with Mr James Chen, Member of the Young PAP’s executive committee

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FIGURE 5.1: Quote from an interview with Mr James Chen (Appendix C.2)

## 5.2 Objective

TSL is a politically-themed game involving varied elements that develop youths' political knowledge and skills through experiential learning. Educators can increase political experiences of youths by engaging them with gaming, where they problem-solve when they meet obstacles (Joseph Kahne, 2008). It will increase both quantity and quality of involvement, necessary as inferred from Mr Chua (Figure 5.2).



---

. "How they (young people) are involved (politically) is also a concern. Some of the young people, when involved, look at things superficially"

---

An interview with Mr Eric Chua, Chairperson of People's Association Youth Movement (PAYM)  
Central Youth Council & Chairman of Cairnhill CC YEC



FIGURE 5.2: Quote from an interview with Mr Eric Chua (Appendix C.1)

### 5.3 Logo



FIGURE 5.3: Logo of the Singaporean Lens

As illustrated in Figure 5.3, the use of a glowing lens inspecting the world represents the analytical understanding of politics, establishing the idea of increasing quality political involvement of youths.

## 5.4 Implementation

TSL will be introduced in secondary and tertiary education institutes as part of the SS<sup>13</sup> curriculum. Students are required to complete a term in office (Figure 5.14) as part of an assignment, grades based on their election results.

### Rationale

There is a need for us to politically engage youths inclusively as most are not (Figure 5.4) and current strategies only reach out to a niche group.

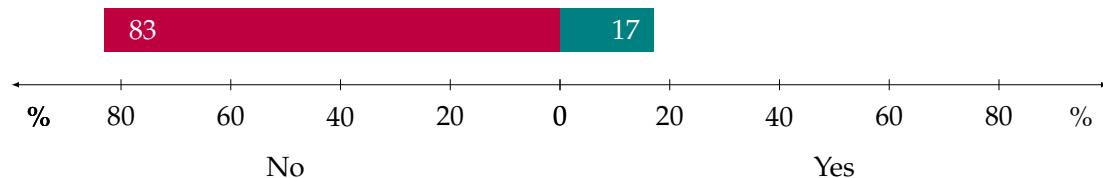


FIGURE 5.4: Survey results on whether respondents are involved in the politics

### Evaluation

Integrating TSL into the curriculum can ensure that we politically engage all students, and monitor the process concurrently.

---

<sup>13</sup> Singapore Studies

## 5.5 Element One: Political Knowledge

### Specialisation

#### 5.5.1 Feature One: Specialisation Choice

Students will choose a specific area of interest which they desire to be educated in (Figure 5.5).

Throughout the game, players will be given tips on the various concerns of policy-formulating<sup>14</sup> (Figure 5.6) in their chosen ministry.

At any point of time, they can also access to all different advices available (Figure 5.7).



FIGURE 5.5: Screenshot of Ministry Selection Screen (Prime Minister).

<sup>14</sup> Economic, military, diplomacy and science concerns of the Prime Minister's Office if one chooses to join that Ministry.



FIGURE 5.6: Screenshot of Gameplay Tips



FIGURE 5.7: Screenshot of Advisor Panel of the Prime Minister's Office

'Civilopedia' is a database accessible in game with regards with necessary knowledge in the sector of concern (Figure 5.8).



FIGURE 5.8: Screenshot of Civilopedia

## Rationale

*In order to get this message out to the beneficiary (old folks), we need to know what the old folks want, and we know that they are very into karaoke or watching old concerts. So we organize such concerts and bring in the local dialect MCs and singers, and in between these concerts which the old folks enjoy, we inserted part of the pioneer generation package information and this idea works.*

FIGURE 5.9: Excerpt from interview with Mr James Chen

The abstract (Figure 5.9) tells us that a feasible way to educate our target audience is to subtly provide them with information in their engaged activity. This is necessary as political content is heavy and may not appeal to youths if taught directly. It also tackles the limitations of current strategies that do not provide simplified information on politics before political engagement.

### **Evaluation**

Dissemination of content as tips will allow students to make informed political decisions and learn about the political considerations while gaming. Bite-sized tips allow youths to be more receptive of political knowledge and gradually get accustomed to the information. The Civilopedia also offers optional, more in-depth data.

## **5.6 Element Two: Shadow Governance**

After being educated on the multitude of political know-how, players are to personally make political decisions (Figure 5.10).

Players will also have to bear the consequences of their choices, in terms of the support and receptiveness of the stakeholders in the various sectors (Figure 5.11).



FIGURE 5.10: Screenshot of the political decision-making in-game  
Picture taken from [truepcgaming.com](http://truepcgaming.com)



FIGURE 5.11: Screenshot of stakeholder responses towards the Ministry  
Picture taken from [www.usgamer.net](http://www.usgamer.net)

### **Rationale**

Shadow governance creates an avenue for youths to practise necessary skills and actions to fully utilise its potential to develop youths' political capabilities, as brought forth by Mr Chua (Figure 5.12).



---

**"You have to let the gamer take on the shoes of a politician and face the simulated consequences, such as an uprising from unhappy citizens."**

Mr Eric Chua



FIGURE 5.12: Excerpt of interview with Mr Eric Chua

### **Evaluation**

Shadow governance allows players to experience the entire process of policy-making, from acquiring greater knowledge to actual decision-making and facing the outcome of their choices. In this way, youths are engaged in experiential political learning, developing their political knowledge, understanding and skills. In fact, experiential learning can result in "deeper" learning which means that students are better able to transfer what they have learned in one context to another context (Lithglow). It will ease the translation of virtual political involvement of youths into real-life activism.

## 5.7 Element Three: Transposition into Offline Involvement

Players will be directed to real-time opportunities for political participation in the pertinent sectors via partner organisation The Nexus (Section 7) (Figure 5.13 and 5.14).

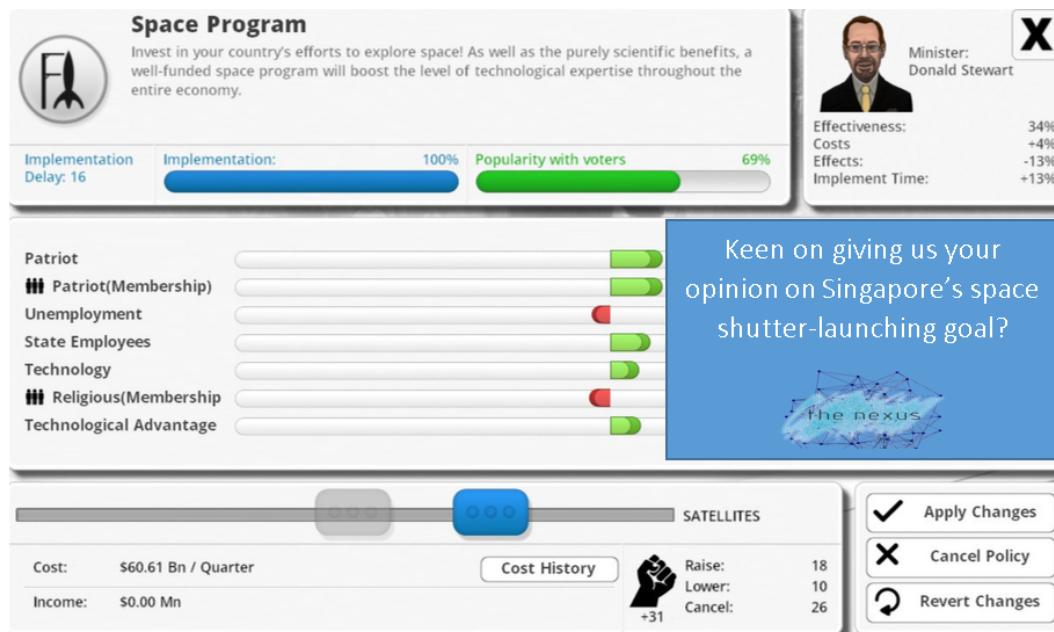


FIGURE 5.13: Screenshot of how players are directed to participate in relevant political discussions or opportunities in-game (Policy Intensity Adjustment Screen)  
Picture adapted from dl.3dmgame.com

### Rationale

As Mr Chua had mentioned in our interview, at some point we have to bring the 'virtual' into the 'real'. This is necessary as the asset of political involvement in the virtual realm needs to be transposed into real-time political participation that is our project objective.

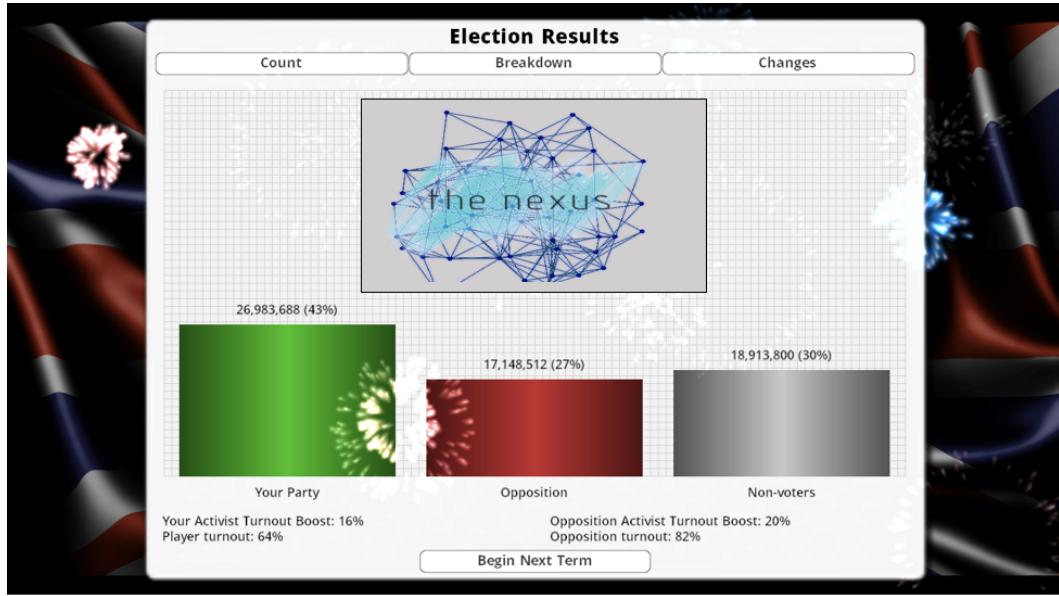


FIGURE 5.14: Screenshot of how players are directed to participate in relevant political discussions or opportunities in-game (End-game Screen)

### Evaluation

After improving the political knowledge of the young in their chosen sector, the in-game connections to The Nexus will directly link them up with relevant opportunities which they are keener on. There will be direct increase in political participation (Figure 5.15).

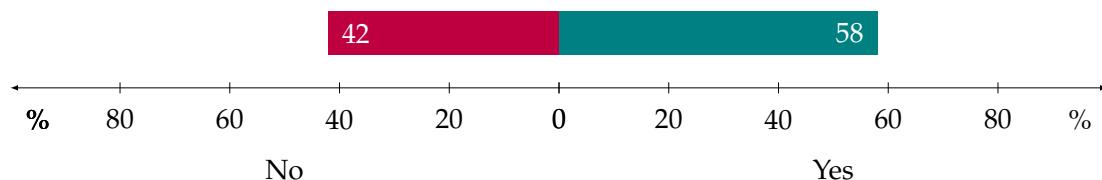


FIGURE 5.15: Survey results on whether respondents would participate in real-life activities related to what they do in game, whereby a majority are willing to be involved

## 5.8 Co-Drivers

The ideal co-driver of this project would be the Ministry of Education due to TSL's educative potential with regards to National Education. Understanding the decision-making circumstances of our current leaders would instill confidence in our nation's future.

# **Chapter 6**

## **The Singapore Nutshell**

**6.1 Rationale**

**6.2 Objective**

**6.3 Logo**

**6.4 Overview**

**6.5 Co-driver**

**6.6 Measures for Success**



The Singapore Nutshell (TSN) is a specialized youth channel which features short 15-minute daily news through radio broadcasts and viewable radio shows on Youtube. News broadcasted consists of youth related news and important political updates. Chat sessions are held as a follow-up activity through radio call-ins and online platforms.

TSN features bite-sized news casting that is concise and youth-centric. Youths are thus able to stay updated on daily news and receive information on political opportunities.

## 6.1 Rationale

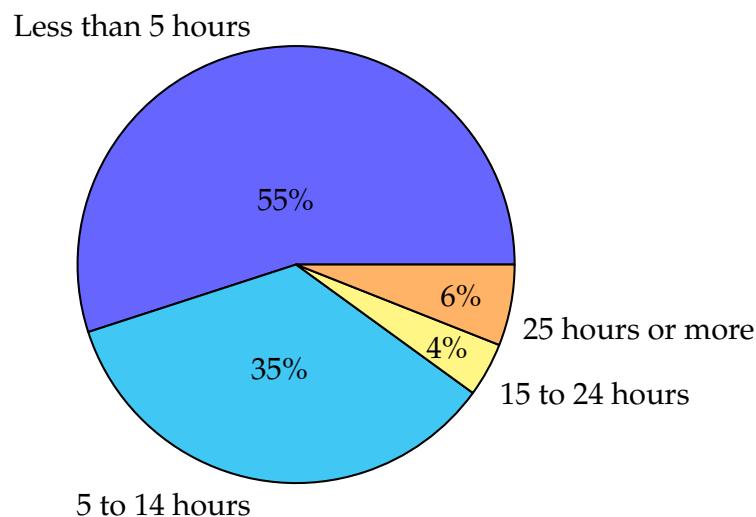


FIGURE 6.1: Survey results on how often do respondents read, watch or listen to news or radio castings in a week

Due to the short attention span of youths, TSN is short in length and engaging in nature. Moreover, a majority admit that they spend minimal (less than 5 hours per week) time on acquaint with political affairs (Figure 6.1). To

counter this, a concise platform can be created to encourage youths to max out the amount of information they receive within the shortest amount of time.

## 6.2 Objective

TSN seeks to educate youths in news and political opportunities through a short and engaging platform. The follow up chat sessions also encourages audiences to enhance their critical thinking skills by means of constructive political debate.

## 6.3 Logo



FIGURE 6.2: The Logo of the Singapore Nutshell

The nutshell is small, but full with fruit. It serves as an allusion to the channel being short in length but rich in content. The white colour of the words signifies the neutral political stand of the radio (Figure 6.2).

## 6.4 Overview

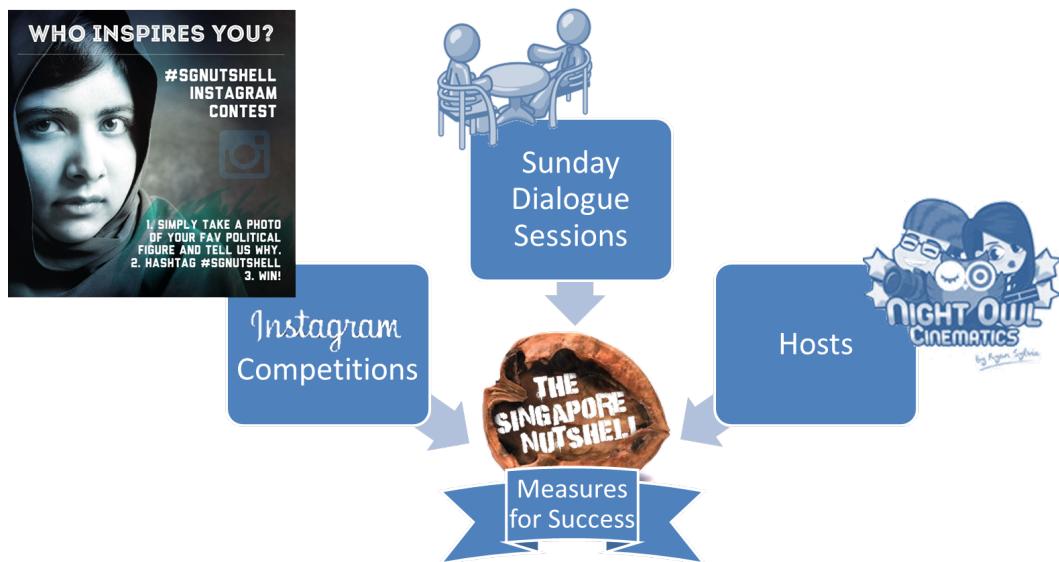


FIGURE 6.3: Measures of success

## 6.5 Co-driver

SCAPE<sup>15</sup> is TSN's co-driver. SCAPE aims to facilitate youth-oriented programmes and support within various communities of youth interest, which corresponds to the nature of TSN. SCAPE in turn promotes its upcoming youth events through TSN.

---

<sup>15</sup>SCAPE Co. Ltd is a non-profit organisation with its mission and vision rooted in support of youth, talent and leadership development

## 6.6 Measures for Success

Youthful factors need to be included to ensure that youths would find the channel engaging and appealing, such that those not initially interested are able to cultivate an interest in politics. Instagram competitions reach out to many as social media is commonplace among youths. It will be promoted during broadcasts, with new monthly themes. For example, in the theme “Who inspires you?” participants have to post a picture of their favourite political figure and write a few lines explaining why (See Figure 6.4).

The Sunday dialogue session is a 30-minute special where guests such as members from the Young PAP, young artistes, etc. will be invited to have a short dialogue session, in order to interest young followers of these public figures and gain new political perspectives.

Radio hosts are popular Youtubers, Night Owl Cinematics, who rank among the top most subscribed Singapore channels (VidStats, 2014). These Youtubers create videos which Singaporeans tend to find relatable to their own experience, especially amongst youths, thus having them as the hosts for the channel will increase its youth influence and receptivity.



mcthenggggg Martin Luther King Jr.

He spoke against injustice of the Native Americans. Leading a civil rights movement, he gave numerous speeches on racial equality. In 1964, a Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to him for his resistance against racial inequality with nonviolence.

He inspires me as he was a man with a dream, and was not afraid to go against the odds in pursuing it.

#sgnutshell

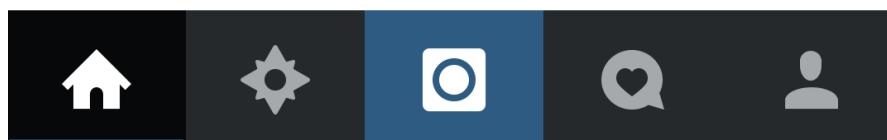


FIGURE 6.4: Example of how one can participate in the Instagram Competition

# Chapter 7

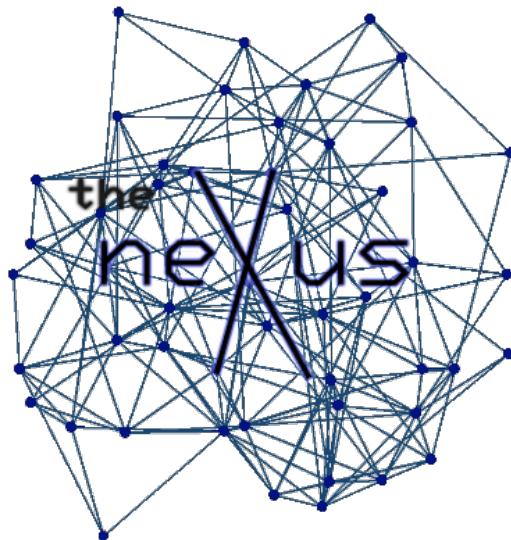
## The Nexus

7.1 Objectives

7.2 Rationale

7.3 Feature One: Centralisation of Opportunities

7.4 Feature Two: Political Forum



## 7.1 Objectives

Nexus is a convenient and accessible online portal, aimed to maintain long-lasting political engagement for youth users, motivating them to be actively involved in politics.

Publicity	Opportunities of political involvement
Accessibility	One-stop portal from informing to application for activities
Interaction	Direct platform for political opinions and participation

## 7.2 Rationale

It was identified that games garner political involvement simulative to that in the real world (Section 1.4). Hence, a means is required to ensure that political participation in-game transcends into reality.



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*"You will have to lure them out of their virtual world. How do you do that? It will be some real world activities that entice them, either based on their interest or their good points-to fight for a cause."*

Mr Eric Chua

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FIGURE 7.1: Excerpt from interview with Mr Chua (Appendix C.1)

As gamers usually spend substantial amount of time online, of which most is spent on reading online content (Sim, 2013), a website that publishes various

opportunities of political engagement will be more convenient to reach out to youths.

### 7.3 Feature One: Centralisation of Opportunities

The Nexus is a centralised platform that enables youths to seek out involvement opportunities in politics, such as grassroots work and meet-the-people sessions. It collates different opportunities available for young people, which can be sorted according to criterion like school year (See Figure 7.2). Youths can easily identify activities they are interested in. The Nexus is also a central agency, allowing youths to sign up activities directly via the website.

#### **Evaluation**

The centralisation of opportunities provide convenience to youths when they source for chances of political engagement. The categorisation function allows it to cater to specific needs of the young, enticing them using activities of their interest and specialisation. Furthermore, the one-stop process reduces unnecessary administrative procedures from being redirected to the relevant organisations before sign-up.

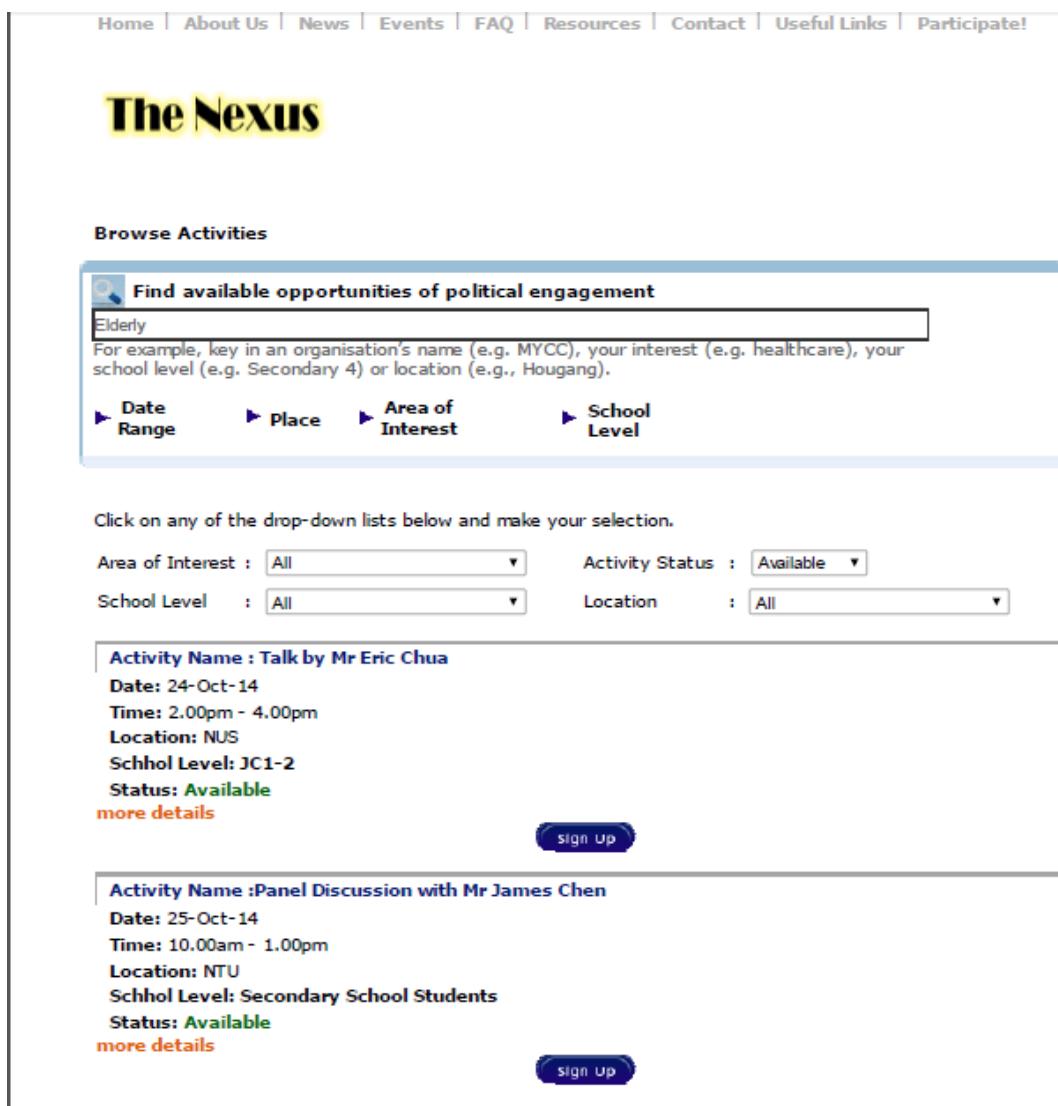


FIGURE 7.2: The Nexus Home Page

## 7.4 Feature Two: Political Forum

The Nexus also has a forum section (Figure 7.3), where youth can discuss about solutions to some of the political problems they observe. The forum managers can also complement expert opinions, making the discussion more progressive. In this way, the youths are instilled with right perception and knowledge.

 JULY 31, 2014 - 6:37 PM  
Mustafa aka Soapian  
I don't understand why the government need us Singaporeans to keep a minimum amount in the CPF. I believe it is their right to spend what they earn!

 JULY 31, 2014 - 8:36 PM  
Forum Manager  
The Minimum Sum of the Central Provident Fund is cash savings for your spending after your retirement, or in case of emergency such as medical operations. It is essential to maintain the Minimum Sum for people in their Golden Year to enjoy a comfortable life.

 JULY 31, 2014 - 9:37 PM  
mustafa aka soapian  
I see! Thank you!

 JULY 31, 2014 - 9:38 PM  
Philocist  
Furthermore, the MS can be used when you intend to purchase a house. Anyway, it is better to have some deposits than nothing! :)

FIGURE 7.3: Screenshot of how a discussion is carried out on The Nexus forum

The forum assists the young in submitting the brilliant ideas for feasibility assessment under competitions<sup>16</sup>. Youths identified by their contributions in the forum to be apt may be given the chance of organising these projects.

### **Evaluation**

Offering outright political participation allows more people to have the hands-on experience of running and participating in political activities. This encourages political participation by getting youths to feel that they are involved and they have a say in politics, as the feeling of powerlessness is one of the reasons for political apathy (Phneah, 2013).

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<sup>16</sup> such as Young Entrepreneurship Challenge

# **Chapter 8**

## **Future Work**

Target audiences of all strategies can expand towards Singaporean youths in general. Expansion packs of TSL containing scenarios of varying difficulties can be added to cater to youths with different educational levels. Such updates ensure TSL is an effective long-term strategy.

Applications of TSL and the Nexus are to be designed to be more user-friendly on portable devices, to further engage the youths.

# **Chapter 9**

## **Conclusion**

Aimed to mitigate consequences and amplify merits of gaming's influence on political involvement, three strategies, namely the Singapore Nutshell, the Singapore Lens and the Nexus are delicately devised, working in tandem to promote political activism.

In the end, we believe the concerted strategies proposed in the report will be able to effectively increase the level of youths' engagement in politics in the future.

# **Chapter 10**

## **Annex**

# Appendix A

## Survey Questions

In this appendix, the questions of our "Survey: Gaming and Political Involvement" will be displayed.

1. Which age group do you fall under? \*<sup>17</sup>

- 13–16
- 17–20
- 21–24
- 25 years old or higher

2. How long do you spend on video games weekly? \*

- Less than 5 hours
- 5–14 hours
- 15–24 hours
- 25–34 hours

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<sup>17</sup>\* denotes the question marked is compulsory.

35 hours or more

3. Which of these political games do you think is popular in Singapore? \*

*i.e. Choose those games you have heard of.*

Civilisation(I–V)

SimCity

Democracy

Tropico 5

Zoo/ Roller Coaster Tycoon

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Would you support greater political engagement through video games? \*

*Video games refers to games played by electronically manipulating images produced by a computer program on a monitor or other display*

Yes.

No.

Why so?

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5. Are you involved in politics?\*

*i.e. Read political journals, Advocate causes, Participation in forums/seminars, Commenting and discussing on related topics online etc.*

Yes.

No.

6. Do you engage in social interactions with other gamers?\*

Yes.

No.

7. Would you be willing to participate in active discussions on game mechanics/matters in the games?\*

Yes.

No.

8. Would you be willing to be involved in real-life activities that relate to what you do in-game?\*

*E.g. Urban-planning internship if you were doing strategic city-development in-game.*

Yes.

No.

9. Playing games translates to fewer time and lower participation in political activities. Do you think it is true for you? \*

*Civic activities such as meet-the-people sessions.(i.e. Are they mutually exclusive to you?)*

Yes.

No.

10. How willing are you to participate in an outdoor camp which aiding youths to rid their addiction to gaming through engagement in recreational activities?\*

Highly unwilling                    Very willing

# Appendix B

## Survey Results

This appendix will present the data collected from our survey, as well as interpretation and evaluation. However, as the survey is not released, the content here is just a template.

We have received responses from 157 people, 152 of whose age group falls under 13 to 20.

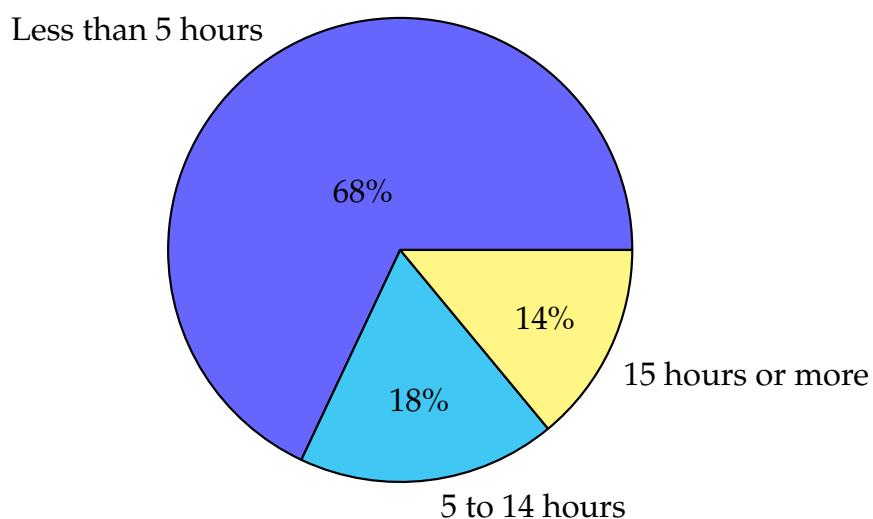


FIGURE B.1: How long do you spend on video games weekly?

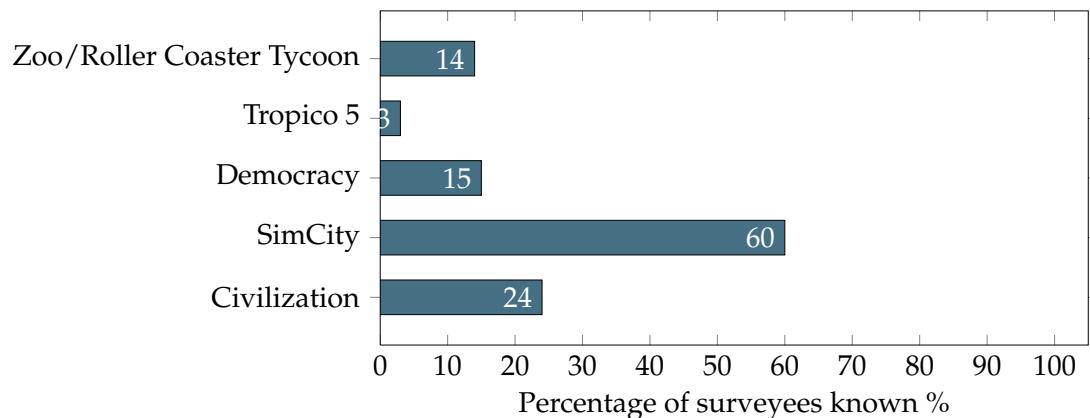


FIGURE B.2: Which of these political games do you think is popular in Singapore?

Apart from the choices above, surveyees also suggest that Risk is also popular among youths.

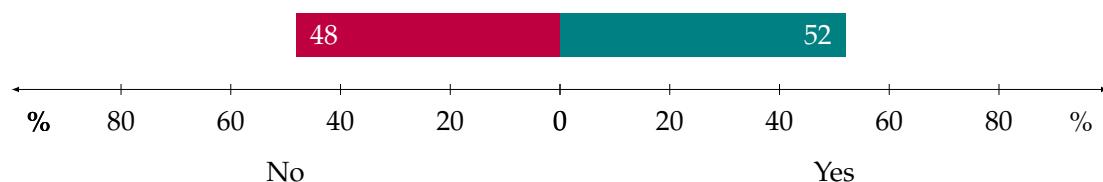


FIGURE B.3: Would you support greater political engagement through video games?

People who agree that educative video games can enhance political engagement argue that video games are interesting, interactive and easy to attract teenagers. On the flipside, the antagonists raise the issues that gaming serving the function of entertainment should remain intact.

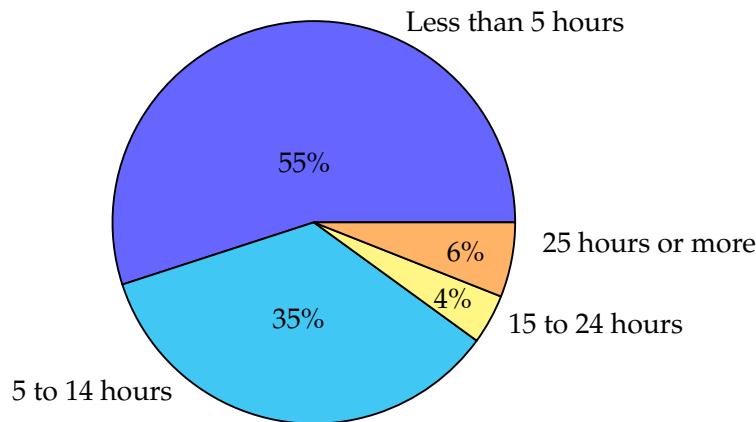


FIGURE B.4: How often do you read, watch or listen to news or radio castings in a week?

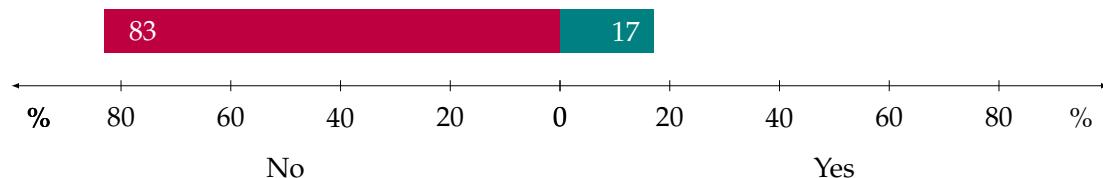


FIGURE B.5: Are you involved in politics?

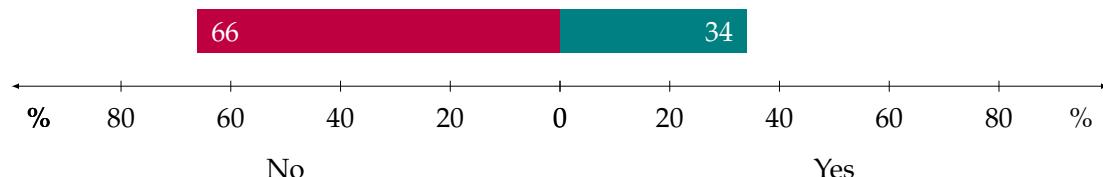


FIGURE B.6: Do you engage in social interactions with other gamers?



FIGURE B.7: Would you be willing to participate in active discussions on game mechanics/matters in the games?

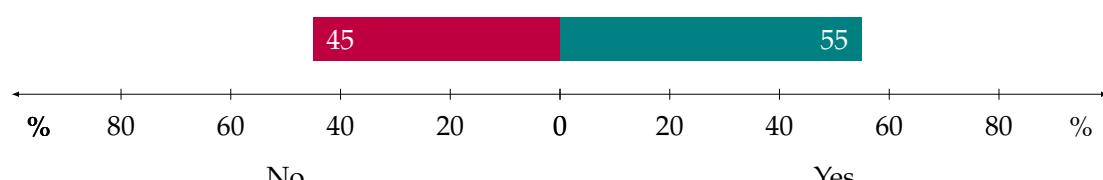


FIGURE B.8: Playing games translates to fewer time and lower participation in political activities. Do you think it is true for you?

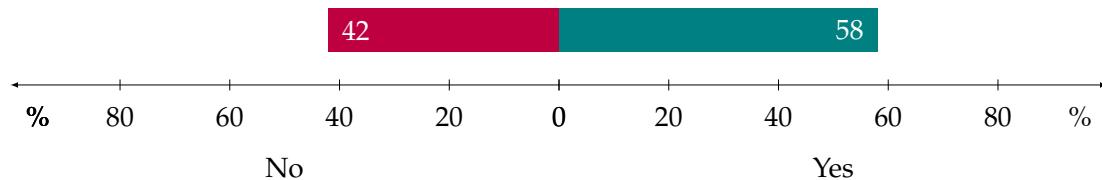


FIGURE B.9: Would you be willing to be involved in real-life activities that relate to what you do in-game?

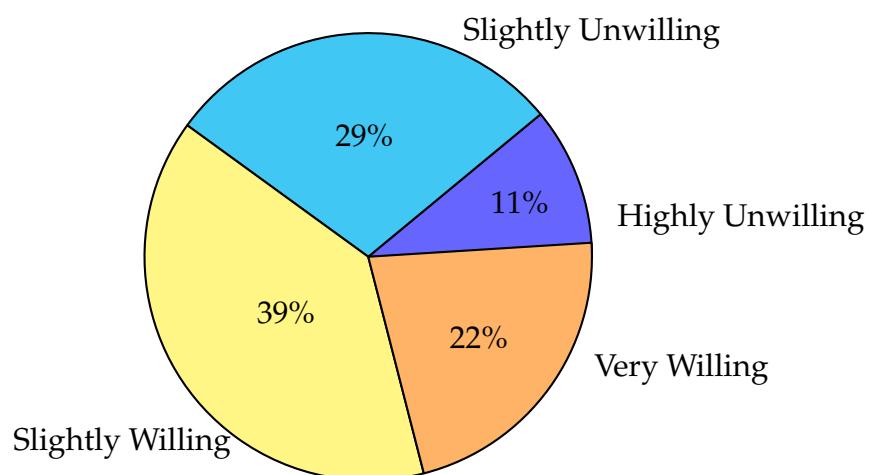


FIGURE B.10: How willing are you to participate in an outdoor camp which aiding youths to rid their addiction to gaming through engagement in recreational activities?

# Appendix C

## Interview Transcripts

### C.1 Interview with Mr Eric Chua

Mr Eric Chua is the Chairperson of People's Association Youth Movement (PAYM) Central Youth Council and Chairman of Cairnhill Community Center Youth Executive Committee. He is also the assistant director of the Operations Department in the Singapore Civil Defence Force.

Below is the transcript of the interview with him.

**Zhi Jia:** Good afternoon Mr Chua, what do you think are the reasons for why Singaporean youths may/may not be politically involved?

**Mr Chua:** There are different definitions of political involvement, or different types of political involvement. Also, when looking at the quality of involvement, while young people can become increasingly involved, how they are being involved is also a concern. Some of the young people,

when involved in matters, look at things superficially. They think that they know everything, but they actually do not. For example, when they read the newspaper they might just read the headlines and they do not fully grasp the entire situation. That's okay, because they are being more aware, but it's not necessarily involvement, so you really have got to define involvement properly.

**Zhi Jia:** To your knowledge of video gaming among youths, do you think that video games can be a viable platform to engage youths politically?

**Mr Chua:** How are you planning to do that?

**Zhi Jia:** We plan to have a video game where we have certain political elements such as urban planning and resource management.

**Mr Chua:** You mean like SimCity?

**Zhi Jia:** Yes, but a very contextualised and extremely politically themed game.

**Mr Chua:** Have you ever heard of the term shadow governance, or shadow parliament? So basically you have to let the gamer take on the shoes of a politician and face the simulated consequences, such as an uprising from unhappy citizens. You need to consider who is going to design the game, who has to pay for it, and how are you going to envisage it?

**Zhi Jia:** Would you see mass media as an effective platform to garner involvement in political activities?

**Mr Chua:** In terms of new media, it is a narrow caste - it only appeals to a specific group of people and it does not broadcast to all. In terms of traditional media, the message gets to all, but not many youths enjoy it

and get into it. On this aspect, new media is a more youthful platform to engage the young people. Increasingly, traditional media decreasingly appeal to the youths, and they get most of their information and knowledge from their friends, social media and their inner circles. That is where the challenge is, especially in terms of getting the information out to the people. It used to be the case where the government only has to put up a few banners and announcements, or advertisements and simple courtesy campaigns- but now we can see that youths are less bothered about Singa the Lion or these mundane stuff and are increasingly into their digital gadgets, as compared to the days where a single message was enough to get the point through.

**Zhi Jia:** Considering strategies that involve video gaming or mass media may not translate to increasing trends of traditional participation, do you think that virtual methods are the good way to engage youths?

**Mr Chua:** I think that it is a good starting point, because, at some point you have to bring the ‘virtual’ to the ‘real’. You will have to lure them out of their virtual cocoons into the real world. How do you do that? It will be some real world activities that entice them, either based on their interest or their good points to fight for a cause. People are bought into these causes, and, with a good enough reason to bring them out of the virtual world, you will have to find what rallies them.

## C.2 Interview with Mr James Chen

Mr James Chen Zhiyu is the Chairman of Young PAP (Tanglin-Cairnhill) and a member of Young PAP Executive Committee.

**Zhi Jia:** What do you think are the reasons for why Singaporean youths may/may not be politically involved? Is this due to their lack of motivation in this area?

**Mr Chen:** Let me see, for youths who are not politically involved, my personal thought is that those in their early 20s set their key priority in life is their career or other objectives, and this is the reason why they are not very much into political awareness. So I would attribute it to different objectives in different stages of life. People of my age, one of the biggest challenges we face is that we have so many things on our plates eg. Careers, studies, families, dating etc. and when they are too focused on these, they are very self-centred as what they are focusing on is more of themselves. I'm not very sure about those younger than 20, but I think that their focus would be very much on their own studies and education. It boils down to the fact that they are more concerned about themselves rather than on national issues, and this is something very dangerous to me as they are not politically aware and most of the information that they gather are hearsay, and all these things may not be true. It can be something that they heard or something that they saw online, which are not verified.

**Zhi Jia:** Do you think that gaming might cause youths to be less politically involved?

**Mr Chen:** I'm not a gamer, but I suppose so. If they spend more time on gaming, then they would naturally have lesser time to spend on other issues. Everybody has a limited amount of time, so if they spend more time on gaming, they would definitely have lesser time for national issues.

**Zhi Jia:** Based on your knowledge of Singapore youths, do you think that video games would be a good way to reach out to the youths?

**Mr Chen:** It is a good idea and it may work. Let me give you an example, which is the current pioneer generation package. In order to get this message out to the beneficiary (old folks), we need to know what the old folks want, and we know that they are very into karaoke or watching old concerts. So we organize such concerts and bring in the local dialect MCs and singers, and in between these concerts which the old folks enjoy, we inserted part of the pioneer generation package information and this idea works. Taking this example, if youths are very into gaming, the only way to engage them is through games. Maybe before they log in, you can insert some video regarding the issue, so that they can learn a little more about it.

**Zhi Jia:** Do you think using mass media would be an effective platform to engage youths?

**Mr Chen:** Yes. If the youths are into social media, it could be a very good platform for them to be engaged. And indeed, I think that the People's Association/companies/corporates are also using social media to reach out to our customer base. The younger consumer base is very much onto social media nowadays and as long as they are on their electronic devices, they are able to connect to their social media.

**Zhi Jia:** We have this idea of using a portal (The Nexus) where youths are given an opportunity to get themselves involved in the politics. What do you think about this centralised portal?

**Mr Chen:** Ultimately it's about how you market this portal. The key problem is how we attract youths to come into this portal. It can be something like Facebook or Instagram. What you need is something that really draws them to your portal. It's not really about what the portal can do or how you implement it, it is about why.

**Zhi Jia:** Considering that strategies using online games may not translate to increasing trends of traditional participation, do you think virtual methods are the best way to engage youths?

**Mr Chen:** I think that the restriction on political activity or the political awareness of the Singapore population in general is low. If a political party wants to set up an event, it is not that easy even for the ruling party. If you can bring it into a physical event, it would definitely be better and more youths would be able to see it. Hopefully, they will become more interested and politically aware as eventually, these youths are pillars of

Singapore. If they don't build up their national or political awareness, how comfortable are we in believing that they will become the future leaders?

**Min Cheng:** What do you think about using a political game where it is something similar to a shadow government and players take up various roles in the government?

**Mr Chen:** I think it will be a fantastic game. In the past, if we had a game like SimCity except tweaked into something more politically inclined, it would be quite fun and definitely drive up the political awareness of the youths. I think it could be like some corporate CEO game, where you log in and assume the role where you make decisions, or where you're a minister governing the state and given the constraints faced by the country. We have limited resources, thus we need to have restrictions and the government has to manage it. Whatever the ruling party plans, they have to plan beyond their term.

#### *Other general comments*

**Mr Chen:** It is all about time management. If you are able to manage your time well, you can actually do many things and do them well. It boils down to why you want to do it (a cause, community work, or even politics in this case) and your awareness about it.

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