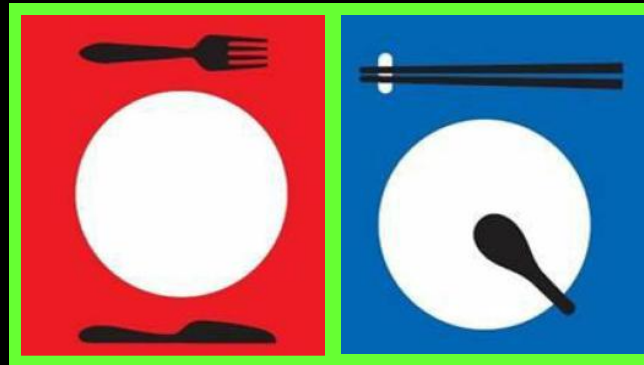


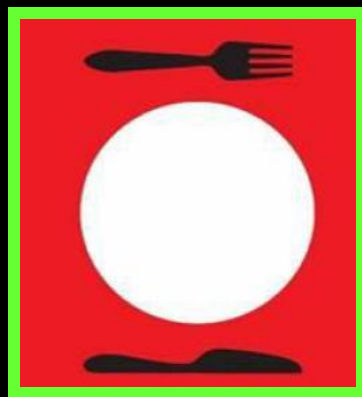
# Bargaining change in the political arena: key success factors

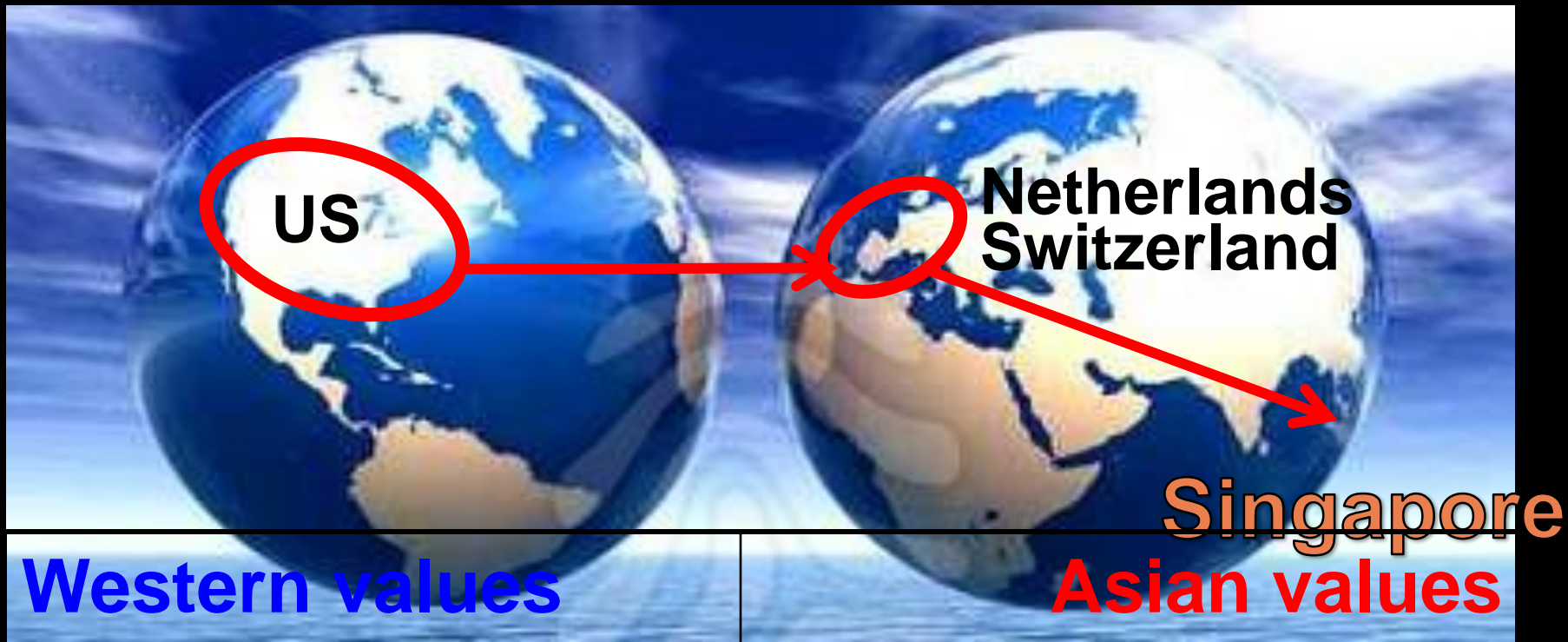


## Singapore: Pragmatism

Meng Kin LIM  
mklam@nus.edu.sg







## Western values

Liberalism

Individual rights

Political pluralism

Dissent & confrontation

Laissez faire

Civil liberties

Communitarianism

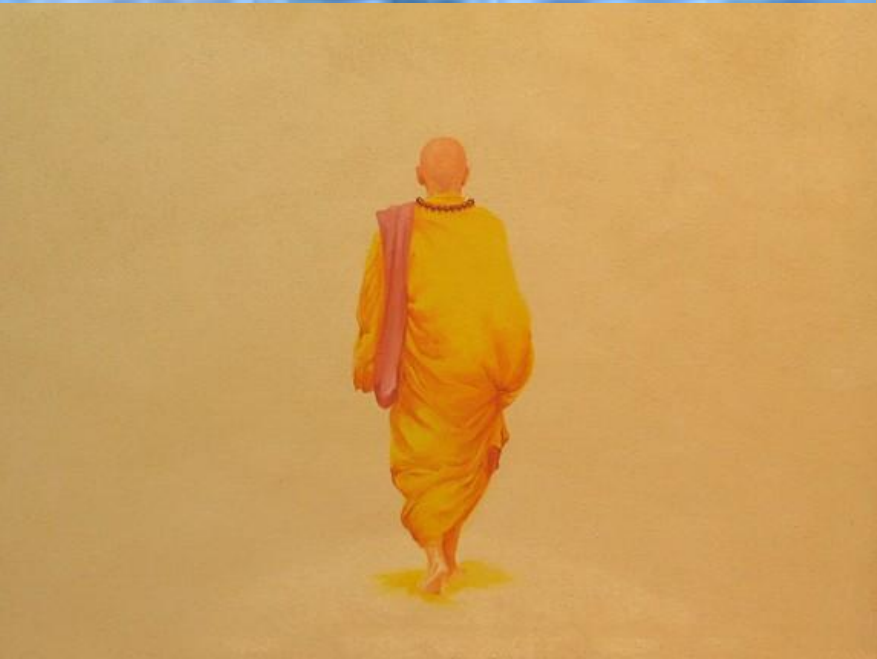
Social obligations

Strong, stable leadership

Social harmony & consensus

State intervention

Socio-economic well-being



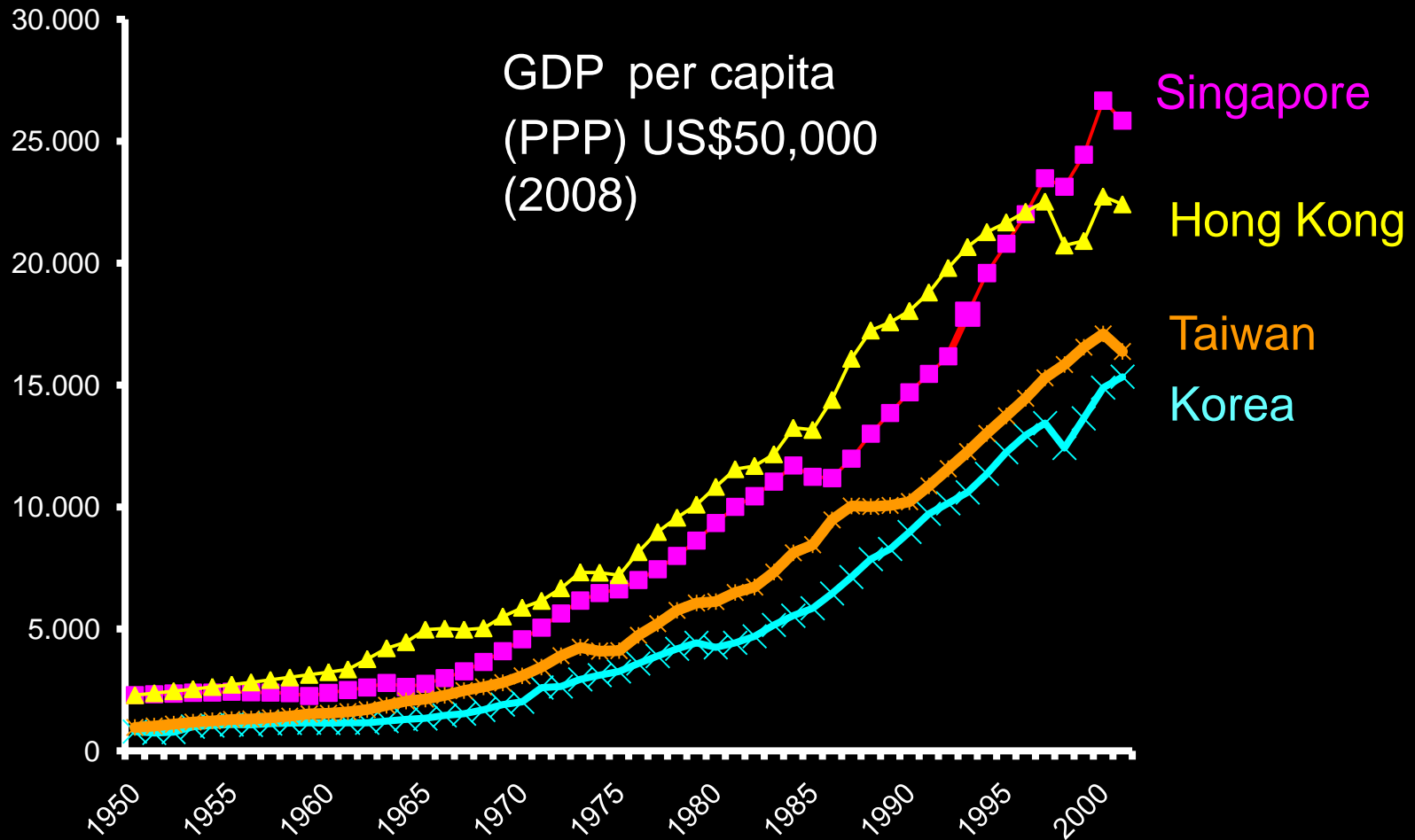
# Singapore



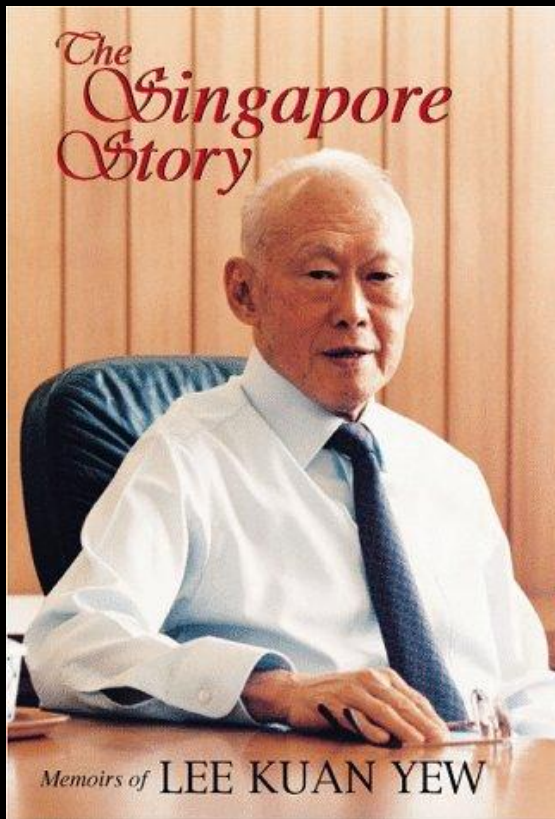
- where 3 ancient civilisations converge

# Economic miracle: Asian “Tigers”

Real income per capita (PPP), Four Asian Tigers 1950-2001



# Lee Kuan Yew



“With few exceptions, **democracy** has not brought good government to new developing countries... Westerners value the freedoms and liberties of the individual. As an Asian of Chinese cultural background, my values are for a government which is **honest, effective and efficient.**”

# Lee Kuan Yew



"Between being loved  
and being feared, I have  
always believed  
Machiavelli was right."

GIANTS *of* ASIA

conversations with

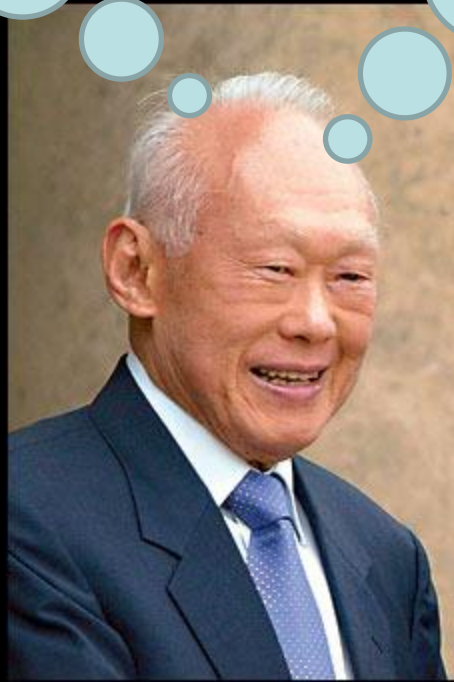
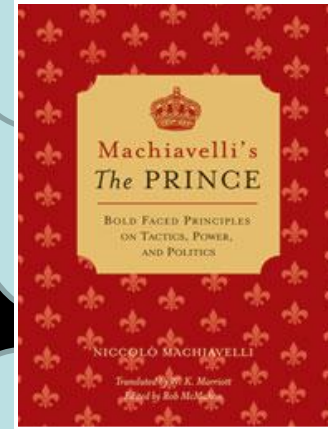
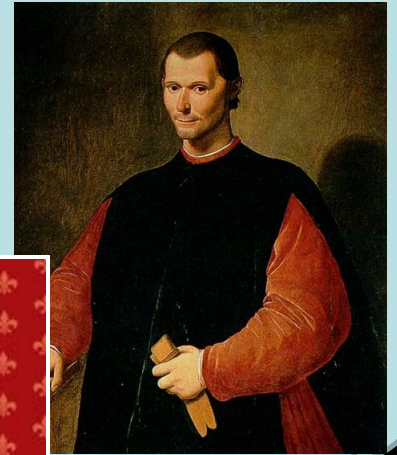
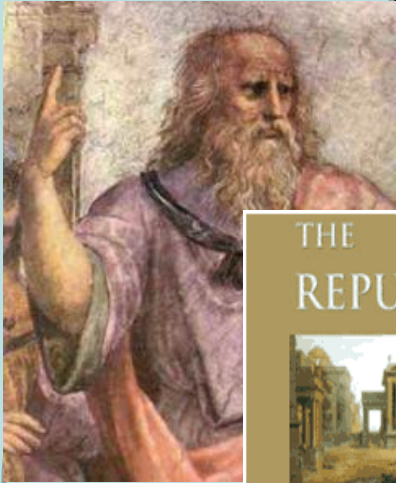
LEE  
KUAN  
YEW



CITIZEN SINGAPORE:  
HOW TO BUILD  
A NATION

TOM PLATE





## **Tom Plate on Lee's worldview:**

*“Sustained and sustainable progress is possible only when a gifted, empowered **elite** is in more or less in complete control of policy”.*



*“Politics that includes significant decision-making by the **unqualified** — or by well-organized narrow interests, **the lobbies** — is the enemy of superior public policy.”*



*“Democracy, at its **one-man, one-vote** purest, is almost always the enemy of a practical, here-and-now, **best-we-can-get** utopia.”*

# Pragmatism

“the doctrine that *practical consequences* are the criteria of knowledge and meaning and value”

[wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn](http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)

“an ideology or proposition is true if it works satisfactorily... *unpractical ideas are to be rejected.*”

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pragmatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pragmatism)



**Pragmatism**





Harmony

“Four Nos”

Communism

Pragmatism

**One man one vote!**

**5000 years**



# Is one-man one-vote the best way to solve problems?



“A democracy is nothing more than mob rule, where fifty-one percent of the people may take away the rights of the other forty-nine.”

# Why is healthcare contentious?



## The Health-Care Debate Turns Angry

Vitriol — orchestrated or otherwise — turns up at town-hall meetings organized by Congressmen to sound out their constituents on the President's proposals for health-care reform

# Because health is special:

*“You may  
promise yourself  
everything – but  
health, without  
which there is  
no happiness”*



*Thomas Jefferson (1787)*



# Universal Declaration of Human Rights



## Article 25

“Everyone has the *right* to a standard of living adequate for the **health and well-being** of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and **medical care** and necessary social services...”



# Common Values & Principles underpinning all EU healthcare systems.

- “The 4 overarching values are **universality, access to high quality care, equity, and solidarity.**”
  - adopted by EU Ministers of Health, June 2006

**But only in utopia can we have it all...**

Low cost

Provider of choice



High quality

Universal access

**In the real world,**

**Cost**

**Choice**



**Quality**

**Equity**

*Trade-offs must be made*

# What do Americans want?



“First, they (Americans) want quality health care, which will cover a wide range of services. Second, they want everyone in the nation, without exception, covered, Third, they want the spiraling costs of health care brought under control And fourth, they want those physicians and hospitals to be mainly controlled by the private sector.”

- 1993 Harris Poll

# American Sausage

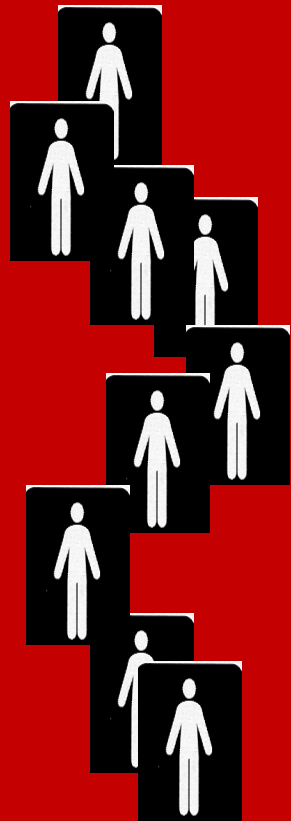


# Singapore's pragmatic approach



*“Singapore believes that welfarism is not viable as it breeds dependency on the government. It has adopted a policy of **co-payment** to encourage people to assume **personal responsibility** for their own welfare, though the government does provide **subsidies** in vital areas like housing, health and education.”*

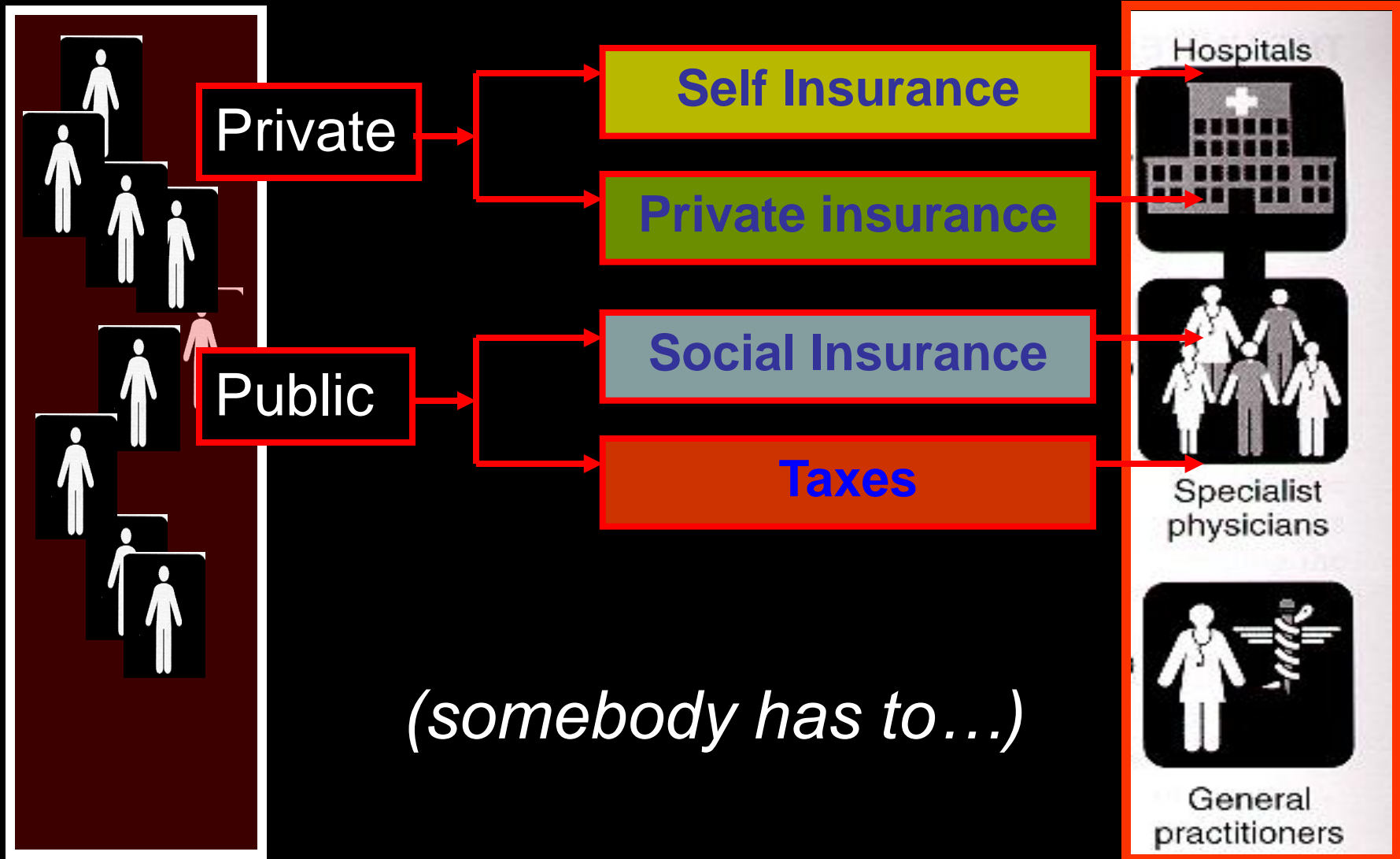
# Reality of Healthcare:



*No money, no healthcare*



# “Who pays” is not the issue

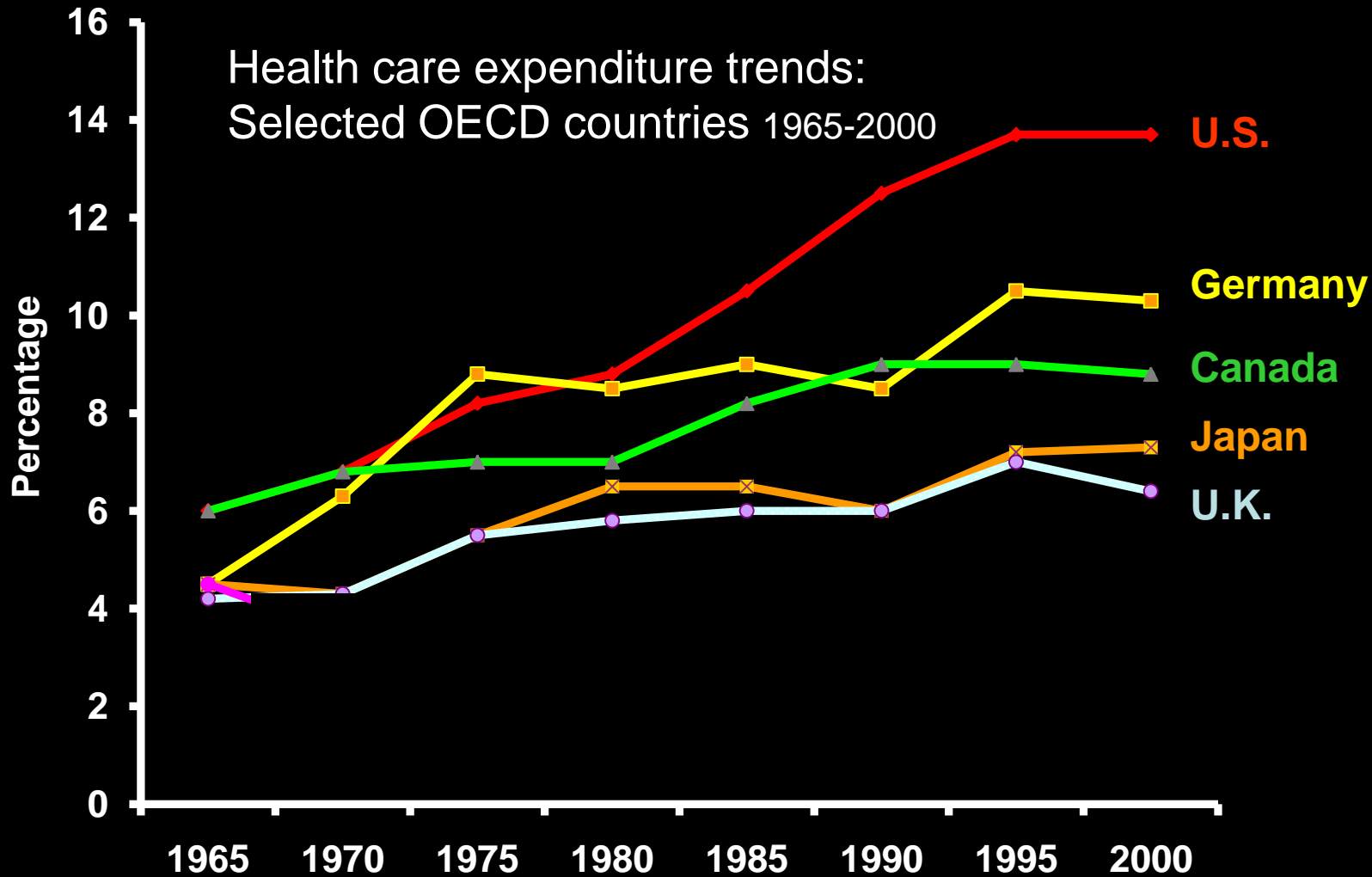


Question is...

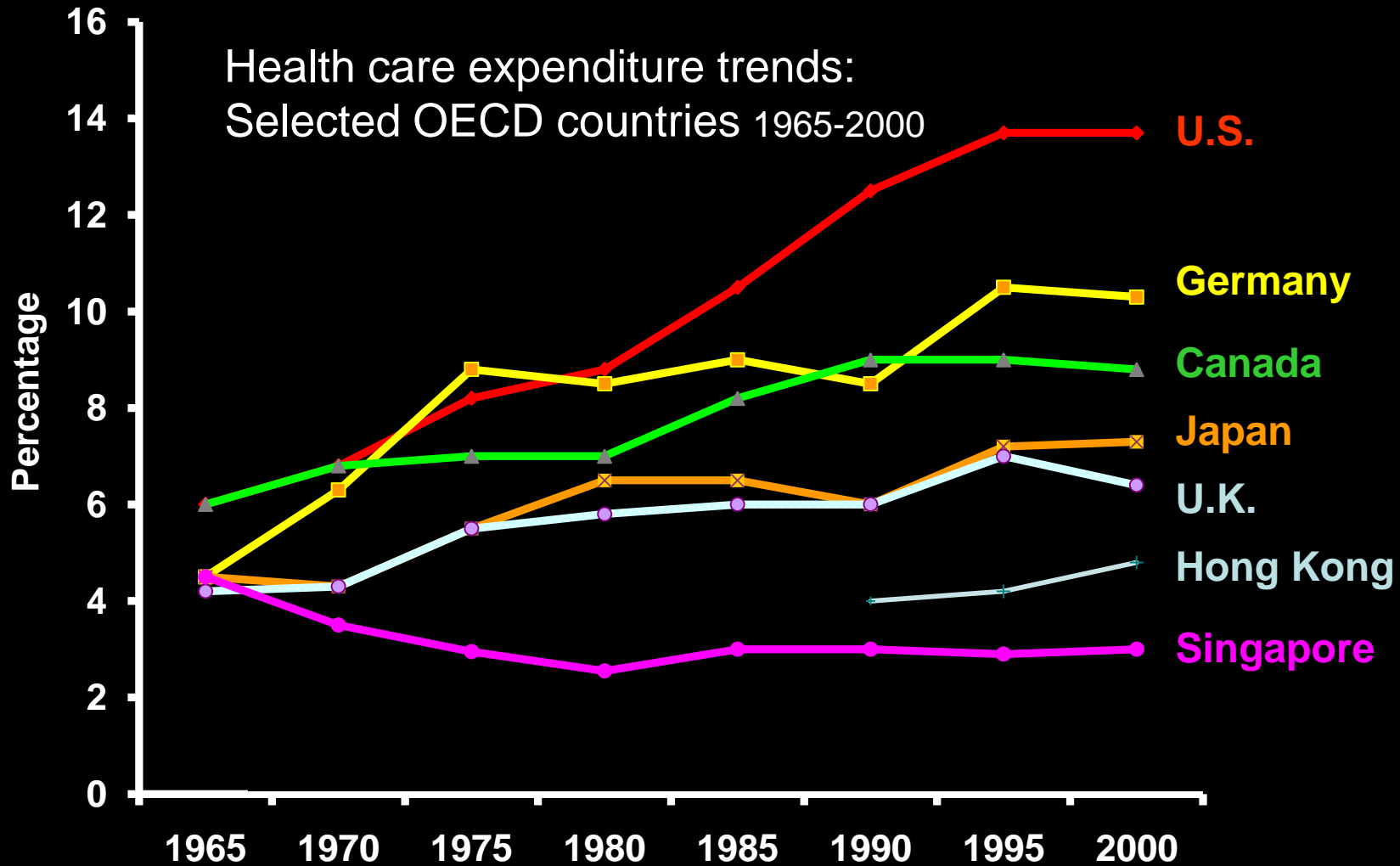


Which is more sustainable?

# Healthcare is inherently inflationary:



# Singapore bucks the trend...



# British colonies

Singapore



140 years

Hong Kong



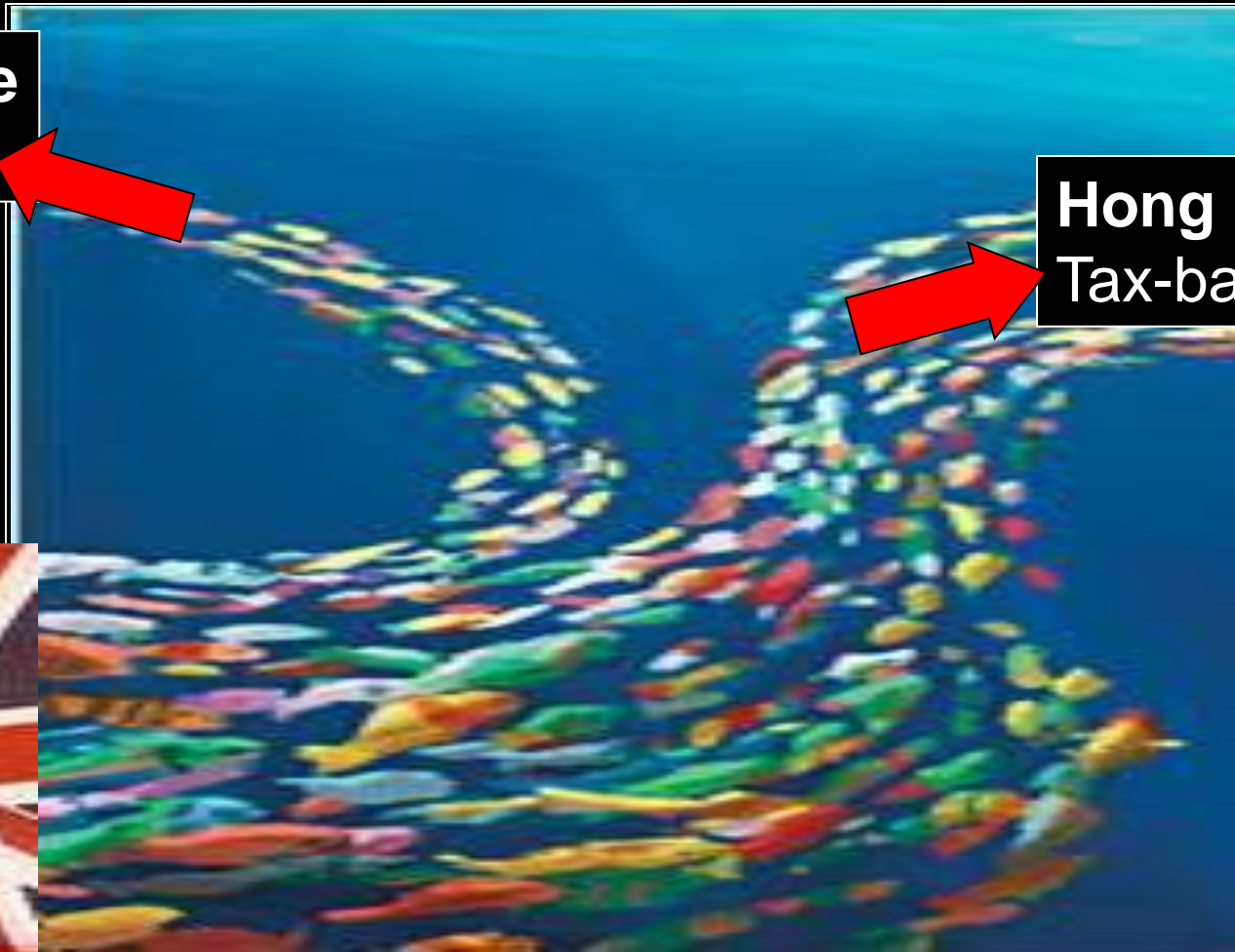
155 years



# Healthcare systems: Why different paths?

**Singapore**  
Mixed

**Hong Kong**  
Tax-based

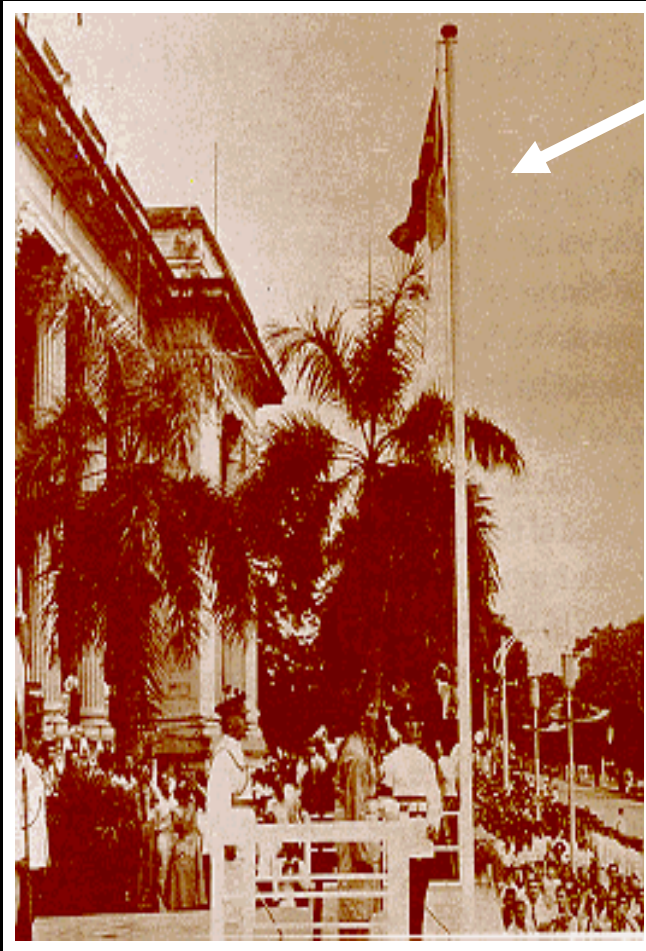


32 year lead time

# Sovereignty

1965

1997



# Contrasting styles of Government

Intervention



laissez-faire



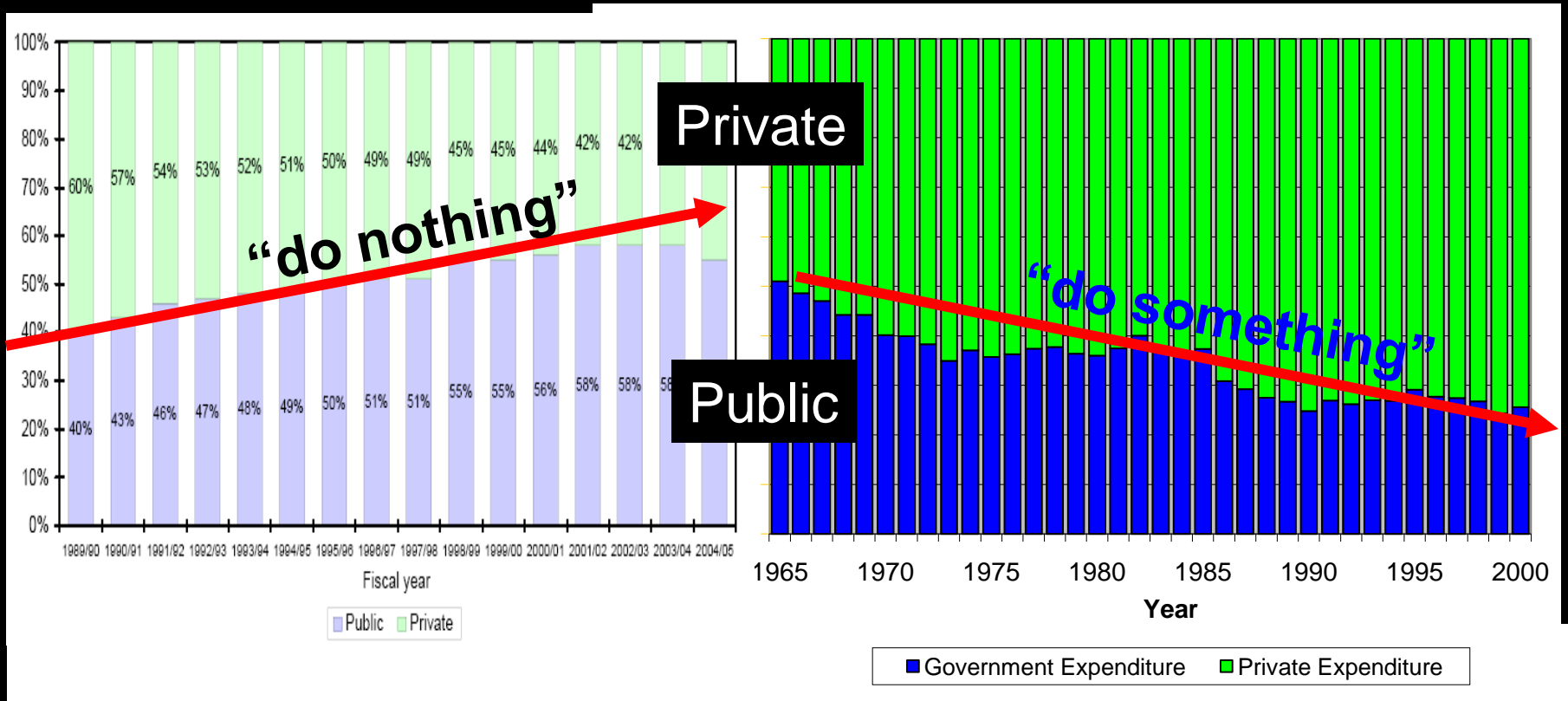
Solve problems  
before they  
arise!



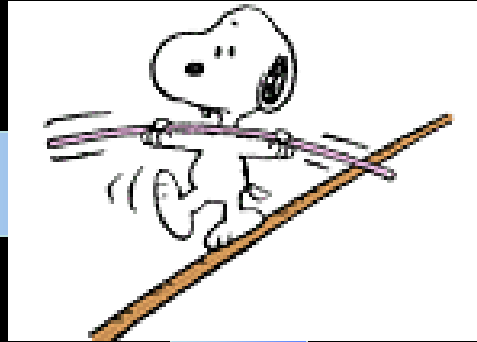
Why fix  
something not  
broken?

# Interventions have consequences

## Public and Private share of Total Health Expenditure Hong Kong (1989-2005)      Singapore (1965-2000)



# Key = finding the right balance



**Free Market,**  
Individual responsibility  
(out of pocket, pte insurance)  
e.g. USA

**Free Healthcare,**  
State responsibility  
(taxes, social insurance)  
e.g. UK

**Mixed**  
Shared responsibility  
(Taxes + *medical savings accounts* + *catastrophic insurance*)  
e.g. Singapore

# Summary: Singapore's advantages:

- **Strong economy:** GDP (PPP) per capita of US\$50,299 (World Bank 2007)
- **Efficient healthcare system:** 6th out of 191 countries in overall health systems performance (WHO 2000).
- **No “entitlement” culture** - population conditioned to cost-sharing,
- **Policies** encourage demand-side responsibility while discouraging supply-side waste
- **Strong, stable government** (since 1959) – continuity in policymaking; willing to make hard decisions;

“Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves are its only safe depositories.”





**Zhou enlai and Nixon**  
“It’s too early to say”

Still work in progress  
The story continues...

