

Is singapore a nation?

Countries



When you think of Singapore, you will think of the myriad of international awards and global benchmark this city-state has achieved within its first 50 years of independence. It is commendable – her success that is. Having attained self-governance in 1959 and subsequently independence in 1965, her economic miracle in the decades to come is deserving of being looked upon as an economic model of success. Her emergence came as a shock as she was expelled from Malaysia in 1965 due to clashing political ideologies, and nobody knew what to expect. The emergence of the imperiled Singapore brewed much uncertainty and anxiety in a "Chinese land in the sea of Malays" environment.

Certainly though, Singapore has come so far into being what she is today. As we slowly transit into a new political era and hand over the political reins to fresher and younger batch of Singapore's fourth-generation leaders, it is worth to stop and reflect. Having gone through 50 years of independence, can it be truly said that Singapore is a nation? Has she become a nation, or is she still in the process of nation-building; a nation-in-progress?

This essay will discuss at large with regards to where Singapore stands in this issue. Before proceeding any further, it is crucial to unpack the term nation.

Defining the term 'nation'

Nation has never had a concrete definition owing to its broad and complex nature. Scholars, nonetheless, have attempted to define the term nation for pragmatic purposes. As argued by Dawisha Adeed, nation is a form of identity. That individuals identify with their nations the same way they

identify with other forms of collective identity. Rupert Emerson also argued that nation is a socio-cultural concept than a political concept. It is the sense of belonging to a community who share the same heritage, and the same future.

It is thus agreeable that nation is essentially a sense of belonging to a country. A sense of pride, and a measure of a person's loyalty to a country. In the words of Benedict Anderson, nation is "an imagined political community" because members may not know most of their fellow members, yet "in the minds of each lives the image of their communion". In this regard, it is in my interest to highlight the difference between a state and a nation. As brought up earlier, Singapore is not a nation as of yet on the grounds that Singaporeans do not feel as intense a sense of belonging to Singapore.