

ASIAN VALUES, ASIAN DEMOCRACY

**THE LEGITIMISATION OF AUTHORITY AND DE-LEGITIMISATION
OF DISSENT IN EVERYDAY POPULAR DISCOURSE
IN SINGAPORE IN THE LATE 1990s**

Soek-Fang Sim

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of .**

Ph.D. Media and Communications

**Goldsmiths College
University of London
2002**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

John Swire and Sons (and Cathay Pacific), for offering me a scholarship that I could not say no to. Without this scholarship, I would probably still have been a civil servant and trying desperately to conform to expectations of a good Asian woman.

David Morley, for perspective – I constantly remind myself of your story of the king and his map makers. For precision – it is as you said, a good title writes itself and I have been humbled so many times in the course of this dissertation; you seem to know where I wanted to go before I could say it. Thank you for first-class supervision.

Geoffrey Benjamin, for your “Unseen Presence.”

James Curran, for being my safety net.

Soek-Tien Sim, I always knew you knew about the gilded cage. A million thanks for your dedicated proofreading and for reminding me that webs of obligations are what make us human.

Caren Willig, Yeran Kim, Claudia Alvares and Kaori Tsurumoto, for enlivening classroom theories in Caren’s kitchen

Bill Schwarz, for insights into Singapore. You understood Singapore better in minutes than I did in decades.

Yuezhi-Zhao, for accepting me as a peer.

My family, for imposing and suspending your expectations of this difficult daughter.

Margot Butler, for letting me walk behind you and beside you.

My colleagues in the Pacific Asia Cultural Studies Forum, for arguing so passionately with me.

Ferruh Yilmaz, for demanding such intellectual, politically and ethical rigour and self-reflexivity from me. Thank you also for putting the Ph.D. in perspective, for reminding me there is more to life than the Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

"Asian values" is more than the articulation of cultural difference; its propositions of "Asian Capitalism" and "Asian Democracy" indicate a project to legitimise particular economic and political structures that have come under challenge. While capitalism and authoritarianism may have elective affinity, the "end of history" thesis argues that contradictions in late-capitalism would threaten authoritarianism and propel societies towards liberal democracy. Singapore's "Asian Democracy" is significant in its ability to detour at history's end and to re-amalgamate authoritarianism with (late)-capitalism.

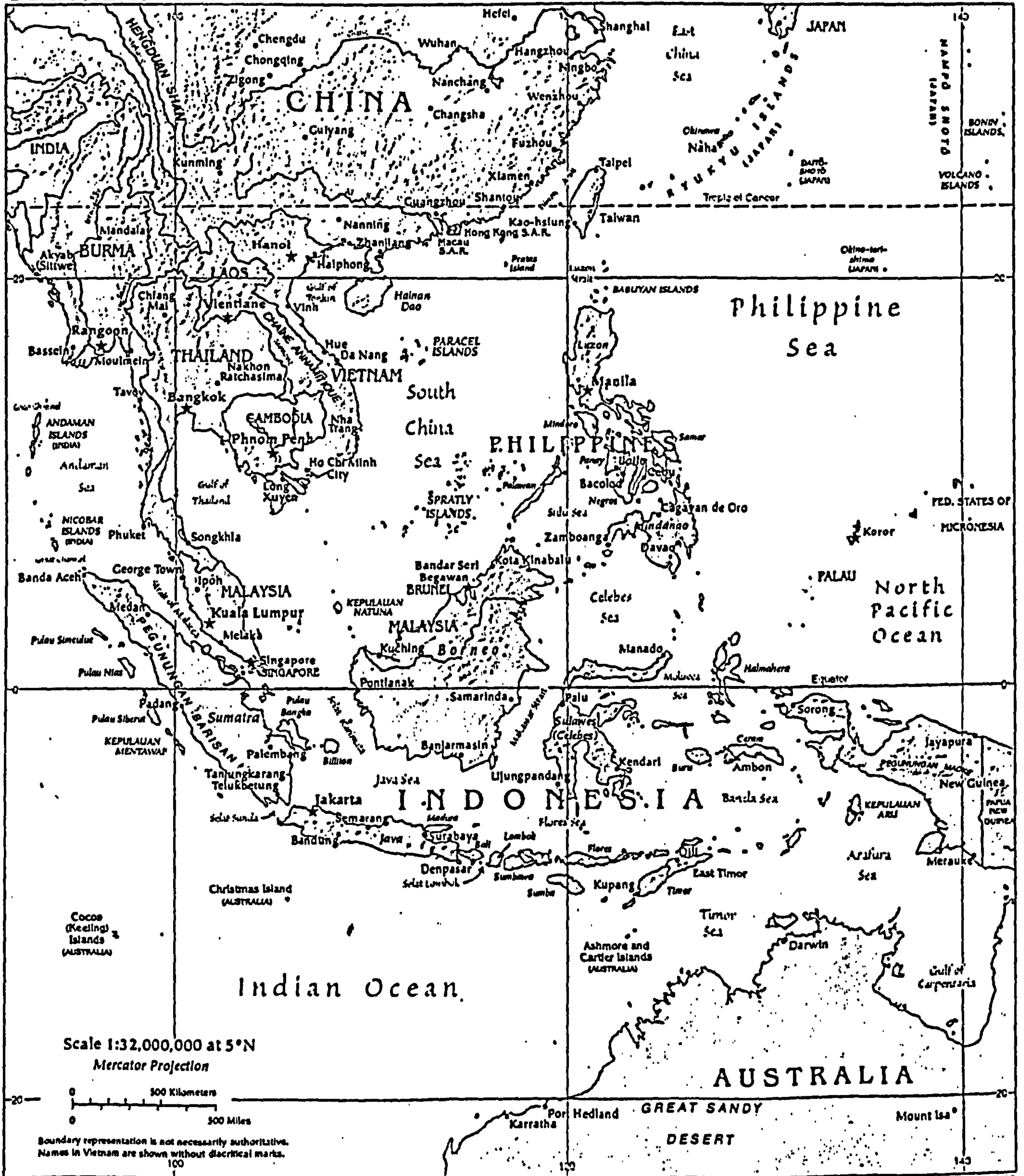
"Asian Values," by emphasising communitarianism and consensus over conflict, creates a normative centre that guides media policy, civil society and inter-personal interactions. Good Asian citizens value prosperity over Western dreams (of non-consensual democracy). They also subordinate personal whims to the good of the community – the "silent (Asian) majority." By allowing ideological pluralism without fragmentation, "Asian values" de-legitimises dissent and legitimises authoritarianism.

The Singapore one-party government's hegemony is based less on belief than on rhetorical compliance, which is reproduced through a combination of consent, consensus and coercion. Coercion (authoritarianism) is tolerated or consented to upon a consensus that it is worthwhile to trade freedom for prosperity and that there are no viable alternatives. Fuelled by personal desire for prosperity and pressurised by social expectations, citizens privatise/subordinate their dissent, producing an aura of public support for the government. This appearance of ideological unity crucially accords one-party governments the legitimacy to claim to represent the nation and deny multi-party representation.

Despite the importance of economic legitimacy to the Singapore government, an economic crisis is not necessarily an ideological/hegemonic crisis because it is the hope rather than the reality of prosperity that sustains its hegemony. This relative autonomy from economic conditions, together with its anti-pluralism nature and its claim of cultural legitimacy makes "Asian Values" a superlative ideology for the evolution of government authoritarianism into soft/popular authoritarianism, thereby enabling Asian Democracy to carve a new trajectory and spark off a resurgence of authoritarianism.

MAP OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

SOUTHEAST ASIA



802696AJ (RC2106) 4-00

Source: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/>

Singapore: Basic Social and Economic Data

(Figures are accurate as of 2000 unless otherwise indicated)

Land area	683.7 sq km
Population, population density	4.018 million, 5885 persons/sq km
Average annual population growth	1.7
Urban population	100%
Ethnic groups (% of population)	Chinese (76.8), Malays (13.9), Indians (7.9%), Others (1)
Official languages	English, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil
Median age	34
Life expectancy (1998)	75 (male), 79 (female)
Infant mortality (1998)	4.1 (per 1000 live births)
Doctors	14 (per 1000)

Education

Primary enrolments	305,992
Secondary enrolments	176,132
Pre-University enrolments	99323
University enrolments	49856
Adult literacy rate (%)	93

Labour

Labour participation rate	68.6% [Male 78%, Female 51%]
Unemployment rate	3.5
Occupational distribution (% of labour force)	
Admin & managerial	11.37
Professional & technical	22.79
Clerical, sales & services	20.23
Production & related	38.67

Economy

GDP	159 billion (US\$94.08 billion)
Per capita GNP	42,212 (US\$ 24978)
Real economic growth rate (%)	9.9
Productivity growth (%)	5.6
Inflation rate (%)	1.3
Official foreign reserves	139,260 million (US\$ 82402 million)
Domestic government debt	134,370 million (US\$ 79508 million)

Communications

Circulation of daily newspapers (1997)	1,087,551 (49.1% English, 43.9% Mandarin, 6.2% Malay, 0.8% Tamil)
Circulation of daily newspapers (1996)	32.4 (per 100)
TV receivers (1997)	29.2 (per 100)
TV licenses issued	89% of households
Cable Vision subscribers	14% of households
Radio receivers (1996)	73.9 (per 100)
Main telephone lines (1998)	54.29 (per 100)
Internet hosts (1999)	259.84 (per 10000)

Sources: Singapore Department of Statistics (2001) *Singapore in figures 2001*. Shelton A. Gunaratne (2000) "Overview" in *Handbook of the media in Asia*, edited by S. Gunaratne, New Delhi: Sage. Gary Rodan (1997) *The political economy of Southeast Asia*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AV	Asian Values
AWSJ	Asian Wall Street Journal
BS	Barisan Socialis
CC	Community Centre
CMIO	Chinese, Malay, Indians, Others
CPF	Central Provident Fund
DARG	Discourse Analysis and Rhetoric Group at Loughborough University
DPM	Deputy Prime Minister
EOI	Export-Oriented Industrialisation
EEC	(former) European Economic Community
EP	Elected President
FEER	Far Eastern Economic Review
FT	Financial Times
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GRC	Group Representative Constituency
ISA	Ideological State Apparatus
ISI	Import-Substitution Industrialisation
IT	Information Technology
JBJ	Jeyaretnam, the "Father of Singapore Opposition"
LF	The Labour Front, dominant party in pre-Independent Singapore
LKY	Lee Kwan-Yew, "Father of Singapore"
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MITA	Ministry of Information and the Arts
MP	Member of Parliament
NCMP	Non-Constituency Member of Parliament
NIE	Newly Industrialising Economy
NMP	Nominated Member of Parliament
NTUC	National Trade Union Congress
NYT	New York Times
OB	Out-of-Bounds
PAP	The People's Action Party, dominant party in Singapore
PM	Prime Minister
PRO	Public Relations Officers
RK	Religious Knowledge Programme
RSA	Repressive State Apparatus
SBA	Singapore Broadcasting Authority
SCMP	South China Morning Post
SMC	Speak Mandarin Campaign
ST	Straits Times, Singapore's national English daily
SV	Shared Values
UMNO	United Malay National Organisation, dominant party in Malaysia
WW2	World War Two

CONTENTS

PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

Chapter 1 Not the end of history: Asian Democracy and the re-amalgamation of authoritarianism and late-capitalism

- 1A. The end of history and the un-dismissable counter-example of Singapore.....11
- 1B. The myth of civilisation clash: beyond a culturalist understanding of Asian Democracy.....16
- 1C. Asian Values as a superior response to contradictions in late-capitalism.....20
 - I. Ideologies of early capitalism: variants of liberalism in Asia and the West.....20
 - II. Ideologies of late-capitalism: Western ideological compromises.....25
 - III. Asian Values and the re-amalgamation of authoritarianism with late-capitalism27
- 1D. Hegemony as a framework for thinking about Asian Democracy.....33

Chapter 2 Conceptualising hegemony: a discursive unity and institutional materiality

- 2A. The organic-ideological state: a critique of liberalism, economism and structuralism38
- 2B. The state as absent yet central: the issue of discursive and social disunity.....42
- 2C. The hegemonic process: its subtle and "necessarily heterogeneous" nature.....48
 - I. Beyond behaviourism: from structure to agency.....51
 - II. Beyond cognitivism: the rhetorical turn to contextualism.....55
 - III. Beyond rationality/intentionality to effects.....59
 - IV. Practice, performance, posture: subjecthood and hegemony.....64
- 2D. Hegemony revisited: a discursive unity/centre and its institutional materiality.....70

Chapter 3 Field issues: finding ideological contestations in everyday life

- 3A. Fieldwork goals.....74
- 3B. Sample Design.....76
 - I. Sample variables.....77
 - II. Sample size and sampling.....85
- 3C. The interview design.....93
 - I. Designing the questions.....93
 - II. The context of interviewing.....95
- 3D. Post-fieldwork issues.....99
 - I. Transcription and translation.....100
 - II. Analysis.....105

PART 2: NATION-BUILDING STRATEGIES

Chapter 4 From immigrants to citizens: economic nationalism in the first generation

4A. State, nation or nation-state?.....	111
4B. Shifting bases of legitimacy: the PAP's consolidation of state-power.....	118
I. Waning British legitimacy and rising popular nationalism.....	119
II. From opposition to dominant party.....	121
III. The end of opposition in Singapore.....	122
4C. Building a pro-party state.....	125
I. Inscribing the party onto the state.....	126
II. Amending the constitution to prevent parliamentary opposition.....	130
III. Extending the party through mass organisation.....	133
4D. Economic nationalism: Building a modern economy-state.....	135
I. Creating a national working class: taming and proletarianising citizens.....	136
II. Subordinating local capital to foreign capital.....	139
III. Legitimising coercion: the myth of the fragile nation and the Singapore Dream...142	
4E. The price of success.....	145

Chapter 5 From citizens to Singaporeans: cultural nationalism in the second generation

5A. The necessity and difficulty of imagining a nation.....	149
I. Nationalism as a new basis of legitimacy for the PAP.....	149
II. Difficulties in imagining a Singaporean nation.....	151
5B. Tools for nation-building.....	155
I. Media penetration and challenges.....	158
5C. The various formulations of Asian Values.....	160
I. The meaning of "Asian Values".....	160
II. Bilingualism: A mother-tongue for cultural ballast.....	165
III. Confucianising citizens: The Religious Knowledge programme.....	170
IV. Shared values.....	175
V. The logic of Asian Values revisited: Ideological pluralism without fragmentation	181

PART 3: THE EVERYDAY (DE-)LEGITIMISATION OF AUTHORITY AND DISSENT

Chapter 6 Postures towards authority: the everyday legitimisation of authority and de-legitimisation of dissent

6A. Pragmatic acceptance: the discourse of economic satisfaction and the neutralisation of dissent	
I. The significance of this posture.....	195
II. The logic of the neutralisation of dissent and the discourse of economic satisfaction.....	196
III. Ways of knowing: Prioritising personal knowledge wherever possible.....	197
IV. Sociology: A pre-state mentality of self-reliance and low expectations.....	202
V. The limits of acceptance: Pragmatism and conditional compliance.....	207
VI. Reproducing the state through pragmatic acceptance.....	212
6B. Patriotic communitarianism: the myth of the sacrifice and the refutation of dissent	
I. The significance of this posture.....	214
II. The logic of the refutation of dissent: The myth of the sacrifice.....	215
III. Ways of knowing: Prioritising media ideals over personal reality.....	219
IV. Sociology, materialism and compensatory morality: The performance of patriotic communitarianism.....	222
V. The limits of acceptance: Convenient communitarianism.....	226
VI. Reproducing the state through communitarian acceptance.....	231
6C. Choiceless tolerance: the discourse of “no viable alternatives” and the privatisation of dissent	
I. The significance of this posture.....	233
II. The logic of the privatisation of dissent: The discourse of “no viable alternatives”.....	234
III. Ways of knowing: Strategic self-belittling	234
IV. Sociology: The burden of social expectations and the trap of desire.....	241
V. The limits of tolerance: The de-legitimisation and re-legitimisation of dissent....	247
VI. Reproducing the state through unconvinced tolerance.....	250
6D. Channelled challenge: the discourse of “no credible opposition” and the subordination of dissent	
I. The significance of this posture.....	252
II. The logic of the articulation of dissent: The discourse of Singapore Inc.....	253
III. Ways of knowing: Knowing and articulating ideological alternatives.....	256
IV. Sociology: Envisioning a society beyond materialism.....	262
V. The limits of challenge: The discourse of “no credible opposition” and the subordination of dissent.....	265
VI. Reproducing the state through channelled challenge.....	268

PART 4: CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 7 Hegemony without popularity: the moral centre as the foundation of soft authoritarianism

7A. The pervasiveness of a moral centre: Rhetorical compliance and the everyday legitimisation of authority.....	274
7B. The softening of authoritarianism: Embedding coercion in public morality and the creation of "face" governmentality.....	281
7C. Creating "face" governmentality: De-ideologisation and the suppression of autonomous associations.....	287
7D. The basis of PAP hegemony: From economic performance to consent to coercion.....	293

Chapter 8 Asian Democracy: its challenges and its futures

8A. The "puzzle" of hegemony without popularity and the logic of one-party rule....	299
8B. Economic legitimacy and its relative autonomy from material/economic performance.....	303
8C. Blocking the development of "viable alternatives".....	309
I. Cracks from within.....	311
II. Cracks from without.....	313
8D. The resurgence of authoritarianism.....	324
8E: Code: "Winning minds but not hearts".....	329

Tables, Charts, Maps

Table 1. Generation as a sample variable.....	80
Table 2. Ideal sample.....	87
Table 3: Actual sample (by generation and ethnicity).....	88
Insert 1. Map of Southeast Asia.....	4
Insert 2. Total defence cartoon.....	161
Insert 3. Article from the Straits Times (4 April 1998).....	180
Insert 4. Picture of Mr Kiasu.....	273

Appendices

Appendix 1. Politically significant ethnic groups.....	333
Appendix 2. The types of link I had with my interviewees.....	335
Appendix 3. Determination of class (Income, property, education).....	336
Appendix 4. Interview questions (Detailed version).....	337
Appendix 5. Interview questions (General version).....	339
Appendix 6. Socio-economic survey questionnaire.....	340
Appendix 7. Media indicators in Asia.....	341
Appendix 8. Mr Brown's list: Singapore National Education.....	342

CHAPTER 1 NOT THE END OF HISTORY:

ASIAN DEMOCRACY AND THE RE-AMALGAMATION OF AUTHORITARIANISM AND LATE-CAPITALISM

1A. THE END OF HISTORY AND THE UN-DISSMISSABLE COUNTER-EXAMPLE OF SINGAPORE

Grand claims have been made about the superiority and inevitability of liberal democracy. Liberal democracy was seen as a superior mode of organising and prospering society because it was believed to provide a check against corrupt authoritarian governments. Liberal democracy was also seen as a more perfect embodiment of equality and freedom than other types of democracies and political organisations.

Liberal democracy has also been seen as inevitable, especially for developed economies, since "prosperity brings democracy" (DeBary 1998, 150).¹ Fukuyama (1992) predicted the end of history and the triumph of liberal democracy over other forms in late-capitalism through increasing institutional and ideological convergence globally. Modernisation theories subscribed to a milder form of economic determinism by highlighting the mutually reinforcing relationship between market economy and liberal democracy (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986) or the emergence of a middle-class that would exert pressure on non-liberal states (Paul 1992, 10).

With the miraculous economic growth of non-democratic Newly Industrialising Economies (NIEs), modernisation theorists were forced to refine or concede their

¹Cf. Robison, Hewison and Rodan (1993) for an excellent review of theories about political forms in capitalist societies. Briefly, in the 1950s/1960s, modernization theories/hopes of post-colonialism ushering in democracy were crushed by a communist wave across the third world. This theory was replaced by the (tautological) theory that authoritarianism blocks democracy. Meanwhile, American Marxists, referencing Marx and Weber's orientalist beliefs about the Asiatic mode of (pre-capitalist) production, argued that capitalism could generate authoritarianism and socialism, and not only democracy. Indeed, some even observed that perhaps certain authoritarian societies lacked the cultural "roots" for democracy. E.g., Barrington-Moore observed that Latin America has

theory. One camp (Zou 1991, 115; Castells 1988, 3-4; Rodan 1993b; Harris 1986) argued that authoritarianism/centralisation was necessary for *new/young* states to kick-start their economies. However, they argued that, in time, contradictions between late-capitalism and authoritarianism would trigger the "evolution/transition" into liberal democracies. A second camp (Pye and Pye 1985; Rodan 1993c, 1996a, 2; Dahl 1966, 1973), while conceding that liberal democracy was not inevitable, continued to rely on it as the standard for classifying states as democratic or "pseudo-democratic" and for investigating factors that "complicate[d] the forward march of democracy."

According to these theories, Singapore, especially, should have become a liberal democracy. Having outperformed all other Asian NIEs and being an extremely successful and "advanced" (late-capitalist information) society, Singapore's success made it a highly visible and un-dismiss-able counterexample. Additionally, Singapore was also the staunchest critic of liberal democracy and the initiator of an alternative "Asian Democracy" trajectory.

Singapore has the world's second highest average rate of GDP growth² (6.3% for 1970-1995³) and is ranked as the world's freest economy along with Hong Kong (SCMP 1/12/2000). It has the highest foreign reserves per capita in the world (Paul 1992, 6) and a GNP that surpasses some EEC's (Castells 1988); for almost a decade, it held unbroken records as the world's busiest port and best airline.

Such phenomenal success has been achieved through exposing itself to Western influences. Having no agricultural industry and a small domestic market, economic growth is entirely dependent on international trade and investments (Castells 1988, 3-7). Despite having the world's highest savings rate (Vogel 1989, 1049; Castells 1988, 6), its industrial production is wholly foreign-owned. Foreigners

democracy because of the presence of strong bourgeoisie (church and hacienda feudalism) while Asia lacked civil society and required revolution from above.

² In year 2000, during the Asian economic crisis, Singapore achieved a 10.1% growth in GDP (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>).

³ Cf. <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/psd/compete.nsf/7349593d593389e88525648f00641829?OpenView>

generate three quarters of all manufacturing investments and own more than 30% of its GDP (Paul 1992, 5-6). Because economic survival is tied to Singapore's competitiveness internationally, industrial and political harmony were seen as essential for Singapore to remain "one of the safest and most profitable locations in the world" (O'Leary and Coplin 1983; Lim and Pang 1991, 72). Singapore's economy was so aligned with MNC's interests that Singapore has been described as "an offshore centre for foreign capital" (Yoshihara 1988, 71) and "a stable and efficient vehicle for the Western exploitation of Southeast Asia" (Mirza 1986, 73).

Socially, Singapore's standard of living is second only to Japan's in Asia. Its income inequality is higher than other NIEs – Rodan (1993b, 54-55) estimates that only one quarter of the workforce is middle-class. There is no unemployment and a large majority owns homes. Education is generally affordable and health standards are high — Singapore has the same infant mortality rate and life expectancy as the USA and UK. With English as the first language in school and the national working language, Singapore is "soft-shelled" (Pakir 1993, 82) and highly vulnerable to Western influences. Living in an urban environment with prosperity and high literacy (93% in 2000), and in the world's third best home (Forbes magazine 1996), Singaporeans are active media users with a high exposure to foreign media. Despite having the smallest population in Asia, it constitutes the largest single-country market in Asia for Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) and second largest market for Asian Wall Street Journal (AWSJ).

The Singapore government has been described as authoritarian; it "has the forms of democracy but the reality is dictatorship" (Friedman in Paul 1992, 1). Hitchcock (1994, 10) considers it noteworthy that Singapore, "in many ways the most advanced country in the region after Japan," is listed in the company of Vietnam, China, North Korea and Myanmar as states that do not endorse a Union of Civil Liberty.

What is problematic for Western myths is that the Singapore government is not only authoritarian but also *hegemonic*. "Although clearly authoritarian, Singapore is not a dictatorship but a hegemonic state, in the Gramscian sense... it is based not

simply on coercion, but also on consensus" (Castells 1988, 78). Singapore's ability to push through tough policies without crippling political costs is envied by Taiwan and Hong Kong (DeBary 1998, 3); its unique combination of openness and regulation is studied and praised by Chinese Premiers Deng and Jiang (ST13/7/1992); Blair highlighted Singapore as the best illustration of the parallel achievements on economic success and social cohesion (FT10/1/1996).

Revised modernisation theories argue that *late*-capitalism requires hegemonic governance rather than authoritarianism, assuming that authoritarian governments are not hegemonic. While this may be true for some third world governments, the Singapore government is extremely stable and hegemonic. Despite its authoritarianism, Singapore has been ranked among the top five countries for political stability and its current regime is seen as being "likely to continue indefinitely" (O'Leary and Coplin 1983, 21), i.e., the end of history or authoritarianism is nowhere in sight.

Singapore's significance can be appreciated if we consider how much easier it would be to emulate the Western model than to "swim against the tide." Most states accept the hegemony of Western democracy—they either emulate it or justify its absence to avoid international sanctions. E.g., Japan and Korea are generally seen as representative democracies despite lapses while the Philippines tries to be one. Singapore could have easily followed suit. Huntington (1991, 108; Rodan 1996a, 17) notes that "if he had wanted to, a political leader far less skilled than Lee Kwan Yew (henceforth, LKY) could have produced democracy in Singapore." Instead, Singapore denounces the Western model as irrelevant and inferior and initiates an alternative "Asian democracy" trajectory of political evolution.

The difficulty and ambition of the Asian democracy project should not be underestimated. "Asian democracy" criticises not only the inferiority of Western democracy but also the West's monopoly over representations (West=democratic, Rest=un/pseudo-democratic). While many states were content to internalise this Western gaze and perform self-Orientalisation (Cf. Morley and Robins 1995 on

Japan's self "techno-orientalism"), Singapore refuses it and insists on defining/representing itself and its Others. Through "Asian Values" (henceforth AV), the West is occidentalised (Ang and Stratton 1997, 2). Democracy is argued to "lead to contention and political instability" while "an authoritarian but benign government could be a better vehicle to achieve development" (Ambassador Koh in Hitchcock 1994, 2).

Singapore's "Asian Democracy" discourse is remarkable because it provides cultural legitimacy⁴ and an aura of regional solidarity against the West. While many states could have resisted the Western model in private, "Asian Democracy" rallies Asian solidarity against the West. Asian states can now legitimise their "deviance" as a cultural/regional trait.

The "Asian democracy" discourse has been extremely successful. It gained worldwide attention and forced the US to concede its monopoly over representation and to re-frame its foreign policy away from universal human rights to a more relativistic (and economically based) framework of "good governance," a term promoted by Tommy Koh, Singapore Ambassador to the UN (Robison 1996, 319). Secondly, a "third way," an amalgam of social conservatism and neo-liberalism, has emerged. Markets are not seen as the cause of the breakdown of traditional values; markets and conservative values can co-exist (Giddens 1994a, 27-41). Reagan and Thatcher coaxed workers to emulate Asian conservatism (Times of London 1/12/1997; NYT 23/11/1997), agreeing that "too much democracy impedes economic growth... conservative values should guide social life ... strong states are required to contain threats to law and order" (Robison 1996, 321).

As an argument that emerged during "the Pacific Century" – a period of Western economic recessions and Asian renaissance – the sustainability of "Asian Democracy" depends on the relative *economic* performance of Asia and the West rather than *its ideological content*. Not surprisingly, the Asian economic crisis

(July 1997) ushered in a period of self-questioning and "Reformasi;" citizens questioned if AV was equivalent to "KKN" (Corruption, Collusion, Nepotism) in disguise. While many Asian states had to concede that AV was vulnerable to nepotism (Time 16/03/1998), Singapore, being less affected, could legitimately continue to champion AV without embarrassment.

If the legitimacy of AV is dependent on economic performance, how then are we to understand its meaning – as a cultural trait or as a political artefact?

1B. THE MYTH OF CIVILISATIONAL CLASH: BEYOND A CULTURALIST UNDERSTANDING OF ASIAN DEMOCRACY

There is an apparent difference between Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis and Huntington's "clash of civilisations" thesis. While Fukuyama predicts international cultural and political convergence (towards liberal democracy), Huntington (1993) observes increasing cultural and political divergence or clashes between nation-states from different civilisation groups.

Their difference is in the degree of optimism in cultural determinism and in the ability of the Western forms to influence the Rest. Huntington observes that, "a West at the peak of its power confronts non-Wests that increasingly have the desire, the will and the resources to shape the world in non-Western ways." He fears for the weakening of the Western civilisation, as evident in its moral decline (suicide, single parenthood, individualism)⁵, in the face of the corresponding strengthening of non-Western civilisations as they increasingly try to "return to [their] roots."⁶ While Huntington is pessimistic about the triumph and international influence of Western cultural-political forms, Fukuyama argues that whether

⁴ Such "regional" culturalist arguments have been used to justify Japan's WWII invasion to create a pan-Asia empire in the name of regional solidarity (Hitchcock 1994, 3).

⁵ Note Huntington's selective definition of Western culture as Christianity rather than as liberalism, of which these indicators of "moral decline" could then be conversely interpreted as the presence of healthy liberalism.

⁶ Huntington cites further the "Asianisation" of Japan, the end of the Nehru legacy and the "Hinduization" of India, the failure of Western ideas of socialism and nationalism and hence "re-Islamization" of the Middle East, and a debate over Westernisation versus Russianisation in Yeltsin's country.

civilisations like it or not, social-economic contradictions in late-capitalism will trigger off pressures towards liberal democracy.

Despite these differences, both share the epistemological premise that there are essential cultural/civilisation differences between the West and the Rest and that Western cultural influences, which are clearly distinguishable from non-Western cultures, are either resisted or adapted to by the Rest. Fukuyama, despite believing that economic forces will triumph over cultural forces, acknowledged that non-Western cultures do try to resist their Western destiny, citing "Asian Democracy" as a case in point.

The problems with their approach is that they ignore that culture can be actively constructed by states; i.e., that cultures are not organic, authentic entities that propels social change while remaining themselves unchanged. Additionally, their insistence on distinct (dichotomous) and essential cultures contradicts with their difficulties in articulating just what "Western" and "Asian" civilisations mean. For instance, AV has emerged as the West's attempts to explain the economic miracles of the Asian Tiger economies and was selectively traced (to provide the greatest distinction from Western values) to Confucianism – the Asian (Protestant) work ethic. It has also been confused with (Asian states' ideologies of) communitarianism.⁷ Huntington and Fukuyama are not alone in conflating Confucianism with communitarianism, most economists and political scientists (Leary 1990; Chua 1995; Vogel 1989) do not distinguish between them.

That "Asian-ness" arose to *explain* economic performance suggests that AV is a postulate (hypothesised category) rather an entity that its advocates are interested in for its own sake. Indeed, DeBary (1998, 2) argues that the consciousness of a shared Asian identity emerged only in modernity. Additionally, what is frequently identified as "Asian-ness" is often simply state ideologies rather than popular everyday practices or mass civilisation (Cf. Leavis 1930 on "mass civilisation and

⁷ Later, I will argue that it is because there is a significant difference between Confucianism (competitiveness) and communitarianism that they are used to supplement each other.

minority culture"). Armentrout (AWSJ 08/11/1995) observes that in Asia, civil servants have "the mistaken notion that they embody the cultures they are charged with representing at world gatherings." Should analysts take on Raymond Williams' understanding of culture as ordinary and take a close look at everyday popular practices, they would be stumped, as Pertierra (1999, 280) and Mauzy (1997, 216) were, by Asia's heterogeneity.⁸ Leary (1990, 13-15) notes that every region except Asia had been able to establish some cultural commonality upon which to found a regional system of human rights. Even Huntington, a descrier of clashing civilisations, concedes that he could not find a common Asian culture/civilisation, only irreducible differences.

Besides being extremely heterogeneous, Asia's "characteristics" are also not unique. Contrary to Chua (1995), DeBary (1998, 11-12) argues that communitarianism is not exclusive to Asia but also underlined 19th Century Western liberalism and 20th Century socialism. Malaysian PM Mahathir (1995a) and Ward (1995, 33) argue that AV is a reinvention of inherited colonial values, particularly "the patriarchal and middle-class humbug puritanism of late Victorian and Edwardian times."

A debate of whether Asia has democratic roots has also emerged in attempts to distinguish between "Asian-ness" and "Western-ness." Because of the pervasiveness of a mindset of cultural determinism among its debaters, the issue of whether Asia has democratic roots quickly becomes an issue of whether Asia societies *should/can* develop into democracies, inspiring many fantastic re-inventions of Asia's past.⁹ Leaving aside the question of how democracy should be

⁸ Surveys offer mixed signals: Hitchcock (1994) concluded that Asians valued social order and harmony while Americans valued freedom and rights while FEER(12/9/1996, 46) finds more differences within Asia than between Asia and the West.

⁹ More extreme re-inventions include interpreting Confucius as a dissident so as to argue for "the great Confucian tradition of dissent" (AWSJ 08/11/1995). While arguing that Confucian was genuinely communitarian, DeBary (1998, 147/12-13) concedes that the best examples he could find of Chinese "civil society" were "rather homespun and humdrum."

defined,¹⁰ many eagerly re-discover missed trajectories to argue that Asia has democratic roots (Cf. volume edited by Schmiegelow 1997) – whether liberal-democratic (Zou 1991) or communitarian-democratic (DeBary 1998). To prove Asia's democratic potential, many present a Whig and linear – even if dotted – version of history (Moody 1999, 339), assuming that roots are something “already there,” waiting to be discovered.

Among governments, the People's Action Party (the PAP, Singapore's dominant party) appears to be the only Asian government to argue that liberal democracy is un-Asian. For Malaysia's ex-DPM Anwar (SCMP 10/03/1995, 23), “to say that freedom is Western and un-Asian is to offend our own traditions [and] ... forefathers who ... struggle[d] against tyranny and injustice.” Dissident President Kim (South Korea) is the only Asian politician who has rejected cultural determinism with his statement that “culture is not destiny.” For Kim, the lack of democratic roots should not be used as an excuse to not let them take root in Asian societies.

Without denying that there may be cultural differences, Kim reminds us at the same time to look beyond culturalist explanations to see how we could (re-) construct culture and to see how culture may be socially engineered to encourage certain political developments.¹¹ Indeed, to think otherwise would trap us within a black box – e.g., should “Asia” be found to lack democratic roots, does it mean that Asia can/should never become democratic? Such cultural determinism legitimises authoritarianism tautologically because, as categories of explanations, culture may be reified/naturalised as ahistorical, thereby generating tautological theses (e.g., authoritarian cultures produce authoritarianism). Especially in studying a “socially-engineered” campaign country like Singapore, one cannot help

¹⁰ Except for the presence of political contestation (Mauzy 1997, 219), several other indicators of democracy, including the existence of popular consensus and the election of delegates (Diamond 1996, 100; Schumpeter 1947), are present in many Asian countries.

¹¹ Kim's position has the distinct advantage of pacifying those for whom cultural differences are too real to be dismissed as a mere construct. Rather than deny them, the task would be to examine how successful the government's socially engineering is and how preferred values are painstakingly maintained.

but be strongly reminded that culture has a political history and is itself in need of explanation.

Often, the issue is less a matter of whether societies have democratic roots than whether their governments desire them – if a society truly lacks such roots, its government would hardly need to defend its society against democracy. Clearly among “Asian democracies,” democratic tendencies must have been real enough to warrant preventive measures (e.g., initiating the discourse of “Asian Democracy”). In Singapore, it was upon the realisation that the West was within and inevitable that the PAP realised it needed to take urgent and drastic measures – LKY resigned without delay – to reverse the quick drift towards the end of history by steering the nation towards Asian democracy.

1C. ASIAN VALUES AS A SUPERIOR RESPONSE TO CONTRADICTIONS IN LATE-CAPITALISM

1. Ideologies of early-capitalism: variants of liberalism in Asia and the West

As a system based on exploitation, capitalism requires the constant legitimisation of inequality and masking of exploitation in order to maintain social order through the consent of happy workers. It is within the context of considering the needs of capitalism that I will review the role of liberal ideologies in sustaining capitalism, including liberal democracy and Asian Values, which I will argue constitute a variant of (economic) liberalism.

In Asia and in the West, the emergence of capitalist systems was bound up with tremendous coercion (Cf. E.P.Thompson 1963, Tremewan 1994). The process of creating a working-class or a reserve army of labour requires that citizens be forcefully deprived of their means of production (especially land), become “bare individuals” stripped of status, position, relationship or place “to be later inserted into combinations of capitalist relations of production” (Poulantzas 1968, 126) and imbued with an ethic of competitiveness: not only must subjects have an insatiable desire to accumulate (“to not be complacent”), they must also feel the need to attain monopolistic control over the market.

As an ideology that validated such values, liberalism was an ideology that “most intimately connected with the birth and evolution of the modern capitalist world” (Eccleshall 1984). Liberal discourses of freedom and equality proved useful in legitimising the proletarianisation of citizens by displacing/framing the issue as one of giving them the freedom from ascribed social positions to select new options and invited them to the exciting project of self-determination. By claiming that liberal subjects would be given the freedom to compete and pursue their self-interest, discourses of meritocratic liberalism also legitimised social inequality. Hall (1986, 39) noted that liberalism has

consistently favoured an ‘open’ meritocratic society, where the energetic individual can rise to respectability and success, whatever his humble origins... Liberalism maintains a contractual and competitive rather than an ascriptive idea of social order. It favours free-thinking, rationalist and sceptical modes of thought, regarding religion as a matter of private conscience, not a matter for the state to legislate.

The basic liberal belief that individuals were “naturally” driven by the search for security, power and self-interest, which was embraced by Western and Asia societies alike in their early-capitalism stage, precipitated two logical modes of political organisation – the maximal and the minimal state.

In the West, it was the latter that became dominant and identified as classical liberalism (e.g., Locke). To ensure that the state interfered as little as possible with individuals’ rights and freedom, state power was weakened, e.g., through separation of power (executive-judiciary-legislative, Hamilton in Morris 1969, 13) and raising civil society over the state so that citizens could check on the state. Because what was prioritised was individuals’ pursuit of their self-interest with minimal state interference, government authority was legitimated only by citizen’s deliberate consent. Situated within the context of sustaining capitalism, this meant that economic elite must now govern indirectly through the state and gain consent, to lead rather than to dominate (Gramsci 1971), i.e., its domination has now to be legitimised ideologically.

Minimal states were unacceptable to Asian societies because, historically in the West, liberalism emerged in opposition to all arbitrary power (church, monarchy and nobility) and ascribed social order. This was something post-colonial Asia was unprepared to do, especially since post-colonial discourses were often based on the overthrowing of Western authority for the reinstatement of a traditional order. Because the term "liberalism" was so strongly identified with the West, many Asian states resorted to dissociate their liberalism from colonialism and Western liberalism by dubbing it "modernisation."

The liberalism that became dominant in Asia was the Hobbes variant, where competitive societies were believed to require strong governments to impose constraints on individuals to prevent them from waging a "war of all against all." While fully embracing economic liberalism, Asian governments argued that politically illiberalism was required for sustaining economic liberalism – a Hobbesian argument echoed by first-generation PAP leaders – and that it was culturally natural – an argument made by the second-generation PAP leaders. This helps us understand what Asian states mean when they say 'modernise without westernising,' and why Hong Kong and Singapore, the freest economies in the world, rank low on political freedom: with Asian liberalism, embracing economic liberalism did not mean the rejection but the return to traditional orders.

How was the PAP able to argue that political illiberalism was necessary and natural? This was achieved through the construction of the myth that, as a small country without natural resources and as a multiracial nation filled with potentially racially chauvinist citizens, Singapore needed a strong government to protect it from its citizens.

Whereas governments are seen as unnatural conventions and social contracts in the West, economic liberalism and political illiberalism (strong governments) are rendered natural and "organic" (Robison 1996, 310-311) through Confucianism.

Observing that the economies of the four Asian Tigers are all Confucian societies, scholars have hailed Confucianism as an Asian (Protestant) Work Ethic. Weber's

(1956) Calvinists have no way of being assured of the status of their (predestined) salvation, thus material achievements became the only signifier of how close/far they are to their ideal state. Like Calvinists but much more “inner-worldly” (Hitchcock 1994, 25), Confucian subjects work incessantly for material goals and *not beyond it* because material achievements are considered the very expression of their moral/spiritual state. Where material accomplishment becomes conflated with morality, and where it is moral to “work for the sake of working,” what is produced is a cultural ethic that easily “electively affiniates” itself with the spirit of capitalism.

Political illiberalism also finds “electively affinity” with the Confucian social order, which consists of a web of five sets of hierarchical relationships – sovereign/subject, parent/child, husband/wife, older/younger sibling and friend/friend.¹² While the Western liberal subject is defined by his individuality,¹³ the Confucian subject maintains his place in the Confucian order by not losing his “face,” through conforming to the (imagined) expectations of a moral community, regardless of what he believes.

That citizens practice a type of rhetorical compliance to maintain face explains two puzzles about Chinese political psychology. Firstly, Pye and Pye (1985, 60) note the Chinese’s high tolerance for cognitive dissonance and “lack of psychic anxieties” (contrast this to Weber’s Calvinists) and puzzle over their ability to “live with all kinds of ambiguities and contradictions.” Secondly, many interviewees puzzled over the difference between “face” and “ego,” since both appears self-centred. The solution to these puzzles lies in the different types of governmentality or self-government practised by the liberal subject and by the Confucian/illiberal subject. Foucault (1979) argues that liberal subjects self-govern after internalising public morality as personal ethics. I would suggest that illiberal subjects are

¹² “Horizontal” friendship is made hierarchical through prefixing sibling terms denoting elder/younger.

¹³ Professor Beng-Huat Chua shared this anecdote: An old Singaporean Chinese woman was asked if she had sufficient privacy in a public flat she shared with her family. After several attempts to explain the concept of privacy (until recently, there is no such term in

governed by social expectations (face). To successfully navigate everyday life, it is vital that Confucian subjects have a high tolerance of ideological inconsistency and that they do not develop a consistent ethical self.

Although the Confucian order is largely constituted by ascribed hierarchies, these hierarchies may also be represented as achieved status. Government authority is especially legitimised by a rigorous selection process of competitive formal exams and by a continuous process of streaming from a young age. Because it is believed that scholastic excellence is acquired through moral self-discipline, it follows that a technocratic government is also morally superior. Pye and Pye (1985, 66-76) noted that modern Chinese politics consists of a series of outbursts at the failings of leadership followed by a search for another perfect "leader without weakness." Because a good/perfect leader is seen as the solution to all problems, Chinese intellectuals devote energy to social change. Checks on authority are not tolerated; mandated to rule, leaders are justifiably "entitled to be hypersensitive to any hint of criticism."

This combination of moral and technocratic legitimacy creates in Confucian subjects a deep unquestioning dependency/trust in government. The expert-sage government is not expected to consult lay-citizens or to "represent" the views of the morally inferior populace. Instead, its task is to embody society's ideal and enlighten the masses with through exemplary leadership.¹⁴

It is inaccurate to describe Confucian leaders as authoritarian; this reflects a misrecognition of the organic cultural/emotional dynamics underlying Confucian authority. The distinction between authoritarianism and paternalism is precisely the question of whether coercion has been successfully legitimated; and to the extent that citizens accept that leaders are morally and technically superior, Confucianism must be said to have successfully rendered political illiberalism organic and natural.

Mandarin), she was finally asked where she goes to be alone. She replied, "Why would I want to be alone?"

¹⁴ Cf. Weber's (1966a) distinction between ethical and exemplary prophecy.

II. Ideologies for late-capitalism: Western ideological compromises

Although liberty and equality have always been articulated together in liberal discourse, the tension between them constitutes a recurring contradiction of liberal discourse. Many liberals noted the non-egalitarian nature of liberalism: democracy was feared as “tyranny of the majority” (Hayek 1986, 25). Representative democracy was often based on beliefs that some were more fit than others to rule or to vote—Burke (in Baradat 1988, 74-75) argued that a good representative should have ability, property and high birth, while Holback (in Arblaster 1987, 37) believed that voting rights should only be issued to those propertied males who were also heads of their household. Concerned that democracy has gone too far and threatens to plunder the rich, John Stuart Mill suggested that the educated should be given two votes, which illustrates the lack of ‘fit’ between liberty and suggesting that values of equality and democracy (political liberalism) were ‘accidental and remediable’ consequences, rather than inevitable features of capitalism (economic liberalism) (Hall 1986, 60).

To get to the heart of this tension, Hall (1986, 41) suggests that equality must be understood as a *subordinate* ideology to liberty since the liberal state is not bound to remedy the inequality that free competition inevitably produces (since many must lose for some to win). I.e., liberalism must be understood as an ideology that (unapologetically) produces and legitimises elitism.

This helps us understand why late-capitalism is purported to produce side effects and contradictions that, if not resolved with various ideological compromises, could threaten the sustainability of capitalism. Economically, the logical and inevitable consequence of free competition is the creation of extreme social equality and stratification. Unless some form of social welfare is provided to alleviate this inequality, it threatens to disrupt co-operative capital-labour relations.

The severity of such contradictions depends on several factors. Insofar as there is economic prosperity or the perception of genuine freedom to compete equally, this

contradiction may weaken or be contained. This contradiction intensifies especially in late-capitalism when economic inequality widens and when social stratification sets in so that the liberal ideology of being free to compete (acquire private property, etc.) no longer holds true. While these contradictions impact Asian and Western liberalism alike, it should be noted that they have been allowed to develop to different degrees. Where economic liberalism is accompanied by political liberalism (the West), discourses of liberal democracy tend to over-legitimise citizens' demands for equality and for individual rights to the extent of placing the liberal state at the mercy of its voters. Where economic liberalism is "protected" by political illiberalism (Confucian Asia), citizens' right to make demands of the state tends to be de-legitimised; and because authority is less dependent on consent, the state is less compelled to compromise the logic of capitalism (e.g., to provide welfare).

A popular solution in the West is the "third way" (Giddens 1994a), which typically involved the weakening of capitalistic instinct and the affirmation of community (socialism/collectivism/communitarianism). In the US and Europe, there are different degrees of compromise between the left and the right. In Europe, these contradictions are partially resolved through welfarism (Hall 1986, 64-65). To a lesser extent, even the USA has to compromise its capitalist logic by providing social security to its citizens.

The case of such a "historical compromise" in the US is worth a closer look. As possibly the most capitalist of all nations, its response is likely to be one where capitalistic logic is the least compromised. It will be in comparison to the American case that I will make my argument that Singapore's Asian Values response is a superior (least compromising) response.

As a response to the Great Depression, Roosevelt promised voters a New Deal, which consisted of a series of pro-labour programmes aimed at breaking monopolies, regulating business and improving workers' conditions (including the Social Security Act in 1935).

Scholars have questioned whether the New Deal was truly a compromise of the interests of capital. The prolonged debate between Roosevelt (Democrats) and Hoover (Republicans) on the benefits of a strong government appears to be a false one, because it was based upon the assumption that strong governments work against the interests of capital, when, as the case of Asian Capitalism shows, economic liberalism can be sustained both by maximal or minimal states. I.e., whether the US has a strong or weak government will not help us identify whether it was pro- or anti-capital.

However, in terms of the extent of compromise, Zinn (1980, 383-384) noted that Roosevelt made concessions only when organised labour was strong – “where organised labour was weak, Roosevelt was unprepared to withstand the pressure of industrial spokesmen.” This led Zinn to conclude that the New Deal, by stabilising the economy and giving enough to prevent a rebellion from turning into a revolution, merely re-organised capitalism to sustain it

Despite the pro-capital nature of the New Deal’s long-term goal, I would argue that it was a significant compromise because it offered an alternative (leftist) vision – as economist Gardiner Means (in Davidson, Lytle and Stoff 1992, 383) observed, “the New Deal ... was less a clear program than a symbol of the possibilities available to a desperate nation.” Indeed, this vision so dominated popular imagination that for two decades, citizens and Republicans alike perceived there to be no viable alternatives and elections were fought within the parameters of the New Deal.

III. Asian Values and the re-amalgamation of authoritarianism with late-capitalism

The Western trajectory of compromise was unacceptable to many Asian (one-party) governments. To understand why many Asian governments are unwilling to blunt capitalistic impulses and why they insist on keeping political liberalism at bay, we have to understand the logic behind the maintenance of one-party rule in Asia.

Firstly, government legitimacy in many Asian one-party democracies is crucially based upon economic growth, which is fuelled by capitalistic expansion. To sustain economic growth and legitimacy, governments must be able to attract foreign investments through being the world's freest economies – i.e., being the most business-friendly economies with the least worker protection and the weakest labour unions (economies where the logic of capitalism runs purest). As such, many Asian one-party governments find the “third way” or any weakening/compromise of the capitalist logic unacceptable.

Additionally, any subscription to welfarist ideologies could promote political liberalism since individuals are deemed to have the rights to make demands on the state. Such liberalisation, if unchecked, could over-legitimise individualism and, carried over to the field of politics, set the stage for ideological fragmentation. This brings us to another logic of one-party rule: single party governments can only legitimately claim to represent a consensual nation since an ideologically fragmented nation would require multi-party representation. I.e., ideological fragmentation must be averted at all costs so that the party is seen as the nation's only option.

In this way, capitalism and authoritarianism are mutually reinforcing: authoritarianism protects capitalism by enabling it to be less compromised by popular demands for welfarism while capitalistic success “protects” and provides economic legitimacy for authoritarian governments. Seeing such ideological function of Asian Democracy allows us to add to Poulantzas' “periodisation of capitalism into distinct stages and phases” (Hall 1988, 152): if liberal (bourgeois) democracy offers the “best shell” within which early capitalist relations can develop since it offers the most illusions about popular representation (Lenin in Hall 1986, 15), I would argue that communitarian (Asian) democracy is an ideology par excellence for protecting the logic of capitalism from having to compromise/give it to its contradictions in late-capitalism.

To protect its one-party rule against threats of political liberalisation and welfarism, the PAP labels these individualistic tendencies as dangerous “Western” values,

the solution of which was the "Asianisation" of society, where communitarianism (anti-individualism) is promoted as an alternative to welfarism and plural/liberal democracy.

"Asian capitalism" is considered preferable – where competition and social inequality continues to be legitimised by meritocracy and where social welfare is privatised and administered through (ethnic) communities, not through the state. Within the AV discourse, individuals, families and (ethnic) communities should be self-reliant and place nation above self. Rather than "selfishly" make demands on society/state, good Asians should provide for their needy family/community members. In China, Taiwan and Singapore, communitarianism has been mobilised to legitimise "Parents Maintenance Bills," where working children are obligated to support their aged, retired parents. In Singapore, "community" is stretched beyond family to include ethnic community: a small portion is deducted from every employee's monthly salary for donation to his/her ethnic "community self-help organisations" (Chua 1995, 34).

Communitarianism is also mobilised against ideological pluralism in support of "Asian (one-party) Democracy." By emphasising consensus over conflict, political contestation or "opposition for the sake of opposition" – an unspoken democratic value – is represented as anti-harmony and unsuited for an Asian society. Communitarianism encourages citizens, as good Asians, to privatise and subordinate their individualism/difference, to communitarianly put national interests (as defined by the PAP) above self. In this way, ideological alternatives are de-legitimised and ideological fragmentation averted.

In this way, communitarianism de-legitimises counter-capitalistic and counter-authoritarian values and enables the re-amalgamation of capitalism with authoritarianism through representing them as "Asian capitalism" (anti-welfarism) and "Asian Democracy" (one-party democracy) respectively.

There are some implications and residual questions when AV is understood as an ideological response to contradictions in late-capitalism, rather than as set of

cultural values. Firstly, the fact that governments feel the need to “Asianise” their citizens exposes the myth of communitarian Asia (Pye and Pye 1985; DeBary 1998). “Asian values” were so clearly absent in Singapore society that it had to be imported. In 1982, 8 foreign Confucian scholars were invited to design a school curriculum (Chua 1995, 159; Hill and Lian 1995, 202) after local (Buddhist) monks’ proposals were criticised for being “unpractical” and for failing to select “desirable national values” (Kuah 1991, 32). Perhaps the best evidence of anti-community values is the phenomenon of clean home/private toilets and dirty public toilets. In the 1990s, the Singapore government was so frustrated by citizens’ lack of civic-mindedness that it launched a “Keep Public Toilets Clean Campaign.”

Additionally, the AV project encouraged only certain types of communities— “safe” communities that did not attempt to usurp the government’s credibility – as the only (legitimate) representative of *national* interest. E.g., racial identification was encouraged until racial groups began to contest the government. The project to Confucianise citizens was abandoned in the late 1980s when the government realised that its campaigns over-legitimated religion as a source of counter-ideology (Hill and Lian 1995, 205-206; Chua 1995, 31-32; Tamney 1996, 35). Such politics of racial differentiation and homogenisation echoed the British colonial strategy of “divide and rule. Rather than encouraging ideological contestation, such politics of difference serve to contain dissent by racialising citizens by constituting them as ethnic, thus subjective and partial, in multi-racial Singapore.

Secondly, seeing AV as an ideological response to social contradictions help us understand why its substantive meaning is necessarily confusing and contradictory. To some extent, the ideological contradiction within AV mirrors the impossibility of combining capitalism with community: “if you drive the notion of enterprise far enough, you undermine any sense of tradition, or organic belongingness to society” (Hall in Tamney 1996, 184). As an attempt to ideologically unite society without compromising capitalism, “Asian Values” must simultaneously encourage communitarianism (community before self) without discouraging competition (self before others). It is vital to remember that AV was invoked to deal with the side effects of late-capitalism—at no point does it

discourage or detract from the dominant ideology of capitalist development or encourage citizens to prioritise community over competition. It is precisely because communitarianism is opposite to competitiveness that it serves as a useful supplement to repair and enable to continued operation of the dominant ideology of meritocratic competition, to make capitalism more caring and the nation more cohesive.

Thus, rather than understanding AV as either communitarianism or Confucianism, I would argue that AV is more effectively understood as consisting of the dominant ideology of Confucian meritocratic competition and a subdominant ideology of communitarianism. The dominant ideology of Confucianism fuels capitalist development by motivating subjects to compete (as individuals and families) and raise themselves over others within the social hierarchy, thereby earning it the label of "Asian (Protestant) Work Ethic." Confucianism's emphasis on competition makes it *anti*-community, not unlike market liberalism, and comes closer to Thatcher's idealisation of liberal capitalism: "there is no such thing as society, there are only individual men and women, and there are families" (<http://www.univ-tours.fr/capaganglais/PovertyQuotes.htm>).

Confucianism can be considered communitarian only if the family *is* the community. Besides the absence of civic-mindedness indicated by the anecdotal evidence of dirty public toilets, Liang (in DeBary 1998, 140-141) also observed that China lacked group life and attempted to add a sixth Confucian relationship to promote group relations – the only "non-hierarchical" Confucian relation. Confucianism guides relationship with *immediate*, not *imagined* community. Confucian subjects are not exhorted to include unrelated others as part of their community – as the PAP's communitarian programmes of Parents Maintenance Bill and ethnic self-help illustrate. The understanding of community is one that is highly tied to blood and race. I would argue that it is in fact vital that Confucian groups are exclusionary; it may be difficult otherwise for subjects to feel competitive against each other. Confucian subjects feel no lateral solidarity, which Benedict Anderson identifies as a prerequisite for the development of a sense of *imagined* community. Given this considerable difference between Confucianism

and communitarianism, we can see that its conflation in the myth of communitarian Asia is an ideological effect that is crucially sustained by a refusal to acknowledge that Confucian Asia is more accurately pro-family and anti-community.

Thirdly, the persuasiveness of AV is necessarily tied to economics. Not only is communitarianism subordinated to the dominant ideology of competition, it is itself an economic argument since the superiority of communitarianism and Asian (consensual) Democracy is “proven” by miraculous economic performance (Lodge and Vogel 1987; Chua 1995, 31; Leary 1990). This has significant implications for its effectiveness: of what use is it during an economic crisis, when the government most needs it?

If we recall that liberal states are not obliged to protect its citizens because such state intervention would constitute a violation of the sacred value of free competition, then the Singapore government must be seen as having been more successful than the US in justifying their non-intervention and the non-compromise¹⁵ of competitiveness as the nation’s primary goal. Indeed, in ensuring that there is no viable alternative to capitalist accumulation, it could even be said the logic of capitalism runs “purer” in Singapore than in the US.¹⁶

The ingenuity of the AV response lies in its ability de-legitimise (“Western”) ideological alternatives. This absence of viable alternatives in turn means that no “historical compromise” was necessary since there was simply no alternative but to tolerate the contradictions (or privatise the contradictions to make capitalism more

¹⁵ It would be inaccurate to say that there have been no compromises at all. The PAP could not have stayed hegemonic for more than four decades without ensuring that citizens were properly taken care of (Singapore has been described as “capitalism with socialist characteristics” in Tamney 1996, 69). However, it would be accurate to say that there had not been any ideological compromises — Singapore has never been imagined as anything but a free, internationally competitive economy. Any compromises that the PAP makes are always one-off and frequently entitled “Off-Budget Measures” to emphasise their non-permanence.

tolerable). It is this lack of alternatives that ensured that, throughout the PAP's one-party rule, it has never been possible to imagine a Singapore without the PAP.

1D. HEGEMONY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING ABOUT ASIAN DEMOCRACY

Once AV is understood as an ideological project to secure consensus on particular economic and political structures that have come under global challenge, the question of whether Asian Democracy is or is not "truly" a democracy seems misplaced. This is because (Asian) Democracy cannot be conceived of as a stage that is either present or absent or simply as whether authority is based on either coercion or consent, as classical definitions of democracy are prone to do. As an ideological project, (Asian) Democracy must be seen as an ongoing project to secure consent on coercion.

Indeed, many have argued that it is a fallacy to think that consent and coercion can be separated and that they can exist independent of each other. This is because firstly, states and governments are inherently coercive institutions with a "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force" (Weber 1946, 78-79). Secondly, consent or consensus is never simply the acceptance of certain values but also the expectation that others conform to this consensus and the agreement to exclude/punish those who contravene this consensus. Thirdly, theorists argue that what is considered "consent" is often "tacit consent" (Locke), "silent allowance" (Hooker) and "habitualised acquiescence" (Hume). These qualified forms of consent suggest that "consent" is more accurately a type of internalised consensus (Key 1961). Indeed, Lipset (1960, 32) goes so far as to argue that the sign of a healthy consensual society is political apathy, rather than consent.

That consent is more accurately "consensus" and that it is also always coercive (towards those who lie outside the consensus) makes the definition of democracy as government by consent a highly un-rigorous concept. If democracy is to

¹⁶ That Singapore is more capitalistic than the US developed in conversation with Yuezhi Zhao (Simon Fraser University). Bill Schwarz (Goldsmiths College) commented that Singapore was a "state without a nation," echoing citizens' nickname for Singapore as

continue to meaningfully refer to government by consent, then democracy is better understood as a utopia or ideal that all governments aspire to, rather than as a stage that some (Western) states have achieved and have to defend against the Rest.

This idea that government by consent is an ideal to be continuously worked towards resonates with my understanding of (Asian) Democracy as an ideological project to secure consent. I.e., Asian Democracy is better considered within the framework of hegemony than democracy. The differences between these two frameworks become clearest when we compare democratic with hegemonic governments.

Governments can be democratic without being hegemonic, such as when the electorate is split evenly between various ideological alternatives (e.g., US presidential elections between Al Gore versus George W. Bush¹⁷). Governments can be hegemonic without being democratic, as in the case of religious leaders who are not popularly elected but who are deemed legitimate nonetheless. Indeed, democracy and hegemony may be inversely correlated—the presence of ideological pluralism or viable ideological alternatives is considered an indicator of democracy but it also indicates the absence of hegemony. I.e., it would seem that governments could not be democratic and hegemonic at the same time.

This brings us to another important difference between the two frameworks: within the paradigm of hegemony, democracy is seen as only one among many ways of securing government legitimacy. Besides democratic/popular legitimacy, governments can also become legitimate on the basis of economics, religion, morality, culture and even charisma (e.g., post-colonial revolutionary leaders who acquire a mythical legitimacy). Within the framework of hegemony, it becomes possible to imagine that governments can be hegemonic without being popular.

"Singapore Inc."

¹⁷ The fact that Al Gore won the popular vote but George W. Bush won the democratic elections illustrates that a leader can be democratic without being popular, and vice versa.

The notion of “hegemony without popularity” is directly relevant to the study of Asian Democracy. The Singapore model of Asian Democracy has always eluded simple classification as either authoritarian or democratic. Academics sometimes call it soft authoritarianism or popular dictatorship, while local journalists resort to metaphors of the PAP having “won the people’s minds but not their hearts,” which signify the conceptual insufficiency of classical political science categories and theoretical frameworks.

In this dissertation, I intend to investigate the basis of PAP legitimacy. What is the extent and nature of its hegemony? What strategies does it use to maintain legitimate one-party rule and how successful are they – to what extent and through what processes is authority legitimated in everyday popular discourse?

In Chapter One, I illustrate the significance of Singapore’s model of Asian Democracy in challenging the superiority and inevitability of liberal democracy. I argue that instead of seeing AV as a form of cultural nationalism, it should be viewed as a hegemonic project with specific ideological functions of sustaining capitalism (Asian capitalism) and one-party rule (Asian Democracy). Indeed, compared to other (Western) responses to contradictions in late-capitalism, AV appears to be a superior strategy because it least compromises the logic of capitalism.

The rest of Part One outlines some epistemological and methodological problems and solutions in conceptualising and applying the theory of hegemony. Chapter Two highlights the particular views that theories of hegemony hold of power and the state and addresses two main criticisms: the possibility of ideological unity in face of discursive heterogeneity and whether power is dispersed or traceable to a certain institutional centre (whether it has an institutional materiality).

Chapter Three addresses a wide variety of issues that arise before, during and after the six months fieldwork period in Singapore. Guided by the research goal of observing the popular legitimisation of authority in everyday life, I explain my fieldwork decisions regarding sampling, interviewing and analytical procedure.

Part Two discusses the nation-building strategies of the PAP within a theoretical and comparative framework provided at the beginning of each of its chapters. Chapter Four and Five focus respectively on the ideological projects of the first-generation PAP government (under LKY) and the second-generation PAP government (under Chok-Tong Goh). Chapter Four outlines the PAP's attempts to navigate a period of shifting bases of legitimacy (from colonial to popular to economic) through building a pro-party modern state and economy.

Chapter Five focuses on the second-generation leaders' attempt to secure cultural legitimacy through Asian Values, which sought to transform a heterogeneous immigrant society into an ideologically cohesive nation that a one-party government can legitimately claim to represent. Chapter Five traces the various trials and errors in formulating Asian Values, noting that the political project/goal of preventing ideological fragmentation was finally perfected/crystallised as communitarianism.

After identifying the state's projects and strategies for securing legitimacy, Part Three (Chapter Six) focuses on citizens' discourse to explore the extent to which state ideologies are central/relevant to everyday popular discourse. Four postures towards authority are identified depending on how citizens bridge gaps between national and personal versions of reality: (a) refuting dissent, (b) neutralising dissent, (c) privatising dissent and (d) subordinating dissent.

After looking at the state's ideological projects (Part Two) and citizens' posture toward authority (Part Three), Part Four evaluates whether the PAP has secured hegemony and if so, what is the nature, basis and durability of its hegemony? Chapter Seven focuses on the hegemonic process at the level of the everyday popular legitimisation of authority. Despite citizens' rhetorical compliance, the PAP must be considered ideologically successful not only because citizens perceive it to be Singapore's only option but also because its party ideologies constitutes a normative centre that mediates social ("face") expectations and guides inter-personal interaction.

By taking a comparative approach, Chapter Eight considers some challenges (hegemonic crises) that one-party governments face and considers how, in the PAP's case, Asian Democracy contributes invaluable to the de-legitimisation of ideological pluralism, thereby sustaining one-party rule. Through being imitated by other Asian nations, AV has sparked off a regional resurgence of culturally legitimated authoritarianism, suggesting that one-party statehood remains highly tenable, thanks for the AV discourse in transforming coercive dictatorships into ideologically dominant one-party states.

CHAPTER 2 CONCEPTUALISING HEGEMONY

A DISCURSIVE UNITY AND ITS INSTITUTIONAL MATERIALITY

2A. THE ORGANIC-IDEOLOGICAL STATE: A CRITIQUE OF LIBERALISM, ECONOMISM AND STRUCTURALISM

In any consideration of the state, the precise relationship between the ruling and the ruled must be established. Different conceptions of power and legitimacy – where power is believed to come from (or be based on) and where the sites of political contestation are believed to be – would lead us to adopt different epistemological and methodological models.

Within liberalism, (decision-making) power is believed to belong to the people; all individuals are believed to be equal and can freely form groups to lobby for their interests. In this model, the state is believed to be merely a neutral facilitator.¹⁸ However, this is likely to be an “idealised” rather than “real” perspective of class and power in a democracy. Firstly, liberalism believes that individuals should be free to compete regardless of their unequal wealth; it does not believe in equality of conditions or equality of opportunities (Hall 1986, 41). Secondly, Poulantzas (1968; 1972, 245) argues that the separation of the economic and political elite makes the state appear distant from capitalistic exploitation, thereby giving it an aura of legitimacy. In sustaining, developing and reproducing the basic social and economic framework of society (e.g., system of private property) to generate wealth and prosperity, the liberal state cannot be recognized as neutral (Hall 1982, 14). Finally, this is a model built upon a free market ideal and such liberalization/privatisation (of the media), which political economists argue, do not necessarily make the media more democratic or better representatives of “the popular” than state media. As Sparks (2000, 47) suggests, they may be equally the “enemies of popular expression and popular democracy.”

¹⁸ On the issue of the objectivity of the liberal media, scholars have argued that “objective journalism” is often guided by highly selective “unwritten rules” (Gans 1980, 80; Hall 1977, 343) that affirm social consensus and commonsense (Schudson 1982, 98).

It is against this liberal conception of state that classical Marxist perspectives are defined. Generally, these perspectives argue that the state is a “political committee of the ruling class” and which allows the ruling elite to “generalise its rule across society” (Hall 1982, 15). Marxists argue further that “general/popular interest” is an illusion and that such “bourgeois democracy” offers the “best shell” within which capitalist relations can develop since it offers the most illusions about popular representation (Lenin in Hall 1986, 15).

The problem with this view of the state is that the role of the state is insufficiently theorized. Firstly, those who do theorise about the state (Hall 1980b; Poulantzas 1978, 20) lament the lack of a general theory of the state within Marxism. Poulantzas (1972, 239) explains this lack by an underlying economism that considers superstructural levels of social reality (including the state) as epiphenomena reducible to the economic base, which makes the study of the state superfluous.

Secondly, while agreeing that the state serves elite interests, Hall (1982, 15) argues that the link between the elite and the state is not simply one of “instrumentalism” (the state as a mere tool of a class) or “economism” (the state as being wholly determined by economics) but as a relatively autonomous entity. Hall’s point follows from Poulantzas’ (1972, 242-243) criticism of Miliband’s theory of the state as too “subjective.” Miliband considers the state to be constituted sociologically by a network of economic elite¹⁹ and psychologically by the desire to profit; i.e., managers and other white-collar workers (who do not own the means of production) are made “honorary members” of the ruling class based upon their (assumed) subjective motivations.

The problem with such subjective descriptions of the state is that its role and existence are not seen as independent. Poulantzas (1972, 246-247) argues that state bureaucrats should not be defined by their individual/group class origins but be seen as a “social category” that is united by their objective function – “the

¹⁹ This understanding of the state runs through Curran and Park’s (eds. 2000) volume, especially the concept of “interpenetration of elite.”

actualisation of the role of the state.” He questioned, should bureaucrats not come from the ruling class and should they feel little motivation for profit,²⁰ would Miliband revise his theory to say that the state ceases to serve ruling class interest?²¹

How then does Poulantzas define the state? Following Althusser and Gramsci, he argues that the state is more than the repressive institution that Miliband implies with his theory of direct governance by economic elite, whose economic control make the need for legitimation unnecessary. Poulantzas (1972, 249) observes that Miliband appears to be affected by states’ crushing of student demonstrations and the rise of fascism in the late 1960s, causing him to focus almost exclusively on the state’s repressive state apparatuses (RSAs). Poulantzas insightfully notes that Miliband interprets events in this way because to accept the state’s ideological role would have required that he abandon his economistic and subjective view of the state. Observing the same events, Poulantzas arrives at the opposite conclusion – that the state’s reliance on RSAs indicated that the “inner ditch” of civil society and consent has collapsed, forcing the state to rely on its “outer ditch” or armour of coercion (Gramsci 1971) – a stage which he described as “authoritarian statism” (Cf. Hall 1988, 152). That coercion is used on rare occasion is taken to further indicate that most of the time, the state relies on non-coercive power.

Althusser (1971) and Gramsci (1971) agree with classical Marxists that the state serves to ensure the reproduction of relations of capitalist production. Both believed that the state has a relative autonomy from the base structure because reproduction takes place outside the economy. For Althusser (1971), this happens within the “legal-political-ideological” super-structures dominated by the state and its many state apparatuses – both repressive and ideological (e.g., schools, churches, family, cultural institutions). Gramsci (1971, 263), arguing that “state =

²⁰ This was actually the case among many young graduate interviewees, who joined the civil service because they could not imagine themselves working hard to profit (individuals who own) corporations.

²¹ In this thesis, the creation of capitalist subjects with the desire to accumulate is a specific ideological project of the Singapore government (Cf. the Singapore Dream, stakeholders’ society in Chapter 4).

political society + civil society," similarly extends the state to include all civil institutions that served such functions.

Agreeing with Althusser's and Gramsci's view of the relative autonomous state, Poulantzas (1972, 246) argues that "the capitalist state best serves the interests of the capitalist class only when the members of this class do not participate directly in the state apparatus, that is to say when the ruling class is not the politically governing class." I.e., political and economic elites are separated and given relative autonomy to produce the illusion of the neutral (liberal democratic) state, which can appear to be independently pro-labour or pro-capital (in the short or long run). Additionally, as a relatively autonomous entity, the state reorganizes/unifies elite interest in the event of an elite dissensus by constraining disagreeing elite and de-legitimizing credible elite alternatives (Cf. Hguy 1991; Mouffe 1982; Lull 1991).

However, even while adopting Althusser's theory, many are critical of its weakness. Hall (1986, 16) argues that Althusser's theory escapes one type of determinism (economism) but falls into another (functionalism) – that "everything in society is determined by the functional requirements of the system, and the state [does] fulfil these needs." Althusser assumes that state and ideology will always function in ways that perfectly fulfil the requirements of the capitalist system; even while recognizing the ideological role of organic communities, he does not accord them autonomy and agency. As such, his view of the state appears too structural and functional, lacking in any sense of struggle and is unable to explain citizens' self-organisation (independent of the state) or resistance against the state (Katz 1996).

The contrast between Althusser and Gramsci can be clearly seen in how, despite both believing that state secures its legitimacy through ideological state apparatuses (ISAs), Gramsci (1971, 244) uses the term "active consent" to indicate that their cooperation in reproducing/legitimizing the state is not automatic but has to be won. I.e., subjects and super-structural agencies, being relatively autonomous, are seen as having the agency to consent or resist. With Gramsci,

the notion of relative autonomy is not limited to the Althusserian reference of the state (from ruling elite) but also extended to ISAs (e.g., civil society).

In this way, the state is not merely an Althusserian super-structure, but a set of social relations (not unlike social contracts) that “cements” a particular social order through moral, intellectual and cultural consensus. It is consent that “forms” society under the social-moral leadership (and not only domination) of a power bloc.

Gramsci's model is thus a very dynamic one where authority is not automatic (upon owning means of production or motivation to profit as Miliband claimed) but conditional upon consent. Gramsci further observes that social reproduction is not only conducted by formal institutions, but more deeply through generalizing elite ideologies as commonsense. The authority of the power bloc is therefore sustained and legitimised through citizens' everyday practices and their reproduction of commonsensical discourses.

2B. THE STATE AS ABSENT YET CENTRAL: THE ISSUE OF DISCURSIVE AND SOCIAL DISUNITY

Gramsci's theory of hegemony nicely articulates my research interest – to examine the basis and nature of the PAP's hegemony by looking at how its one-party rule is legitimised in popular everyday discourse. However, before these issues can be dealt with, it is necessary to address some epistemological and methodological issues that Gramsci's particular conception of state and of the nature of power raise.

As a concept, “hegemony” requires careful verification. Firstly, while it may be relatively easy to verify the coercive domination through considering how those who own the means of production also has a monopoly over legitimate (state) coercion (Weber 1966b), the bourgeoisie can only become a hegemonic class through overcoming its “corporatist” nature and by providing intellectual-moral leadership to secure the consent of the ruled (Mouffe 1982, 220-221). By inserting “the masses” crucially into the heart of governance, hegemony breaks the easy

equation of control with power or legitimacy, and inserts into it the crucial component of mass consent.

Secondly, Gramsci understands hegemony as a dynamic process rather than a static condition since hegemony will always be contested. His own reflections on hegemony are based upon his keen concern with usurping the ideological dominance of Italian fascism and building a communist hegemony. For Bennett et al (1982, 16), this facet of hegemony is so important that studies of hegemony would be incomplete without considering “hegemonic crises” or “cris[es] of authority:”

the issues posed by the concept of hegemony concern not whether ... hegemony can be said to be present or absent in a given situation ... but rather the direction in which a complex set of relations between two principal classes and a series of intermediate social strata and social groups are moving.

These two features significantly influence the nature of research on hegemony. By emphasising the relationship between political legitimacy and everyday citizen practices, the verification of hegemony implies certain methods of study. Firstly, hegemony establishes popular consent as a central element in any discussion of governance and insists upon the verification, not just assumption, of hypodermic ideological effects. This concern with the *active* role of the masses in reproducing the capitalist social relations urges studies of hegemony towards some form of audience studies.

Secondly, because hegemony is an ongoing process, there is a need to go beyond studying only the political moments (e.g., elections) to also focusing on everyday political contestation. Just as Hall (1977, 342/347) is interested in studying the ideological effects of the media, the study of hegemony is interested in the ideological effects of everyday citizen practices. To this end, qualitative methods are especially suitable for studying the local, subjective and particular practices that naturalise, legitimise and perpetuate the ideological and political status quo.

The difficulty of verifying hegemony has been acknowledged, especially the difficulty of identifying “popular will” without assuming that there is an authentically²² popular conscience that can be discovered and used as a standard against which consensuses can be judged to be truly “national-popular” or not. Nowell-Smith (1977, 13) questions if “the popular” exists and whether it is merely the people’s sense of itself as reflected by the political elite. Even if it is possible to generalise about a “popular will,” to what extent is such a popular will merely a form of false (inauthentically popular) consciousness – especially in a situation of an organic ideological state such as Gramsci’s where the state and society/working class are blurred (Hall 1986, 17; Hall 1980b, 63)? Additionally, Nowell-Smith (1977, 12) noted that national-popular culture is defined by its absence just as hegemony is an ideal condition, which makes it difficult to establish empirical indicators, often requiring highly historical and descriptive accounts (Hall 1986, 17).

These critiques of hegemony can be more clearly glimpsed when Gramsci’s theory of power and the state is contrasted to Foucault’s since Foucault seems to take Gramsci’s idea of an organic state to an extreme. As we move from Althusser to Gramsci and to Foucault, there is an increasing embedding of the state onto (civil) society and the notion that state and society are mutually constitutive, to the extent that their boundaries are no longer clear (Cf. Hall 1980b, 65). In some ways, Foucault’s theory of dispersed (discursive) power reflects the logical consequence of a neo-Gramscian situation when the state becomes too organic or when it becomes so “truly national-popular” that the state melts and disappears/disperses into civil/organic society, losing its objective reality and if even possible, can be traced only to sets of inter-personal (e.g., Miliband) and intra-personal (e.g., technologies of the self) relations.

²² An idea that developed in conversation with Erik Axel (Roskilde University, Copenhagen) was that the shift from the state being conceived as overarching and external to society to the state as being embedded in society can be likened to a shift from a dualistic paradigm (where it is more possible to separate the national and the popular) to a dialectical paradigm (where both are mutually constituted).

It is at this juncture that Poulantzas' (1978) attempt to bridge Foucault and Gramsci (no matter how unsuccessful, Cf. Hall 1980b) can usefully highlight the gaps between their models. Like Foucault and Gramsci, Poulantzas saw the state as more than consent plus coercion since it is through the ISAs that citizens' practices are disciplined and they are persuaded to consent to coercion. Using the term "institutional materiality," he sought to articulate how material state processes are institutionalised through the conflation of knowledge-power.²³

The impasse between Gramsci and Foucault is firstly, whether there can be a discursive/ideological unity and secondly, the "institutional materiality" of this discursive centre. I.e., whether this discursive unity can be further traced to certain social formations (or relations of production), especially to (the project, interests, intentions or effects of) a social group that holds (economic or other types of) power.

On the first issue, Foucault believed in the chaotic, unsystematisable heterogeneity of discursive materialization. From Foucault's point of view, the problem with Gramsci's theory is that hegemony requires a sense of ideological unity, which Foucault (1979) believes to exist only as an elite construction created by the disciplines of population sciences (statistics, demography, etc.). As such, Foucault does "not simply [point] ... to the proliferation of discourses. He advanc[es] a theory of their *necessary heterogeneity*" (Hall 1980b, 66) and a rejection of the possibility of ideological homogeneity.

Although Foucault's rejection of this possibility seems to deal a deep blow to the study of hegemony, I would argue that this is only so if hegemony is thought of as being based on a positive unity (as identification or match/correspondence between elite and popular discourses) – an understanding that Nowell-Smith (1977, 12) cautions as idealistic and empirically unviable. Indeed Gramsci and Hall believe that for an ideology to become hegemonic, it must be necessarily transformed and localized, especially as commonsense. Still, the question remains

²³ E.g., how the emergence of the discipline of psychiatry allowed for the categorisation and institutionalization of a previously non-existent concept of the "madman."

whether it is possible to find an ultimate discursive/ideological unity despite the irreducible heterogeneity. Toward the conclusion of this chapter, I will suggest that this is a possible task. Notions of "incorporation," "subordination" and "rhetorical compliance" (a term I use to describe Singaporean's posture towards the state) all point to hegemony as being not the elimination of discursive heterogeneity but an acknowledgment that while discourses are irreducible heterogeneous, there may also be limits to their variations.

On the second issue of whether the state remains a distinct entity, Poulantzas (1978, 68) observes that for Foucault, power is "an abstract machine,' whose action is everywhere and which is assumed prior to its concretisation in any particular field." By Marxist standards, Foucault's conception of the state and power constitutes a form of ideologism because the economic base disappears. Indeed, Hall (1980b, 67) argues that Foucault simply cannot afford to conceptualise non-abstract sources of power (whether economic elites or state) if he is to retain this thesis that power "is dispersed [heterogeneously] so that it cannot, theoretically, be traced back to any single organizing instances, such as the state. It voids the question of the economic because it cannot ... be crystallized into any set of global relations" (e.g., class relations).²⁴

Poulantzas is uncomfortable with this view of power and insists on the state as a "condensation of relations of [class] forces" (Hall 1980b, 65), i.e., that power is not abstract but specifically concentrated along socio-economic lines. This is in line with Gramsci's (1971) insistence that hegemony is not exclusively an ideological phenomenon and that there can be no hegemony without "the decisive nucleus of the economic." What is so disturbing about Foucault's reluctance to posit non-abstract sources/centres of power is best expressed by Hall (1980b, 66): that the state appears to be missing "not by inadvertence but by design" and by Benjamin's (1988) description of the state's "unseen presence."

²⁴At the same time, Hall (1980b, 67) observed that Foucault, when he is unable to question sources/centres of power, descend abruptly into "vulgar economism."

That the state (and/or ruling elite) may be strategically absent brings to realization just how subtle its hegemonic processes are and makes the project of re-discovering these sources of power and the de-mystifying their processes all the more urgent. Indeed, if the liberal state is viewed within the historical stages of relations of production, then such strategic absence of the state must be understood as part of the liberal ideology of separating political and economic power to legitimise the ethics (freedom to compete) and consequences (social inequality) of capitalism. This is perhaps what Hall (1980b, 67) means when he points out Foucault's implicit "anarcho-libertarianism." While Foucault does provide tremendous insights into the subtle processes of discursive power, Marxist criticises that he does so within liberal frameworks, oblivious to the possibility that these processes – including discursive heterogeneity and the dispersal of power through inscription onto the popular– are particular to the needs of liberal capitalism.

Nevertheless, Foucault's theories do contribute to a clearer vision of socialist strategy. Certainly, if power is "everywhere," then states are no longer the centres²⁵ of ideological/discursive unity in liberal capitalist societies (despite remaining centres of ultimate "coercive" power). The "heart" of capitalist reproduction now takes place in new centres – whether this be individuals' desires to accumulate (Miliband), a society's shared commonsense (Hall) or as a society's moral expectations of individuals ("face"), which I argue to be the case in Singapore. Indeed, if these constitute the new centres of social reproduction, then the emergence of a counter-hegemonic movement would require struggling at the level of personal desires, collective commonsense and public morality.

Depending on where the heart of social reproduction is believed to be and what is seen as problematic about it, theorists offer different strategies. E.g., for Bourdieu (in Hamel 1993), what is problematic about everyday practice and commonsense

²⁵ In the Philippines during the People Power II revolution, power seemed to reside less with the state (President Estrada was removed) than with the people. However, even among "people power," there are different centres. People Power II (nickname "cell-phone" revolution) was organized by the middle-class and resisted by the rural working class who supported Estrada to power during the People Power I revolution.

is not that it is mediated by ideology – an inescapable condition – but that it is unable to transcend its mundane subjective reality and is thus alienated from an objective vision of society. Bourdieu's strategy is then the recovery of a sociological imagination to re-establish the objectivity of individuals' subjective conditions. For Gramsci (1971, 324/421; Hyug 1991, 149), the goal is to transform commonsense into a coherent, unified and critical conception of the world and to achieve a new "conformism" – but conformism no less (Colucci 1999, 152-153) – to this critical commonsense.

It is upon the affirmation that the state is absent by design and that it undertakes ideological projects to shape inter/intra-personal relations (e.g., technologies of the social and of the self) that I will try, in the course of this dissertation, to articulate a theory, epistemology and method for thinking about how/when hegemony can be said to exist in the light of Foucault's criticisms. Before doing so, I will first focus on the irreducible and "necessarily heterogeneous" nature of hegemony by looking at the subtle ways that the state inscribes itself onto the popular and the sites that it grafts itself onto so as to render itself seemingly absent.

2C. THE HEGEMONIC PROCESS: ITS SUBTLE AND "NECESSARILY HETEROGENEOUS" NATURE

Many scholars have noted the heterogeneity of elite discourses. Their heterogeneity is both a material and ideological condition. Materially/economically, many note the blurring of class boundaries. Where late-capitalism brought "embourgeoisement" (Goldthorpe and Lockwood 1969) and "middle-class societies" (Fukuyama 1992; Rodan 1993b), and where "information societies" expand the definition of (ownership of) "means of production" to include computer literacy and technical expertise, it has become more difficult to hold on to traditional indicators of class. Since the 1950s in Britain, Westgaard (1972) has observed the ascendancy of "a myth of classlessness." The failure of class as an

explanatory concept has echoed throughout the decades, gaining more strength as social theorists try but fail to demonstrate the significance of class.²⁶

If it is difficult to identify the elite as an economic class, it is even more complicated to identify the elite's dominant ideology. Firstly, where there is elite dissensus – whether due to contradictions or disagreements – is it still meaningful to speak of a dominant ideology? Lull (1991) argues that in China, the elite's ideological projects have not been successful because the elite's could not come to a consensus (pro/anti-capitalism), and this elite dissensus, when disseminated and amplified by the media, led to popular dissensus.

However, elite dissensus poses a problem for the identification of dominant ideologies only if it is assumed that dominant ideologies must be consistent. This is not the view in theories of hegemony where the elite must compromise its corporatist interests to become hegemonic. Indeed, Hallin (1986) argues that elite dissensus are often mirrored by popular dissensus, suggesting as Billig (et al 1988) does, that elite dissensus and ideological contradictions can also be naturalized (as personal dilemmas) and reproduced, rather than problematised in popular discourse. For Hyug (1991) and Mouffe (1982), elite ideological heterogeneity is not an obstacle but a necessary process in the study of the elite's hegemonic strategies because the elite often have to sacrifice their short-term interests or modify (rendering inconsistent) dominant ideologies. Looking at elite ideologies from a long-term perspective allows us to see that elite ideology is often constituted by hesitations and contradictions.

In Singapore, state capitalism allows the PAP to exercise extensive control over relations of production and over the media. Such conflation of economic and political power makes the identification and theorizing of state power relatively easy – theories emphasizing economism would suffice. However, the PAP does not only legitimise its rule based on economic performance but also through

²⁶ Morley's (1980) study of the Nationwide audience is perhaps the most famous of these. In Singapore, Rodan (1993b) struggles to maintain the relevance of class explanations,

economic ideologies. E.g., the Singapore Dream and the creation of a “stakeholders’ society” represent the PAP’s attempt to give their ideologies an “institutional materiality” through being grafted onto personal desires and dreams. As such, “hegemony” remains relevant because the PAP government does undertake ideological projects to inscribe pro-party values as an organic discursive centre that, by being relatively autonomous from the state, would render the state strategically absent.

The heterogeneity of PAP discourses is emphasized in Part Two. The discussion of the PAP’s political history and cultural/ideological policy is not placed at the opening of the dissertation as “factual” background information but is presented as part of the analysis of what constitutes elite or dominant ideologies. Rather than offering an “objective” account, only analytically relevant aspects of Singapore history is woven in, paying special attention to the trial and errors (the various reformulations of “Asian Values”) and the contradictions (“side-effects” and “price of success”) within elite discourses.

The heterogeneity of popular discourses in Singapore is emphasized in Part Three. Accepting that the popular is too multi-faceted and defies generalizations, sub-sections in Part Three aims to minimize categorization and explore variations in popular discourse. Sub-sections are intentionally without strong links and do not aim to provide an overarching, abstracted/general view of the popular, preferring to capture the messiness of the field. It is crucial that Part Three convinces readers of the irreducible heterogeneity of popular discourse because it is only then that the argument for hegemony (as a form of unity *in spite of* discursive heterogeneity) can be convincingly made in Part Four.

To observe popular discursive heterogeneity and to uncover the subtle processes of inscription, we need to have a clear idea of where the site of ideological reproduction/contestation is. E.g., many theorists argued that hegemony is negotiated and maintained in unique “sites” such as commonsense and un-

insisting upon the liberal potential of the middle-class even while having to explain its failure to live up to this potential.

reflexive practices rather than in deliberated opinion. What is identified as the "site" and "mechanisms" of ideological contestation is often premised upon theories of where and how meaning is made or fixed, since the project of interpretation depends on finding some fixity in meanings, however temporary. These theories of meaning are inevitably based on some assumptions about human nature.

In the next four sub-sections, I will criticize some theories and assumptions concerning the site of meaning so as to pinpoint the precise sites and mechanisms of meaning making or ideological reproduction and to point us, in the conclusion, towards us a re-conceptualisation of hegemony.

1. Beyond behaviourism: from structure to agency

Theories of hegemony accept ideological and structuring effects (from power elite, language, culture, sociology, etc.) as very real. For Gramsci, the role of organic intellectuals is precisely to achieve the ideological effect of a socialist consensus. However, these structural effects must be understood within the context of individuals' active and heterogeneous reproduction firstly because the fact that subjects must be persuaded to give their consent means that they can also withhold it. Secondly, as many scholars suggest, ideology becomes naturalized and reproduced through subjective experience and micro processes – through desires, pleasure and everyday commonsensical practices (Ang 1985; Radway 1984).

The issue then is not the denial of the effects of ideological/structural determinism but to graft its processes onto the subjective and the biographical. To this end, Ien Ang's (1990, 247) clarification that an active audience is not tantamount to a powerful one is useful; certainly, theories of hegemony subscribe to the view that subjects' agency is limited rather than celebrate complete freedom (Cf. Fiske 1987a; 1987b on "semiotic democracy"). For the purpose of understanding the hegemonic process, theories of determinism are useful to the extent that they take into consideration individuals' consent and complicity in the process of social-ideological reproduction. A suitable level of determinism is thus one that, while not pronouncing certain and even effects, offers insight on the pressures exerted on

individuals to conform. It is in this light that I will review some theories of determinism.

Social psychological theories of determination range from assumed (total) ideological effect to objective sociological correlations to psychoanalytical/biographical determination. Among these, structuralist theories are the most totalising. The pronouncement of total (behaviourist²⁷) determination is possible only through prioritising langue over parole and deep structures over surface representations, i.e., through the dismissal of heterogeneity and variations. Structuralist theories are especially dominant in the discipline of “cultural psychology,” where language (Whorf 1956), culture (Pye and Pye 1985) or myth (Levi-Strauss 1972) are seen to have all-pervasive, often homogeneous and inescapable effects. E.g., Pye and Pye argued that subjects of Confucian societies exhibit a high degree of dependency on authority and tautologically assert that authoritarian (Confucian) culture creates authoritarianism. What is problematic is that their account is not only their Orientalist uni-dimensional representation of Confucian subjects, but also that they see the dependency on authority as an inescapable trait for all Confucian subjects, ignoring the many instances of revolts against authority in Chinese history.

Slightly less deterministic are structures (textualism) that prescribe *several* positions, e.g., the three readings (“dominant,” “negotiated” and “oppositional”) in Hall’s (1980a) Encoding/Decoding model. In these theories, variations are seen as a property of structures/texts rather than of individual agency. This distinction between multiple positions as opposed to ambiguity is also observed by Hall when he says polysemy is not pluralism (in Hagen and Wasko 2000, 19-20) and by Willemen’s (1978, 45) criticism that polysemy denies rather than celebrates audience agency. The problem with the theory of polysemy is again, that variations/heterogeneity is seen to be a textual quality that is independent of subjects’ agency. An analyst can pre-determine a number of possible readings

²⁷ Behaviourism typically refers to animal-like non-capacity for active symbolic communication (Percy 1975). Here, I would argue that these models suggest a type of “symbolic behaviourism.”

without consulting subjects and insist upon their legitimacy even if, upon consulting subjects, he finds that none of his subjects occupy certain positions. E.g., Hall's "oppositional reading" is an empirically rare position (Cf. Ang 1985) and becomes rarer the more hegemonic the ideologies in question are. Its value lies more in its logical importance and counter-hegemonic potential than as a description of the position of real subjects.²⁸

Less deterministic is the view that variations exist within structures due to agents' interpretation and practice. Using dramaturgical metaphors, Nelson(1985) and Peckham (1965) argue that "roles" and "scripts" are always interpreted and performed in the personal style of the actor (e.g., pitch, emotional quality) and cannot never be fully pre-determined. Despite such focus on variations, they argue that these personal variations exist within a pre-scripted "range." For them then, an ideal social psychological theory – or cultural script – must then be skeletal and flexible enough to account for limited variations.

The notion of a prescribed script and obedient subjects focuses on parole with little consideration that it is through parole/performance (e.g., "argument" and "commemoration" for Billig, 1992) that "scripts"/langue are *(re-)written*. While "script" theorists may postulate multiple but clear positions, for Billig and Volosinov, the "script" is not a clear ideology with a range of variations but one that is infused with contradictions and ambiguity. For Volosinov (1973, 10-13), ideologies live through signs, which have no reality outside communication. Because communication is characterised by non-determinacy ("multiaccentuality," "registers of voice"), the meanings of signs and thus ideologies can never be fixed. For Billig (1988), ideological reproduction is often infused with indeterminacy and contradictions/arguments. In dramaturgical terms, there is no "script," only "interpretative repertoires" (Potter and Wetherell 1987), rhetorical goals, devices and constraints.

²⁸ As opposed to textual subjects, Cf. Willemsen 1978, 48 later.

In reviewing these theories, my aim is less to reject ideological determinism and celebrate “semiotic democracy” than to find a satisfactory explanation of the extent and limits of ideological determination. What is unsatisfactory about many theories of determination is that the postulation of static “deep/underlying structures” necessitates a de-linking with surface variations and particularities and a privileging of *langue* over *parole*. This over-emphasises abstract structuring effects at the expense of a localised account of how structures may or may not be (faithfully) reproduced through human agency (Lechte 1994, 75). For Willemen (1978, 48; Østerud 2000, 126), there is an unbridgeable gap between “real” readers/authors and “inscribed” ones, constructed (in and by the text). For Willemen, real readers are subjects in history, living in social formations, rather than mere subjects in a single text. Secondly, conceptually, such trivialising of surface variations also compromises the explanatory power of the theory. Without some understanding of the process/mechanism of structuration, it would not be possible to understand whether theorised/objective correlations are meaningful or coincidental²⁹ (e.g., the issue of “control variables”); and if they are meaningful, whether it is a case of causality, amplification or dialecticism.

Foucault’s and Marx’s theories offer us insights into what constitute a good theory of determination because they are “deterministic” in different ways. Marx’s theory is objective without being totalising while Foucault’s theory focuses on subjective process but is totalising. Marx’s theory can be said to be more deterministic than Foucault in that Marx posits objective structural determinations (of the superstructure by the base structure) while Foucault focuses on the micro bio-processes through which objective structures become inscribed and subjectively real for individuals. On the other hand, Foucault’s theory can be said to be more deterministic (totalising): Marx actively theorises social change while Foucault sees power as being dispersed and its disciplinary effects as inescapable.

Looking at these two types of determination, it would appear that what makes a good theory is the extent to which objective processes and theories of social

²⁹ E.g., Bourdieu (1992) distinguishes between correlation and explanation.

change are articulated through subjectivised lenses. Indeed, without attendant explanations of micro-processes, the assumption of hypodermic ideological effects problematically implies that ideological success can be achieved merely with the implementation of ideological projects. What is missing from such coarse correlation between objective structures/projects and their ideological effect can be found in Gramsci's distinction between domination and leadership or governance by consent – the subject's active cooperation/complicity. Looking at the particular, local and the subjective allows us to identify the mechanisms through which objective structures become subjectively "real" in subjects' lives and through which power/structure is mystified and naturalised.

II. Beyond cognitivism: the rhetorical turn to contextualism

To understand the process of subjectification or internalisation, social psychological theories are especially useful. Depending on where meaning is believed to be located – in the "script," in the "head," in social structures/representations, in the "context," etc. – different approaches incline us towards different projects of interpretation. This is because our claim to know/represent the "Other" or "masses" is premised on assumptions that there are relatively consistent or (context) unvarying "attitudes"/"opinions" without which the project of interpretation would be impossible.

More mechanical social psychological models posit some form of cognitive symbolic structures. Believing that the prime task of social science is to study "the thinking society" Moscovici (1981; 1984) and Farr (1990) build their theories of social representations based on Durkheim's concept of collective representations. For them, people are socialised into communities and inherit the accumulated received wisdom of their community. These symbolic structures (mechanically) govern the actor's creation of their shared realities and, Billig (1991, 7) argues, remove the autonomy of thinking from the individual.

While Moscovici and Farr postulate a *direct* process of transference of social representations into individual representations, Van Dijk (1985) and Fairclough

(1989) use the concept of "mental structures"³⁰ to postulate a mediating cognitive process that occurs in the individual's mind. The separation of the cognitive process into two stages accords actors relative autonomy from the symbolic structure. The transference of social structures to mental structures may be mechanical but the process of forming an opinion from one's mental structures is less prescribed since individuals exercise subjectivity/choice in assembling options from their cognitive resources (Garrett and Bell 1998, 6-13).

For these theories, the mind is seen as the centre of meaning making and subjects are seen as mental beings. Neale observed that many analytical categories place a strong emphasis on cognition and associate ideology with mind (Neale 1977, 10/11/18; Willemen 1978, 45-47). Willemen (1978, 58) attributes the over-emphasis on cognitivism to psycholinguistic, to Lacanian theories that argue that self-awareness emerges through language and to empiricist standards that demand that only "text" counts as evidence (Willemen 19878, 43-7).

Such assumptions of cognitivist subjects seem to stem from/affirm a liberal paradigm. Foucauldians³¹ describes Western liberal subjects as subjects who are encouraged to become cognitively aware ethical subjects who self-disciplines themselves into ideological consistency (e.g., individuals who hold on to principles regardless of contextual variations.) By contrast, the moral subjects that "Asian Democracy" attempts to cultivate should have a high tolerance of cognitive dissonance (Cf. Pye and Pye 1985). It is vital that the good "Asian" subject does not strive for ethical/ideological consistency but tries to live harmoniously with others by observing the right *contextual* codes of conduct (e.g., the 5 hierarchical Confucian relations). While liberal subjects are expected to stand by their principles even if it inconveniences them, moral (Confucian) subjects take the path of least resistance, thereby maintaining the cherished "Asian" value of social harmony. [Indeed, should moral subjects attempt to live ethically, they may not be able to cope in a moral society where they have to conform to others' expectations

³⁰ Traditional semantics (linguistics) is replete with analogies of the human minds to library filing systems, with further analogies of memory to acts of retrieving old files and cataloguing away current information.

or in an “Asian (authoritarian) democracy” where what they want must be subordinated to the social consensus – or what imagined “others” want.]

Additionally, there is significant empirical evidence against the cognitivist premise that there are consistent attitudes inside people’s heads – entities that social psychology studies and political science polls seek to categorise and quantify. As early as 1970s, Pollock (1976, 229) has explained that people reproduce stereotypical knowledge when they feel caught by the need to give an opinion when they lack one. Recent findings also indicate that “opinions” are extremely sensitive to contexts and changing the wording of questions can bring about *systematic* changes in responses (Zaller 1992). Coming from an American quantitative tradition, Zaller (1992) argues that there is no such thing as attitudes, only “considerations” and that survey responses are a function of the immediately accessible or “salient” considerations – which are typically those of the media’s/elite’s. To summarise all this as being the expression of an ‘attitude’ or as a ‘predisposition’ is to undermine the rhetorical complexity of opinion giving (Billig 1991, 16). Similarly arguing that meaning is not independent of rhetorical goals, Østerud (2000, 125-126) criticises Hall’s encoding-decoding model³² for failing to recognise that “use” (contextual meaning) and (textual) meaning is not separated and that “use” is not a “secondary phenomenon” but rather a factor that influences how a message is decoded.

These empirical findings have led theorists to move away from cognitivism to contextualism, where meaning is not located inside people’s heads waiting to be uncovered but is seen to be constructed in (contextualised) discourse, e.g., Knorr-Cetina’s (1988) methodological situationalism. Nowhere is this departure more clear than in the work of members of the Discourse And Rhetoric Group (DARG) at Loughborough University. Rejecting Fairclough’s (1989) and Van Dijk’s (1982;

³¹ Cf. Barry, Osborne and Rose (1996).

³² According to Hall (1980a, 130): “Before this message can have an “effect” (however defined), satisfy a “need” or be put to a “use,” it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded. It is this set of decoded meanings which “have an effect,” influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioural consequences.”

1985; 1998) “mental structures” and “attitudes” approaches, Potter and Wetherell (1987, 7) make clear their opposition to various types of discourse determinism (cognitivist, linguistic, sociolinguistic) in their book, provocatively entitled “Discourse and social structure: beyond attitude and behaviour.” While Van Dijk argues that people hold racist *attitudes* because they internalise the media’s (collective) representations (and are thus racist or un-racist), Potter and Wetherell argue that racism is not a mental/cognitive attribute of actors but arises in/through discourse.

Besides this discursive turn towards social psychology, DARG’s approach is further distinguished by a rhetorical turn where ideology/structure is not seen as a “script” but as a resource manipulated through rhetorical devices to achieve rhetorical goals. E.g., Potter and Wetherell use the notion of “interpretative repertoire” to capture this rhetorical nature of the subject. For another DARG member Billig (1987), subjects are fundamentally rhetorical or “argumentative” beings. Social interactions – and even the act of thinking in private – are seen as inherently dialogic (Bahktin 1981); actors are constantly defending, persuading and negotiating with (internalised) others. I.e., conversation is not merely “talk” or the expression of personal attitudes, but “action” directed at the achievement of rhetorical goals (Hagen and Wasko 2000, 20).

DARG members acknowledge structuring effects to different degrees. For Potter and Wetherell, ideological frames are resources rather than constraints. Despite drawing heavily from Foucault, there is an unwillingness to acknowledge structuring effects. This is due less to a naivety about media/ideological effects than them being rigorously discursive. Ideology, race and class are seen as *effects* of discourse rather than being pre-discursive; i.e., subjects are not racial and their discourses cannot be explained by their race. Instead the issue is whether and how “race” is sustained through discourse. While this comes close to Hall’s (1996b) notion of race as a floating signifier, their perspective is constructivist without being historical and sociological and intensely (micro-)contextual without

being embedded in (macro-) contexts.³³ Their perspective lacks a consideration of how, over time, meanings and positions can accumulate into sociological traits/patterns or “predispositions” (Parkin 1971; 1974; Bourdieu 1984) through being inscribed onto the body, commonsense or interpretative communities (Fish 1980).

Billig's (1991, 3; 1992) elegant argument that thinking is ideological *and* rhetorical/argumentative allows for a more dialectical perspective where subjects are both structured by and manipulative of ideology. Meanings are created within ideologies and are inherently rhetorical (rhetorically constructed by the individual) while the use of rhetoric by the individual in turn reflects the patterns of ideology. Thus, while commonsensical thinking replicates ideology, it can also serve as a rhetorical resource. In my research, I am interested in whether government discourses are replicated faithfully or hijacked for personal rhetorical goals. However, it would be insufficient to think of ideologies as either a constraint or resource because they can be subverted despite an actor's intention of faithful reproduction. I.e., it is insufficient, if even possible, to identify the rhetorical goals of the actor because the effects are often more important than the actor's rhetorical goals.³⁴

III. Beyond rationality/intentionality to effects

The shortcoming with the above approaches is the incomplete transcendence of cognitivism. While arguing that meaning emerges through discourse rather than resides in the mind (“mental structure theories), DARG emphasises context without giving up on cognitivism totally through focusing narrowly on the mind as the key agent in the process of meaning production. Although there is less emphasis on the consistency of meaning, the DARG's postulation of a rhetorical,

³³ Another way of phrasing this critique is to suggest that what they are doing is not “social” psychology but “interpersonal” psychology.

³⁴ This will become evident in Chapter 7's argument of “rhetorical compliance” and “aura of consensus.” This focus of effects is also important to understand “unintended consequences” and the function served by the state/media's construction of “moral majority.”

argumentative subject, especially by Billig, emphasises the logical, goal-oriented subject with “rhetorical devices” and “interpretative repertoires.”

This assumption of the rational, goal-oriented subject, which also underlies rational choice theories and “Uses and Gratification” theories, is problematic because it overlooks firstly the unintended consequences or effects of intentional actions. Hall reminds us that hegemony is the unity achieved across different classes regardless of their different “motivations” or intentions. This means that hegemony may be sustained by apathy (Abercrombie et al 1980) or even by seemingly counter-hegemonic forms. E.g., Neale (1977) examines how critical art films can have propaganda effects while Hall (1988b, 176) argues that the hegemony of Thatcherism was sustained less by rational/calculated identification with her economic policies than by her articulation of their irrational fantasies and anxieties:

People don't vote for Thatcherism ... because they believe the small print... What Thatcherism ... as an ideology does, is to address fears, the anxieties, the lost identities, of a people. It invites us to think about politics in images. It is addressed to our collective fantasies.

Secondly, the emphasis on the rational subject prevents us from appreciating that ideology may be more effectively inscribed through pleasure and irrationality. This perception of the subject as strictly pragmatic/rational is a significant weakness in Zaller's argument that public opinion is a function of (mental) “considerations” and “predispositions.” Despite acknowledging the non-rational influences on opinions/meaning-making, he leaves the notion of “predispositions” unexplained, in contrast to his careful theorisation of “considerations.” This distinction between the different aspects of audience agency - rational/intentional versus unconscious/non-deliberate – is also an issue of contention between Curran (1996) and Morley (1996). In his critique of “new revisionism” in audience research, Curran tries to demonstrate that the notion of active audience also forms the basis for studies in the 1940s and 1950s. However, these early studies define audience activity strictly in terms of selective use, rather than as meaning construction (Hagen and Wasko 2000, 15-16).

Studies have pointed out that ideological processes are also located at the level of the “unthought.” Morley (1992, 79-80) argues that in the long-term, the media influences interpretative frameworks and categories of thought. Chessbro (1984, 120) argues that television works to provide general orientation of awareness; Corcoran (1984, 138) argues that the medium (rather than the message) is the ideology, e.g., in its ability to frame conventions and time orientations (Gumpert and Cathcart 1982, 23). For Brummett (1991, 6-7, 13-18), the televisual logic is dramatic and anecdotal. Many Marxist theories also see media effect as non-specific or attitudinal and in terms of the categories or frameworks induced through habits of thought and discourse (Blumler and Gurevitch 1985, 238-239/262-263). For Marxists and other structuralists, “it is above all as *structures* that [ideologies] impose on the ... men, not via their consciousness” (Heck 1980, 122).

Similarly, Bourdieu (1992), Gramsci (1971) and Hall (1996a) argue that society is inscribed onto subjectivity through practices and commonsense. For Gramsci and Hall, commonsense has an element of “irrationality” to it. Gramsci (1971, 323/419) saw commonsense as a sedimentary collection of previously organic ideologies, ranging from folklore, superstitions, received wisdom and popular science. For Hall (1977, 325), commonsense is non-reflexive:

It is precisely its ‘spontaneous’ quality, its transparency, its ‘naturalness,’ *its refusal to be made to examine the premise on which it is founded*, its resistance to change or to correction... which makes commonsense, at one and the same time, ‘spontaneous,’ ideological and unconscious.

These approaches vitally acknowledge that everyday practices and pleasures of popular culture cannot lie outside ideological formations and that the pleasures of popular culture must be implicated in the ways in which hegemony is secured and maintained (Ang 1985). For Rose (1992), the pleasures and aura of freedom are vital for ideological success – the transformation of public morality as personal ethics - in liberal societies. Hall (1977, 325) also reminds us that hegemony is maintained less through ideological consistency than through the inconsistent and fragmented commonsense. Together, these theories imply that it is more through unthinking habits and pleasure than cognitively mediated forms that ideologies

become inscribed and taken-for-granted. It could even be said that ideologies are most successful when ideological contradictions are rendered invisible (naturalised as commonsense), reproduced rather than resolved by citizens. E.g., Billig (1988) uses the term "ideological dilemma" to underline that it is not only consistent ideologies that are reproduced but that ideological contradictions can also be reproduced/naturalised as personal ideological dilemmas. Just as Weber argues that the capitalist ethic was an unintended consequences of Calvinist Protestant dilemmas, hegemony is not necessarily intentionally reaffirmed by citizens and is sustained in spite of (or even through) ambiguous communications, contradictory ideological reproduction and even intentions of resistance (Neale 1977).

This does not constitute a repudiation of the idea that meanings are situated in contexts, but a repudiation that they are necessarily mediated by the mind, conscious/deliberate thought or intentional action. This realisation - that ideology is maintained and negotiated not only through intentionality but also through being unthinking - creates epistemological and methodological problems. Is it still possible to access meanings, to claim to know our subjects, to re-present or capture "the popular?"

This suggests that analysis is often merely a form of "popular ventriloquism" (Frow in Morley 1992, 31), where there is an unacknowledged "substitution of the voice of a middle-class intellectual for that of the users of popular culture" and that analysts often resort to the fact of "being there" (Geertz 1988) to argue for the superiority and "truth" of their particular account.

While such privileging of the researcher's "first-hand" experience is difficult to avoid in my analysis, I will try as far as possible to incorporate primary material to allow readers to develop an independent interpretation. Part of this strategy includes identifying multiple interpretations of the same phenomenon, whether through comparing my analysis with that of other scholars or through identifying different levels/layers of meanings. Let me illustrate the latter with the infamous example – in local popular songs – that Singaporeans are "famous for complaining" (in private).

As an utterance in itself, a complaint can be read literally as an expression of dissatisfaction. However, reading a complaint inter-textually frequently produces a contrary reading – how serious/significant is it, and what is the meaning of a complaint or the act of complaining in the speaker's overall discourse? The complainer may be a fervent anti-government critic or someone who is generally satisfied but critical of some "side-effects," e.g., a phrase that recurs is "despite these, the PAP has done a good job." Indeed, I would even argue that, far from indicating dissent, such complaints indicate a high level of consent since citizens choose to accept the government *despite* their awareness of "side effects" Hence, hegemony may be more convincingly indicated not by the absence of dissent/complaints but by citizens' complicity in subordinating/privatising dissent (cf. Mouffe 1982, 219).³⁵

The act of complaining takes on a third meaning when viewed contextually or extra-textually, such as when the speaker's rhetorical goal and targeted audience³⁶ is considered. There were moments during the interviews when I felt that my interviewees were communicating with an audience other than myself. Through thinking about these "hidden" audiences, originally irrelevant statements become the most insightful and important.³⁷ In some subcultures (e.g., coffeeshop or "artsy"), citizens may criticise the government to appear "alternative/hip." It is a taboo in Singapore society to ask anyone how he or she voted – this is because it may be embarrassing (losing face) for a person to confess that he voted for the PAP. Finally, the ideological/hegemonic effect of this act must also be considered. It may be a way of "letting off steam" so that the system would not explode. In this

³⁵ For Leys (1990), the hegemony of Thatcherism was indicated by how even critics of Thatcher could not bring themselves to vote Labour. (i.e., by spoilt votes rather than opposition votes).

³⁶ In an authoritarian society, the researcher (with a recorder in hand) represents a unique type of "audience." This will be dealt with in Chapter 3.

³⁷ A good example is HO's defence that she was not "a stupid housewife" in response to my seemingly innocent question of "which newspapers do you read?" (Chapter 6B). It was not until I remembered her telling me about her educated snobbish neighbours that I understood that it was they, not me, who were her "real" audience. (Also see "moral majority" and "the burden of social expectations" in Chapter 6).

way, citizens may passively “support” or reproduce the state without discursively doing so and despite their intention.

Finally, even though thicker descriptions can generate more layers of meanings, Morley (1992, 15) argues that it is not the case of the more context the better, as Dahlgren (in Corner 1991, 280) implies. Morley rejects Corner's distinction between micro ethnographic research and macro research into media power and argues that context-bound (“ethnographic”) research is valuable only insofar as it explains “how media power ... operates in the micro-contexts of consumption.” As such, the quality of my interpretation should be judged by the extent to which they bridge the micro and the macro.

IV. Practice, performance, posture: subjecthood and hegemony

What concepts would allow us to go beyond behaviourism and cognitivism to take into account the subjective, particular, and even biographical (Willis 1980; Mills 1959) mechanisms through which ideology is naturalised and hegemony maintained? In this section, I will compare the different conceptualisations of subjecthood and argue for “posture” as a superior category for thinking about ideological processes.

The notion of “performance” is developed from Goffman's (1973) theory about impression management in front/back-stages. Performing subjects are deemed to have a backstage, more authentic self (that is less impressions-managed) and often, have a sense of an abstract, transcendental and reflexive self — one that is conscious of and even disturbed by the “problem” of inconsistent selves. This contrasts with the goals of the PAP's project to Confucianise subjects, where ideal subjects conform to social expectations or public morality (e.g., the 5 hierarchical Confucian relationships) rather than personal ethics.

The notion of “subject position” operates within a similar paradigm of the liberal ethical subject/project, where inconsistency in the self is seen as problematic, e.g.,

as (cognitive) “dissonance.” Usually implied rather than verified,³⁸ each subject position tends to be conceived of as un-encumbered by internal contradictions³⁹ and approximating to the purity associated with “langue” rather than “parole” categories. Such a pejorative view of inconsistency as a “clash” contrasts starkly with Taoist and Buddhist notions of ideal subjecthood, which see opposition as inherent and as something to be balanced/harmonised rather than to be resolved, as dialectical rather than dualistic.

Leaving aside “performance” (backstage/frontstage selves) and “subject positions” - concepts that imply cognitivist subjects seeking ideological coherence – I want to suggest “posture” as a concept to talk about ideological reproduction and contestation, a concept that is inspired by the anthropological works of James Scott (1990, 1985). Studying peasant resistance in three Southeast Asian societies, he described how powerless peasants who could not overtly articulate their resentment (without jeopardizing their subsistence) resorted to embedding their dissent in acts of civility (Cf. 1990, 139-182), e.g., farting while bowing, or wearing fake smiles. Unlike cognitivist (ethical) subjects who may experience ideological ‘doubleness’ as troubling, Scott observed that such doubleness had become a form of “routine resistance” (1985, 255-274) that actually served to salvage the self-esteem of these peasants (1990, 7).

“Posture” bears many similarities with other concepts; “habitus” and “practice” are especially complimentary. All three concepts focus on embodied subjects in their material contexts – what Willemsen (1978, 48) described as “real subjects” as opposed to “textual subjects.” All three concepts see culture as being re-made on an everyday basis, and in a way that is often unthinking, if not unconscious.

³⁸ “Subject position” seems more popular among textualists than anthropologists, perhaps because pure subjects cease to exist when submerged in context. Cf. Criticism of textualism earlier.

³⁹ Hall’s earlier distinction between polysemy and pluralism (which I described as ambiguous versus multiple readings) is relevant here. Textually motivated subject positions may be multiple but seldom ambiguous.

However, these three terms all emphasize different aspects of this process. "Habitus" (Bourdieu 1984) tends to de-emphasize agency by theorizing subjects as products of their (sociological) "habitus." "Practice," by comparison, focuses on subjects as active agents, who constantly re-make their "habitus" but this perspective often ignores wider questions about social inequality. Especially in anthropological studies, "practice" tends to focus on those practices that agents *can* and *do* perform (e.g., Hobart 1986), with little consideration of agents' (lack of) access to the forms of cultural capital necessary in order to perform different practices, i.e., of practices that agents *do not* or *cannot* perform. De Certeau's (1984) distinction between the "strategies" of the powerful and the "tactics" of the weak, Bourdieu's (1984) notion of "cultural capital" and Scott's (1985) theorization of the "weapons of the weak" are noteworthy. While acknowledging the (semiotic) freedom of the subject, they also situate such practices within a wider context of power and acknowledge that there are various types of limits – semiotic, socio-economic or political - limitations to agents' freedom to carry out symbolic practices.

It is almost impossible to think of "posture" without simultaneously thinking about the environment (habitus) and habits (practice) that produce it. Indeed, it is this quality of articulating the other two concepts that makes 'posture' a useful way of thinking about ideological/cultural reproduction. Articulated in terms of the other two concepts, posture can be seen as the accumulated effects of habitualised practices (Cf. Lull 1988 on "ritualized practices") and recurring (personal-sociological or interpersonal) habitus-es. By focusing on effects, "posture" focuses of the process of inscription of social discourses over time. To highlight the effects of inscription is to also highlight the way that ideological effects have a certain durability. Postures are not subject positions or postmodern identities displayed in show-windows that subjects can simply purchase/consume and occupy, but must be cultivated over time through repetitive practices. Yet, while durable, postures can also be changed with effort and awareness.

The concept of "posture" connotes the embodiment of practices and sets up expectations of visual description of these embodied practices, which further

implies a reliance on ethnographic observations. Yet, while I am directly interested in citizens' doubleness and posturing (e.g., reading ethnic newspapers only when one is reminded that one is an inadequate Malay/Indian), the fact that resistance in an authoritarian society must always be disguised makes it inappropriate for this research to rely primarily on observational modes of ethnography.

Although local pop songs describe Singaporeans as "famous for complaining," what is so frustrating about studying (strategies of managing) dissent in an authoritarian society is that one does not always have direct access to those who perform such resistance and that one can never be sure of the meaning of their acts. As Scott (1990, 139) observed, "at the most basic level, ... techniques [of resistance] can be divided into those that disguise the message and those that disguise the messenger."

Both types of examples abound in Singapore, and I would argue, are not amenable to ethnographic research. For those acts of resistance whose meanings are clear, the identity of the actor must be anonymous. Performers of such type of resistance, such as vandalism and not flushing public toilets⁴⁰, cannot be easily traced unless interviewees "brag" about them during the interview – an unlikely situation especially since the interviewer confronts the interviewee as a stranger and who may or may not prove trustworthy since these acts are punishable by law.

If such "actors" are difficult to find, actors of the second type of resistance are even more difficult to identify, since it is not always clear if they are in fact 'resisting', as they must perform their resisting posture *while staying within the law* (Scott 1990, 138). As such, these acts are usually "too ambiguous to be actionable by authorities" (Scott 1990, 139), as they could always be attributed to carelessness or coincidence. The meanings of such acts of resistance are often so subjective that it is difficult for the researcher to know, without checking their meaning with the actor (which is in turn premised upon the assumption that

⁴⁰ The government had become so frustrated by this that it launched a "Flush the toilet" campaign along with a fine for not flushing, although there are no toilet police appointed.

meaning is authorially determined, rather than through the process of reading). For instance, a friend voluntarily told me that he leaves a middle shirt button unbuttoned – something that I would not have noticed - as a refusal to be completely “proper.” There are also acts that are more visible, such as the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women. However, it is not always clear whether these women wear them out of deference for tradition or as a protest about official secularism, or a mixture of both.

Because ethnographic observations are often inadequate for ascertaining the meanings of these acts, I followed up on what observations of resistance I could identify in the interviews. Besides asking observation-based questions⁴¹, I also asked more generic questions as to how interviewees “let off steam” or react when confronted with social expectations. Many of their responses, from joking to sourcing for rumors, are listed in Chapter 6CIII and 6DIII.

The implications of filtering ethnographic observations into the interviews mean that the presentation of the interview material appears in a particular format – neither as my ethnographic notes nor block-quoted in interviewee’s own words, but re-told in my own voice. This is because firstly, interviewees’ narration of their practices tended to be repetitive and hesitant, and since these conversations took place in the interviewees’ natural settings (e.g., homes), there were often interruptions. Given the space constraints in this dissertation, block-quoting my interview conversations did not seem practical. Secondly, the meaning of the interviewee’s practices can only be appreciated when situated within a wider semiotic, (sub-)cultural context that is tacitly shared between myself and the interviewee. Because I could not ask the interviewee to explicate during the interviews without losing rapport, I found it necessary to then ‘vocalize’ my

The media also had their own “Toilets of shame” – which regularly featured the nation’s dirtiest toilets in order to shame them into improving.

⁴¹ E.g., why professional women wear headscarves to work (“is there a special reason why you wear headscarf?”), why self-proclaimed Westernised citizens would have a 20kg sack of rice (“why do you have so much rice?”), why some students wear colourful dental braces (“I bet your friends think it’s cool! (not nerdy)), whether the designer clothes that working class subjects wear are genuine (“this outfit is lovely, how much did you pay for it?/where can I get it?”).

understanding of the semiotic context, so that the reader can understand the significance of the interviewees' practices.

In this dissertation, I use the notion of "posture" to highlight the non-cognitive and non-behaviourist processes through which ideology is reproduced in everyday life. I use different postures to capture how citizens balance their personal values and ways of knowing with those of the media's. For instance, how would gaps between national and personal reality be bridged (if citizens are even aware of them)—through discrediting personal knowledge or doubting the media? Drawing from Morley's (1980) application of Hall's model of 3 types of readings (dominant, negotiated, oppositional), I expand their criteria to include the relevance/awareness of dominant ideology and modify the unit of analysis from uni-dimensional reading positions to strategies of coping with different versions of reality. To what extent do citizens' version of reality resonate with official representations of reality and where there is no match, how are "reality gaps" bridged: through de-legitimizing their own version or through doubting the media?

The posture of unconditional acceptance describes the refutation of dissent and the reproduction of official discourse. The posture of conditional acceptance describes the neutralisation of dissent (whether due to a genuine appreciation of the state or through apathy) and/or the reproduction of dominant frames. The posture of tolerance describes privatisation without neutralisation of dissent. Citizens are not necessarily convinced of the illegitimacy of their opinions but conform out of a perceived lack of choice (fear or belief that there is "no viable alternatives.") The posture of challenge describes the refusal to privatise dissent and the attempt to work towards the creation of a "viable alternative;" however, in this posture, dissent can sometimes be subordinated [Cf. Chapter 6.]

My research direction is guided by theories that hegemony is maintained less through ideological identification than through the unintended effects of less-cognitively mediated practices of privatising and subordinating dissent – through deference, conformity, rhetorical compliance – rather than through belief and active consent. Through "postures," I want to explore the subtle link between

citizens' everyday discourse and political legitimacy: government legitimacy is not necessarily achieved through citizen's belief but rather through their unwitting, unintentional reproduction, through inscribing ideology onto everyday practices and over time, moulding citizens' very posture.

2D. HEGEMONY REVISITED: A DISCURSIVE UNITY/CENTRE AND ITS INSTITUTIONAL MATERIALITY

Although hegemony seeks to distinguish government by consent (leadership) from government by coercion (domination), Gramsci and Hall argue that it is not indicated by the absence of coercion but by consent to coercion, e.g., through identifying common enemies or to arrive at consensual definition of what constitutes normality and deviance.

Neither is it unproblematic to conceptualise hegemony as a "match" or resonance between elite and popular discourse. Firstly, to think of hegemony as governance by "consent" is misleading since hegemony tends to be sustained less through conviction and belief than through tacit consensus and apathy. Additionally, as Mattleart (1983, 27-28) observes, the consumption/reproduction of ideologies exercise a transformative effect on them:

Subdued and even consenting, often [ethnic] Indians *converted* the liturgies [of their Spanish colonisers], the representations or laws which they were forced to accept, into *something other* than what the conqueror hoped to obtain through their imposition; they subverted them not by challenging or changing them, but by their way of using them for and in the function of references that were outside the system they could not escape from.

To say that ideologies are transformed through consumption is not tantamount to the dismissal of the possibility of hegemony. Rather, hegemony is not to be indicated by the absence of ideological variations, but by the presence of ideological unity despite local transformations.

If Leys (1990, 127) is right, that for ideologies to be hegemonic, it is not necessary that they are loved, merely that they have no serious rivals, then the presence of dissent or "mismatches" would not indicate non-hegemony. If Fiske (1986, 293) is

right, that "in order to be popular, [an ideology] must reach a wide diversity of audience and, to be chosen by them, must be an open text that allows the various subcultures to generate meanings from it that meets the needs of subcultural identities," then variations and dissent may even be a necessary condition for the pronouncement of hegemony. Most citizens have some complaints against their governments and it is too simplistic to dismiss governments as un-hegemonic on this basis. Indeed, I argue in Chapter 7 that it may well be the case that complaints (privatised dissent) should be read as an indication of, rather than counter-evidence against government hegemony.

Thus, I would suggest that hegemony be understood as a form of limited heterogeneity and especially, following Leys' analysis of Thatcherism, a heterogeneity that does not stake "a viable alternative." Because of a perceived lack of ideological/political alternatives, dissent may be incorporated or subordinated to the prevailing (even if reluctant) consensus. This conceptualisation of a minimal ideological unity – a "teeth-gritting" (Hall 1978) and reluctant one - allows us a way to bridge the seeming impasse that Poulantzas faced between Foucault's irreducible discursive heterogeneity and Gramsci's ideological unity.

The second impasse that Poulantzas' theory faces is the question of whether it is possible to ground such discursive unity to the material/economic (i.e., the base structure of relations of production.) I would suggest that the key to this impasse is to recall Hall's reminder that the state may be absent not inadvertently but by design.

Firstly, if a (minimal) discursive unity can be identified ("there is no viable alternative") within popular discourse, the nature of its content can provide insight into whether it coincides with values espoused by elite projects or whether it perpetuates authority (regardless of citizens' "intentions"). Indeed, to what extent is this discursive unity a form of commonsense that works to de-legitimise alternatives and render them unthinkable or unviable?

Secondly, it is important to think about how the site of this discursive unity – whether commonsense or in this dissertation, “face,” social expectations and “the silent majority” – can precisely be the institution that state ideologies are grafted on, allowing the state to be absent while allowing its ideologies to acquire a certain “institutional materiality.”

In my dissertation, I will use the term “moral centre” to refer to this relatively autonomous (from the state) organic/civil institution⁴² where state ideologies are inscribed and disseminated. This term is borrowed from Neale's (1977, 14) use of “centre” to highlight the way that ideological dominance is not maintained only by the reproduction of preferred readings but that even seemingly oppositional or critical discourses can serve propaganda purposes.

This conceptualisation of hegemony as a minimal ideological unity based on centrality/relevance rather than identification or actual reproduction is especially suitable for Singapore. Like Neale, LKY believes that the project of hegemony should not aim to eliminate dissent but maintain the relevance or “centrality” of dominant frames and standards of morality in public life. Indeed, LKY goes so far as to argue that citizens' (private) identification with values of this moral centre is a non-issue; it suffices that they conform to it in public. I.e., it suffices that dominant ideologies serve as a moral centre or “middleground” (a term the PAP uses to describe its ideological strategy) - a well demarcated area with clearly set norms (consensus) of what is il/legitimate, im/moral, Asian/Western - within which contestation is confined.

This is because hegemony is not about citizens' agreement/disagreement with government *opinions* or values, but citizens' affirmation of their centrality/relevance and using them as frames to make sense of the world. I.e., it may be more useful

⁴² In chapter 7, I will argue that these civil institutions perform in Asian societies the same function that civil societies perform in Western society. This argument is made in response to the observation by many theorists (including Gramsci) of the absence of civil societies in Asia.

to think of hegemony as the privatisation and subordination⁴³ of dissent than as the absence of dissent. The strategy of subordination of dissent also serves to render ideological alternatives unthinkable – less in the sense of being logically unimaginable (and thus dissent being completely absent) than of being considered “impossible” or “unviable,” despite consideration.

In Singapore, globally hegemonic ideological alternatives such as Western capitalism and democracy are not unimaginable, but made “unthinkable” through rendering them unviable for the present or for “the nation.” The “Asian Values” argument that economics is more important than democracy postpones the relevance of democracy indefinitely. Communitarianism, by obliging citizens to subordinate their personal (= selfish) wants to what is good for society, denigrates dissenting desires as unviable and allows government values to remain socially relevant/central, despite being privately seen as meaningless by many citizens.

To reiterate, I am interested in how the values of a one-party government are kept central and relevant for society and how political legitimacy is reproduced in everyday citizen discourse. To this end, I have suggested that hegemony may be more accurately and effectively maintained by rhetorical conformity and apathy than by (behaviouristic) obedience and convicted (cognitivist) belief. Having established the types of processes that would help us understand the process of hegemony, let us move on to discuss how to look for them.

⁴³ This understanding of hegemony as subordination is rather unique since hegemony is more frequently thought of as incorporation (Hall 1977, 331-333; Brown 1993) This may be due to the particular ideologies under study – liberalism seems to have greater “elective affinity” with incorporatist strategies while communitarianism, with subordination strategies. See Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion.

CHAPTER 3 FIELD ISSUES

FINDING IDEOLOGICAL CONTESTATIONS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

3A. FIELDWORK GOALS

My research is concerned with the everyday legitimisation of authority through the popular reproduction of dominant discourses. Although it takes popular discourses as its chief body of data, this data is only meaningful when seen in relation to dominant ideologies and more specifically, when considered in terms of the extent to which popular discourses affirm or contest authority.

To identify the “dominant ideology” in Singapore, I had hoped to rely on analyses by local scholars. To my disappointment, there were no analyses that I could immediately draw upon. Of the handful of scholars who study cultural projects in Singapore, most saw them as what the government claimed they were – nation-building rather as ideological projects. The only two works (Chua 1995; Hill and Lian 1995) that attempted an ideological analysis of culture identified “Asian values/communitarianism” as the dominant ideology for the maintenance of party dominance.

Their analyses were problematic for me because they miss a vital level of analysis – economics or “base structure;” after all, these scholars admit that economics remains the PAP’s most important basis of legitimacy. This implies that the relation between culture and politics is mediated by economics. Perhaps, as I argued, communitarianism serves as a supplementary subdominant ideology (to the dominant ideology of competitiveness) that allows for a re-amalgamation of capitalism and authoritarianism.

This identification of a mediating economic level meant that the project to identify the government’s ideological project required a two-pronged approach – the identifying of cultural ideologies and situating them within political-economic contexts.

To identify cultural ideologies, I drew on media coverage (from local and international, especially 1998-1999, when I was in Singapore for fieldwork). Media coverage was used in two ways. Firstly, campaign advertisements and related campaign press articles were used as a source of information about the various cultural campaigns and campaign strategies that the government used in their attempt to nation-build (Part 2).

Besides analysing media coverage of specific campaigns, I was also interested in general media effects on popular discourse. Because I was interested in only those media discourses that were actually *reproduced* in popular discourses - which tended to be fragmented and contradictory - it was difficult to trace them to daily media coverage, which tends to be event-specific. Instead, throughout my discussion of citizens' ways of knowing (and sources of knowledge) in Part 3, I try to highlight moments when citizens' discourses seemed to echo media discourses. For example, in Chapter 6A, dissent tended to be neutralized by the reproduction of the media's comparative frame of the economic crisis - even though citizens understood Singapore's economy to be worsening, they always qualified this observation with the cautionary statement that, "at least we're not doing as badly as Malaysia and Indonesia!" In Chapter 6B, the dissent of the "have-nots" is 'de-fused' by the belief that Singapore is meritocratic and that their children would be able to achieve the Singapore Dream - a myth that is kept alive by the media's highlighting of cases such as that of the working-class boy who receives government scholarships. In Chapter 6C, dissent is privatised through (the perception of) the burdens of social expectation, which could be traced to the media's constant reminders (through popular cartoons or soap operas, even one entitled "5Cs") that the "silent majority" values material success. In Chapter 6D, dissent is subordinated because citizens, even if they can imagine viable alternatives, perceive there to be no credible political opposition - a group that the media represents as clowns.

Besides identifying cultural ideologies, they also have to be situated in economic and political contexts. The lack of a political economy analysis of culture in Singapore meant that I had to look through a considerable quantity of economic

documents to establish how the cultural and the political were connected with the economic. The analysis derived from these materials will be discussed in various chapters (especially Chapter 4 and 5 on the political economy of social control and Chapters 7 and 8 in the discussion of the PAP's economic legitimacy).

To collect popular discourse, I spent 6 months (Aug 1998 to Feb 1999) in Singapore immersing myself in various forms of popular culture. Besides doing ethnography in coffeeshops and other popular "hangouts" (malls and cultural events), I conducted in-depth interviews and collected popular literature (from bookshops and websites) and citizens' letters to the press. Given the "authoritarian" environment, I also collected anonymous popular discourse such as jokes and rumours to develop a more rounded sense of the "feelings on the ground." Given that the methods of collecting popular discourse is less straightforward than that of collecting elite discourse, I will use this chapter to explain my fieldwork and analysis procedures.

3B. SAMPLE DESIGN

My understanding of hegemony as ideological unity *in spite of* pluralism (the subordination of dissent) means that my research has no vested interest in demonstrating the homogeneity of popular opinion or the prevalence of a particular position. Indeed, the persuasiveness of my analysis of hegemony requires that I first convey a sense of the breadth and messiness of the field, before describing how these different discourses work towards sustaining or challenging the status quo.

Given that I prioritise range over average, hesitations and contradictions over coherence, qualitative methods are more suitable because they embrace issues of interpretation and are context-sensitive (Mason 1997, 4). However, they tend to lack representativeness. While many qualitative researchers respond by weakening their claims (to the extent of dropping all claims to represent the wider population), this response compromises the potential significance of qualitative research. In studying hegemony, the analysis of commonsense allows for a certain

claim to generalizability even from a small sample. There would be no need to demonstrate the numerical frequency of commonsensical statements because readers⁴⁴ would intuitively know how prevalent these discourses are. Indeed, Durkheim (1965) and Foucault (1965) remind us that representativeness – what is average or normal – is not always the opinion of a numerical majority, but expert knowledge that has become a “preferred reading” that each of us expect others to “prefer.”

In downplaying the problem of representativeness, I am not trying to avoid a discussion of issues in qualitative sampling. Rather, this is an issue I want to return to, but only after considering sample variables, because the size of a qualitative sample also depends on the types of variables we want to sample for.

1. Sample variables

In selecting which variables to sample, I am particularly concerned with those variables that would allow me to methodologically control for media influence. This is not because, in studying how successful the government is in gaining consent to its ideology, I accord an automatic importance to the media or its effects. Indeed, my dissertation recognizes that consent can be gained in many ways — Chapter 4 describes attempts to secure popular identification through policies (e.g., housing, employment) and not only (economic or cultural) ideologies.

The 1st-generation PAP government's ideological projects were largely founded upon economic policies and economic ideologies. Since the late 1980s, the 2nd-generation government increasingly relied on “Asian Values” and other cultural policies to secure legitimacy, and these campaigns were largely – if not solely, as Chua (1995) argues, media campaigns.

The media are important also because Singapore is famed as “Campaign Country.” While these campaigns tend to be accompanied by disciplinary policies (whether educational, correctional or fiscal— Singapore is also famed as “Fine

⁴⁴ Especially Singaporeans but hopefully, also readers familiar with capitalist culture.

Country”), the media is usually the key state apparatus to alter citizens’ perception. Thus, for the “Brush Your Teeth” campaign, while the Ministry of Health taught children to brush their teeth, it is MITA who was responsible for changing their perception of dental health. Additionally, as coercive policies become less acceptable to the citizenry, campaigns became increasingly a principally media event (Chua 1995).

The media are also important because for a vast majority of citizens, they are their only source of information about the nation. As an easily accessible source of knowledge, the media can considerably shape citizens’ perception of national reality.

While acknowledging the importance of the media, I also do not want to fall into a kind of media determinism. The media must be contextualized and be seen as only one of many “ways of knowing,” as a particular type of semiotic capital/resource that citizens may draw upon and as a particular government-led interpretative frame. A central fieldwork goal in my work is to locate alternative sources that citizens may draw upon in their “talk” about the nation, including the use of jokes and rumours. Analytically, I am particularly interested in comparing the use of governmental and non-governmental “ways of knowing” (whether personal observations or social knowledges drawn from “interpretative communities” such as “coffeeshoppers”).

GENERATION

It is this interest in non-governmental “ways of knowing” that leads me to select generation as the most important sample variable — one that would allow me to control for government/media influence.

This can be achieved through sampling and comparing pre-state citizens (who lived a considerable portion of their lives in pre-independent Singapore) with “post-state” citizens. For most countries, this opportunity to study pre-state citizens may not be available. Because Singapore is a very young nation-state (since 1965),

this research project has the rare opportunity of accessing this group of citizens, which allows for a "control" for government and media influence.

However, there are also problems with the assumption that pre-state citizens are "less ideologically influenced" by the media and the state. An especially plausible critique is that this group may be influenced by media exposure in post-state Singapore. However, I would argue that (post-independence) media influence is not as strong as readers may expect. When asked about their media habits, many senior interviewees (above the age of 60) told me that they had little contact with media. As poor immigrants from China and India, these immigrant-citizens were mostly illiterate.⁴⁵ The government's ban on dialect languages in broadcast media also meant that radio and televisual communications were inaccessible to them. Indeed, a typical complaint that the older generation had was that "they (broadcasters) speak Mandarin too fast." Many resort to listening to cassette music or rent dialect videos (e.g., Cantonese Hong Kong serials).

Secondly, I tried to select pre-state citizens who had spent their formative years in pre-state Singapore. By "generation" I refer primarily to the generation of political authority in which citizens spent their "formative years"⁴⁶ and secondarily to their own ancestry. E.g., "1st generation citizens" are citizens who spent their formative years under the 1st-generation PAP leadership.

⁴⁵ The extent of illiteracy cannot be underestimated. A pastor confided the older generation is nervous about going out alone because they could not read train station signs, fill forms or communicate with receptionists at hospitals and other public services. It is also common knowledge that dialect-speaking politicians are more popular at election rallies.

⁴⁶ Childhood, teenage, youth: It is difficult for me to give a concrete age, but a general guideline was to think of formative years as lasting till early 20s, when most post-state citizens would have started working.

Table 1: Generation as a sample variable

Generation category	Experience of types of government
Immigrant citizens, (pre-state citizens)	Various non-local authorities (British colonialism, Japanese Occupation, Malayan Federation, interim governments)
1 st -generation citizens, (pre-state citizens) ⁴⁷	1 st -generation PAP government under PM LKY (1959-1990)
2 nd -generation citizens, (post-state citizens)	2 nd -generation PAP government under PM Chok-Tong Goh (1990-present)

A more general defence of my choice of sampling variables is that, when investigating issues of consciousness, experiment is not a methodological option and that pure specimens are hard to come by. Furthermore, Singapore offers a rare opportunity to study a relatively "pure" group that is already dying off.

A post-justification for my research decision and choice of sampling variable is the startling fieldwork findings: many pre-state citizens exhibited a complete lack of a sense of national belonging. KPT, an 82-year old immigrant citizen, asserted that governments were transient and that ordinary citizens should simply use whatever languages were necessary for survival: Malay during Malaya Federation, English during British Colonialism, Japanese during the WW2 Occupation. He had no vested interest in a particular language; he only wanted to be "left alone" to raise his family. I had always been persuaded that the nation as an imagined community was a recent phenomenon (Cf. Andersen 1983 on the role of the printing press) but it was not until I interviewed immigrant pre-state citizens that I realized how very recent and how very absent it was among the pre-state generation.

Such sampled interviews lent insight to the relation between capitalism and nationalism: the making of a working class (E.P.Thompson 1965) or the transformation of individuals into workers require that they be deprived of their

⁴⁷ This generation is likely born in pre-state Singapore because 1st-generation PAP came to power before independence and LKY, "the father of Singapore," led Singapore to independence.

means of production (especially land) so that they are forced to sell their labour. Yet, without a sense of national belonging, a person who has been deprived of his means of subsistence could simply migrate and seek “greener pastures,⁴⁸” which was precisely the motivation that led immigrants to Singapore and a continuing problem that the PAP government faces to this day (“brain drain”). As such, the formation of a working class also requires that they develop a sense of nationalism and a willingness to remain on the very land they are deprived of.

Using “generation” as a sampling variable brings many advantages. Besides allowing me to control for media/state effect, it also allows me to explore the historical stages of nation-state formation and to develop an embodied insight into the goals of the PAP’s stakeholders’ policy and nation-building projects.

ETHNICITY

Besides creating a nation based on a “stakeholders’ society,” the PAP also mobilized ethnic identities to secure consent; this was especially so for second-generation leaders, whose concern was no longer with converting immigrants into citizens, but with converting citizens into “Singaporeans.” This shift in nation-building goals meant that consent was no longer to be gained through coercive projects but through mediating citizens’ relations to their (ethnic/Asian) self and through defining and appealing to citizens’ sense of national being. To better understand the second-generation government’s project, two concepts are especially useful. In terms of “governmentality,” how successful is the PAP in inserting and making relevant its discursive values (“the good Singaporean”) to private citizens? In terms of “hegemony,” to what extent are government discourses reproduced in everyday social and personal practices?

The “ethnicity” of the Singaporean citizen has changed over the decades of British and PAP governance. Before independence, the British strategy of divide and rule aimed to homogenize diverse immigrant groups into three main races – Chinese,

⁴⁸ Marx describes the “vagabond,” a category that resisted being transformed into the reserve army of labour. For a discussion of the relation between land deprivation and the making of the working class, see Giddens (1971, 27-34, especially p30).

Malays, Indians (and Others). The PAP kept this “CMIO” formulation but overlaid it with a (multiracial) national formulation. Instead of “CMIO” being subordinated to British/European ethnicity, it was now subordinated to a group of British-trained local elites who guard a fragile, multiracial nation against its dangerous ethnic(ised) citizens.⁴⁹

Had this research been concerned with PAP hegemony before the 1980s, operationalising “ethnicity” as “CMIO” might be useful. This is because rapid economic development and government campaigns to homogenize Chinese dialect groups (through making Mandarin the mother-tongue for all Chinese) produced a relatively prosperous Chinese population and heightened Chinese-dominance in Singapore. This conflation of Chinese cultural and economic dominance destabilized the multi-racial nation, leading to the re-invention of Singapore as an “Asian nation.”

When the working class appear to be increasingly united against the PAP, the PAP sought to fragment it ethnically. This was the strategy against the development of a counter-cultural movement based on the glamorisation and legitimation⁵⁰ of “Singlish,” which the elite saw as a bastardisation of elite English – the language of global capitalism. Fragmentation through ethnicization was a way of maintaining elite cultural control since cultural power would remain in the hands of leaders/elite (of each cultural community), rather than ceded to popular leaders of Singlish culture (such as pop singers and actors).

While a multiracial “CMIO” formulation sought to fragment the counter-culture when it seemed too united, the discourse of “Asian Values” aimed to do the

⁴⁹ See Chapter 4B on why Britain withdrew support for the Progressive Party and the Labour Front and supported the PAP as Singapore’s post-independent government. That local leaders are “Western-oriented” also explains why the Chinese-educated is described as a politically un-represented majority.

⁵⁰ This situation parallels Arnold’s (1932) and Leavis’ (1930) fear that mass culture in 20th century Britain would result in a loss of cultural coherence – a condition where despite cultural differences between masses and elite, cultural coherence was maintained by mass deference and acknowledgement of the *superiority* of elite culture.

reverse: to bind when social consensus seemed too fragmented.⁵¹ By the late 1980s, dramatic improvements in living and education standards meant that the PAP government was no longer the only educated, modern elite who could claim professionalism. AV thus sought to secure a consensus on a new social ideal – an Asian (not multiracial) modernity where the PAP government denounced ideological alternatives (raised by professionals or by lay citizens) as “too westernised” or “too Eastern” (“Chinese/Malay chauvinist”). In everyday media, the “English-educated” and the “Chinese-educated” were constructed and naturalized as “real” categories. These categories provide a latent source of moral panic that could be mobilized during political crises and elections because they could be easily made to sound extremist.

Situating my research in the late 1990s and being especially concerned with the PAP’s Asian Values strategy requires a new understanding of ethnicity beyond the “CMIO” model. Besides investigating whether the PAP succeeded in getting citizens to identify themselves as belonging to one of the CMIO categories, I am also interested in whether the PAP succeeded in getting citizens to “self-Asianise.”

This understanding of ethnicity deviates considerably from a biological understanding of ethnicity as race (which LKY tries to entrench through basing social policies on genetic theory) or a cultural understanding of ethnicity as unique cultural practices (festivals, etc.).

Instead, ethnicity is understood as cross-ethnic politicised groups.⁵² “CMIO” categories no longer sufficed because they did not capture the two politically significant groups that the AV project sought to contain: the “English-educated” (ENG) and the “Chinese-educated” (CHE). Neither groups were strictly based on

⁵¹ This shift concretizes two of Hall’s (1977, p336-346, citing Poultanzas 1968) 3 notions of ideological effects: shifting, fragmenting, binding.

⁵² For the British reader, it may help to think of the CHEs as a sort of white working-class (who has some identification with minority working-class). However, because Singapore is not anti-colonial – the PAP came to power with British support and PAP’s language policy (colonial tongue as first language) – means that even the ethnic majority (CHEs) feels ethnic and “black.”

ethnicity or language⁵³ and are better understood as particular formations of class, gender and race.

The actual meanings of “ENG” and “CHE” have never been clearly articulated in Singapore society, perhaps because they are so strongly infused with class – a notion associated with leftist values and deemed politically dangerous⁵⁴ and irrelevant to a “middle-class society” like Singapore. Social order can be better maintained if citizens consider themselves “Asians,” rather than “ENG” or “CHE,” which displaces dissent and class into consensus and organic ethnicity.⁵⁵

“ENG” refers to a specific category within the professional class or “yuppies” (Young Urban Professionals). Used synonymously with “Western-educated,” “ENG” refers specifically to those who are vocal and who espouses “Western” values. “ENG” is usually not race or gender specific, though they tend to refer to the Chinese, who are the most-educated in Singapore.

According to a Chinese pastor, the CHEs were a politically un-represented majority who had been left behind in the nation’s quest for rapid modernization, and especially through the state’s privileging of English, rather than Mandarin, as the working language. Keeping in mind their political alienation and socio-economic marginalization, we can now understand the stereotype image of the CHE - a dialect speaking, relatively uneducated and disaffected Chinese man who frequents the coffeeshop. In Singapore, coffeeshops serve as a type of semi-public sphere for the working-class,⁵⁶ where views can be articulated without

⁵³ Thus far, I have not explained why ethnicity should not be operationalised by language. Language is a direct effect of education policies that defines one’s “mother-tongue” as one’s father’s race. Pre-state immigrants tend to speak only dialects while post-state citizens speak English as their first language and mother tongue (Mandarin, Malay, Tamil) as their second language.

⁵⁴ The recognition of class faultlines and legitimation of class categories threatens to rally the working-class into a significant counter-hegemonic force. To date, the most popular (and thus most persecuted) opposite party is the left-leaning Workers’ Party, rather than the liberal Singapore Democratic Party.

⁵⁵ This corresponds with Hall’s (1977) 3rd ideological effect: “displacement” or “shifting.”

⁵⁶ When questioned about their ties with Malays and Indians, those interviewees who described themselves as Chinese-educated said they felt closer to them than to English-educated Chinese. This suggests that the coffeeshop may be a trans-ethnic working-class

having to conform to expectations of expertness and factuality. Demographically, there is usually a coffeeshop for every ten public housing apartment blocks. Located on the ground floor and serving inexpensive food and drinks, the coffeeshop serves different groups at different times of the day. After lunch and dinner, the coffeeshop serves as a space where the CHEs gather to discuss the latest news and to exchange rumors.

The Malays are indigenous, well defined religiously (Islam) and have the lowest status. Indians are internally very heterogeneous and constantly resist being labelled "Indian." Eurasians are problematic "Asians", and a group that is self-defined, whereas other "CMIO" categories were constituted with considerable governmental interference. Despite being conceptually interesting, given the small fieldwork sample, it is necessary to focus on those "ethnicities" that are more politically significant. In local media, "ENG," "CHE," "Malays" and "Indians" have been identified as politically significant⁵⁷ (Appendix 1). In my own sample, I include these groups but vary their proportion (see below).

II. Sample size and sampling

PRE-FIELDWORK "IDEAL" SAMPLE

Sampling is an important issue in qualitative research insofar as researchers are concerned with finding patterns – whether averages or ranges. If researchers wish to claim some degree of generalizability of their findings, then issues of range (how many sampling categories) and generalizability (how many in each category) remain relevant.

public sphere and that "CHE" should be understood as a trans-ethnic political identity not unlike how "black" is sometimes understood in Britain.

⁵⁷ What is considered politically significant depends on the model of democracy we privilege. An understanding of power as decision-making power (Lukes 1974) may prefer a quantitative view of democracy where only winners count. Random sampling identifies the average or median rather than range. A qualitative view of democracy accords more primacy to marginalized groups. The types of sample and results (average or range) we choose have significant ideological consequences: the insistence that there is an average or majority allows a one-party government to legitimately claim to represent the nation.

How range and generalizability are negotiated depends on sample size. The process of determining a qualitative sample size is shrouded in mystery. Even in fine empirical work (Radway 1984, Ang 1985) or qualitative methods reference books (Mason 1996), it is not uncommon for researchers to bypass or dismiss the complex issue of qualitative sampling with a simple "30 people were interviewed" before quickly proceeding to discuss in elaborate detail the design of interview questions and the technique of interviewing. Alternatively, researchers appeal to the notion of "saturation point," when fieldwork can be justifiably ceased because incremental fieldwork brings no new insights. A less mysterious and more concrete way was one that I was informally given by a few professors: to collect 60 to 80 hours of recorded interviews. Working on a minimal of 60 hours of recorded interviews (each 2 hours), I targeted 30-36 interviews.

In a small qualitative sample, goals of range and generalizability contradict: the more range (sampling categories), the lower the generalizability (the number of interviewees in each category). In my research, I preferred to sacrifice generalizability because, as chapter 2 argues, the focus on everyday discourse will supply my research with a different (discursive) generalizability. I intend to analyse popular, commonsensical discourses that readers will be able to identify as "preferred readings" in society, as normative values that members feel compelled to negotiate. The implication for sampling is to increase the number of sample categories and decrease the number of interviewees in each category. My ideal pre-fieldwork sample was to have 9 permutations of sample categories based on three "generation" categories and three "ethnicity" categories:

Table 2: Ideal sample

Ethnicity/ Generation	"English- educated" (ENG)	"Chinese- educated" (CHE)	Malays, Indians, Eurasians
Immigrant citizens	4	4	4
Pre-state citizens	4	4	4
Post-state citizens	4	4	4

ACTUAL SAMPLE

After 6 months of intense fieldwork in Singapore, I completed 32 interviews, each lasting at least 2 hours. After the 30th interview, I felt "saturated" – the past few interviews had no brought new insights – but decided to finish another 2 that had already been scheduled to complete the sociological categories set out. I did not feel the need to complete the original target of 36.

Upon "entering the field," I was immediately confronted with a serious problem – the sample categories were not something I could easily ascertain before the interview. "CHE" and "ENG" were ideological positions—identities that interviewees may choose and which the analyst identifies through analysing transcripts. In my first interview, an overseas university student seemed sociologically and unproblematically "ENG" until I spotted a 10kg sack of rice. When asked about why he had such a big sack of rice for a person who live alone and who claims not to cook, he admitted that he was "Chinese after all."⁵⁸

This quickly led me to realize that my sampling categories had to be based on variables that were identifiable *before* analysis. This led me back to a more traditional race-based sampling strategy ("CMIO") while backgrounding the goal of collecting a balanced proportion of "ENG/CHE", which in turn has strong class and gender correlations.

⁵⁸ Rice is the main staple for Southern Chinese; most eat it for two meals a day.

Table 3: Actual sample (by generation and ethnicity)

Ethnicity/ Generation	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Eurasian	Total
Immigrant	3	X (indigenous)	1	X (indigenous)	4
Pre-state	7 2ENG, 5CHE	3 1ENG, 2MLY	0	1 1ENG	11
Post-state	10 4ENG, 6CHE	3 3ENG	3 3ENG	1 1ENG	17
Total	20	6	4	2	32

"X" refers to historically improbable categories

This sample deviates considerably from the pre-fieldwork ideal. Besides the conceptual problem discussed above, there were also practical obstacles to achieving that ideal.

Because of the length of the interview (2 hours), it was impractical to expect strangers to accept an interview. Secondly, I preferred to conduct interviews in the subjects' own environment (mostly home), having learnt from the above "10kg sack of rice" example that what people say about themselves may not correspond to an outsiders' view of them. Thirdly, in an authoritarian society, citizens do not easily trust researchers with their views. These issues of trust meant that I could not approach strangers and that I had to find my interviewees via introductions or "snowballing."

However, there are practical and methodological problems with "snowballing." Practically, it was difficult for me to ask interviewees to introduce me to others because, firstly, my interviewees were already doing me a considerable "favour" by giving me so much of their time, which I tried to reciprocate with gifts of cakes and fruits. More importantly I left politically sensitive topics to the last, when the interviewee and I have established sufficient trust. As such, the interviewee's understanding of my research *after* the interview might differ from their initial

expectation. Thus, although some interviewees enthusiastically recommended their friends *before* the interview, I did not take their offers too seriously.

Methodologically, "snowballing" is prone to skew a sample since interviewees tend to recommend others who are ideologically close to them.

Since I had little choice but to depend on introductions, I took a few measures to minimize the side effects of "snowballing." Firstly, I asked for recommendations from non-interviewees; "recommenders" are not interviewed. This altered way of snowballing produces a methodological advantage: by "skipping" the recommender, I (hopefully) placed some sociological/ideological distance between interviewees and myself. The disadvantage is that, as a stranger to the interviewee, I had to put more effort to build rapport. To do this, I usually asked the recommender to tell me a little about the interviewees before the interviews. In one case, my sister described her church-mate as working-class and "very Christian," which contradicted my observations that he exhibited some upper class traits and had some "non-Christian" practices. It was rare for a Singaporean man in his 60s to speak excellent English; this would typically signify very high social status in colonial Singapore. He also practiced the tradition of arranged marriages for his children, selecting his daughters-in-law from India. This difference in perception between my recommender and myself made me think harder to reconcile these different perceptions and to develop a more multi-dimensional impression of him and a more sophisticated understanding of "class."

My family and friends drew upon their formal and informal networks in recommending interviewees to me. I do not think it is a problem that my interviewees are recommended by people close to me because I "skip" the recommender. Secondly, before concluding whether the sample is unbalanced, I think it is important to consider the way these interviewees were linked to my family and friends.

There are 3 types of "links:" formal links, informal links and exceptions (Appendix 2). 2 interviewees were special cases. One was approached because she spent "all her time writing in the Forum page" (in the national daily). A friend was

approached because she was the only graduate I knew who had comfortably relinquished the desire to be successful.

The bulk of my interviewees (22)⁵⁹ were secured through formal institutional links (of family, friends, etc.), including advertisement (2), a Chinese church network (4), an English church (1), offices (6), schools (4), a tuition agency (1), a counselling centre (2), and journalistic contacts (2).

Eight interviewees were directly taken from among family friends. The reasons for choosing them need to be clarified because this group can be perceived to be “closer” to me (sociologically or ideologically). My translator recommended two old Malays interviewees; it was impossible for me to have contacts with non-English speaking minorities. Another two were from my extended family: my aunt was selected for her involvement with the government’s grassroots organizations; my grandfather was selected because he belonged to a rare category – English/colonial-educated pre-state citizen. 2 interviewees were my father’s friends: one was a Peranakan (Malay-Chinese mix) and another was an uneducated Chinese businessman who had “made good.” While interviewing this Chinese businessman, I “stumbled” upon the last two interviewees — his father and son. I interviewed all 3 generations because they were a picture of the national fairy tale — the immigrant grandfather who worked hard and set up a small business, the pre-state son (father) who inherited and expanded the business and the post-state grandson (son) who went through university, “modernized” and is now a successful civil servant.

How balanced is my sample? That depends on the standards for judging the sample. In terms of ratio among races, my sample (62.5% Chinese, 18.75% Malays, 12.5% Indians, 6.25% Eurasians) corresponds quite closely to the national ratio (77% Chinese, 14% Malays, 8% Indians, 1% Others).⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Brackets indicate number of interviewees.

There were 22 men and 10 women. It was difficult to interview women, especially pre-state and immigrant women. Older women especially were "shy" about speaking "publicly" to a researcher. In one case, I insisted that I had a Malay translator but she insisted that no translators were needed. When I arrived at her home, I realized that she did not speak English and had intended for me to interview her English-speaking husband. This difficulty of securing female interviewees only serves to strengthen my fieldwork finding: that a (good Asian) woman's space is the private sphere of the home rather the "public" sphere that I as a researcher presented to them.

In terms of class,⁶¹ the sample is quite evenly distributed. Summarily, there are 14 "above average," 7 "average" and 11 "below average" class positions. More specifically (Appendix 3):

- 2 Upper (university-educated interviewees from rich families)
- 8 Upper-Middle (small business proprietors, graduates from above average families)
- 7 Middle (rich with little education, graduates from poor families)
- 3 Lower-Middle (retired and living on average wealth)
- 8 Working (low education, blue-collared jobs).

Although there is a rather even class distribution, there is an asymmetry in the way the interviewees are linked to me. "Upper Class" interviewees were a group I was acquainted with but not friendly with (e.g., schoolmates but not friends). "Upper-Middle Class" interviewees were comfortably linked through informal ties of friendship and family. "Middle Class" interviewees were usually approached through a particular combination of formal and informal links: they were largely the colleagues of friends and family. "Lower-Middle Class" interviewees, because they belong to the older (retired) generation, were usually family friends. "Working Class" interviewees were either subordinates of friends/family or secured through formal institutions, e.g., counselling centres, advertisements.

⁶⁰ It is impossible to correspond exactly to the national ratio for a small sample with so many categories. To do so, I would have to interview 24.6 Chinese, 4.5 Malays, 2.56 Indians and 0.32 Eurasians.

⁶¹ The Singapore dream of the 5Cs (car, credit, career, condominium, cash) depends upon good education, which allows individuals the opportunity to acquire them.

There were 22 men and 10 women. It was difficult to interview women, especially pre-state and immigrant women. Older women especially were "shy" about speaking "publicly" to a researcher. In one case, I insisted that I had a Malay translator but she insisted that no translators were needed. When I arrived at her home, I realized that she did not speak English and had intended for me to interview her English-speaking husband. This difficulty of securing female interviewees only serves to strengthen my fieldwork finding: that a (good Asian) woman's space is the private sphere of the home rather the "public" sphere that I as a researcher presented to them.

In terms of class,⁶¹ the sample is quite evenly distributed. Summarily, there are 14 "above average," 7 "average" and 11 "below average" class positions. More specifically (Appendix 3):

- 2 Upper (university-educated interviewees from rich families)
- 8 Upper-Middle (small business proprietors, graduates from above average families)
- 7 Middle (rich with little education, graduates from poor families)
- 3 Lower-Middle (retired and living on average wealth)
- 8 Working (low education, blue-collared jobs).

Although there is a rather even class distribution, there is an asymmetry in the way the interviewees are linked to me. "Upper Class" interviewees were a group I was acquainted with but not friendly with (e.g., schoolmates but not friends). "Upper-Middle Class" interviewees were comfortably linked through informal ties of friendship and family. "Middle Class" interviewees were usually approached through a particular combination of formal and informal links: they were largely the colleagues of friends and family. "Lower-Middle Class" interviewees, because they belong to the older (retired) generation, were usually family friends. "Working Class" interviewees were either subordinates of friends/family or secured through formal institutions, e.g., counselling centres, advertisements.

⁶⁰ It is impossible to correspond exactly to the national ratio for a small sample with so many categories. To do so, I would have to interview 24.6 Chinese, 4.5 Malays, 2.56 Indians and 0.32 Eurasians.

⁶¹ The Singapore dream of the 5Cs (car, credit, career, condominium, cash) depends upon good education, which allows individuals the opportunity to acquire them.

This imbalance of links to different classes tells us something further. I can see that I am most comfortably linked with "Upper-Middle Class," and that my friends and contacts were limited to the neighbouring classes. E.g., I do not personally know a member of the working class. However, despite my particular class background, I managed to acquire a sample that is relatively balanced in terms of class.

A final standard of sample balance is whether I have interviewed people who hold sufficiently diverse ideological/subject values. During fieldwork, I was deeply concerned that there might be insufficient ideological diversity in the responses I could gather. The working-class members that I interviewed were linked to me through formalized *correctional* institutions such as counselling centres and churches. As such, I was concerned that they were a very particular group of "re-enchanted" working-class (Chapter 6C). All spoke about a problematic past they repented⁶² while two Chinese pastors told me that their churches were dedicated to those who needed hope. These "formerly dysfunctional" interviewees tended to have a curiously combined air of resignation and hope about them: it was as if they had decided to work within the system while accepting that their flawed beginnings mean they have no rights to have any expectations of society.

Because of this suspicion that these working-class interviewees were particularly pro-system, I valued Thomas (a "working-class" coffeeshopper) very much and tried very hard to get his co-operation. However, our interactions were plagued by many (necessary) problems. He felt a strong antagonism towards me, such that even a recorder, a note-pad and the act of questioning were seen as icons of our difference—my "Western/English-educatedness" as opposed to his lack of education. To date, I am not certain that I fully appreciate the CHE's world or if I have sufficiently captured the ideological diversity of the field. I hope that it suffices that I have begun to understand how deep social/ideological antagonisms can be and that I have experienced them at first hand through my interactions with Thomas.

⁶² E.g., gangsterism. Interestingly, many considered "wasting" their time as a significant (social, ideological) crime.

3C. THE INTERVIEW DESIGN

1. Designing the questions

There were two key challenges to designing interview questions prior to entering the field. Firstly, questions had to be subtle and indirect enough for interviewees in an authoritarian society to be willing to answer. One solution was to design the questions as a game where each party "dares" the other to be more "overt" and to "up the stakes" until it reaches a mutually comfortable level of overt-ness.⁶³ This means that my questions had to begin innocuously. Instead of asking about freedom and democracy in Singapore, I asked, "Which newspapers do you read and why?" Many responded, as I expected, by talking about media censorship. Instead of asking meritocracy and fairness, I asked, "Which schools do your children go to?" or "Are you satisfied with your job?" Many responded by talking about the national ranking of educational institutions and degrees, and the class and racial discrimination they experienced.

A second measure also aimed to overcome interviewees' paranoia about commenting on anything mildly political in front of a stranger/researcher. Instead of asking interviewees what *they* thought, I first asked them what they thought *others*, especially *their friends*, thought before asking if they felt the same. This type of question is double-edged. Not only did it bypass interviewees' paranoia, it also allowed me to identify the "interpretative communities" and subcultures they belonged to and to see how much credibility or deference interviewees accord public opinion.

A second challenge was to design questions that were broad enough to be comparable and applicable to all interviewees, while specific enough to be localizable. This led me to design two different set of interview questions: one that is detailed (Appendix 4), and another that is general (Appendix 5).

⁶³ The alternative solution – that I be politically more incorrect than them so that they would feel comfortable trusting me – was discarded because it may be too leading. In one instance, an interview "started" after the official interview ended (and the tape recorder stopped) when the interviewee asked me about my views and started telling me about his.

These lists were useful only in the beginning and soon proved problematic. They allowed me develop my ideas in breadth and depth and helped my translator (see later) have a better grasp of the directions I hope to guide the interviews in. The questions were refined as I gained more interview experience. Some amendments included removing or clarifying categories that did not make sense to certain interviewees. E.g., the older generation could not “remember” or did not “know” what Singlish and the Singapore Dream were. Others had difficulty understanding my distinction between dialect, ethnicity and nation.

Ultimately, I realized that these problems could not be solved simply through refining interview questions; they required a more fundamental, paradigmatic shift in my interview strategy. To make questions relevant to interviewees while keeping the interview theoretically meaningful, I realized that my interviews needed to be less rigid and to be less guided by standardized questions. Instead of compelling interviewees to enter my “comfort zone,” I should follow them to theirs – even if it meant completely abandoning my painstakingly designed list of questions. In one case, after trying to get LDS to comment on multi-racialism and failing badly, I gave up and allowed him to speak about whatever he wanted. He then spoke about how he “ran” his family in an “Asian style.” Themes of Asian vs. Western values, and paternalism in family structures flowed easily and parallels were made to the benevolent government. In some cases involving Malay interviewees, my translator was an immense help to me. Because he understood my research goals, he was able to steer interviews into issues that were controversial for the Malay community in Singapore (e.g., civil versus Islamic divorce laws).

With more interviewing experience, I realized that I had been too preoccupied with maintaining topical comparability across interviews and that interviews should be linked through my conceptual framework rather than through standardized/topicalised questions. This is one of the most important lessons I learnt in this interview project: thematic/conceptual unity and topical flexibility. In approaching the field, it is vital to retain a clear view of these research themes and goals at all times; without this conceptual clarity, the overall coherence of the

interview project would have to be achieved through sacrificing the flexibility of interview questions. At moments when I lost this clarity, I found myself less flexible with the interview questions and less able to immediately assimilate what the interviewee was, in my distracted attempts to steer the interview. Conversely, when I regained this clarity, I found myself having the flexibility to follow interviewees into topics they preferred to speak about.

This led me to clearly articulate the conceptual goal of the interviews, which is to explore the extent to which citizens' versions of reality resonate or contrast with official representations of national reality. Where there is a gap, how are "reality gaps" bridged: through de-legitimising their own versions or through doubting the media? In attempting these coping or bridging strategies, what "ways of knowing" or sources of knowledges do citizens draw on – to what extent are non-governmental, informal sources of knowledge such as rumours and jokes drawn upon to legitimise the illegitimated? If citizens do reproduce government discourses, what is the contextual meaning of these discourses and how do these contradict with official meanings?

A secondary interest was whether the various coping/bridging strategies and "ways of knowing" were sociologically correlated. As such, before each interview, a short survey (Appendix 6) requesting information about interviewees' socio-economic background was administered. Alterations to this survey were slight: income became rephrased as "disposable household income." From the start, I had explained to interviewees that I was not interested in how much they earned (which may be sensitive) but in their spending power as a household, including on instalments for property, cars and other aspects of the Singapore Dream.

II. The context of interviewing

In the course of fieldwork, I realized that the methodology of interview is biased towards certain types of sociality. I have already mentioned how "icons" like a tape recorder and note-pad came across as a type of "expert-isation" of social interaction, which Thomas violently opposed and accused of being "insincere." Additionally, I also noticed that conventions like turn taking and giving monologue-

like replies (rather than having a conversational style) made older uneducated housewives very uncomfortable; some felt they were being "impolite." In one case, I had great difficulty transcribing the many uncomfortable pauses – I did not know if I should transcribe them as the interviewee's or as mine. If it was not for my interest in collecting a range of views and if I had been interested in understanding the pre-state generation and housewives, participant observation would have been a more effective methodology than interviews. As can be imagined, getting responses with these groups was a trying experience, and interviews had to be sustained by incessant questions to prod them on.

I also noticed that in cases where I was more personally related to my interviewees or had more rapport with interviewees, they spoke more freely to me, to the extent of telling me about their emotional lives and inter-personal conflicts with others. I really valued these instances because these narratives, rather than opinions, help me to see who their Significant Others were, what sub-cultures they belonged to and how my interviewees situated themselves in everyday controversies/conflicts. Before giving some examples, I would like to discuss systematically my attempts to secure an interview environment that is conducive for interviewees to speak freely; it is not always the case that trust is the most important factor, occasionally, respect and ignorance worked better.

One such case is in interviews with older male interviewees. In an interview with a three-tier family, these issues were compounded. In this interview, I was the youngest female among 3 older Chinese men. Being a Chinese myself meant that I was *expected* to know how to behave in such settings, i.e., that I had the least "power" and rights to speak in this interview situation; it would also be rude for me to interrupt or ask questions in such a way as to cast doubt on the credibility of the interviewees' statement. This was a very difficult situation for me to control and this difficulty was enhanced by two other situations: firstly, I did not understand the grandfather's dialect and needed the grandson to translate for me; secondly, the father kept trying to cut the grandfather short because he thought "the old man" was rattling.

There were several possible solutions to these difficulties. One that I rejected off-hand was to return and interview the others separately. I had originally arranged to interview only the father but the other two became excited by the idea and wanted to be interviewed too. I did not want to interview them separately because they would develop pre-conceptions about what I would ask them. Additionally, they fitted the national fairy tale of the poor immigrant who made good and handed his small business to his sons and grandsons. Another solution I rejected was to occupy the subject position of an expert/researcher who had the "right" to control the conversation. I knew that any control I gained this way would merely compromise the quality of the interview.

To control the interview situation, what I did was to take the opposite subject position by presenting myself as a "blur girl" so that my challenges to patriarchal authority would not be seen as malevolent. While the term "blur" may be used in Singapore used to describe people who are socially inept (usually because they are unaware of unspoken expectations), it is also common for well-intentioned friends to tell each other to "act blur" when they do not want to be invest socially or commit to a particular moral-political position. Acting like a "blur girl" who was unaware of social expectations and who had little understanding of local wisdom (such as "open secrets") helped me navigate many sensitive interview situations. From my experience of living and working in Singapore, I knew that people would not become defensive when questioned by a "blur" person because they could not see the non/mis-communication as *their* problem (of not being clear, of having too many assumptions), but rather *my* problem. In particular, I attributed my "blurriness" to having spent too many years in the ivory towers of academia, affirming popular perceptions that academics have no understanding of the "real" world.

This strategy was especially important in an interview with a three-tier family. Through speaking hesitantly and sounding confused, I could stop the father from cutting the grandfather off and beg for more elaboration from the grandfather. This strategy worked very well and the grandfather's transcripts provided tremendous insights; he was probably the singular most important interviewee to be cited in my analysis (interviewee KPT in Chapter 6A).

This "blur girl" strategy seems useful only with senior males. With interviewees of similar age, an environment of trust rather than hierarchy seemed to create a more conducive interview environment. With VH, my former student, he spoke freely about his recent break-up and how he lost his girlfriend to a university student, saying, "How could I compete with him?" His willingness to speak about personal loss and conflicts gave me an insight into something that is otherwise very well hidden – the self-inferiority of the working-class (CHE) male. With Thomas, another young working-class (CHE) male, similar relationships problems cropped up but Thomas always responded with macho, almost violent, anger – "I wouldn't allow my women to see other men, if they do so, I leave them!" – until he became drunk, when he would then call or meet me to tell me that "I have nothing, I am a good for nothing, of course she doesn't want me." While my interactions with Thomas cannot be described as one of rapport, the fact that "a Western-educated" person bothered trying to understand what he called "*our* plight" somewhat endeared me to him.

The above cases are instances when there was rapport. Rapport with VH had been gained years ago, outside the interview context, while "rapport" with Thomas was something I had to work extremely hard to secure, but which is all the more rewarding because of our considerable social and ideological distance. When I first met him, Thomas laughed that I would never be able to understand the CHE coffeeshoppers – who unlike the repentant working-class, defined themselves as people who enjoy "wasting" time – because I had only mixed with privileged company. When I retorted that my best friend was a Muslim gay man, to impress him of – what I now with hindsight recognize as – my "tolerance," he laughed even harder. He said that I hung out with these friends in cafes; I did not frequent the coffeeshops. I realized that he was right, my friends and I just would not feel comfortable in a coffeeshop. His statement made me realize that sexuality, gender and ethnic boundaries are often more easily bridged than that of class, and convinced me of the importance of "class" as an analytical category.

In another case, TEO explicitly checked my research ethics before allowing the interview to start. He cautioned that I must maintain interviewees' anonymity at all costs because "it only takes one bad researcher to spoil the market" (to scare Singaporeans into distrusting *all* researchers).

I raise these examples to convince the reader that I took considerable pains to create an interview environment that would allow me to collect the material I needed. Of course, interviews could be performed without a significant level of rapport; however, it is in those interviews where there is a lot of rapport that the interview material is richest. In some cases, interviewees did not require such excessive assurances; educated interviewees were usually willing to talk about themselves while housewives were generally eager to gossip about their neighbours and confide their anxieties about their children's future. Yet, even in these "easier" situations, rapport was something that I had to incrementally secure.

Without building rapport with my informants, I would have only been able to analyse their opinions and thoughts, I would not had access to their dilemmas and hesitations, I would not have been able to locate "the structures of feelings" that they live within. In the case of my fieldwork experience, it is definitely the case that the more rapport and trust, the more interviewees revealed the type of social conflicts they were involved in and how they positioned themselves in these conflicts, allowing me to see, at first-hand, ideological contestations in "live" and embodied ways.

3D. POST-FIELDWORK ISSUES

Throughout the fieldwork process, the research goal has been to understand how citizens legitimise and de-legitimise (by reproducing, negotiating, opposing or ignoring) various versions of reality. In particular, I wish to identify their choice among many "ways of knowing" and variously credible sources of knowledge (media, rumours). As such, the criteria against which effective translation and translation is measured should be the extent to which transcription is sensitive to interviewees' (subtle) attempts to convey doubt, hesitations or secondary

meanings of words. The analytical process must be sensitive not only to linguistic cues but also non-verbal cues. Following Scott's (1990) description of how peasants bow and fart at the same time, and following Geertz's (1973) imperative that we distinguish between a wink and a blink, I chose "posture" as my key analytical construct. "Posture" indicates my abiding concern with the importance of the non-verbal aspect of communications and in thinking of language and gestures as "speech acts" with rhetorical/communicative goals and agenda.⁶⁴

1. Transcription and translation

Given the importance I place on field observations (Cf. the sack of rice example), I place a high premium on transcribing immediately after each interview. Even when there were many interviews stacked up, I ensured that every interview was fully transcribed within three days. By transcription I do not refer only to the interview transcript. Each transcript begins with a description of how contact is made (including the recommender's impression of the interviewee) and my observation of the objects and people surrounding my interviewee and concludes with discussion of methodological problems and solutions. Especially in the case of older males, seeing their behaviour with their spouses help me grasp their expectations of how I, a young female, should behave. In one case, my fieldnotes say:

His wife is very silent but visible from the corner of one's eye. She stands at the doorway between the living room and kitchen, like a servant ready to serve. When she needs to get to the other side of the living room, she does so without daring to cross our field of vision.

This and other observations of "silent" wives, helped me concretise the notion of what a "good Asian woman" would be.

"Posture" goes beyond linguistic discourse to seek clues in interviewee's actions and surroundings. For instance, a collection of self-help books ("how to improve your market value") and other signifiers of the Singaporean preoccupation with

⁶⁴ I argued further in Chapter 2 that the meaning of a communication also include its effects and not only its intentions.

“upgrading” would offer a richer interpretation of an interviewee who seemingly denies being concerned with staying competitive or appears anti-system.

Because I was not engaged in conversation analysis (e.g., Silverman 1998), my transcripts did not record details such as length of pauses or loudness of utterances. An issue that arose during transcription was to whom pauses should be attributed. In most interviews, this was not an issue; pauses seemed to “naturally” belong to either the researcher or the interviewee. However, with older citizens and housewives – people who may not be so used to being interviewed and turn taking⁶⁵ – the transcription of pauses were problematic. I was often surprised by their short replies; I kept expecting them to elaborate but was always disappointed. I often had to repeat to chase them for what I consider “a decent answer,” but my repetitive questions only – in hindsight, deservedly – reaped repetitive replies. In these cases, I transcribed the pauses as my own – my own non-understanding of the interviewees’ mentality.

The question of what details then are meaningful enough to be transcribed is a difficult but necessary one. To date, I am not certain if my transcription paid sufficient attention to details, since I could only transcribe those nuances that I am conscious of. While I did not transcribe all sounds (e.g., coughs), I did however pay attention to “hmm” and other communicative sounds, which are especially abundant in Singlish, perhaps because it borrows heavily from the tonal Chinese dialects. While transcribing my first Singlish interview, I realised that “meaningless” sounds do signify. E.g., the use of “meh” transforms a sentence into a question. However, the way it is uttered can determine whether it has an “innocent,” “blur girl” tone or whether it is merely a form of mock innocence “fake blur girl” tone. For example, the following statement can generate two meanings and it takes an experienced eye – literally, to observe the facial expression - to differentiate between this verbal blink and wink.

⁶⁵ Older people have authority because of their seniority; they are listened to, not questioned. Housewives are usually subordinate to their husbands and even their children, especially if they are more educated.

WCM: There is a difference between Chinese and Singaporean meh?
= surprise: is there a difference?
= irony: there *is* a difference?

For interviews conducted in Mandarin and Chinese dialects, I had to transcribe and translate simultaneously. This is not something difficult for Singaporeans who are used to communicating in many languages at the same time. However, there were some terms that I was reluctant to translate in simple way. One such example was:

zhong-guo ren: China people
[Word exists in Mandarin and Chinese dialects]
= Chinese nationals
= Chinese ethnicity

hua ren: Chinese people
[Word exists in Mandarin]
= Chinese ethnicity

The term zhong-guo ren conflates ethnicity and nationality, which is unproblematic as long as a Chinese remains in China. For overseas Chinese, this term is inconvenient and another term “hua ren” has emerged recently to Chinese ethnicity. However, in Singapore, “hua ren” is used only when speaking in Mandarin – the language that is learnt is state-imposed. In dialect conversations, even though a corresponding term can be coined, none exists (perhaps because the state does not try to mould dialect vocabulary as much as it does Mandarin vocabulary). The particular transcription/translation problem that this poses is whether I should assume that those who use “zhong-guo ren” necessarily imagine China as their homeland. To solve this problem of translation, I turn to transcription — instead of notating an English meaning, I left the term as spoken by the interviewee while putting a most probable English equivalent in parenthesis.

Hiring a translator was a difficult decision, but I finally decided that the conceptual importance of interviewing certain groups overrode any financial and methodological difficulties I may incur. Firstly, I recognised that my limited language abilities (I speak English, Mandarin, Singlish, Cantonese and can understand some Teochew, Hokkien and Hakka) were effects of the nation-building process; I had been trained in the languages of modern, not pre-state Singapore. As LKY himself recognised, in the process of building a nation, many

families were torn apart because children and grandchildren could not speak the same language. Indeed, the "Speak Mandarin Campaign" even encouraged grandparents and parents to swallow this pain so that their children would have a brighter future. To date, the "Speak Mandarin Campaign" fights an ongoing battle and the political significance of dialect is acutely recognised. It is common knowledge that politicians can better woo voters in dialect than in Mandarin. Additionally, in recent years, many churches have started dialect phone lines to reach the "heartlands" – a political term describing the dialect-speaking "silent majority."

Recognising my own linguistic and historical constructedness, I felt an urgent need to contact the illiterate older generation who may be relatively "untouched" by the government's nationalising project. Partly out of a romanticisation of this group and partly out of a fear of regretting that I would miss such a rare opportunity to study a pre-national people slip, and encouraged by anthropological accounts of migrant culture in pre-national Singapore, I decided that this group would be my priority. [The insights from the interview with KPT alone made this risk a worthwhile one, see Chapter 6A.] It should also be noted that the need for translation is a historical one: a few decades ago, every person in Singapore spoke Malay; a few decades later, every person in Singapore would speak English.

Besides reaching this group, I also felt that it was important, perhaps because of my own experience as a minority in London, to break out of a type of academic compartmentalisation where researchers study only their own ethnic group. Such academic compartmentalisation serves to affirm an imperialist status quo where minorities (the Rest) are deemed too "ethnically-biased" (e.g., jealous, angry minority) to be a credible expert on non-partisan/ethnic issues – a privilege reserved for the unbiased (the West).⁶⁶

⁶⁶ E.g., minority journalists can only comment on minority affairs; I should teach about "Asian/third world women in developing countries." Historically and currently, anthropology remains a discipline where it is the norm for the West to an expert on the Rest but not vice versa.

However, using translators and transcripts creates significant financial and methodological problems. I decided to use only one translator for 2 Malay transcripts because I could not afford more. I selected to interview non-English speaking Malays because they are culturally the least assimilated group in Singapore.

I recruited a good friend to be my translator. Before and during my PhD, I often discussed my ideas with him and we have become very familiar with each other's way of thinking. Upon deciding that I needed his assistance, I involved him more deeply in the details of my work, including all the paths among which my research could have developed but did not. This was intended to help him pinpoint the type of research that I was and was not doing. The two lists of interview questions were partly designed for his benefit.

Translation is never only about language, especially in a face-to-face interview situation. Translators have a vital role in understanding, explaining and performing the expected customs to establish rapport with the interviewees. My translator did all these admirably: he advised me on gifts, collaborated with me on selecting topics that would be more relevant for the Malay community and corrected me after each interview. I also showed him 4 sample transcripts and briefed him on transcription procedures.

Because of his familiarity with the field and with my research, I chose to let him take a more active role during interviews. Rather than passively translate communications between the interviewee and me, I gave him the license to pursue interesting themes. In deciding this, I was also concerned that the "flow" of the interview should not be sacrificed by incessant translations and worried that any rapport that we gain would be lost and that frustrated interviewees would give only short, easy-to-translate replies.

There is some evidence that my analysis of the translated transcripts were inferior to my interpretation of those transcripts that I personally transcribed. My supervisor faithfully read the entire first round of analysis, where I profiled each of

the 32 interviewees in considerable detail. He highlighted 2 transcripts as being different from the others, although he could not explain how it was different. It was not until he named them (AZ and ALI) that we discovered that those were the analyses of the translated interviews. Evidently, something had been sacrificed during the interviewing, transcribing or/and analysing process.⁶⁷

II. Analysis

The goal of the analysis is to explore the various ways that the hegemony of government discourses are affirmed, negotiated or opposed in embodied everyday contexts, paying particular attention to the types of knowledges (media, personal, rumours) citizens draw upon to legitimise or de-legitimise various versions of reality. Theories of hegemony – especially Gramsci's emphasis on commonsense and Hall's elaboration of the concept through "reproduction," "preferred reading," and "frame" – is useful because it acknowledges the unintentional complicity of individuals and because it understands that hegemony is founded more on unthinking reproduction⁶⁸ than active consent. Rephrased in Singaporean political terms, hegemony is maintained insofar as government values serve as a "middleground" or norm, as the moral gaze of "the silent majority," as a normative centre against which non-conformity has to be justified and as the "grain" or preferred reading against which alternatives must be read. Because I am interested in seeing ideological contestation "live" and "embedded" in everyday negotiations, I was particularly fascinated with and hoped to collect interviewees' experience of contradictions, hesitations and dilemmas and to, at the analytical stage, identify how their personal experience may be understood within wider structures of feelings and socio-ideological configurations.

⁶⁷ My original translator fell very ill after the interviews and due to time pressures, I had to ask another person to transcribe the interview tapes. This could explain the disparity in the quality of my analysis.

⁶⁸ E.g., through apathy, "the dull compulsion of the economic," adaptation, which creates a stage of "expansive hegemony."

IDENTIFYING THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

I conducted three rounds of analysis. In the first round, I profiled individuals in terms of their awareness of nation, their perception of the constituency, nature and their stake in this nation, and the "ways of knowing" they drew upon to substantiate their accounts. I was very aware of the pitfalls of such analysis and fought the inclination to search for an "overall" opinion of each individual or to take the cognitivist view of incoherence as pathological. If this danger can be avoided, this analytical profiling can actually help the analyst arrive at a more multi-dimensional view of each interviewee.

In the second round, I tried to locate sociological patterns. While this embedded actors in their context, it also produced the problem of assuming that individuals exhibit consistent-enough traits (e.g., "opinions," "attitudes") that could be correlated with sociological categories. Considerable time was spent trying to analyse interview material sociologically without falling into this trap, and I ended up distinguishing between two rounds of sociological analyses: (i) to group sociological groups together and identify what they have in common, and (ii) group strategies and postures together and then identify sociological patterns. I preferred (ii) because it gave me less pressure to engage in sociological gymnastics⁶⁹ and allowed me to better understand and explain, not merely correlate, sociological influences in a subjectivised way.

I found this last round of discursive analysis (discussed above as (ii)) to be highly productive and have organized my analysis chapter according to four postures, which categorises strategies (of balancing dissent and consent) rather than individual's overall opinion. Strangely, giving sociology a secondary prominence actually helped me identify "stronger" sociological patterns. This is because certain strategies were used only by specific sociological groups, but each sociological group could have several types of strategies/postures. E.g., the most sociology-specific posture was that of unconditional acceptance. Those who felt this

⁶⁹ Such as by allowing an ethnically mixed interviewee to be classified as "Malay" or "Chinese" depending on which produced more desirable results.

emotional bond to LKY as the “father of Singapore” did not necessarily come from the same class, but exhibited the same kind of class experience – they all spoke about their blocked class trajectory and their hopes that their children will go further. This finding⁷⁰ would have been lost had I stuck to (i), where classifying them by objective indications of class would have meant separating them out into different sociological groups. Additionally, because my analysis began with their postures and struggles, it allowed me to arrive at a “subjectivised” understanding of class as (the perception of family) class trajectory, which I believe is a more meaningful than a traditional, objective understanding of class.

IDENTIFYING SUITABLE CATEGORIES OF EXPLANATION

In many ways, the process of analysis is a continuation of the interview process. Often, analysts simply quote their interviewees’ statements and equate them with analysis. These analysts may perceive the interview as a way of interrogating interviewees so as to collect answers from their informants’ lips (Soysal 1999). I disagree with this understanding of what analysis is or should be. For me, the analytical process is more than a “comprehension” exercise that treats interview material as a resource rather than as a topic (Slater and Tonkiss 2001). The analytical process is an opportunity for the analyst to go beyond texts to take into account a variety of sources of knowledge (theory, observation, perception, deduction) and to arrive at a contextualized and meaningful appreciation of the significance and the wider processes in which the interviewee’s world is embedded. To this end, “posture” is a superior concept because it bypasses tendencies in cognitive and linguistic approaches to establish coherence and goes beyond linguistic discourse to seek clues in interviewee’s actions and surroundings. For instance, a collection of self-help books (“how to improve your market value”) and other signifiers of the Singaporean preoccupation with

⁷⁰ I cannot take full credit. Conducting fieldwork during the Asian economic crisis, where a person’s “class” can change overnight, meant that I had to either abandon or arrive at a better way of capturing class. Seeing how the PAP government successfully rallied citizens made me realize that an “ideological” understanding of class was more important than a “material” one. The PAP’s hegemony can be sustained without economic performance, but not without the people’s dream/hope of material success.

“upgrading” would offer a richer interpretation of an interviewee who claims to be unconcerned with staying competitive.

The shift to seeing transcripts as “topics” rather than as “resources,” and the emergence of discourse analysis is underlined by a constructivist turn, where the unit of analysis is no longer the utterance as a factual statement, but the utterance as a speech act (Austin 1975), with no true or fixed meaning in itself but whose meaning is derived contextually. In my work, this shift is not merely a theoretical ideal, but an issue I was forced to reckon with directly in two fieldwork situations.

In the first situation, an interview with HO left me mulling over it for days trying to understand her many irrelevant answers. My seemingly harmless questions were met with defensive replies:

Me(60-67): Are there sections [in newspapers] that you look out for?

HO: I read all, whatever happens, I want to know about it, if not I sit at home stupidly, not knowing about the world outside. I must know a bit!

Me(84-93): Do you think the economy will recover?

HO: Of course we wish

Me: But do you have the confidence?

HO: Yes! If the whole world is like that, it's tragic. I cannot be so selfish.

I could not make sense of HO's replies until I realized that there were “hidden audiences” in our conversations – a concept whose theoretical significance will be explained in Chapter 7. I could not make sense of HO's replies until I realized that there were “hidden audiences” in our conversations. As to who these “hidden audiences” were, they became obvious at other points in the interview when HO spoke about how her neighbours looked down on her CHE family for being “old-fashioned” and “scolded” her for “stupidly” sending their children to Chinese schools (Chapter 6B).

There were similar situations where certain interviewees (especially those with blocked class trajectory) seemed to be haunted by social expectations, usually embodied in the voices of impersonal significant others like neighbours, brothers-in-law and classmates.

If these cases were difficult, the situation with Thomas nearly incapacitated my research—Thomas smugly told me that researchers like me were very stupid, because we assumed that our interviewees told the truth. He then told me he deliberately lied to me during interviews but refused to tell me all the things he lied about. This was an epistemological and analytical nightmare for me — I had not realized how “unconstructivistic” my analytical procedure had been so far; I had not realized how dependent I was on the goodwill and honesty of my interviewees. I realized that thus far, my belief that my approach was constructivist (see chapter 2, especially “proven” by my willingness to analyse jokes and rumours) was an illusion. It took Thomas’ trick to slap self-reflexivity into my work; I was forced to consider the extent to which my analysis would still hold if all my interviewees lied to me.

A solution that I was tempted to implement (but did not) was to try to find out exactly where he lied. Without his cooperation, it would have taken a lot of second-guessing to achieve this. More importantly, such a solution would require that I judged his utterances based on some notions of coherence – which I was highly unwilling to do, given my professed anti-cognitivism.

The only other solution was to make a resolute constructivist turn by prioritising the meaning of the (speech) act (of lying) over the meaning of the utterance. Without thinking about his utterances – especially the statement that he lied – in terms of “speech acts” and “hidden audiences,” I would not have been able to put constructivism into practice. Without Thomas’ case, I would not have realized the problems with my previous analytical method and overhauled my research goals and methods of analysis.

Since this realization, thinking about “hidden audience” had proven useful whenever I came across passages of transcripts that seem “to come from nowhere.” Indeed, I later realized the conceptual importance of this notion⁷¹—

⁷¹ A whole dissertation may be needed to explore the full significance of this concept. Briefly, this focus on hidden audience again suggests a type of non-abstract

“hidden audiences” appears to function as a type of preferred reading that interviewees have internalised and which they feel compelled to live up to, failing which they feel they need to act defensively. Theoretically, these moments have become the most important analytical nuggets in my research – because these are precisely the moments when ideological contestations are performed on an everyday basis and in embedded and materially “real” contexts (as conflicts with neighbours and brothers-in-law).

How interviewees resolve these dilemmas and conflicts with alternative ideological values (represented by significant others who hold these values) vitally reveal what my research aims to uncover: the subcultures they belong to (which group constitutes their preferred reading) and their structure of feelings. These “live” and embedded dramatizations of ideological contestations provide direct insight into the presence of a normative/moral centre (internalised social values or “discursive unity”) and its institutional links or “institutional materiality” (e.g., government campaigns), and explain how the state/authority is rendered organic yet (strategically) absent in everyday life.

communitarian governmentality based on the formation of moral subjects (who may exhibit different public/private behaviours) rather than ethical subjects with a neo-liberal governmentality. If this is correct, it would suggest the need to develop different epistemological and analytical tools to understand different ideological systems. To study moral societies (as opposed to ethical/liberal societies), it may be especially important to develop methods and concepts that are not based upon cognitivist assumptions of (public-private) coherence.

CHAPTER 4 FROM IMMIGRANTS TO CITIZENS

ECONOMIC NATIONALISM IN THE 1ST GENERATION

**"The PAP is the vital nerve centre of the entire nation...
Without the PAP, there will be no Singapore..."
(Petir, December 1983).**

4A. STATE, NATION OR NATION-STATE?

What is the nation-state and what is its relation to the state or nation? The conflation of nation with state (e.g., "nationality") has increasingly become a taken-for-granted category. The views that the state and nation are coterminous and the view of a nation as an "organic" (state) community have come to constitute the preferred understanding of nation-state. However, these views belong within a particular, culturalist paradigm where (state) cultures or communities are used to explain social phenomena, rather than as a phenomenon that needs to be explained. This culturalist understanding of nation-state is hegemonic in popular and academic discourse. Researches are often conducted within the boundaries of the nation-state and draw upon national stereotypes as explanations. Among contemporary thinkers, there is a longing to reassert national essence and uniqueness, especially in face of rapid social changes. E.g., Heidegger's desire for a return to German *folk* culture became controversial when rallied behind Hitler's cause.

By seeing the nation as "natural," "essential" or "already there" (e.g., Herder, Fichte), culturalist approaches mystifies the process of nation-state formation and cannot be applied to communities where state and national boundaries are not coterminous.⁷² Kurds and Israelites are considered nations without state while Singapore has been described as a state without a nation. Many of my

⁷² Connor (1994, 39) supplies some interesting figures to argue that "a prime fact about the world is that it is *not* largely composed of nation-states:"

-Only 12 states (9.1%) can justifiably be described as nation-states.

-25 (18.9%) contain a nation or potential nation accounting for more than 90% of the state's total population but also contain an important minority.

-Another 25 (18.9%) contain a nation or potential nation accounting for between 75% and 89% of the population.

-In 31 (25%), the largest ethnic elements accounts for 50% to 74% of the population.

-In 39 (29.5%), the largest nation or potential nation accounts for less than half of the population.

interviewees considered themselves "Singaporean" because of their passports. That Singapore's independence was unwanted means that citizens see "Singapore" as a historically contingent political entity rather than as an organic polity with an intrinsic ahistorical essence. Citizens also joke about being citizens of "Singapore Inc.," indicating that their nationality is based on (social and economic) contract, rather than a sense of belonging to an organic community.

While culturalist perspectives conflate the state and nation, materialist perspectives tend to dichotomise them such that the nation tends to be seen as being constituted by subjective bonds between citizens, as opposed to the "objective" entity of the state.

Materialist approaches offer useful insights into models of development of the nation-state by looking at the process of state and nation-formation. Hroch (1996, 63) identifies three stages of nationalist movements by looking at political agents and mobilisation: small groups of intellectuals first elaborate on the concept of the nation; a wider network of patriots spread the word through concerted agitation; and serious popular mobilisation begins. Breuilly (1989, 11) distinguishes between the various goals and enemies of nationalism: nationalism prior to ("state nationalism") and after ("government nationalism") the gaining of state power. He also distinguishes between the internal functions (consensus-building) and external functions (coercion towards opposition) of government nationalism. Anthony Birch (1989, 8-11) distinguishes stages of national development institutionally:

1. Consolidating political control by quelling internal rivals ... establishing police and courts to maintain order;
2. Penetrating administratively ... collecting taxes, implementing laws, appointing bureaucrats and creating register of tax-payers;
3. Creating educational system to give a sense of national identity, common history, inculcate patriotism; and
4. Developing national pride.

All these theories can be usefully applied to Singapore. Hroch's trace of the growth of nationalism can be directly applied to how a small Westernised elite with little popularity strove to gain nationalist legitimacy by building an administrative state founded upon a network of loyal civil servants and mass

(Chan, Vasil, C.M.Seow). Breuilly's distinctions are especially applicable for post-colonial one-party states, where revolutionary parties' monopoly over state/government power and legitimacy is often based upon state nationalism. Within Breuilly's and Birch's categories, we can discern Althusserian categories of repressive versus ideological state apparatuses (RSA vs. ISA), Gramsci's distinction between consent and coercion and Foucault's distinction between government through law and morality or through ethics and the self (governmentality). Birch's delineation of stages provides the structure for Chapter 4 (stages 1 and 2) and Chapter 5 (stages 3 and 4).

While materialist theories can be useful, their view that the nation-state evolved under certain material conditions is problematic. By subscribing to some form of material determination, they privilege particular material forces over other (non-) material forces, which limits their usefulness as theories. Materialist typologies tend to be prescriptive and reductionist, explaining the nation-state as a "sociological necessity in modern society" (Eley and Suny 1996, 6) or an *inevitable consequence* of certain material forces. Gellner (1983, 5) goes so far as to argue that, "in the post-agrarian, industrial age there is, once again, no option; but now the *presence*, not the absence of the state is *inescapable*." In these historical accounts, *functions* and *effects* are used as *explanations*. Weber (1946, 78-79) argued that the modern nation-state should not be defined "in terms of its ends... (but) in terms of the specific means peculiar to it." E.g., Gellner (1974 and 1983) argues that the state performs an exosocialisation function by educating and disciplining a workforce, but does not explain why the state is needed to perform this function or how this state function may be an effect of yet other forces.

Secondly, Benjamin and Kedourie, drawing upon the experience of post-colonial states, provide strong refutation of materialist theories: nation-statehood is neither continuous nor inevitable.

Instead of nation-states being surrounded by conducive (material) conditions of emergence or there being "elective affinity" between material conditions and state-formation, Benjamin (1988, 3-7) argues that for many states, the

experience of nation-statehood in modern nation-states is characterised by a "discontinuity between nation-statehood and whatever preceded it" rather than as a continuous evolutionary process. He argues that the nation-state was invented once and "never again to be independently invented." This Western intervention was then imposed on the rest of the world; statehood is mutually conferred through violence and diplomacy, rather than gained through events as "Independence." Primary nation-states emerged in Europe between the 13th-18th century, "gradually and cumulatively to *reinforce each other*, until eventually, it became obvious to the people involved that a new kind of societal framework had enveloped them." Secondary nation-states, "with very few exceptions... come into being quite literally overnight," usually through postcolonial struggles and conscious imitation by local Westernised elite." The achievement of statehood requires the mutual recognition of each other's territorial sovereignty and not merely material conditions. States interpellate each other into existence into a world-system of nation states. Because statehood has to be conferred, claims for sovereignty by the Kurds and Taiwanese are empty without the recognition of the UN or other nations.

Kedourie similarly rejects materialist/evolutionist perspectives that argue that nation-states develop locally. To him, nationalism "is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the 19th Century. It pretends to supply a criterion for the determination of a unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively for its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state, and for the right of organisation of a society of states" (Kedourie 1990, 1; Eley and Suny 1996, 6).

Not only may nation-statehood be experienced as a discontinuity, the stages of state-formation that materialist theorists highlight may actually be reversed. Because the nation-state is invented only once, "primary nation-states" are more easily explained by domestic materialist conditions. In "secondary nation states" statehood often *precedes* industrialisation (versus Gellner 1983); the "material determinant" (industrialisation) is actually the *goal* of the determined (state).

This brings us to a more general critique that constructivism levies on materialist and culturalist perspectives on the nation-state. Both camps tend to see the nation, in different ways, as “natural” – as essential and unchanging in culturalist theories or as evolutionary/continuous and thus historically natural or inevitable in materialist theory. Constructivists argue that the nation is not natural but naturalised; it is more imagined than real, it is a selectively constructed human artifice and an effect of (deliberate or complicit) human effort.

In thinking of the nation-state as a social construction, it is important to ask “whose version of nation” and “for what purpose?” It is only within more recent work on nationalism that constructivist perspectives emerge, conceptualising the nation as a rhetorical and ideological entity constructed by the state to legitimise its monopoly over coercion. In thinking about “whose version of nation” is naturalised, scholars appeal to Raymond Williams' (1965, 66) notion of the selectivity of tradition. Nowhere is the awareness of alternative trajectories sharper than when confronted with post-colonial statehood, where governments struggle against the “Western” model of nation-statehood. Jayasuriya (1997) argues for a “reactionary modernisation model” where the Asian Values discourse is seen as a reaction against Westernisation; Kohn (1994) distinguishes between Western and Eastern forms of nationalism. Ang and Stratton (1997) argue that “Asian Values” represents an attempt by non-Western governments to use Western strategies (Orientalising/Occidentalising) and epistemology (East/West) to ward off Westernisation (liberal/plural democracy).

Weber (1946, 78-79) reminds us that the nation-state must be understood not only “in terms of its ends ... (but) in terms of the specific means peculiar to it.” Weber's definition of the state is by now canonical: it is an institution with a “monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force.” If a nation is state community that shares a common culture, then a nation is surely, first and foremost, *a community that shares the same system of legitimate coercion*. This understanding of nation as a coerced state community is a logical derivative from Weber's definition and begs the constructivist question of how

the nation-state can be coercive and organic at the same time? Why is it that "state" and "nation" tend to be inseparable in our minds?

The blatant incongruity of the coercive state and the organic nation and their seamless conflation into "nation-state" should give us cause for alarm. Considerable ideological efforts must be invested to make state communities forget its common coercive culture so as to experience themselves as organic communities. To this end, it is imperative to consider the role of organic intellectuals in helping state communities erase/forget the coercive dimension of their communality and in helping the state to build nations based upon state-mediated consensus. Constructivists point out this ideological function that culturalist and materialist theorists perform when they do not address the issue of the unnatural creation or naturalisation of an organic state community based on an erasure of the community's coercive antecedent. For constructivists, the act of seeing national culture as natural (essential or inevitable) furthers the state's ideological project and legitimises cultural justifications of coercion.

Singapore's experience questions many taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of nation-statehood. Statehood, or territorial sovereignty, was neither a material inevitability nor a goal that was fought for. Independence was considered "a foolish and absurd proposition" (Drysdale 1984, 249) and came as a shock. The degree of disbelief cannot be underestimated: even when occupied by the Japanese during WW2, its people did not desire independence but sought British colonial protection. Even when freed from colonial rule, independence remained unimaginable and leaders tried to avoid it through a proposed merger with Malaysia. Modern statehood, which necessitated the breaking of traditional bonds and teaching citizen to accept state intervention in personal life, was not experienced as a continuous material evolution but as a discontinuity.

Secondly, the PAP retained many colonial institutions while trying to avoid evolving into a "Western" model of statehood. Materialist and culturalist approaches tend to ignore the ideological projects that state elite mobilises to combat trajectories favoured by nature, culture or material conditions (Cf.

Fukuyama's 1992 "end of history" thesis). "Asian Values" is but the PAP's latest project to prevent the "natural evolution" towards liberal-plural democracy and inaugurate a more hierarchical and monolithic "strong moral centre" model of Asian statehood based rhetorically on communitarianism and benevolent paternalism.

As a one-party hegemonic state,⁷³ Singapore also provides interesting insights into the conflation of party with the nation-state. Within a Western framework where pluralism is the norm, and where authoritarianism is contrasted with democracy and believed to be unpopular, the existence of popular dictatorships is an anomaly that begs explanation. This anomaly is made all the more bewildering by observations that some governments (including the PAP) have shifted from "hard" to "soft authoritarianism."

Poulantzas (1978, 203) and Hall (1988b, 153; 1977, 337) observed that coercion and consent can be uniquely combined to perpetuate a form of "authoritarian populism." While the PAP is not always successful in disguising its coercion or making citizens forget the coercive dimensions of their community life, it has, nonetheless, secured considerable consensus such that observers (Castells 1988, 78) consider the PAP government a hegemonic one-party-state. This makes Singapore's case theoretically interesting: how is it possible to secure citizen consensus despite, not in absence of, reminders of coercion?

The PAP rejects a "government by the people for the people" model, preferring a Confucian model where leaders have a mandate to rule and the duty to make unpopular decisions. The PAP's hegemony is not gained through absorbing popular values to enlarge party hegemony but through inscribing its party objectives into administrative and social processes and institutions such as social expectations and public morality so that state authoritarianism can be transformed and softened into societal authoritarianism.

⁷³ For Sartori (in Chan 1985b, 147), a "dominant party system" is characterised by an absolute majority of seats over time while a "hegemonic party system" should be "truly one-party centred" but without precluding minor parties. The PAP is both: its monopoly

In the rest of Part 2, I will elaborate on the PAP's attempt to allow ideological pluralism without allowing fragmentation throughout generations of PAP rule and the different state apparatuses and ideological strategies used to achieve this goal.

4B. SHIFTING BASES OF LEGITIMACY: THE PAP'S CONSOLIDATION OF STATE-POWER

If it is not totalitarian to arrest a man and detain him when you cannot charge him with any offence against the written law... – what is it? What [Marshall] is seeking to do in the name of democracy is to curtail a fundamental liberty... freedom from arrest and punishment without having violated ... the law. (LKY in 1955, cited in Tremewan 1994, 21)

Where there are fierce anti-colonial struggles, successful leaders gain mythical legitimacy as fathers of the nation. In Singapore, independence came peacefully and late, when post-colonialism was already "passé" (universal) and "inevitable" (Vasil 1984, 8). This meant that changes in the bases of legitimacy (from colonial appointment to popular nationalism) were not attained through a process of mass nationalist struggle but through a fine diplomatic balance between the shifting bases of legitimacy had to be negotiated skilfully.

Originally, the PAP was neither the British's nor the people's favourite. Its legitimacy was not based upon popularity but affiliation with the strategic political elite; its ideological flexibility allowed it to keep up a "sustained dissimulation" (T.George 1973, 40). This does not mean that the PAP did not have ideological preferences, but these preferences were not given vent until it had consolidated power and eliminated political opposition. Because it was able to align with popular ideological camps, the PAP, while in opposition, was able

of state power since Independence is unbroken; at its weakest, it conceded only 4 out of 81 seats to the opposition.

to bait dominant parties into losing credibility without showing its own hand.⁷⁴ As the dominant party, the PAP did not hesitate to use coercion to consolidate its power.

1. Waning British legitimacy and rising popular nationalism

With the Japanese occupation in Malaya (made up of Malaysia and Singapore) during WW2, the British lost their imperial legitimacy. Yet, because Malaya was the main dollar-earning colony, the British were not willing to relinquish it without a fight. However, its attempt to re-colonise Malaya was met with strong international and local opposition. While the British continued to rely on colonisation as a method of exploitation, the US had developed an "open door policy" technique of exploitation without colonisation (Tremewan 1994, 12) and was eager to have a share of Malaya's revenues. Locally, the Japanese occupation had led to the formation of a popular⁷⁵ guerrilla army (with British support), the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), who was now ready to fight British colonisation.

Because of Malaya's economic importance, the British fought fiercely, crippling the MCP and other leftwing organisations. It closed down two Chinese newspapers, jailed editors and quelled MCP demonstrations, resulting in several deaths (Clutterbuck 1984). Despite declaring a state of emergency (which gave the government unlimited power to detain without trial⁷⁶ and impose bans and curfews), and despite their superior numbers (10000 against MCP's 3000 men), the British became aware of their unpopularity and begun to see the "inevitability" of international decolonisation (Vasil 1984, 8). However,

⁷⁴PAP's skill at baiting/scapegoating enemies is well known and popularly joked about: LKY, Dr Mahathir (PM of Malaysia) and Claudia Schiffer were sitting together in a train. Suddenly the train went through a tunnel and it went completely dark. Then there was a kissing noise and a loud slap. When the train came out of the tunnel, Claudia Schiffer and LKY were sitting as if nothing had happened and Dr.M had his hand against his face as he had been slapped.

Dr.M (thinks): "LKY must have kissed Claudia Schiffer and she missed him and slapped me instead."

Claudia Schiffer (thinks): "Dr.M must have tried to kiss me and actually kissed LKY and got slapped."

LKY (thinks): "This is great. The next time the train goes through a tunnel I'll make another kissing noise and slap that Dr.M bastard again."

⁷⁵ Turnbull (1989, 334) estimates 70000 supporters in Singapore.

⁷⁶ Tremewan speculates that as many as 1200 were detained.

they harboured the hope of controlling Malaya and sought the co-operation of the right-wing 'leisured gentry' Progressive Party (PP) (Drysdale 1984, 83) to maintain a veneer of popular legitimacy. The PP was encouraged to propose constitutional changes, which was accepted as the Rendel Constitution, to be instituted after the 1955 elections.

The Rendel Constitution marked the change in the bases of state legitimacy. Leaders were no longer appointed by the colonial masters but were to be popularly elected. The British were confident that the PP would win and did not believe citizens would be nationalistic or interested enough to vote, thereby thwarting its final attempt at indirect re-colonisation.

LKY thought differently and founded the PAP in 1954 with his friends. Aware of the shifting bases of legitimacy, the PAP knew that it had to court both the British and the masses. Its class position (English-educated) drew the British but alienated the masses. Because "any man in Singapore who wants to carry the Chinese-speaking people with him cannot afford to be anti-communist" (LKY 1955 in Vasil 1984), the PAP allied itself with the left. A PAP with two distinct factions was formed, held together by anti-colonialism and mutual need. The communists needed PAP's legal front, the PAP needed the communists' popularity (Bellows 1970, 20; Tremewan 1994, 19). This marriage of convenience demonstrates PAP's ideological flexibility. LKY's identification with the left's cause has always been suspect. Although he earned the reputation of being an activist by volunteering his legal services to communists, he often begged them to tone down their protests. He also knew that the communists did not trust a bourgeoisie like him who could not speak Chinese (Tremewan 1994, 18-19).

The results of the 1955 came as a shock for all parties concerned. The mass turnout was unexpected. Turnbull (1989, 254) attributes this political awakening to the verbal duels of Marshall from the Labour Front (LF) and LKY (PAP), which "electrified the legislative chambers and brought crowds to its previously empty public benches." Left-wing parties, which had criticised the Rendel constitution as neo-colonial, emerged victorious despite fielding only a token

force; they had wanted to secure a platform to protest, not to win seats. The LF emerged the clear victor while rightwing parties were decimated. The election clearly demonstrated that the future belonged to politicians with anti-colonial social-democratic tendencies.

II. From opposition to dominant party

After the election, the British understood that the Chinese masses regarded [the PP] as neo-colonial collaborators (Turnbull 1989, 239) and realised they needed was "an ally with apparently contradictory attributes: mass support ... and a commitment to British interests" (Tremewan 1994, 17).

The PAP needed British and mass support. It knew that its goal of a merger with Malaya was less detrimental to British interest than the LF's quest for full independence. I.e., in terms of gaining British support, the PAP was ahead of the LF. To emerge as leader, the PAP had to be more popular than the LF. The PAP tried previously to ally itself with the LF but without success. It should be noted that, according to election results, while the LF was more popular than the PAP, LKY was more popular than Marshall (Drysdale 1984, 99). Had an alliance been formed, LKY would have emerged leader of the alliance and leader of Singapore. Without an alliance with the LF, PAP was not able to co-opt the LF's popular legitimacy and had to find other ways to ensure that PAP was more popular than the LF. It did so by engineering the LF's unpopularity.

LKY's goal was made easier by the problems plaguing the Rendel Constitution. The Rendel Constitution was designed to reduce the elected leader to the status of a puppet of the British. Chief Minister Marshall (LF) found himself having to defend a constitution he did not support while struggling for more power from the British to control the many riots and strikes organised with the PAP's legal aid (Drysdale 1984, 106).

LKY wanted to force the LF to repress the mass riots and lose its popularity. Marshall was not baited; he refused to take stern measures and instead initiated discussions, which was interpreted by Chinese students and workers

as a sign of “weakness⁷⁷” (Turnbull 1989, 255). The British feared that Marshall’s soft attitudes towards communist demonstrators and his demand for full independence would make Singapore “an outpost of communist China.” Marshall resigned, as promised, when he failed to obtain self-government from the British and was replaced by his Deputy Yew-Hock Lim.

While Marshall refused to be baited, Lim responded harshly to the 1956 riots, leaving 15 dead and more than 100 injured. The PAP took the opportunity to criticise the LF as anti-democratic and ironically, neo-colonial (it was LF that wanted full independence while PAP wanted a merger). The LF lost its credential as an anti-colonial socialist party; Lim was seen as a “running dog” or lackey of colonialism and the PAP was left as the sole leader of the anti-colonial movement.

In the meantime, the British became more sympathetic to calls for self-government and agreed to grant it after the 1959 elections. During rallies, LKY accused a communist LF of accepting and misappropriating American funding and called for “the immediate resignation of the entire Lim Yew Hock government” (Turnbull 1989, 262). The PAP, by contrast, symbolised their incorruptibility by dressing in white and offered economic and social reforms. PAP’s victory was complete. LF lost every seat while PAP secured 43 out of 51 seats. LKY, as PM of a self-governing Singapore, now had “the means to push forward its hegemony to the fullest possible extension” (Chua 1995, 13).

III. The end of opposition in Singapore

The PAP-leftwing opposed LKY’s (PAP rightwing) alliance with the British and considered the merger neo-colonial. It threatened LKY to support Marshall if LKY did not stop repressing them. In 1961, it successfully won the Anson by-elections against the PAP rightwing.

Now that legitimacy was based on democratic elections rather than British favour, LKY’s faction faced a crisis. PAP’s popularity had always been based

⁷⁷That “consultative” government is taken as weak leadership lends some credibility to the PAP’s claim that developing countries do not appreciate “soft governments” and

on the PAP leftwing mass organisations; LKY needed to find a way of consolidating his legitimacy, without or without mass support. How could this be achieved? As an opposition party, it had baited the LF into repressing demonstrators and thereby losing its credibility. As the dominant party, the PAP could not use the same strategy against its internal left faction because it had to convince the British and the Malayan leaders that PAP was united and sincere in its proposal for a merger with Malaya. To consolidate legitimacy without its leftwing's mass support, LKY adopted a two-step strategy. Firstly, he had to cast out the leftwing; only then could moderate-PAP appear united to Malaya. To achieve this, LKY called for a confidence vote in Parliament after purging leftwing leaders. LKY's faction won by the slimmest possible margin (majority of one) and expelled the left faction, which then formed the Barisan Socialis (BS). In this way, LKY's faction manage to achieve legitimacy without mass support; it successfully evaded the test of *electoral* popularity even while acquiring an aura of popular legitimacy based on its *parliamentary* popularity.⁷⁸

However, *electoral* popularity remained the most fundamental basis of legitimacy and the PAP (now consisting only of the rightwing) could only delay, not eliminate, a contest for popular votes with BS in the next elections. The PAP was emasculated after the split; while it retained state control, it was left with no more than 20% of its former membership (Pang 1971, 14), "not even the skeleton of the Party remained" (Tremewan 1994, 27). However, it could now take an overt anti-communist stance. Using one-sided radio broadcasts, PAP addressed "the nation" as nationalists. Singapore's survival as a nation was tied to the merger and BS was portrayed as a communist organisation intent on sabotaging the merger, i.e., Singapore's survival. PAP represented itself as "a popular elected government" and BS as anti-nationalist, even though BS was more popular than the PAP before the split. Nation, state and party became conflated as one inseparable anti-communist pro-merger entity. Another attempt to bolster its legitimacy was the 1962 Referendum, which presented the people with 3 merger options that were, in actuality, all pro-merger:

are not ready for democracy.

1. ... giving Singapore autonomy in education and labour.
2. A complete and unconditional merger
3. Entry into Malaysia on terms no less favourable than the terms for the Borneo territories

PAP needed the people's endorsement of "A" to justify its continuance in office. It claimed that the second choice was in keeping with BS's demand for "complete merger;" BS disagreed and encouraged blank votes to embarrass the PAP (Pang 1971, Footnote 104). Although 71% voted for "A," the PAP's victory was tainted by the considerable 25% blank vote.

Besides propagating an anti-communist pro-merger ideology, the PAP also set about solving problems by creating jobs for a rapidly growing population. By 1963, its 4-Year-Plan was achieved ahead of schedule (Turnbull 1989, 277) and its impressive results in industry, housing and education were appreciated by citizens.

By the 1963 elections, PAP had successfully deprived the BS of its mass base. The conflation of nation and party allowed PAP to further repress the BS "legally" (de-registering, banning, deportation, detention without trial; the 1963 Operation Cold Storage detained 100 "radicals," Clutterbuck 1984, 158) and electorally (snap elections, freezing funds, smear campaigns). Using the British election technique of one-member constituencies designed to produce strong effective government in 2-party states (Turnbull 1989, 278), PAP won 73% of the seats with less than 47% of the votes, leaving the left with mass support but without state power.

Despite PAP's measures to weaken it, BS captured 33.3% of the votes, indicating that had PAP not repressed BS, BS might well be the dominant party in Singapore today. PAP admitted that success was never a certainty in 1963 (Pang 1971, 17). After the elections, PAP continued to purge BS—out of thirteen MPs, three were arrested and two fled. BS also committed a series of mistakes (it failed to consolidate its base and boycotted Parliament in 1965),

⁷⁸ As mentioned in Chapter 1 (US Presidential Elections, Al Gore and George W. Bush), a democratic leader is not necessarily a popular leader.

thereby losing the opportunity to become the main opposition party and spelling the end of opposition in Singapore for decades to come.

Having effectively silenced any leftwing anti-merger opposition, PAP found that after many years of courting Malaya, the Malayan PM was no longer interested in a merger with Singapore (Turnbull 1989, 266-267). The fallout was the culmination of fundamental ideological difference and was triggered off by an arrogant PAP gesture. PAP advocated multi-racialism while Malaya's UMNO advocated Malay communalism. PAP was concerned there was no non-communist party to present Malayan Chinese interests and took it upon itself to "save" Malaya from Chinese communists (MCP) by offering itself as a non-communist Chinese option during Malaya's 1964 elections. The Malayan PM, who feared the Singapore government would plan a Chinese take-over of Malaya, saw this as a breach of faith (PAP had previously declared it would not contest in Malaya) and declared solidarity with the Malayan Chinese communists, thereby repudiating any alliance with PAP. PAP had no choice but to declare independence and concentrate its effort on the mammoth task of building an independent modern nation-state.

4C. BUILDING A PRO-PARTY STATE

The PAP did not come to power on the basis of its popularity. While in opposition, it entered parliament through allying itself with popular parties and upon entering parliament, baited the dominant party to take harsh measures and lose popular credibility. After manoeuvring itself into a dominant position, the PAP further consolidated power through coercion that was justified as protecting Singapore from communism. Since it was not a genuinely popular party, the PAP understandably sought to ground its legitimacy on administrative and economic foundations.

LKY also understood that party legitimacy could not be sustained by his charisma (Vasil 1984, 64) and sought to perpetuate it by inscribing party values into the states machinery, i.e., by building a pro-party state that would give the party "legal legitimisation" (Weber 1946, 78). Legitimacy was to be based on the efficiency of a bureaucratised "administrative state" (Chan 1985a, 74;

C.M.Seow 1985a, 112). New institutions and safeguards that promoted the PAP's vision of a good state were entrenched in the Constitution to "outlast Lee's tenure as Singapore's paramount leader" (Tan and Lam 1997, 3).

Western observers are perplexed by Singapore's "soft authoritarianism." Authoritarianism is "softened" through embedding party values into the inner logic of institutions. The first generation leaders inscribed party values onto *state*, which allowed repressive party objectives (anti-ideological fragmentation in parliament and society) to be achieved by legislation and state bureaucracy, thereby "softening" the party's image. Second-generation leaders had to "soften" their authoritarianism even more. By the early 1980s, citizens were beginning to criticise the government for over-regulating and interfering with private life. Second-generation leaders realised that the surest foundation of their legitimacy was not in "charismatic" or "legal legitimisation" but in "traditional legitimisation"⁷⁹ (Weber 1946, 78) and sought to inscribe party values unto the *nation* through "social engineering." With the second-generation leaders' attempt to re-define its basis of legitimacy, the PAP state appears to have shifted through all three of Weber's types of legitimisation: from charismatic (pre-Independence struggles) to legal (first-generation) to traditional (second-generation).

1. Inscribing the party onto the state

While the boundaries between party and nation-state have become blurred, the party is highly centralised and well defined. At the top, the PAP consists of 12 members chosen by a secret list of cadres, who in turn are chosen by the Central Executive Committee. This cadre system allows LKY, the Secretary-General, to retain central and undisputed authority over the ruling party (Bellows 1970, 24; Chan 1985b, 159). This cadre system ensures that the day-to-day administration of the party is in the hands of the Parliamentary-ministerial wing.

⁷⁹Paternalism, unlike authoritarianism, sees authority as benevolent, which legitimates citizens' dependency on the state and encourages *personal* loyalty towards the authority-centre (Pye and Pye 1985, 27-29).

Through constitutional reforms, Singapore's legislature remains a unicameral parliament. Chan (1985a, 72) noted that unicameralism is preferred by leaders of new states who need greater power and authority to deal with the problems of development. Unicameralism was thought to "respond more readily to the search for efficiency and to make the right balance of authority between the various institutions of government easier to achieve."

PAP leaders believed that political neutrality of the civil service was unworkable in developing countries. Additionally, unlike other Asian societies (Indonesia, Burma, India), Singapore's civil service was relatively uninfluenced by nationalism/patriotism. As such, the civil service had to receive "political education." LKY (1959, in Vasil 1984, 122) exhorted civil servants to see the survival of the democratic state as their vested interest:

The civil service, in order to contribute its maximum in the critical tasks before the nation as perceived by the PAP, had to be fully informed of the objectives, priorities and policies of the party and imbued with a zeal to achieve their fulfilment. They had to be made to view the programmes as their own.

Instead of de-bureaucratising, which was fashionable in the late 1950s era of decolonisation and democratisation, the leaders were aware that "to denigrate and abuse the civil service until ... it loses all confidence ... [and] the respect of the public" would lead to "a collapse of administration and its floundering in inefficiency, corruption and graft" (G.E. Bogaars, foremost civil servant, in Vasil 1984, 123).

The bureaucratisation of the civil service is a key strategy in achieving "the administrative state" via a "deliberate depoliticisation of the political arena" (Chan 1985a, 73; C.M. Seow 1985a, 112). Within an administrative state, politics is weaved into management and the bureaucrat's contribution becomes more significant than the elected politician's. The PAP takes pains to recruit the "best" (through rounds of streaming in education). When candidates prove themselves, they are approached for party membership. The PAP has been so successful that "after the first two elections, the PAP became really an administration. It was no longer a party. And the civil service has become a part of that" (Rajaratnam, a senior PAP minister, in Vasil 1984, 127). While some

consider this "administrative turn" as "pragmatic" and "value-free," others argue that the strategic division between the technical and the administrative is *the* politics of the modern state's management process (Chua 1995, 126; Habermas 1975, 68-75).

The PAP has strong influence over the judiciary and its power of legislation is strengthened by the lack of judicial independence. Half of the Supreme Court's appointments are short term; PAP leaders closely screen tenured positions. Judges who have ruled against the government have found themselves in trouble; their rulings have also been reversed by parliamentary legislative amendments (Rodan 1989, 203).

To discourage political participation, the PAP relied heavily on legalised sanctions rather than hard repression. Instead of arresting the opposition, the PAP sued and bankrupted them. [Later, the PAP deployed ideology (Asian Values) to discourage dissent.] Institutions that tend to be oppositional (e.g., unions, media) were centralised and managed directly or indirectly by the government. Non-institutional political activities were dealt with legislatively. Ultimately, the government could always rely on the Internal Security Act to detain without trial, which was used frequently in the 1970s.

Upon gaining self-government in 1959, the colonial Printing Presses Act was revised in 1960 to prevent foreign interests from gaining a foothold in Singapore (Turnbull 1989, 309). Immediately after this revision and through the 1970s, reporters and editors were detained and several newspapers banned. Having removed these "obstacles," the process of centralising the media began in the 1980s. Newspapers and publishers were merged into a conglomerate to form the Singapore Press Holdings. While the merger was officially claimed to prevent media wars, such centralisation made government control easier (D.Birch 1993, 16-17). Journalists protested in a rare (and illegal) demonstration with placards, to no avail.

Licensing was another key strategy of controlling media and public groups. Under the 1972 New Printing Presses Rules, media licences had to be

renewed annually on condition that owners do not run articles that will cause "ill will or misunderstanding between the government and people of Singapore and ... Malaysia; or which ... excite ... racial emotions, or which glorifies the use of violence in politics' (D.Birch 1993, 17).

Control was also gained through legislation on ownership and funding. Directors of media companies must be citizens; shareholders are not allowed more than 3% of the equity (although a 1974 Amendment Act allows the government to waive this rule if it so pleases). Finally, the government also attempts to "cultivate" the press by establishing 'cosy' relationships between editors and ministers to make 'journalists more aware of the basic facts, ... to feel the nuances and textures of political developments" (D.Birch 1993, 18).

Tremewan (1994, 194-221) argues that there is a "criminalisation of politics" in Singapore. This refers to administrative laws, especially against the opposition, which defines what constitutes "legal and illegal politics." Gatherings of four or more may be broken up by the police; groups that want to hold meetings must register as a society under the Societies Act and satisfy the Registrar of Society (which the Internal Security Department oversees) that it is not contrary to national interests. Non-political societies that dared to engage in political arguments have suffered considerable reduction of powers through legislation. When the Law Society criticised the Newspapers and Printing Presses (Amendment) Act in 1986, the government introduced the Legal Profession (Amendment) Bill, which restricted the Law Society to commenting on legislation only when requested by the government. Politics and professional interests were separated and politics was marked "Out-of-Bounds" ("OB markers") to laypersons.

Individuals have also been targeted. Opposition politician Jeyaretnam has been charged with libel and fraud, bankrupted, imprisoned and suspended from Parliamentary duties on tax evasion charges. Civilians have also been criminalised, albeit in a gentler form. Local writer Catherine Lim was chided by the PM when she hinted about PAP factionalism.

What possibilities are there for a civilian to participate politically? The PM argues that, if "you want to politick, you form your own party or join Mr Jeyaretnam," an opposition politician. Yet if they want to do so, they would face many obstacles (Cf. Tremewan 1994, 163 for a list).

Besides criminalising politics, Tremewan (1994, 211) argues that crime was also politicised to discipline the lower sectors of society into obedience. This may be seen as the process of nationalising citizens, a way of inserting the relevance of the state in lives that would otherwise be scarcely affected by the state's existence. Citizens needed to be taught "the rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the sociological-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination" (Althusser 1969, 6). Citizens are shamed or fined when they trespass the rules of good social conduct, such as urinating in lifts, littering or failure to flush the toilet. Over time and generations, coercive laws have become norms and are now seen as the natural, civilised pose of a "gracious society."

II. Amending the constitution to prevent parliamentary opposition

While the PAP's monopoly lasted, backbenchers were encouraged to supply "loyal opposition" to create an aura of political contestation within the Parliament proceedings, which are televised nationally (Chan 1985a, 82-3).

The PAP's monopoly ended in 1981 when an opposition MP was elected in a by-election. The PAP was in a state of disbelief and considered it a "freak election." To forestall further protest votes in the 1984 elections, the 2nd DPM Rajaratnam argued that:

The theory of democracy as opposition is founded ... on intellectual dishonesty.... No opposition enters the parliament to help a government govern well... Put bluntly, the role of an opposition is to ensure bad government (Asia Yearbook 1983 in Tremewan 1994, 158).

The PAP also wanted to woo citizens back by showing them that it was responsive to their needs for opposition. It conceded (to popular opinion) that an opposition *might be* desirable, not *necessary* (Tremewan 1994, 159). In preparation for the 1984 elections, the PAP demonstrated its responsiveness to

citizens by amending the constitution to establish the Non-Constituency MP (NCMP) scheme. In the event that less than three opposition MPs were elected, this amendment would provide for the appointment of top three scoring opposition candidates as NCMPs.

When the opposition gained an additional seat in the 1984 elections, registering the highest level of protest votes against the PAP since 1968, LKY felt so "coerced" by the electorate that, in the first hours after the election, he questioned the merits of the one-man-one-vote system, suggesting that it may be necessary "to try to put some safeguards into the way in which people use their votes to bargain, to coerce ... and get what they want" (Chua 1995, 154-5). The NCMP scheme had obviously failed to stem the tide, its ineffectiveness further confirmed when the opposition spurned the offer of an NCMP seat to make up the minimum of 3 opposition MPs (Tremewan 1994, 160).

After the 1984 elections, the Feedback Unit was set up to facilitate consultation. Its ideological message was, again, that parliamentary opposition was unnecessary because the government was responsive to citizens. In 1987, LKY's son Hsien-Loong Lee launched the 'National Agenda' to "enable all Singaporeans to participate in formulating the means of attaining the goals identified by the Government's Vision of 1999" (Quah in Tremewan 1994, 161). This reveals the PAP's paternalism: even while trying to be open-minded, it attempted to mould citizens' desires by offering them assistance/tutelage to fulfil their national selves. By the 1990s, the Feedback Unit has come to be popularly joked of as the Feedback "black hole." The government invites feedback but does nothing with it (at times, it explains why it cannot accept suggestions). Public mistrust became so intense that ministers had to prove that they had implemented some suggestions and to flag them in the media.

These were some PAP strategies to keep liberal developments at bay. When it became clear that the opposition vote against the PAP had consolidated (at a consistent level of about 25%) despite the continuous use of anti-opposition election strategies (changing constituency boundaries, snap elections), the PAP realised it had to take more drastic measures.

Before the 1988 elections, the Constitution was again amended to create the Group Representative Constituency (GRC). Three or more constituencies may be grouped together into one GRC to raise the threshold of votes needed by the opposition to get elected into parliament in the first-past-the-post electoral system. Its aim was to 'dilute opposition votes with neighbouring constituencies which strongly support the PAP' (L.Lim 1989, 184). The strong public reaction that GRC provoked compelled the PAP to come up with a more satisfactory justification than Asia's brand of democracy. The government then presented the GRC as a scheme to ensure minority representation. Although the government went to considerable lengths to convince the electorate, many minority citizens resisted being singled out ethnically.⁸⁰

The Nominated MP (NMP) scheme was another constitutional amendment. NMPs are non-politicians nominated by the public and selected by a committee of elected MPs. The NMP scheme aimed to introduce non-political party contestation in Parliament, and "reduce the circulation of dissenting voices outside the official political sphere and agenda" (Tremewan 1994, 171).

In 1991, the PAP again amended the constitution to establish an Elected President (EP). It has been debated whether the EP is simply "a pragmatic move to safeguard national reserves⁸¹" or another "constitutional device to perpetuate PAP dominance" (K.Tan 1997, 79). The EP would have the final say over the release of political detainees and has the power to veto almost any bills; no party would be able to govern without his co-operation. The creation of EP increased control by the executive (PAP's CEC) further; the President's executive actions were immuned from judicial review. The EP scheme indicated that it has become imagine-able to the PAP that it may lose its parliamentary monopoly or majority. Should it happen, the EP scheme could

⁸⁰ In my fieldwork, many minority interviewees – old and young – explicitly stated that they did not require a minister of their own race to represent them and that an MP from any minority is sufficient.

⁸¹ On a per capita basis, Singapore's reserves are the highest in the world. Even then they are grossly understated (US\$16.9 billion in 1988) because Singapore values its instruments at purchase price rather than at current value, e.g., gold at US\$35 an ounce rather than current value of US\$376 (Tremewan 1994, 174).

help the PAP maintain power. The public distrusted the EP scheme and believed that the position was tailor-made for LKY. Public reaction was so negative that LKY was forced to say that he would not "necessarily be the first EP" (Tremewan 1994, 174/194). Despite negative public reactions, the bill was passed.

It was clear that the EP was designed for a loyal PAP cadre in mind, someone who would not question Cabinet decisions. Teng-Cheong Ong, a faithful PAP ex-minister, won by a slim majority (over an unknown businessman) to become Singapore's first EP. While announcing his plans to retire in Aug 1999, he revealed that he had been "circumvented by some ministers and senior civil servants and treated as a nuisance when he asked too many questions" (SCMP 12/08/1999, <http://www.singapore-window.org/sw99/90812sc.htm>).

Despite the constitutional attempts to forestall parliamentary opposition, the opposition vote has consolidated at about 20 to 25%. The PAP's near-monopoly appears to be pillared by anti-pluralist democratic practices, which allowed the PAP gain a disproportional number of Parliamentary seats. In 1984, with about 63% of votes, the PAP gained 97% of total seats. In 1988, with 62% of votes, it gained 99% of total seats. Since the 1980s, Tommy Koh, Singapore's ambassador to the UN, advocated the merits of proportional representation (PR). I.e., with 20-25% of the vote, the opposition should have a quarter of the parliamentary seats. Support of PR has increased due to the growth of a liberal middle class (de Cunha 1997, Gomez 2000) although it is highly unlikely that the PAP would accept such a system. However, such social consciousness does give an indication of the liberalist pressures that the PAP is beginning to face.

III. Extending the party through mass organisation

Besides using legislation to penalise citizens into compliance, the PAP attempted to inscribe itself into everyday citizen life through mass organisation.

The basic unit of the party is the party branch. There is one such unit in each electoral constituency, which may be served by sub-branches (Chan 1985b,

160). A community centre is also provided for every 200 households (C.M.Seow 1985b, 177). The CCs were important for the PAP to reach out to citizens, to bring a sense of statehood and nationhood to citizens who would otherwise have no interest or identification with the party/government/state. Being of immigrant stock, many could not read. As such, radio and CCs (with televisions and officials who explained policies) were important channels of political communication and tools of nationalising the population. In 1970, LKY remarked that,

In the early days, voluntary associations ... took place largely on the basis of common geographic and racial origin... It was only when these groups became rooted to Singapore permanently ... that new associations have emerged, which do not draw their membership on the basis of the districts or origin... The Community Center marks the beginning of this long process of identification with the country.

With growing literacy, the top-down communication function of CCs faded and had to re-invent itself to remain relevant in the everyday life of citizens. The establishment of Residents Committee and later the Citizens' Consultative Committee represent PAP's "experiment(s) at grassroot democracy;" each new scheme tried to establish a meaningful institutional link and to attract local participation (C.M.Seow 1985b, 186). Presently, CCs serve social and cultural needs, e.g., sports, tuition, childcare and cookery lessons.

"Meet-The-People" sessions are organised routinely for MPs to deal with petty problems of the citizens and to placate their anxieties regarding state legislation, e.g., school entry, purchase of home. MPs are aware of the importance of this contact with the masses—it is an important way of neutralising potential dissent (Turnbull 1989, 307), which may otherwise lead to withdrawal and alienation (C.M.Seow 1985b, 186) or anti-government whispering campaigns. Already, the Chinese-educated resent being drawn into the state system and felt discriminated because they do not speak English.

As "nursery(ies) of citizenship" (Turnbull 1989, 275), CCs are a material embodiment of the abstract idea of "statehood" in everyday life and are an important tool for consolidating and mobilising consent/acquiescence. CCs play such an important party function that the PAP admits that grassroots

institutions should be distinctly "pro-party" and access to them should be denied to the opposition (Tremewan 1994, 164; C.M.Seow 1985b, 190-1). This is because CCs

accentuated the populace's dependence on a whole range of government agencies for services and facilities... people develop a strong stake in the continuing stability of the system since any major disruption on the status quo would ... affect... the supply of those services essential for daily living (C.M.Seow 1985b, 174).

Having eliminated opposition, secured monopolistic control over state organs and having extended the party through mass organization, the PAP, as the sole representative of the nation, can now embark on the project of building a pro-party (economic and cultural) nation.

4D. ECONOMIC NATIONALISM: BUILDING A MODERN ECONOMY-NATION

Upon securing complete parliamentary power, the PAP identified its most urgent goal as the creation of a modern economy. The PAP believed that, with proper employment and housing, racial riots and various political agitations would cease—improvements in standards of living (materially) would serve as a panacea for social-political ills.

This assessment that economics (prosperity) would render politics irrelevant led the PAP to define its approach as pragmatic and supra-ideologically (Chua 1995, 57-60) and its goal as simply "national survival." Far from being supra ideological, the PAP's rhetoric of "pragmatism" aimed to manage local labour and capital and build a particular modern economy—one that avoids state-welfarism and democracy (later described as Asian Capitalism and Asian Democracy). For Chan and Evers (in Hill and Lian 1995, 191):

The pragmatism to which the national identity refers is one of purposive rational action, one of means-end calculation, one of technology and science. Citizens are admonished to identify with the economic success of the state which demonstrates the correct policies have been applied. As these policies are not based on an explicitly stated ideology nor even on purely political considerations, but on rational and scientific principles, *any criticism of these policies can be branded as irrational*. The prestige of science and technology is used to buttress not only the day-to-day policies but also the social and political system resulting from such policies, because leaders will ask if such a system is not derived from the very principles of scientific and rational action. The supremacy of this pragmatic identity or

technocratic consciousness can thus be used to legitimised tight political control and eventually an authoritarian political system.

1. Creating a national working class: taming and proletarianising citizens

To build a national economy, the PAP needed to create a national working class and “proletarianise” immigrant-citizens (Tremewan 1994, 49). This required that the masses be “uprooted from local communities, in order to become citizens – recognised as equal before the law – of an industrialising nation-state, housed in cities, taught in common schools, assembled in common workplaces, exposed to common mass media, meeting the common demands of economic growth and nation-building” (Kwok 1993, 5).

Following Marx’s observations about the rise of capitalism, the PAP needed to dispossess citizens of their means of subsistence (especially land) so as to create a “reserve army” ready for capital exploitation. This process was achieved largely through the Land Acquisition Act (inherited and amended from British colonial rule), which empowered the government to acquire any land deemed necessary for national development, including acquisition on behalf of private developers; the rate of compensation of which was to be determined by the state (Chua 1995, 130). Scholars suggest that unjust means were used to acquire land. For Chua (1995, 131), the government legitimated its “illegal” actions by arguing that its goals of attracting foreign investments and of offsetting for British neglect, was necessary. Within these ideological paradigms, compulsory land acquisition for public housing could be carried out without apologies and even allowed the government to occupy the moral highground in terms of its commitment to the people. For those who were unconvinced by these ideologies, undisguised coercion was used. Tremewan (1994, 47) noted that state demolition teams were often accompanied by police riot against farmers and rural dwellers who resisted, although public protests faded with the arrest of BS leaders in 1963. Citing George and Pugh, Tremewan (1994, 47) reported that extended periods of passive resistance invited “fires of convenience;” serious fires broke out on several occasions when coincidentally, “few fire-engines would be available, the water pressure

would be low and the firefighters would have defective equipment and engage in 'rather odd target selection.'"

However, dispossessing citizens of their means of production is insufficient. As Marx observes, "vagabonds" can always resist proletarianisation and seek greener pastures. In Singapore, the fact that citizens are highly mobile immigrants – a problem that persists to this day in the form of "brain drain"⁸² – made the PAP realise very quickly that the strategy of dispossessing citizens by itself was counter-effective since deprived citizens could seek greener pastures. I.e., the creation of a modern economy and a national working class requires some form of nationalism or territorial identification – that people have a sense of belonging to the very land they are deprived of. The battle for citizens' national belongingness is an ongoing one. During his National Day Speech⁸³ (Aug 2001), PM Goh announced a new scheme to give Singaporeans a new stake in a new Singapore in the form of a "New Singapore Shares," where, like previous counter-recession measures, wage increases were to be tied to economic performance.

For first-generation PAP leaders, economic identification with nation was to be achieved materially through the creation of a "stakeholders' society" (and ideologically through the Singapore Dream, see later). The public housing and national pension schemes are especially important in creating such a nation.

Singapore's public housing programme, which houses 85% of the population, is internationally commended.⁸⁴ This programme of forced resettlement or "forced suburbanisation" does not merely address the people's housing needs but also performs vital political functions. By destroying traditional communities and networks of support, and by forcing citizens to give up their land to become

⁸² The emigration of its local talents. At its worst in the mid 1980s, emigration rates were speculated to be as high as 12.5% (for a country with 3 million citizens).

⁸³ In an economic crisis, communitarian dimensions must become more dominant to sustain capitalism. His entire speech was an attempt to redistribute more to the working class while protecting capital interests. This scheme was praised and immediately studied by Hong Kong officials.

⁸⁴ Many praise Singapore for having the highest home ownership rate in the world (<http://www.ncpa.org/studies/s198/s198.html>). However, it should be remembered that

long-term tenants of public housing, proletarianisation is made inescapable – citizens have no choice but to sell their labour to have a home. Besides making citizens dependent on the national economy, the public housing programme also gave citizens a stake in the nation, so that they do not become individuals who have “nothing to lose by casting a protest vote” (Tremewan 1994, 62).

The Housing Development Board (HDB) exercised enormous power through controlling flat allocation. Because public housing promoted nuclear families (which is more conducive for producing a patriarchal, capitalist society, Cf. Chua 1995, 115; Tremewan 1994, 59-60), traditional kin and ethnic communities were fragmented and citizens were forced to re-build⁸⁵ (imagined) community with multiracial⁸⁶, non-kin strangers with whom the only common culture they share is nationality. These new communities aimed to disrupt the social bases of oppositional political organisations and encourage the emergence of a politically convenient balance of ethnic and working class communities (Y. Yeung 1973, 14-15; Hua 1983, 96; Minchin 1986, 249). These new communities are also likely to be highly state-mediated since the PAP's community centres are the only public places in housing estates that people can gather and interact.

The Central Provident Fund (CPF), a state pension scheme based on forced savings, linked domestic capital formation, forced housing and labour supply. Tremewan (1994, 53-54) argued that because savings are deducted directly from the workers' wage, CPF is more accurately a scheme for “withholding wages.” The CPF forces workers to pay in advance to support themselves (housing, health care, pension, family responsibilities) so that workers continue to be consumers and not become dependent on future capital expenditure either by the state or the corporations. CPF was one among many schemes to

the scheme heighten social inequality since working class citizens do not have access to freehold ownership but must re-buy their homes every 99 years.

⁸⁵ The sense of social alienation was extremely high; suicide rates soared (Tremewan 1994, 51). For more descriptive accounts, see Chapter 6C on the plight of the older Chinese-educated.

⁸⁶ To undermine any sense of neighbourhood identity based on ethnicity, inter-racial mixing is enforced through quotas for each of the three races in each block of public housing apartment. Owners may only sell their flats to a household that is not already racially over-represented in their block.

manage capital-labour relations. Over the years, the percentage contribution of worker and employer has increasingly tilted in favour of the employer. In 1955, workers and employers contributed equally (5%) to CPF. By the mid 1980s when the PAP was weakest, workers contributed 25% while employers contributed 10%. Presently, workers and employers each contribute 20% (<http://www.ncpa.org/studies/s198/s198.html>). For the working class, given the low level of state welfare support, the CPF is the only practical means of providing for their retirement. Because the PAP-state control access to forced savings, citizens fear (whether rationally or not) that non-cooperation with the state's labour policies may jeopardises their future security.

Capital-labour relations were also regulated by the 1968 Industrial Relations Act and the collective bargaining role of unions was further reduced with the establishment of the PAP-backed National Trade Union Congress (NTUC), which was tasked with promoting "good" industrial relations. The NTUC was established in place of other unions as an umbrella organisation for labour organisations. The NTUC sought to avoid a 'confrontational' relationship between labour and employers and establish 'mutual trust and co-operation' in its place. In 1968, unions were prohibited from strikes and lockouts through the Industrial Relations (Amendments) Act. Bargaining was also disallowed during the first 5 years of a new company's operation. Bargaining on behalf of the workers was left to the National Wage Council (set up in 1972) and the position of secretary general of NTUC eventually became a cabinet post (Tremewan 1994, 33). The 1982 Trade Union (Amendments) Bill further emphasised good industrial relations and broke large industrial unions down into 'house unions,' thereby reducing the collective strength of labour (Chua 1995, 61).

II. Subordinating local capital to foreign capital

Besides regulating labour, high CPF rates (40% of net wage), along with rising wages, make Singapore the country with the world's highest savings rate. (<http://www.ncpa.org/studies/s198/s198.html>) and provide a major source of capital for the government to undertake industrialisation, to the extent of competing with and dominating local capital. Having created and tamed a national working-class and having acquired a stable source of capital for its

economic projects, the PAP government, as the largest employer, is now able to mould the economy in a very particular way—one where, unlike the other Asian NIEs, there is little chance for a strong local capitalist class to emerge (theoretically a class important for its counter-hegemonic potential) and where “the PAP was able to sacrifice not only workers but also local capitalists to the greater competitive power of foreign capital” (Tremewan 1994, 32)

For Tremewan (1994, 31), the subordination of local workers and bourgeoisie to foreign capital is a theme that underlies the PAP's economic visions at each stage of economic development. Between 1959 and 1965, the PAP advocated a strategy of a common market and political merger with Malaya to stimulate import-substitution industrialisation (ISI). ISI was based on an alliance with foreign capital after independence, which would allowed foreign capital to retain its interests and to profit from the acquisition of raw materials, low local wages and provision of technology and credit.

The failure of a political and commercial merger with Malaya (after 1965) led the PAP to strive for export-oriented industrialisation (EOI) between 1965 and 1978. This required the formation of a disciplined workforce, which coincided with the PAP's strategy to maintain its political dominance through capitalist expansion. The PAP's control over labour and its offer of major tax incentives to foreign investors successfully attracted foreign investment. However, Hamilton (1983, 57/63) noted that in contrast to other Asian NIEs, EOI was undertaken almost exclusively through the inflow of direct foreign investment and that “foreign capital has so overwhelmed indigenous firms that the latter has played no role in most export industries and a small role in the rest.”

The low-wage EOI strategy was so successful that it not only solved Singapore's unemployment problem, it created a labour shortage. Thus, from 1979 to 1986, the PAP waged a Second Industrial Revolution to move out of low-wage, labour-intensive manufacturing to capital-intensive, higher value-added manufacturing. Again, MNCs were invited, which decimated budding local capital (Tremewan, 1994, 36). Although productivity improved, escalating labour costs without sound technological upgrading and the failure of foreign

capital to transfer advanced technology to Singapore (two-fifths of Singapore's key decision making positions were occupied by non-Singaporeans) led to the failure of the Revolution and an economic recession in 1985. Noting Singapore's lack of technological expertise and PAP's weakening hegemony, the PAP realised the need to embark on a new economic strategy.

The second-generation government envisioned the creation of "Singapore Inc"—instead of completing the Second Industrial Revolution, the strategy shifted towards "technology-less industrialisation" or "ersatz capitalism," towards developing Singapore as a service centre (middleman) for offshore exploitation (Yoshihara 1988, 115-116). Singapore was to become an "internationalised" economy that exploits other ASEAN economies on behalf of Western capital (Mirza 1986, 173/192/272). Ideologically, Singapore was represented as the "gateway to Asia," as a native who was fluent in English and Asian-languages, a capable local guide for foreign capital as they navigate a complicated and corrupted but charming and cheap Asia.⁸⁷

Through various reformulations, the imagined national economy remains unchanged—an "internationally competitive" capitalist economy through strong state leadership/influence over local labour and capital to create an environment that is attractive to foreign capital. Despite some deviations (social welfare), welfare is provided "in such a way as to maximise profitability and also control of workers" (Tremewan 1994, 72).⁸⁸

By and large, the PAP-government had been very successful in achieving its goals of creating a modern, internationally competitive economy – for more than a decade, it had contended fiercely, and often emerged the world's freest economy, busiest port and best airline. However, these accomplishments required that it impoverishes and subordinates the interests of local proletariats

⁸⁷ E.g., (1) building an industrial park in Suzhou (China) to help foreign capital gain a foothold in China and (2) forming a Batam growth triangle with Malaysia and Indonesia to attract foreign investments (Cf. Kahn 1996, 62).

⁸⁸ Many Americans believe there is considerable social welfare in Singapore and are surprised when I argue that Singapore exhibits a rather "pure" form of capitalism. Singaporeans joke about Singapore being "Singapore INC" because they recognise

and bourgeoisie to foreign capital interest (Rodan 1989, 210). Indeed, T.George (1973, 8) goes so far as to argue that it is because Singapore is economically tied to foreign (Western) capital that LKY can afford to be "not dependent on populist appeal and free from the need to play to gallery."

George's observation that the PAP does not try to be popular echoes my analysis that the PAP has never been truly popular; it has always managed to marginalise opposition and successfully avoided contests based solely on popularity. That the PAP manages to maintain hegemony without popularity is a testimony of the PAP's leadership skills – how was it able to, time and again, to persuade citizens that unpopular coercive policies were beneficial and necessary and to convince citizens to consent on coercion? To this end, *different generations of PAP leaders attempted to legitimise coercion and secure national identification on different imaginations of nation. First-generation leaders sought legitimacy and identification based upon economic nationalism (next section) while second-generation leaders sought to supplement the PAP's economic legitimacy with cultural nationalism.*

III. Legitimizing coercion: the myth of the fragile nation and the Singapore Dream

Authoritarianism is made to seem necessary and beneficial for citizens through a conflation of party survival with national and personal survival. The PAP's legitimacy crucially relies on the meta-myth that Singapore needs the PAP to survive, which requires the perpetuation of other myths and dreams.

The most common myth is Singapore as a fragile nation. In any information booklet about Singapore, Singapore is described as a small English-speaking multiracial city-state with no natural resources. This connotes that Singapore is highly susceptible to racial unrest, global economic trends and Western values. Together with historical accounts of Singapore's reluctant national birth, what is emphasised is the infirm boundary and status of Singapore as a nation-state, which heightens Singapore's fragility as a nation. Told daily, the moral of this

that social welfare are extended only to workers, not to citizens. "Social welfare" is more accurately "company benefits."

story/myth is that a *co-operative* people is Singapore's only economic resource and hope for survival.

Singapore's fragility finds relief in the PAP's capabilities. Historically, throughout political upheavals, LKY has been mythologised as "the Father of Singapore", a self-sacrificing hero who took the burden of independence,⁸⁹ without whom there would not be Singapore. Together with its impeccable image of incorruptibility, these myths install the PAP as the guardian of the nation.

While the myth of the fragile nation legitimised coercive policies and allowed the PAP to successfully appeal to citizens for national sacrifices, the process of creating a successful capitalist economy is not complete until workers have been ingrained with a competitive mentality and desire to constantly upgrade their social situation and skills.

This was what the Singapore Dream campaign sought to do – to ingrain a desire to "succeed" – a metaphor for a spirit of capitalism. E.g., Malays were highlighted as a problematic group not because they were not willing to work hard but because they lacked the spirit of capitalism – they preferred to be hardworking low-paid gardeners than exploited waiters (Alatas 1977, 168).

Despite Singapore's fragility, citizens are encouraged to dream the Singapore Dream of material prosperity. A media-led campaign, the Singapore Dream was given a catchy formulation as the "5Cs" (car, credit, cash, condominium, career) and was later inspired a similarly titled Mandarin soap serial. The Singapore Dream captured the public's imagination and created a strong national consensus about the type of society "the people" wanted, provided a language and framework (e.g., social expectations) that guided social, interpersonal interactions and inscribed a certain preferred reading/code of moral-conduct.

⁸⁹ Even though the PAP believed independence to be unviable and discouraged it.

The Singapore Dream institutionalised a spirit of competitiveness ("Confucian work ethic") that enables the reproduction of a particular (Asian) capitalism. To be interpellated into the Dream, citizens must accept its premise that everyone has a chance, i.e., that there is equality and meritocracy. Immigrant-citizens found it easy to identify with these values.⁹⁰ Having little expectations of welfare and being self-reliant, achievements and failures were attributed to individual, not systemic factors. Hoping that their children will be able to secure the Dream, no sacrifice (coercive policies) was considered too great. Additionally, the "5Cs" are status symbols whose consumption is highly regulated and taxed (especially car and private property in land-scarce Singapore). To achieve/maintain the Dream, citizens must remain unceasingly competitive.

The "5Cs" are typically prestige items with high investment and re-sale values, e.g., property, career and education, which are not ends in themselves but investments for greater financial reward. In this way, the "5Cs" creates, simultaneously, instant and (partially) delayed gratification. This has been described as a feature of Asian capitalism. Lian (2001) observes that it is unusual that a high-income city-state like Singapore with a per capita income of US\$23,000 saves excessively and exhibits an abnormally low level of private consumption. In 2000, "Singapore's abnormally high savings rate results in a whopping gross national savings to GNP ratio of 52% and a paltry private consumption to GDP ratio of 39%. Such a low consumption ratio is usually found in war-torn economies."

Recognising that education was the key to achieving the "5Cs", parents supported the government's plan to "develop every child's economically useful capabilities to the full" (Turnbull 1989, 301) – such as not speaking dialects to their children (Chapter 5). The British and Confucian tradition of ritualistic, instrumental exams provided an avenue for the general disciplining of workers and contributed to the emergence of a society based on certification (Chua 1995, 66/111-113). Standard exams also provided a platform for embedding of

⁹⁰ Chua (1998) argues that Singaporeans, as immigrants, have never been strangers to modernisation and have been adaptable to each period of change in the modernisation trajectory because of the absence of a 'pre-colonial', traditional or tribal culture.

the ideology of meritocracy since failure was to be explained by personal rather than structural factors. Students are also streamed from age nine to distinguish leaders from workers and the various grades of workers. There was also an attempt to practice antenatal streaming (Tremewan 1994, 114) through the Graduate Mother Scheme –explaining low-achievement genetically, LKY wanted to use tax incentives to encourage graduate women and to encourage lesser-educated women to have lesser children.

The Singapore Dream appears to be so successful that it has filtered into commonsense. It is no longer articulated officially but constitutes the tacit agenda behind the struggle to remain internationally competitive. Citizens are quick to pick up on the quickest path to the Dream whenever the government envisions the future of the economy. For one interviewee, “when the government announced more engineers are needed, everyone wants to become an engineer the next day.” The Singapore Dream, by fusing personal desire and national goals, makes the PAP’s coercive policies appear essential for national-personal survival. By encouraging citizens to dream a Dream that only the PAP can bring to bear, authoritarianism, as a package deal, is rendered tolerable, even necessary.

4E. THE PRICE OF SUCCESS

By the 1980s, the PAP was at its peak of self-confidence. It had centralized control of agencies with political potential (trade union, media, community centers, etc.); its leadership had brought about an “economic miracle.” Yet, it was at this point that the PAP faced a legitimacy crisis. The 1980 elections marked the high-water mark of the party’s hegemony. In a 1981 by-election, its parliamentary monopoly was broken; in the 1984 elections, its total votes declined 12% to 64%.

This situation – of losing hegemony when it was most economically successful – has been described as “the price of success.” With prosperity, Fukuyama’s “end of history” thesis threatens to come true. As Singapore moved towards late-capitalism, contradictions in the logic of capitalism threatened to tear society asunder (ideologically). Indeed, the PAP’s hegemony was so

challenged that the PAP admitted that opposition may become a regular feature of post-1980s politics and measures were taken to subordinate or contain, rather than eliminate, dissent.

The mid 1980s saw the maturing of a new generation of citizens. The 1980 census showed that more than 78% of the population were Singapore-born (Turnbull 1989, 319); they had no war experience, were likely to be better educated, more exposed to Western ideas and have the desire to “try something new.” I.e., the government “just can’t always be telling them to compare their situation to that of the 50s and ask them to be grateful” (ST19/9/1984).

Prosperity led to stratification along class and ethnic lines; the Singapore Dream became irrelevant for some (middle-class liberals) and inaccessible for others (working class, Malays). They made liberal demands on the government (to compromise the logic of capitalism): to provide welfare for the poor and to allow more democracy for the middle-class. The discourse of “Singapore Inc” arose to describe how citizens perceive their relation to their government – as workers, units of labour, “baby factories.”⁹¹ Emigration of local talents, or “brain drain,” was also at its peak⁹² and the government became frustrated at losing its most valuable workers.

The PAP’s alienation from the people was also caused by party arrogance and stagnation. With strong leaders, subordinates developed a habit of “following instructions.” A second-generation leader admitted that:

I sleep well knowing that if something goes terribly wrong, the PM is there to take care of the situation... This is the same feeling held by other ministers of the second generation” (Vasil 1984, 151).

Without political competition, the PAP grew arrogant and did not care to be popular or accountable. Dhanabalan, a PAP minister, asserted that, “there are certain key institutions in Singapore that must be beyond reproach – parliament, courts and so on” (Tremewan 1994, 165). In fact, the PAP prides

⁹¹ A common response to the Graduate Mother Scheme.

⁹² 12000 migrants in a population of 3 million in 1987
(<http://www.unesco.org/most/apmrnw13.htm>).

itself on being a government who does not “bend to popular opinion” (Turnbull 1989, 308; Vasil 1984, 151). LKY was aware of his party’s unpopularity but was “unrepentant:”

I have often been accused of interfering with private lives... I say without the slightest of remorse... we would not have made economic progress if we did not intervene on very personal matters – who your neighbour is, how you live, the noise you make, how you spit, or what language you use. We decide what is right. *Never mind what the people think. That’s another problem.* (LKY, National Day Rally 1986).

Chin-Chye Toh, a founding father of the PAP and now an unwelcomed dissident said: “We have no check on the use of power, the major issue here is centralisation of power in the hands of those who have been in power too long, but not long enough for people to realise it” (Paul 1992, 11). Safety valves for institutional criticisms were also closed due to a “voluntary abdication of power by the electorate.” Over time, dissent was muffled and driven out of the parliament unto the streets (Chan 1985a).

The degree of the PAP’s alienation from the people is indicated by their disbelief in the 1984 election results (the opposition secured 37% of votes and PAP votes declined 12%), to the extent of calling it a “freak election.”

“Accustomed to the euphoria of applause of the early days, old leaders reacted with excessive sensitivity to domestic and external criticism” (Turnbull 1989, 326-327); LKY felt so coerced by the electorate that he questioned the merit of the “one-man-one-vote” system. This election shock brought about an intense realisation that dramatic measures had to be implemented, including the early retirement of LKY and other first-generation ministers, a lowering of the PAP benchmark of electoral success to 60% (Milne and Mauzy 1990, 75), and “safeguards into the way in which people use their votes to bargain, to coerce... and get what they want” (Vogel 1989, 195).

Besides safeguarding electoral and political processes, the PAP attempted to find a new consensus and middle-ground to unite the nation. There were attempts to retain its economic ideology based on the Singapore Dream. The PAP realised that regardless of economic performance, citizens must be persuaded that the PAP is Singapore’s best/only option (for economic survival).

The ideological challenge was then to keep the Dream alive for all, since it is the *belief* in the Dream, rather than its *accomplishment*, that is the foundation of the PAP's economic legitimacy.

For those lacking in the qualifications to dream, the Dream must be sustained by a belief in meritocracy, by a belief that if not them, then their children can achieve it. The government also embarked on campaigns to encourage these citizens to lower their expectations. For those overqualified to dream the Dream, the challenge was to prolong the relevance and primacy of economic goals. The ceiling of what constitutes "necessity" was raised, thereby delaying the moment when non-basic dreams (i.e., non-"bread and butter," non-economic dreams) such as democracy becomes relevant.

Ultimately, the PAP's attempt to find ideological unity was undercut by a more fundamental problem: in building a modern economy and society, the PAP, through encouraging "rugged individualism," had over-legitimated individualistic discourses. The over-emphasis on pragmatism also created social problems: abandoned aged parents, decreased birth rates, the alarming percentage of career-minded women who were not marrying or having children.

As long as citizens feel they have the rights to act "pragmatically" in their self-interests, it would be impossible to find a national consensus. Since these problems were by-products of capitalist success, and the PAP government was unwilling to dilute the ethic of competitiveness (the logic of capitalism) or compromise its goal of capitalist development, the only option was to implement an ideological solution. While retaining the ethic of competitiveness, the PAP must simultaneously introduce a supplementary counter-individualistic (communitarian) ethic to channel away excessive individualism. This is precisely the aim of the Asian Values project.

Chapter 5 From citizens to Singaporeans

Cultural nationalism in the second generation

“Singapore is Lee Kwan Yew, SIA (Singapore Airlines), Telecoms, but that’s the government, for goodness sake, not the people!”
(Head of psychological defence, in Gwee 1987, 27).

5A. THE NECESSITY AND DIFFICULTY OF IMAGINING A NATION

I. Nationalism as a new basis of legitimacy for the PAP

The first generation leaders’ “stakeholders’ society” policy of giving immigrants a material stake in Singapore so that they will stay on as citizens resulted in utilitarian and materialistic bonds between citizens and the state, rather than bonds of solidarity and patriotism (Hill and Lian 1995, 218). National pride was based economic development (compared with neighbouring countries). By the end of its rule in the mid 1980s, the first-generation PAP government realised that pragmatic immigrant-citizens did not hesitate to move to greener pastures and Singapore was faced with a severe “brain drain.” Even ministers were willing to migrate “if the price is right” (Cotton 1993, 12). The government wondered whether the next recession would trigger a mass migration.

Realising that any further attempts to build an economic nation would only promote utilitarian citizenship, but realising that the scale of migration called for urgent measures, the new second-generation government simultaneously pursued a two-pronged approach. In the short term, it tried to “make Singapore the best home.” To this end, the second-generation PAP government was highly successful – Singapore was ranked by *Fortune* magazine (1996) as the world’s third best city for work and living, after Toronto and London (<http://mita.gov.sg/speech/speeches/v20n6002.htm>). However, this was insufficient because such pride and citizenship is temporary and conditional upon Singapore remaining the world’s best home. Ultimately, the PAP-government would have to embark on projects of cultural nationalism so that citizens no longer think of themselves as workers in “Singapore Inc.” but as an imagined, organic community that they belonged to.

Internationally, there are also benefits for Singapore in representing itself as a cultural entity and not merely an economy. Marriott (1963, 27) points out that “no state, not even an infant one, is willing to appear before the world as a bare political frame. Each would be clothed in a cultural garb symbolic of its aims and ideal being.” Lane (in Lai 1995, 180-181) notes that the eagerness to establish national/cultural identity is “more pronounced in newly formed societies with one-party system in which a ruling elite pursues clearly defined goals.” Claiming cultural difference could serve to silence Western criticism of the non-democratic nature of one-party statehood.

Nationalism is useful for governing because it is able to transform a state community that suffers the same system of coercion (Weber 1946, 78) into an imagined community where citizens have affective bonds. As an “administrative state” (Chan 1985a, 74) whose rule was based on legislation/coercion, the PAP sorely needed such a transformation to woo politically alienated citizens.

In order to take into account this transformative power of nationalism, the nation should be seen not only as an imagined community (Anderson 1983), but specifically, as one that has forgotten that its shared culture is constituted by its shared system of coercion. This conceptualisation of nation allows different theoretical camps to be bridged.

On one hand, nationalism is seen as an expression of the essence of nation (Breuilly 1982), as constituted through the will/belief of individuals. For Renan (1994, 18), the essence of the nation is the moral conscience of a group, or the willingness of its members to sacrifice themselves for the community. For Weber (1994, 22), a nation requires that members share a common myth of descent. Anderson (1983) also emphasises the subjective lateral bonds between citizens.

A second camp sees nation as more than a product of subjective will. Giddens (1994, 34-35) holds the most polar, statist and anti-subjective definition of nation—the nation is a ‘bordered power-container’ administered by a state with a formalised monopoly over the means of violence within its territory. For Stalin

(1994, 20), "a nation is a ... stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup." Deutsch (1994, 27) argues that a nation is held together by its members' communication; "nationhood" is shaped by the community's "communicative efficiency and facilities." This is not unlike Andersen's thesis where the printing press is a condition of emergence for nations. Deutsch observes additionally that nations are characterised not by lateral bonds of solidarity between citizens, but also by a centralised communication link. Connor (1994, 45) distinguishes between nation and ethnicity: a nation is a self-aware, and often politicised, ethnic group. This implies that a nation requires some form of centralised co-ordination, a well-defined sense of boundary *and* centre.

A nation may be subjectively real but it is also centrally administered by the state. Thinking of nationalism as the transformation of a state community into a nation allows the two camps to be bridged. It also allows us to see the benefits of nationalist projects and understand why the PAP wants a new basis of legitimacy. National values, if internalised by citizens, encourage the development of governmentality, or self-governing citizens (Foucault 1979). Once a citizen has internalised national values, he can endlessly discipline himself and others, allowing state myths becomes citizen beliefs and state morality becomes privatised as personal ethics.

II. Difficulties in Imagining a Singaporean nation

Language, ethnicity and religion are common building blocks that states use to construct nations. However, these standard recipes for the construction of national identity failed in Singapore. By exploring the paths that Singapore could not take, many assumptions about what constitute "nation" and "culture" are exposed.

Almost every theorist considers nation to be (ideally) constituted by the common culture of citizens, whether this be "daily plebiscite" (Renan 1994, 17), "common myth of descent" (Weber 1994, 22) or a "*common* economic life" and "*common* psychological makeup" (Stalin 1994, 20). The interesting question is whether common culture can be said to exist in Singapore.

National/common culture needs a stable community. Singapore was and *remains* an immigrant society with no stable community.⁹³ At the moment of independence in 1965, the bulk of its citizens were immigrants who had every intention of returning to their homeland. Singapore represents itself as lacking in natural *and* human resources. To survive Singapore has to be internationally competitive. I.e., Singapore “should” import global/“foreign talents” when necessary (about 20% of the workforce is foreign) and not be protectionist towards its citizens. Citizens joke about Singapore being Singapore INC. (run by PAP bosses) rather than a home; poet Tzu-Pheng Lee likens Singapore to a hotel that “makes the tourist feel at home.” PM Goh even quotes a popular joke: “Singapore wants to be global? Okay, I’ll leave.”

Can an elastic, non-stable community have a common culture? Was there common culture in immigrant Singapore? Anthropologists (Clammer 1985; Benjamin 1976) argue that there had always been colonial and coolie (indentured labour) “cultures.” However, the PAP, despite claiming to be anti-colonial, hold the elitist perception that only high culture can count as national culture and finding an absence of high Asian cultures in Singapore, proclaimed Singapore to be a “cultural desert” and looked to Western cultures to civilise Singapore’s national self. Unlike countries like Indonesia who can claim a glorious revolutionary (anti-colonial) past, Singapore could not. Colonialism, Japanese occupation (WW2), a failed merger with Malaysia and a peaceful handover of power from the British (with no anti-colonial resistance) were all too embarrassing a past.

Nationalist sentiments are strengthened by defining the national self against an other. Lacking in resources, Singapore survives on its skills as a middleman and is highly dependent on the co-operation and supply of others. As such it cannot try to raise nationalist sentiments through defining itself against a well defined other. Border skirmishes are always “life-threatening”—Malaysia’s threat to cut off the water supply never fails to cause a national panic. When a

⁹³ 15% have considered emigrating, 20% of the workforce is foreign, emigration rate reached 16000 out of 3 million population (1989).

Filipino maid was sentenced to death, other Filipinos maids working in Singapore resigned, almost causing a national crisis. Instead the PAP identifies opposition politicians as its others. However, such a strategy is not always in the PAP's favour because citizens do sympathise with the opposition.

Common culture is also assumed to be homogenous/shared by all. Tilman (1987, 154) observed that, "geography, history, language and culture have all conspired against the countries of ASEAN to make their task of nation-building and economic development more difficult." Given the violent racial conflicts in the 1950s and 1960s, assimilating all immigrant groups into one homogenised ethnicity was impossible. Nationalising "Chinese values" would be politically dangerous since the Chinese were immigrants in a predominately Malay Muslim region. Even without ideological prominence, the Chinese in Malaysia and Indonesia were cautious that their financial dominance would incur the violent envy of native Malays. A Singapore nation based upon minority "Malay values" has more claims to authenticity (or indigeneity) and in fact, is adopted rhetorically to placate Malays in the region. Malay is Singapore's "national language" but English is its "working language." Singapore students sing the national anthem in Malay every morning during flag-raising, albeit without 'strong emotions' (ST26/7/91). A Malay national culture would alienate the Chinese majority and is unlikely to be supported by the Chinese-dominated PAP government.

The most homogenous image the PAP government could conceive of was a multicultural model based on the three major homogenised ethnicities left over from colonial rule (Purushotam 1995, Ang and Stratton 1997):- Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others (CMIO). Singapore's multi-racialism is a rigid one where mixed ethnicity is not recognised- citizens were either Chinese, Indian, Malay or Others. In schools, "mother tongue" is not the first language learnt, nor the language spoken by one's mother or father, but the language defined by the *ethnicity* of the father. Singapore's multi-racialism is also rigid in that it is not allowed to find its own racial equilibrium—a "significant" Chinese majority

(Chiew 1990a, 11) must be maintained at all costs, even if artificially through immigration.⁹⁴

By the mid 1980s, a bottom-up culture did emerge based upon Singlish, a hybridisation of English and local languages and dialect. However, because the government desired a *pure common culture*, Singlish was banned from TV and radio as "bad English." Singapore tried to escape impurity and hybridity (and multiracialism) with Asian values. Multi-racialism (e.g., bilingualism and religious knowledge (RK) project) failed because it emphasised racial distinctiveness rather than national commonness. The ideology of "Asian values" was thought to be supra ethnic, thus having the potential to unite Singapore as a nation rather than divide it into ethnicities. However, "Asian values" was also too vague (Asia is extremely diverse, culturally) and was useful only against the West, not within Singapore.

Ang and Stratton (1997, 12-14) note, "Singapore's desperate attempt to escape, at least at the official level, its hybrid fate, the perceived curse of its impurity." "In its very conception Singapore's national Self cannot escape the tension created by [Western-Asian]-binary. It is a tension which cannot be resolved *precisely because Singapore's national identity depends on it.*" This produces extreme anxiety about its identity and concerns about pollution (Clammer 1985, 165). Unable to imagine itself as an *organic* nation with a homogenous (ethnic) culture, Singapore constructs its identity upon its lack—it see itself as a *problematic* nation whose national identity is projected into the future.

Paradoxically, while the 'Asian' heritage of each race is located in the past, Singapore's national 'Asian-ness' is projected into the future, something which in the present needs to be constantly struggled for. Increasingly, these struggles are fought over in the media. While bilingualism and the religious knowledge projects were predominately located in the sphere of education, Shared Values approximated to the status of a "pure ideological exercise;" it

⁹⁴ Singapore kept an open door to wealthy Hong Kong citizens who were worried about the 1997 handover.

was strictly a media project un-translated (and some would argue, untranslatable-able) into statues, acts and policies. As noted by Schiller (1989, 30), the media industries today serve as “sites for the creation, packaging, transmission, and placement of cultural messages” and “they have greatly grown as their importance and centrality to the corporate economy increases. J.Thompson (1990) describes this as the “mediation of cultures” – the way in which symbolic forms have become increasingly mediated by mass communications. Understanding how important the media is for the construction of national identity, and realising that non-Western societies are constantly inundated with Western media products, the Singapore government embarked on a strenuous media project to defend Singapore against Westernisation and to promote its own values and way of life.

5B. TOOLS FOR NATION-BUILDING

While the first-generation leaders relied heavily on legislation (“administrative state”), second-generation leaders aimed to influence behaviour through ISAs. The MITA was set up to co-ordinate psychological defence. E.g., while the Ministry of Health teaches children to brush their teeth, it is MITA who is responsible for changing perception of dental health. While the Ministry of Education is tasked with romanising Mandarin, it is MITA's task to prepare citizens to accept this change. In all these campaigns, the MITA and the media are important partners.

Although the government does not own the media, the MITA and its statutory boards have extensive power over media organisations. The print media is managed directly by MITA. Through a process of centralisation since the 1980s, the Singapore Press Holdings owns most of the nation's print media. Such centralisation allows for easier, centralised government control with an expansion of the role of the Public Relation Officer (PRO) of each Ministry and Statutory board. While Singapore's Constitution provides the right to freedom of speech and expression, the Parliament can limit these rights for the sake of protecting public interest and morality.

The Newspapers and Printing Presses Act of 1974 is the dominant law affecting the press. The Act requires newspapers and magazines to renew their licences annually. In 1986, the Act was amended to empower the minister to restrict the circulation of publications that "engage in domestic politics" (Kuo and Ang 2000, 407). Since then, the 1986 Act has been used to terminate or gazette (limit circulation) a few foreign publications. The Undesirable Publication Act prohibits the circulation of publications "contrary to public interest."

The Singapore Broadcasting Authority (SBA) supervises broadcast media. Radio broadcasting was dominated by Radio Corporation of Singapore and grew speedily when faced with foreign competition (Indonesian/Batam station "Zoo" in 1988). Stations changed their styles and imported DJs, speedily increasing the popularity of radio. There are now more than 18 radio private and public radio channels (P.Ang 1998, 160; D.Birch 1993, 30).

Over the years, broadcast media have been increasingly privatised and the co-ordination between national policy and broadcast media has become less direct. Television broadcasting used to be supervised by the ministries but in 1980, was separated from the government as Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (Kuo and Chen, 1983) and later privatised as Television Corporation of Singapore, owned by the Singapore International Media Holdings. A public service, called Channel 12, provides 2 channels dedicated to minorities, sports and the arts. Privatisation purported yielded "considerable improvements" (in quantity and quality) – viewership for prime time English TV programmes rose 38% while radio audiences grew by 11-28% (McDaniel 1994, 168). Supporting the government's plans to make Singapore a regional hub, the television industry increased local productions.

There is also an influx of cable and satellite programmers since 1993. The Singapore CableVision is already broadcasting more than 40 channels, although each channel has to be government approved. By 1998, the SBA licensed some 26 satellite broadcasters to broadcast from Singapore. Despite the desire to go regional/international, satellite dishes are banned and allowed

only for financial institutions. (P.Ang 1998, 160-161). Cable television and Internet are also merging as Singapore achieved the target of wiring all 750,000 households for cable television by 2000 ahead of schedule. Cable television represents a wider project to wire the island for the Information Age. Singapore has four satellite earth stations that does not only provide uplink and downlink services but also production and distribution services, thanks to a high degree of digitalisation that brought ISDN connections to more than 10,000 subscribers (Kuo and Ang 2000, 415).

The SBA's regulation of the Internet ("Class Licensing Scheme") has been contradicted and mellowed by Singapore's desire to become a global IT hub (ST18/3/1995). Unwilling to wield a heavy hand, the government encouraged citizens to perform psychological defence, or self-censorship. The private sector (parents and the media industry) was told to shoulder the moral responsibility of censoring (ST8/3/1986) so that the SBA can oversee the Internet with a "light-handed approach" (ST25/10/97).

Besides overseeing the media, MITA and its posted PROs in ministries and statutory boards also actively "cultivate" journalists. Baksh (1987, 14) observed that government PROs have become "more responsive to the needs of the media." They "no longer regard the media as a nuisance to be tolerated but an important and natural ally in their communication with the public."

The government also exerts influence through the market. The advertising market has expanded vigorously since 1980, to US\$800 million in 1997 (Kuo and Ang 2000, 408). Named "campaign country" (Peters 1989, 22), advertisement agencies acknowledge government departments are "stalwart advertisers" known for polished and award-winning work. Annually, at least S\$1 million is spent promoting National Day songs each year. According to the Head of Psychological Defence, these songs are important tools of psychological defence. By "captur[ing] the feeling of that moment," they succeed in getting citizens to "put [their] hearts, [their] minds and [their] skills to our defence" (Gwee 1987, 26).

Over the years, campaign strategies have become more sophisticated.

G.Thompson (1974, 28) noted that LKY's technique of not using slogans but keynote words (e.g., clean, gracious, rugged) makes it easy for government ideology to diffuse into common vocabulary:

As we used these words of congenial association, their familiarity brings conforming actions. It is interesting to see how, just by the use of such simple proto-type concepts, the people have appreciated, adopted and acted them. There is a purposive use of the media. Communication is not a gimmick; it is not an emotional bath a people take from time to time.

Culture minister Dhanabalan, in the 1980s, recognised the need for campaigns to be persuasive without the benefit of legislative support. Gwee (1987, 25-26) and Peters (1989, 24) observed that hard-sell approaches reminiscent of the early years ("Don't Litter. Fine \$500") have given way to the soft-sell approaches directed at private issues (e.g., marriage, toilet behaviour). E.g., the campaigns to match-make graduates do not make explicit statements but show a boy-meet-girl situation with a voiceover: "it's just an introduction, the rest is up to you."

1. Media penetration and challenges⁹⁵

To understand the reach of government campaigns, it is necessary to know how much the media has penetrated everyday citizen life. Living in an urban environment with high English-literacy (93% in 2000) and economic prosperity, Singaporeans are ardent media users highly exposed to (English language) foreign media. Despite having the smallest population in Asia, it is the largest single-country market for the FEER and the second largest market for the AWSJ.

8 major dailies (3 English, 3 Mandarin, 1 Malay, 1 Tamil) share a total circulation of 1,197,301 per day in year 2000, with English language papers commanding more than 50% of the circulation. Circulation averages 32.4 per 100 population, ranking Singapore as the highest in Southeast Asia (Kuo 1993, 243; Gunaratne 1998, 22). Radios and televisions are popular and practically universal, with 73.9% radio receivers and 22.4% television receivers in 2000.

⁹⁵ For a comparison of media indicators in Asia, see Appendix 7.

Within Asia, Singapore also has the highest volume of computers and Internet hosts per capita. Singapore is a nation of enthusiastic computer users. 30% have PCs, a rate comparable only to the USA (New Scientist 25/3/1995, 38-39). Singapore was the first in the world to use optical fibres in commercial telecommunications network and is only behind Japan in the production of hard disc for PCs.

Although Singapore has developed one of the most advanced telecommunications infrastructure in Asia, it faces many challenges to its aspirations to become an IT centre. With the highest per capita cinema attendance, Singapore should constitute a significant advertising market, if not for its small and linguistically fragmented population.

Secondly, the goal of becoming an IT hub requires that Singapore remain open to Western technologies and ideas. Kuo and Ang (2000, 418) observed that the government has tried to manage contradictions by separating different categories of information and treating them differently. This strategy of "compartmentalisation" (financial versus political) is reflected in the current policy of granting permits for setting up satellite antennae to financial institutions⁹⁶ on the basis that they need such information to make themselves internationally competitive.

However, "compartmentalisation" remains based on a strategy of censorship, which is fast becoming untenable with rapid Internet expansion. LKY, in a landmark speech at the Asian Media Conference in 1998, spoke of the need to develop new strategies of managing information without suppressing dissent: lamented that information technology... has made it impossible for inconvenient news to be suppressed for long. Thus, governments have to work with the technology, not suppress it.

It is precisely the need to control without suppressing dissent that leads the PAP to embark on the Asian Values project. Instead of "compartmentalising" or

⁹⁶ In 1991, financial institutions incurred losses because, without satellite, they learned of the Gulf War 30 seconds late.

suppressing dissent, the PAP looked to the Asian value of communitarianism – the subordination of personal difference to community interests – to maintain one-party dominance by allowing ideological diversity without fragmentation.

5C. THE VARIOUS FORMULATIONS OF ASIAN VALUES

1. The meaning of “Asian Values”

Fears of Westernisation emerged as early as 1965 (Hill and Lian 1995, 82) and sharpened significantly with the PAP's electoral decline in the mid 1980s. The PAP's economic performance no longer awed a freedom-loving post-war generation born into material prosperity. Given that Singapore's working language was English, which made it more “soft-shelled” to Western influences (Pakir 1993, 82), prevailing social and political problems such as “individualism” and “liberal attitudes” were readily attributed to “Western” influences. Having identified an enemy, the government can now rouse citizens to participate in Singapore's total defence – military, economic, social, civil and psychological. However, until the Michael Fay incident in 1994 where an American teenager was canned for vandalism, AV had little popular currency and had been perceived as the government's project against the West, not the people's concern. With this Incident, Western values became associated with lax standards of social discipline (punishment of crime) and citizens begin to see the relevance of AV in their lives and the need to be “cultural soldiers” in the “total defence” of Singapore against Western Values.

By the PAP's own admission that the problems it faced were side effects of success, these social problems are more accurately materialisation of ideological contradictions than Western problems that require Asian solutions. “Individualism” is a logical consequence of runaway pragmatism and competitive instrumental rationality—qualities associated with the Asian work ethic.

Two developments influenced how AV was to be reformulated. Firstly, having succeeded in altering economic and work attitudes among the proletariat, the second-generation government's nation-building project now required that it intrude into citizens' private sphere to mould their lifestyle choices – e.g., to

STEW ON TOTAL DEFENCE

A NEWSLETTER ON THE TOTAL DEFENCE OF SINGAPORE DECEMBER 1998

Dad, why do the papers say there are five aspects of Total Defence? I thought there is only Military Defence!

That's what many people think, Ben. But we cannot just depend on the military. All of us have a part to play in the defence of Singapore.

Did you know that by standing up for Singapore and believing in its future, you play a part in Psychological Defence?

Take me, for instance!

After spending years studying abroad, instead of staying there, I've returned to use what I've learnt for the good of our country.

Girl, I'm so proud of you. And I'm really happy you're home...

... no more sending you a fortune every month to pay your rent!

Hey, I can read that!

Snack time!

Slurp!

Yummy!

Hmm...

Don't worry, Uncle Hamid, my Mum has some halal snacks just for you!

Whoa, thanks!

With so many races and religions here, we must know and respect other people's way of life... this is what Social Defence is about.

Yeah, I like Singapore - with its different festivals and celebrations...

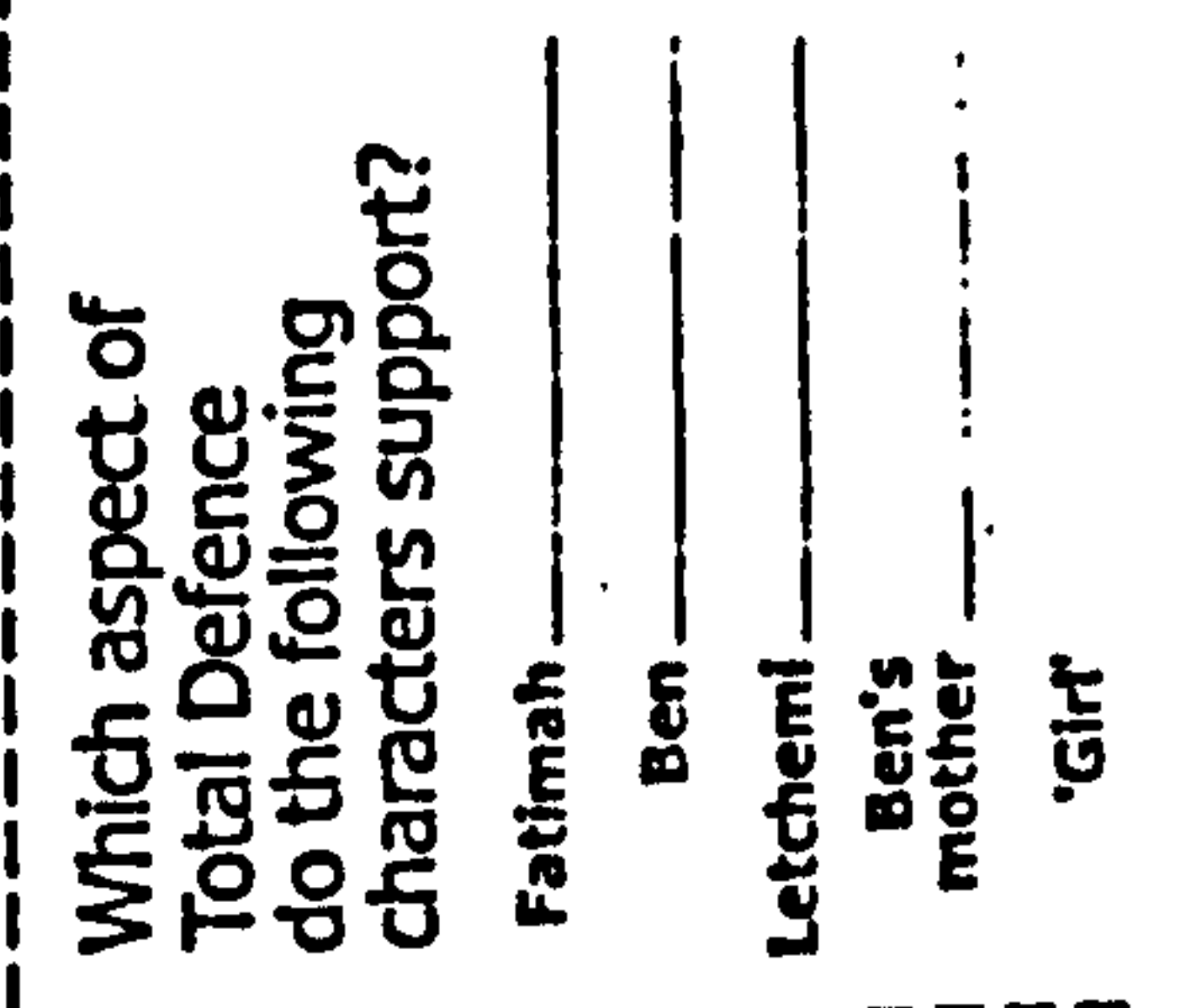
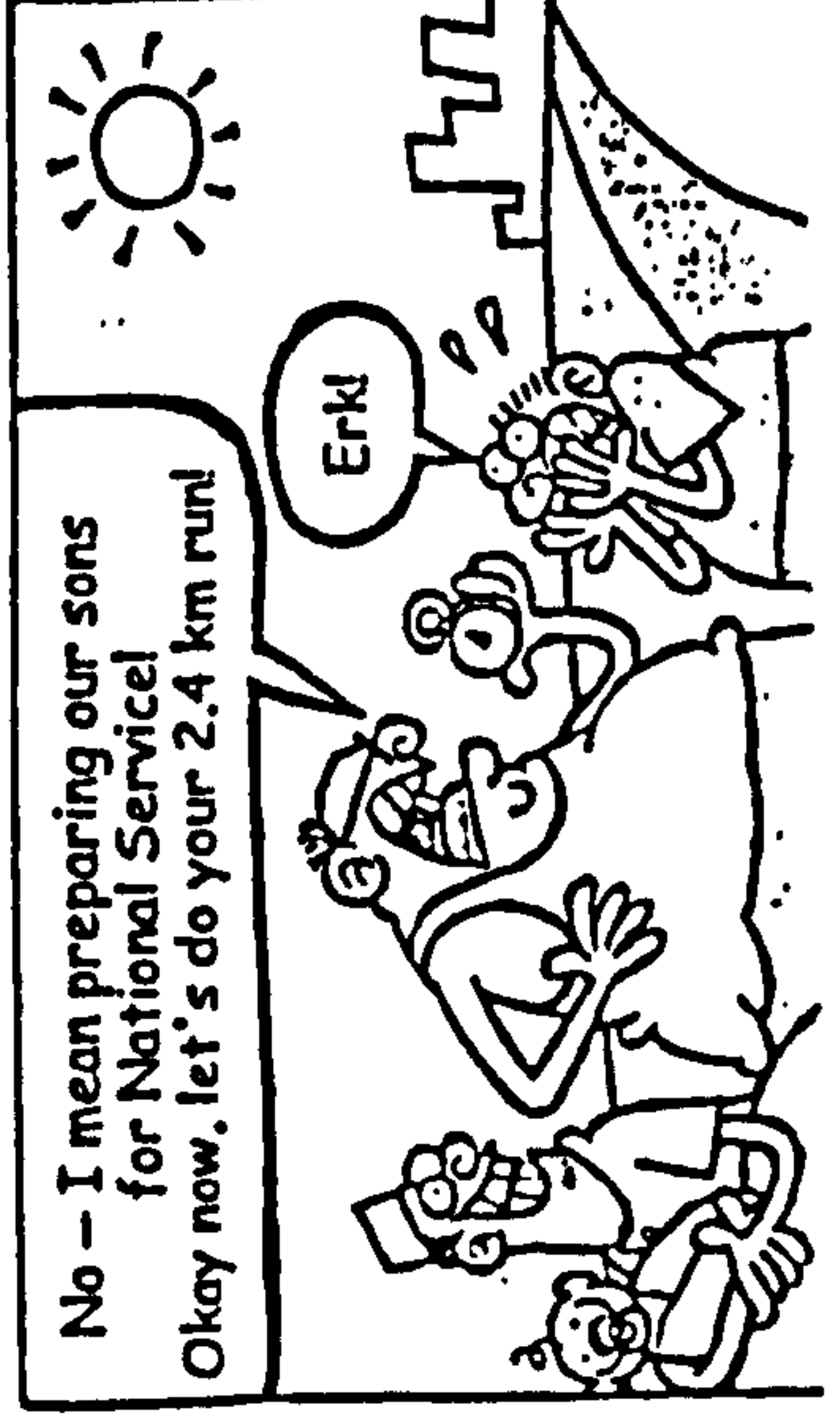
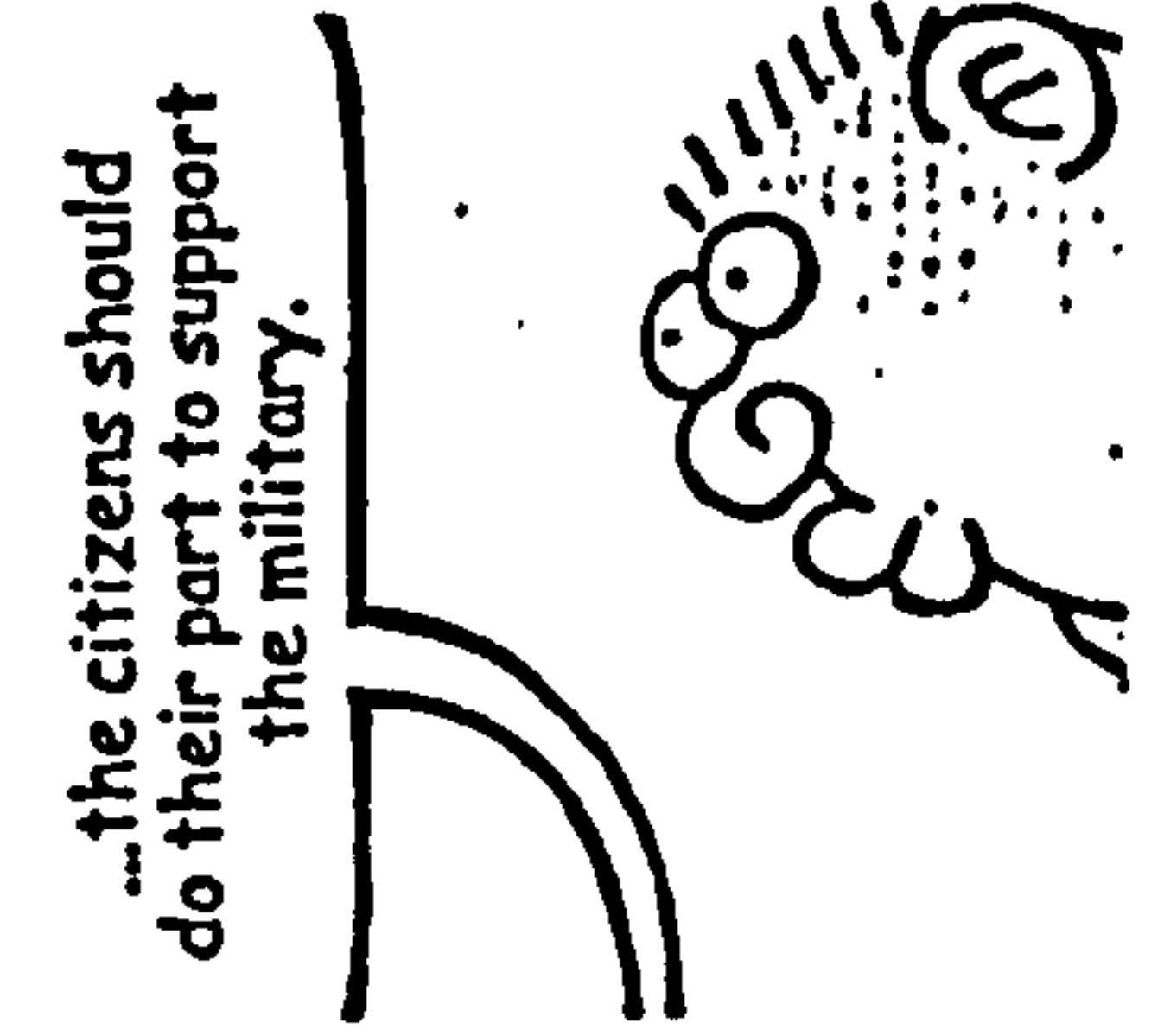
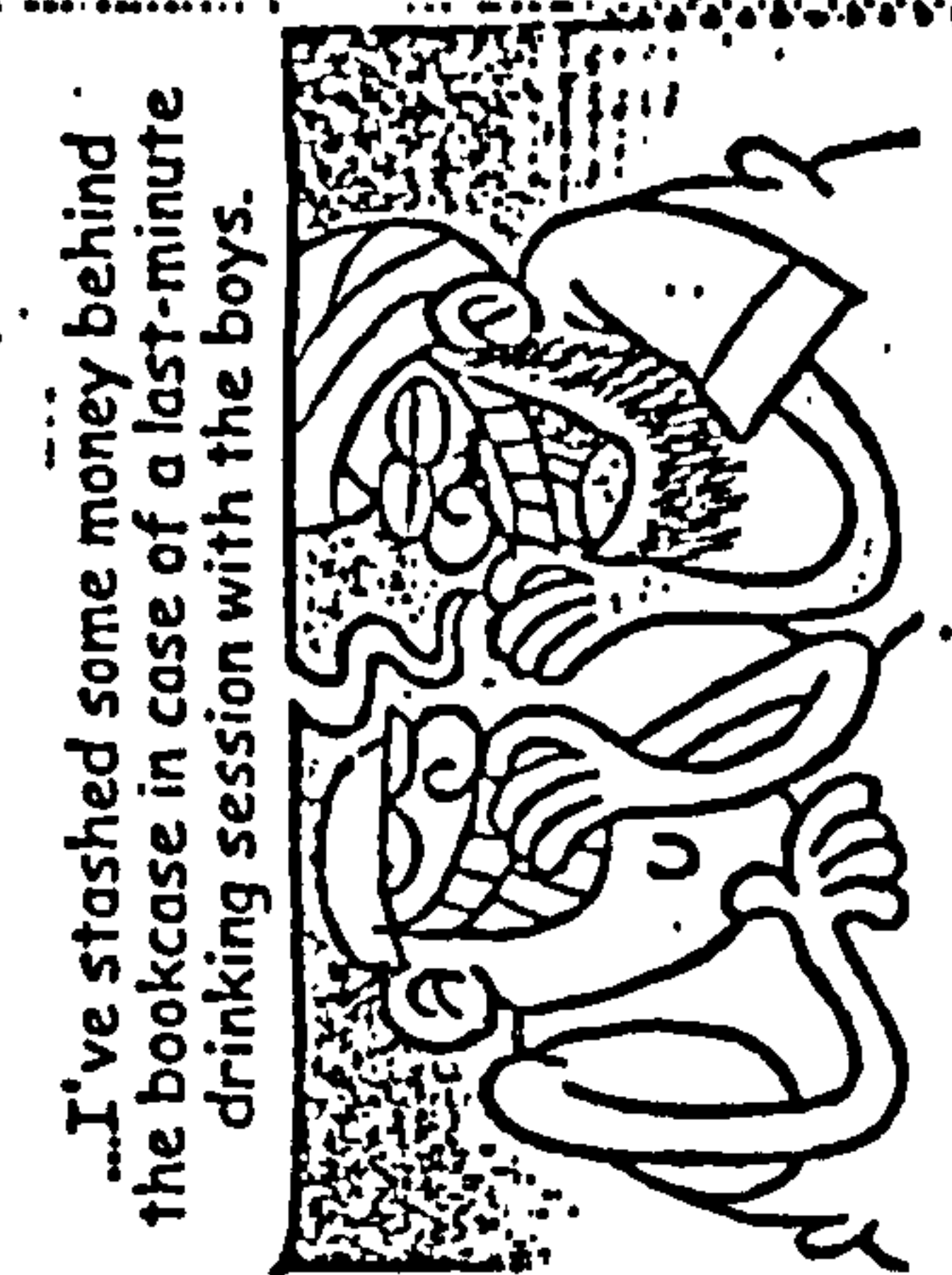
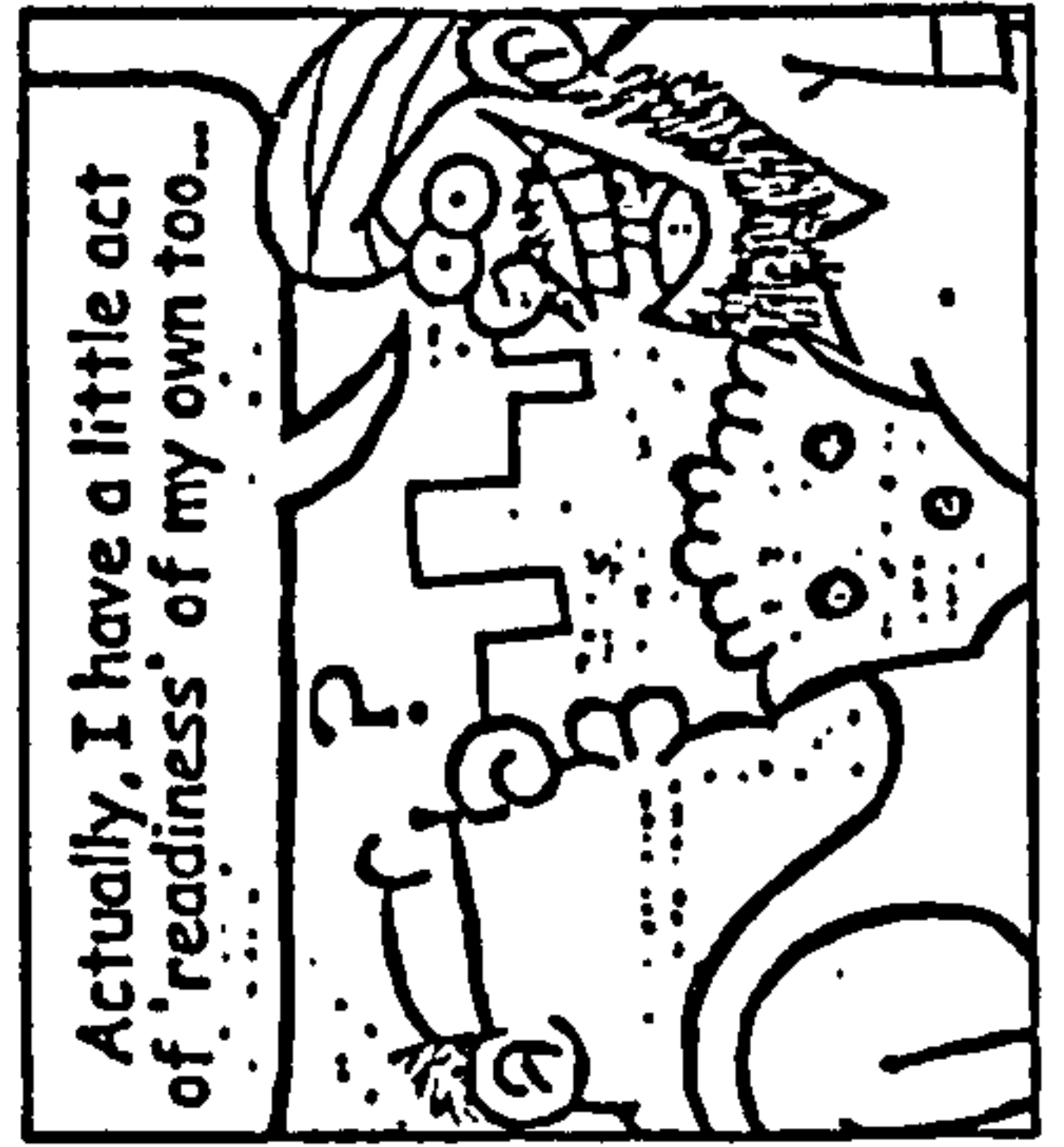
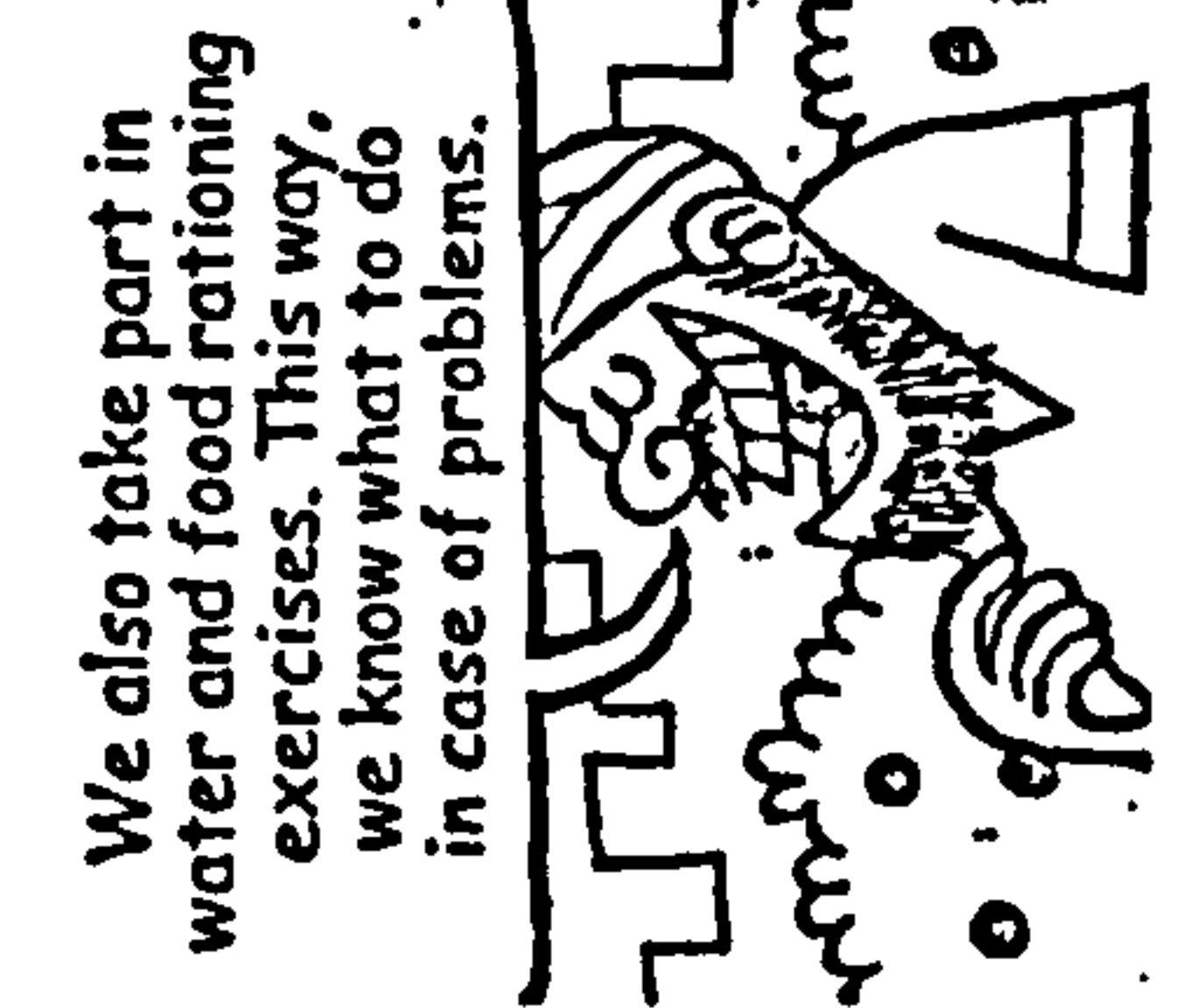
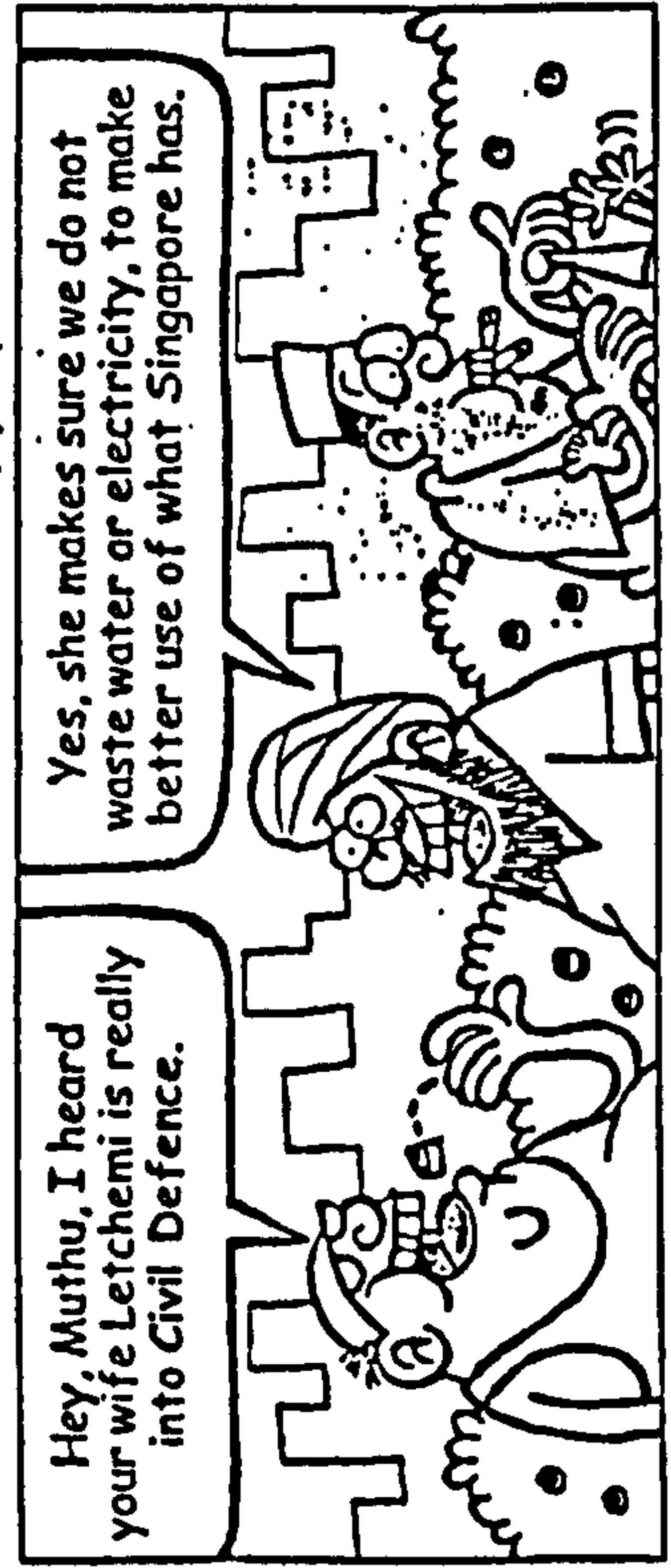
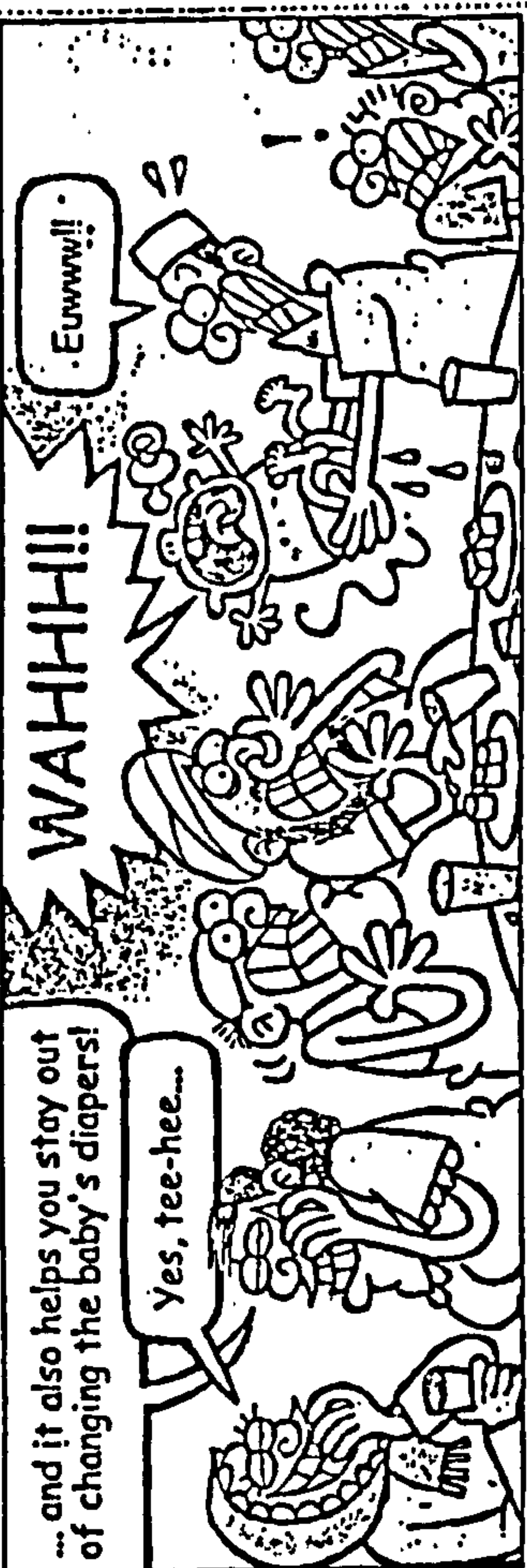
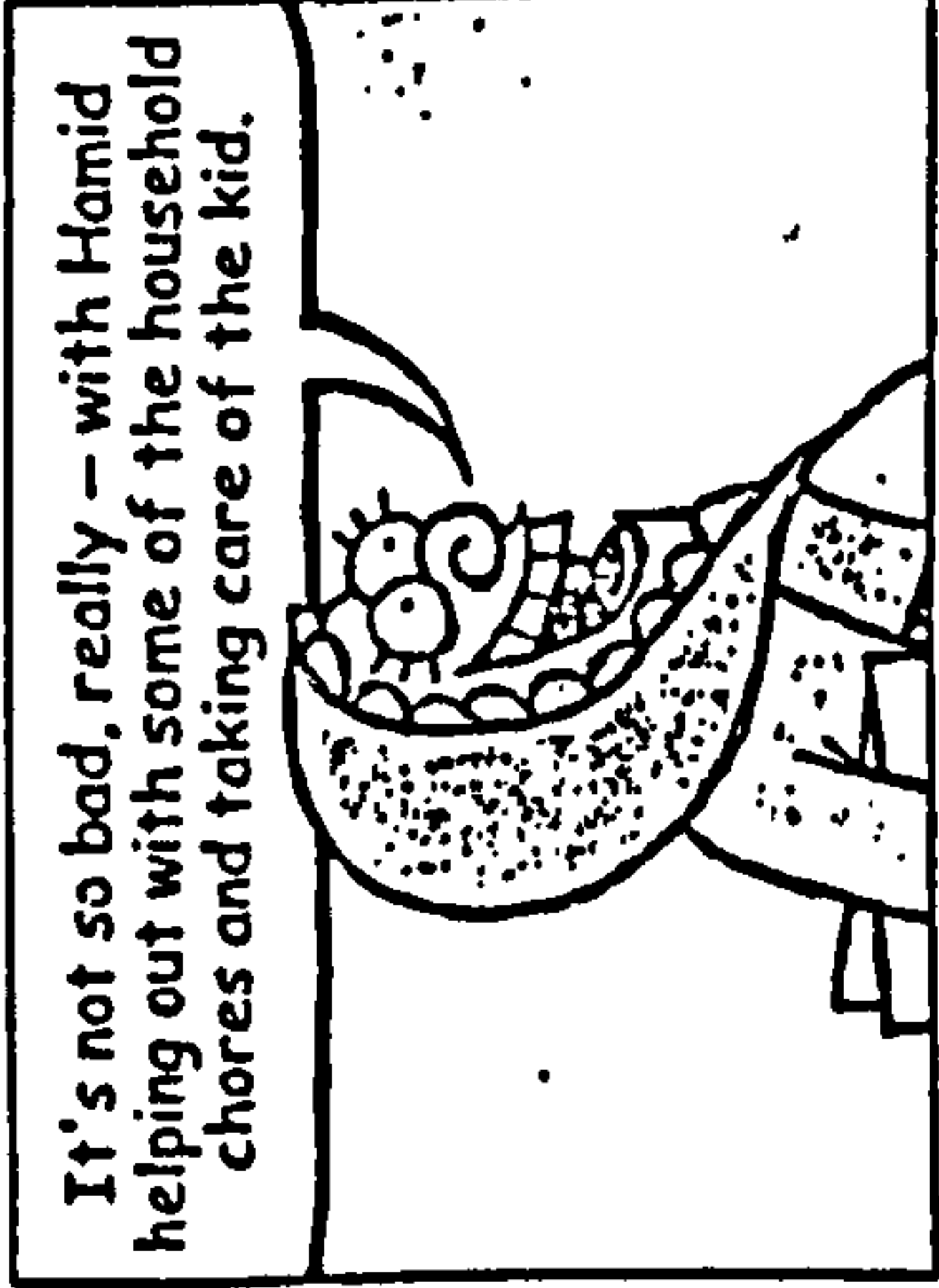
... I have more holidays to enjoy and also more goodies to eat when I'm invited to my friends' homes!

BURP!

Sorry, I'm late - I was held up in my computer class.

Glad you could make it, Fatimah! It must be very hectic for you...

...what with your full-time job, attending classes to upgrade your skills, plus your role as a mother.



Join our contest!
 Fill in the blanks and win one of 30 unique sets of limited edition one-hand Total Defence watches and Transitlink farecards or 20 attractive Total Defence giftpacks!

Name _____ Age _____
 NRIC No _____ Sex _____
 Occupation _____
 Contact No (s) _____
 Address _____

Rules and regulations
 1. All entries must be made on this form. Photocopies are acceptable.
 2. Please send all entries to: P.O. Box 13, MacPherson Road Post Office, Singapore 913486.
 3. Entries must be submitted by 15 Jan 1999. Winners will be notified by post.
 4. The jury's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained.



flush toilets, to have three babies, to marry early, to choose to be a teacher. Given that these areas of life cannot be monitored and penalised, the new AV construction has to secure citizens' wholehearted co-operation, i.e., the battle was no longer for people's minds but for their hearts.

Secondly, prior to the mid 1980s, the PAP seemed to "genuinely" believe that prevailing social problems were Western in origin and sought to promote multiracial AV through language (AV as Bilingualism) and religion (AV as Religious Knowledge). The implementation of these multiracial programmes brought two realisations. (1) These programmes became, again, *too* successful, to the extent of over-legitimising communal/ethnic discourses and demands on the state. The PAP realised that a multiracial formulation of AV and the promotion of multi-ethnic identities worked to fragment rather than consolidate national consensus. (2) By the mid 1980s, there was increasing awareness that the "West" was within and inevitable, rather than an external threat that a nation can seek "cultural ballast" against. E.g., the bilingualism that was promoted was one where English was prioritised as first language and one's Asian mother-tongue was relegated to second language. Poets and citizens considered Singaporeans "bananas" – yellow outside, white inside. A PAP minister recalled that a British Army major had praised Singaporeans as a "well-colonised people" (STWeekly 29/8/1993 in Ang and Stratton 1997); suddenly, Singaporeans were not so proud of speaking excellent English anymore. "Western" values and the English language have become so much a part of life in Singapore that it became impossible to exorcise the West without destroying the very nation that the PAP sought to build.

Unwilling to endure the consequences of the nationally divisive policy of multiracial Singapore and unable to expel the West, the PAP re-envisioned Singapore as a culturally homogenous Asian nation, one that no longer aimed at a denial of the West, but at a subordination of it. It now sought to define AV as "Shared Values" (SV) and to secure a new consensus based on communitarianism.

To understand the meaning of AV, it is necessary to remember that the PAP's vision of the ideal nation was not necessarily an Asian nation – civil and opposition members have been criticised for being too “Eastern.” The SV formulation crystallised the PAP's goals – AV was not promoted to preserve “Asian-ness” but was a project to (re-)legitimise certain economic and political structures – “Asian Capitalism” and “Asian Democracy” – that have come under challenge.

This recognition that AV is not merely a cultural project implies that critiques of the constructedness of AV – whether because Asia is infamously heterogeneous or because culture is always constructed (e.g., Purushotam 1995; Clammer 1993; Tamney 1996; Benjamin 1976) – miss the point. The government does not deny this charge: Rajaratnam (1990), a senior PAP minister, agrees that race, religion, language and culture were “creations of men” that need to be “Singaporeanised to suit our needs and tastes.” The government is aware of the benefits that self-Orientalism⁹⁷ brings—it silences Western critiques and brings in tourist dollars.

To understand the meaning of AV, it is necessary to situate AV within a wider economic and political context of ideological contestation, instead of focusing on (the accuracy of) its substantive content. It is in this context that I want to highlight two opposite yet complementary meanings of the AV project – competitiveness and communitarianism. Given that competitiveness requires individuals to put self over others while communitarianism requires individuals to put others over self, how can AV simultaneously refer to both values?

The AV project never aimed to make Singaporeans/Singapore less competitive or reverse/halt the “westernisation” of Singapore insofar as it is necessary economically; it only aimed to dilute Singapore's vulnerability to unfavourable Western trends (including Fukuyama's observation of the end of history) *within the constraints of global capitalism*. Just as English was prioritised as first language during AV's bilingualism campaigns, similarly, communitarianism was never promoted at the expense of, but to enhance national competitiveness. As

⁹⁷ To actively reproduce powerful elite's representation of oneself.

such, communitarianism (the smaller AV project of SV) should be understood as a subdominant ideology to supplement and to be subordinated to the wider AV project of sustaining Asian Capitalism and Asian Democracy through sustaining the dominant ideology of competitiveness.

How does AV (competitiveness and communitarianism) sustain Asian Capitalism and Asian Democracy? By emphasising communitarianism and consensus over conflict, AV creates a normative centre that guides media policy, civil society and inter-personal interactions. Good Asian citizens value prosperity over Western dreams (of non-consensual democracy). They also subordinate personal whims to the good of the community – the “silent (Asian) majority.” By allowing ideological pluralism without fragmentation, AV de-legitimises dissent and legitimises authoritarianism.

II. Bilingualism: A mother-tongue for cultural ballast

THE LOGIC OF BILINGUALISM

To achieve multiracial unity, English was chosen as the working language because it was supra ethnic or “ethnically neutral” (Kuo and Jernudd 1994, 34). Despite public furor, the government closed down Nanyang University – a university sponsored by Chinese businessmen and the heart of pro-China communist sentiment – and set up a national schools system with English as first language (Gopinathan 1994, 75-88).

The government’s attempt to promote English and de-ethnicise citizens proved *too* successful. LKY commented that during the National Day Parade:

The compere spoke in English, and the whole National Stadium ... responded as one...! the spectators sang together, when once they could not even laugh at the same jokes (ST18/8/1986).

Once English became popular, fears of de-culturalisation and “Westernisation” intensified. In 1989, LKY regretted that Chinese schools had been shut so quickly (Pakir 1993, 83) and sought to re-ethnicise citizens. Believing that “the learning of the mother tongue was synonymous with the learning of a whole value system” (Gopinathan 1994), the government promoted bilingualism as a “cultural ballast” to Westernisation.

The logic behind bilingualism was a very peculiar one. Firstly, learning English was not equated with the acquisition of Western values but learning Mandarin was equated with the acquisition of Asian values; citizens could be *bilingual without being bi-cultural* (Clammer 1985, 22). Secondly, bilingualism did not imply equal status between English and Mandarin (Pakir 1993, 73). Should students find bilingualism unmanageable, they would be demoted to a monolingual stream where they studied only English, not their mother tongue. Thirdly, "mother-tongue" referred to the father's ethnicity rather than language spoken at home. Fourthly, Hokkien (the most common dialect) and Market Malay (the most frequent cross-ethnic language of communication, Pakir 1993, 79) were rejected in favour of Mandarin because Mandarin, as a written language, permitted non-face-to-face communication. Additionally, Mandarin was associated with high Chinese culture of calligraphy and with China, a huge consumer market.

Mandarin was alien to Singapore, neither spoken at home (less than 10% of Chinese in 1978, S.H. Tan 1995, 30) nor in public places (1.2% in food markets, Ministry of Communications and Information 1989, 57). Fishman (1989, 414) believed that language needed to be learnt in a total environment and that it was insufficient if learning was limited or restricted to schools alone. The Speak Mandarin Campaign (SMC) was launched in 1979 for precisely this reason.

STRATEGIES OF PERSUASION

Bilingualism was first implemented through the educational policy of making a minimal level of Mandarin competence a prerequisite for admission into the next level of education. It increasingly became a national campaign (SMC) to provide a total learning environment for the acquisition of an "alien" language.

The SMC was inaugurated in 1979 with a broadcast public rally and thereafter, strenuously publicised through the media. Television provided LKY with a public forum to make lengthy appearances (McDaniel 1994, 180). The press covered promotional activities and ran features such as a "bilingual page."

Slogans and songs were inserted in as daily "fillers" in print and broadcast media (Kuo 1984, 29-30). Although the SMC was a heavy media campaign, Kuo (1984, 34) argued that the media did not play a significant role; the media accepted bilingualism as a given political decision that they should implement and acted as a passive supporter.

I have previously delineated the government's strategies for promoting Asian values. Strategies of defining and discouraging are associated with first-generation rule; strategies of debate and incorporation are the hallmarks of second-generation rule. The SMC was promoted chiefly through first-generation strategies.

The media was used to define a new common sense. Through the media, dominant ideas were allowed to "accumulate and classify the world for others" and become a "horizon of the taken-for granted," defining "what the world is and how it works" (Hall in Eley and Suny 1996, 31). The SMC sought to equate Chinese-ness with Mandarin by exposing citizens to its logos and slogan constantly, especially one that associates Chinese ethnicity with Mandarin. In local television serials, Mandarin was represented as a language that was spoken at home (Quah 1990b, 60) by Chinese families with good Asian values.

The government attempted to alter citizen's commonsensical perception of reality. Besides creating and standardising an entire Mandarin vocabulary for everyday items (Kuo 1984, 33), it also sought to present what *ought to be* as *what already is* so that a public (national) ideal would be (mis)recognised as an *already-existing reality*. It was a commonsensical understanding that market hawkers prefer dialect. Ministers argued that this was not so based upon their personal experience (which was hardly reliable since people tended to be guarded with what they say, and what language they spoke, to ministers) and substantiated this claim with the statistics that 82% of Chinese Singaporeans could speak some Mandarin (Ministry of Communications and Information 1989, 55-59). The logic is that "if one can, one should" and that, since 82% of Chinese *can* speak Mandarin, therefore they *are*.

Where persuasion failed, the government pressurised citizens to speak Mandarin. In the 1983 SMC speech entitled "A language for the sake of our children," the government applied emotional pressure on parents to support Mandarin for their children's sake (getting good grades and jobs). Accepting that there were emotional costs, such as creating a linguistic generation gap, ministers continued to appeal to parents to sacrifice themselves for their children and the nation through a discourse of good parenthood.

Within the discourse of good citizens, it did not matter that citizens *preferred* dialects, the fact that they *could* mean that they *should*. By framing the issue as one of competence and disregarding/de-legitimising citizen's preferences – parents who resisted Mandarin were bad parents/citizens who did not want what was good for their children and their country. Through the conflation of parental and patriotic responsibility, (non-)conformity was moralised and also objectified: individuals' language behaviour was to be explained by one's (willingness to gain) *competence*, not personal preference (S.H.Tan, 1995, 33).

Ultimately, the government relied on legislation to speed up campaign success. Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools were set up for talented students to study both languages at "first language" level. Understanding the 'pragmatic' nature of Singaporeans, the government ensured that (scholastic) conformity would be "reward[ed] after school" (Kuo and Jernudd 1994, 31), e.g., career advancement. It is not always clear if the government was more reliant on encouragement or penalisation in promoting bilingualism. Despite strong public objections, policies were passed to curtail the use of dialect in public. Dialects were banned on television and radios; dialect commercials were phased out; and the much-loved Hong Kong Cantonese movies had to be dubbed in Mandarin. Dialect names were also romanised into "pinyin"⁹⁸ for school children (Kuo 1984, 31-33; Kuo and Jernudd 1994, 36-37; Gopinathan 1994, 74). To ensure that students applied themselves seriously to learning Mandarin, the government raised university entrance requirement to include a pass in

⁹⁸ E.g., my romanised dialect (Teochew) name is "Soek-Fang Sim;" my romanised Mandarin name is "Shufen Shen."

Mandarin and used a dual-standard weighing scheme where scores for both first and second language were equally important (this was scrapped in 1985) (Hill and Lian 1995, 87; Gopinathan 1994, 74/79).

A LIMITED SUCCESS

Kwok (1981, 96) commented that campaigns exert some pressure on organisers and target population to attain the predicted outcomes. Their success is easily overestimated. As a campaign, SMC and bilingualism seems to have fared poorly (McDaniel 1994, 178). Although dialect speakers are dwindling steadily, the gains are being made in favour of English rather than Mandarin (Pakir 1993, 78). At the same time, LKY noted the persistence of clan and dialect loyalties in elections. Opposition politicians who won were bilingual and fluent in dialects (Gopinathan 1994, 73). Vague statistics like "81% speaks more Mandarin more often" (ST28/9/1981) and faint praise that SMC is "quite successful" (ST1/10/89) hint that it has fared below expectations—bilingualism is not yet irreversible, as LKY had hoped (ST4/10/89).

Campaigns also easily lend themselves to rhetorical manipulation. Messages and slogans may be promoted and performed without conviction (Kwok 1981, 96). Kuo and Jernudd (1994, 41) observed that citizens may "know what (policies) want but [do] not modify (their) own language behaviour."

Additionally, language acquisition does not imply culture acquisition; there exist "mono-cultural bilinguals" and "bicultural monolinguals" (Beardsmore, 1994, 49).

Bilingualism failed as a means of shoring up PAP's legitimacy and ameliorating political alienation; SMC's favouritism towards Chinese-ness deepened social faultlines. Media programmes segregated races, heightened awareness of racial difference (Quah 1990b, 57) and made the Chinese more Chinese (Benjamin 1976, 121/129) than China nationals (ST15/11/98). Minorities suffered inferior media programmes and unfair immigration policies to artificially maintain a Chinese-dominated multi-racialism (Tamney 1996, 97). Dialect-speaking (elderly) Chinese were also angered by the ban of dialect

programmes and retaliated by watching Malaysia TV (McDaniel 1994, 187). The PAP also showed itself to be “Western-elitist” when it revised its SMC goal from targeting the masses to nurturing a core group of ethnic elite to serve as “standard bearers” for the rest of society (ST9/4/1994): as an interviewee TSK explained, what the PAP meant by “Chinese elite” was not people who graduated from Chinese universities (such as Nanyang University, which the government closed), but English-educated elite who were bilingual enough to be useful for business/political relations with China and with the electorate.

Ultimately, the bilingualism policy failed because its implementation was subordinated to nationalism and international capitalism. In a multiracial society, bilingualism encouraged ethnic diversity; it divided rather than united a nation. This tension between multi-racialism and nationalism stemmed from Singapore’s lack of ethnic homogeneity (“the curse of impurity”) and the government’s elitist dismissal of Singlish culture. Bilingualism and the preservation of Asian values also contradicted the dominance of the English language in global capitalism and the goal of being a borderless information hub. Ultimately, bilingualism and Asian values were projects to be subordinated to the national project of economic survival and growth.

III. Confucianising citizens: The Religious Knowledge programme

IMPORTING CONFUCIANISM FOR ASIAN CAPITALISM AND ASIAN DEMOCRACY

Interest in Confucianism arose with Lodge and Vogel's (1987) attempt to explain the decline of Western economies and the rise of Asian economies in the 1980s. Dichotomising national ideologies into two idealtypes (communitarianism and individualism), they concluded that Confucian values, with its emphasis on communitarianism⁹⁹, hardwork and ascetism (Pye and Pye 1985; Tamney 1996, 103) produced a superior capitalist work ethic and society – one that could ward off excessive individualism and put a check on welfare demands. Locally, the ‘signs’ of excessive individualism included ‘excessive job-hopping’ and singles wanting to live apart from their families by applying for housing to indulge in “hedonistic” lifestyles (Chua 1995, 157).

The Singapore government sought to inscribe Asian values through religion after the poor success of their bilingualism programme. After having been restricted to the private sphere, the practice of religion was revitalised (Kuo 1992). In 1984, the RK programme made religious studies a compulsory and examinable subject for students at upper secondary levels; students could choose from Bible Knowledge, Buddhist Studies, Confucian Ethics, Hindu Studies, Islamic Studies or Sikhism.

Scholars have questioned whether Confucianism is native to Singapore (Kuo 1992). Foreign experts (including from the West) were hired to design school curriculum (Hill and Lian 1995, 202) after local monks' proposals (for Buddhist Studies) were criticised for being impractical and failing to select the 'desirable national values' (Kuah 1991, 32). Some argue that what the government desires is actually Victorian values or a Protestant work ethic (Chua 1995, 151).

The Confucian emphasis on scholarly examinations complements and provides cultural legitimacy for Singapore's meritocratic ideology. Within Confucianism, rulers gain their "mandate" to govern on the basis of their discipline and moral standing, allowing them to legitimately claim, "the government/father knows best."

With RK and Confucianism, AV shifted from being a defensive project against the West to a project to entrench a positive form of Asian work ethic in support of Asian Capitalism — one that is ascetic and materialist/consumerist simultaneously. The Confucian ascetic is not simply a happy worker; he also does not fear exploitation since society's needs take precedence (Tamney 1996, 175).

The good Asian worker is keen to accumulate and consume, despite the Confucian disdain for the merchant class. Within Asian Capitalism, ascetics must believe that "Greed is not evil... greed gives you the will and motivation to

⁸⁹ In Chapter 1, I argued that there is a significant gap between Confucianism and communitarianism and that their confusion/conflation is a deliberate political project.

succeed" (STWeekly 26/6/1993). A director of education told Hindu Studies teachers that progress is "walking in \$200 French or Italian-made high-heeled shoes instead of inexpensive locally-made shoes" (ST24/6/1984 in Tamney 1996, 27). The ideal "Asian" worker is the Japanese who is reputed to never job-hop and consumes not out of need but out of national duty (Chua 1995, 152). The unique combination of Confucianism and capitalism would encourage consumerism without liberalism—good citizens would understand that their rights and individualism extend to only where their wallets can take them.

Most importantly, Confucianism/communitarianism prevents the evolution of a capitalist state into a welfare state during late-capitalism by restraining excessive individualism and welfare demands. The good Confucian citizen is self-reliant. Since he places community before self, the citizen makes no personal (welfare) demands on the state but would provide welfare assistance to members of his community. By this very sophisticated sleight of hand, a "capitalism with socialist characteristics" is achieved (Vogel in Tamney 1996, 69) and the state is absolved from the provision of social security. Already, Singapore provides minimal social security according to the International Labour Organisation.

Confucianism also supports "Asian democracy." The Confucian individual is constantly aware of being a *part* of five basic relationships: sovereign and subject, father and son, elder and younger brother, husband and wife, friend and friend. To be a person is to know that one's obligations to others are more important than what one obligations to one's self (Tamney 1996, 103-105). The ideal Confucian society is one where everybody fulfils a role faithfully. In the Confucian Ethics textbook, students were extolled to ask 'what is expected of me?' not 'what can I get out of this?' (CDIS 1985, 83).

The Confucian self is opposite different from the liberal self; it aims for social harmony, not self-actualisation. In Singapore, this would mean being a productive worker for national survival and an obedient citizen for social harmony. Such self-cultivation enables ideological subordination. Within the

discourse of multiracial bilingualism, subordination is achieved through the construction of citizens as being intrinsically flawed—being ethnic, they are partial and biased and so should leave politics to the supra-ethnic, impartial government. With RK, Confucianism was not considered a religion but a body of ethics. Being supra religious, the Confucian state is seen as the only body that is objective and ethnically neutral, un-inflicted with religious/ethnic chauvinism.

Confucianism encourages paternalism with its emphasis on loyalty and obedience to authority. Since rulers are “mandated” to rule (by meritocratic examinations), they choose to consult others at their own discretion and co-opt others. The Confucian ideal of harmony ought to sustain lasting PAP dominance (Tamney 1996, 182). Confucianism was expected to hasten the re-centralisation of authority (Chua 1995, 161-4; Weber 1946, 225) and slow down democratisation. In this way, Confucianism actually “forces people into obedience for no reason other than to protect the interest of a small minority,” and is “diametrically opposed to the democratic idea” (Tu 1984, 23/29).

CONFUCIANISM ABANDONED

Confucian Ethics as an RK school subject failed to attract Chinese students. Tamney (1996, 37-39) explains that, “in keeping with the Chinese’s utilitarian approach to religion and the spiritual” (e.g., fengshui, luck), Chinese students preferred Buddhist Studies because it was easier to pass.

Confucianism and RK did not repair political alienation. Despite being a secular ideology (which implies being non-ethnic, since there is a strong relationship between religion and ethnicity in Singapore), minorities were not fooled by its “Chinese-ness.” Many “superior” Confucian values contradicted the cultural values of minorities. E.g., the government criticised the Malays’ lack of diligence (Rajaratnam in Tamney 1996, 98). Alatas (1977, 168) argued against the myth of the lazy Malay – what the Malays lacked was not the willingness to work hard but the spirit of capitalism; Malays preferred to be hardworking low-paid gardeners than to be an exploited waiter.

Confucianism also alienated the "liberal" young generation. Singapore society had become too irreversibly "Westernised" to respond to attempts to elicit conformity. Confucianism requires "the pressure of public opinion" (Kuo in Chua 1995, 159), which was experienced as a constraint on individualism (Fukuyama 1992, 242). What was produced was not consensus but "imposed conformity" (Clammer 1993, 40). A 1989 survey found 15% of the population (the young, tertiary-educated, "politically alienated") were considering emigration (Chiew 1990b, 73). Confucianism had so disconcerted citizens that a minister had to placate public sentiment by reaffirming that "each person is intrinsically worthy of respect" (ST15/1/1991).

RK did not mend social faultlines either. Christianity, a "Western" religion, had gained many inter-ethnic converts. In 1987, Malays (mostly Muslim) protested the Israeli President's visit and called for greater government sensitivity (Cf. Hill and Lian 1995, 205-206). In the same year, members of a Catholic organisation, which had become concerned with social justice, were charged with "Marxist conspiracy" and detained without trial. The government realised that RK intensified religious fervour and over-legitimated religion as a source of counter-ideology discourse (Chua 1995, 31), so much so that they contested the government's hegemony in the *public sphere*. RK ceased to be compulsory in 1990 and was replaced by a Civics/Moral Education programme in schools. The "Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill" was passed *not* to ensure harmony between religious groups but to prevent 'religious leaders [from] straying beyond the religious realm' (Cf. Tamney 1996, 35; Hill and Lian 1995, 193).

The failure of the Confucianisation programme can be traced to contradictions within capitalism between the need for private accumulation and the need to provide social welfare (Rodan 1993a, 63). Hall notes the impossibility of combining of capitalism and community (communitarianism): "if you drive the notion of enterprise far enough, you undermine any sense of tradition, or organic belongingness to society" (Hall in Tamney 1996, 184).

So far, multiracial AV deflected welfare responsibilities to ethnic organisations. Such multi-racial ethnicisation divides rather than unites the nation. With the failure of Confucianism and bilingualism to shore up PAP's hegemony, the government conceived the SV project, having learnt that national ideologies based on multiracialism tended to heighten social divisiveness rather than unity—something that a one-party government desperately needs to remain the *sole* representative and guardian of national interest.

IV. Shared values

SHARED VALUES AS PURE IDEOLOGY?

These tensions impacted the government's third attempt to reformulate AV. Abandoning multiracial ideologies and their socially divisive effect, SV emphasised national unity based upon secular and supra-ethnic values. Nevertheless, SV seemed unable to break out of its Confucian bias, as indicated by the use of Confucian terms ("jun-zi") (Clammer 1993, 42/45; Tamney 1996; Chua 1995, 35).

The SV (1991) programme identified five Asian ideals that should be shared by citizens:

1. (nation before community and) society above self
2. upholding the family as the basic building block of society
3. resolving major issues through consensus instead of contentions
4. stressing racial and religious tolerance and harmony
5. regard and community support for the individual

"Nation before community" was inserted into the first imperative to subordinate ethnicity and religion to nation (In Singapore, 'community' refers to ethnic community.) The fifth value was added later as a concession to public concerns that Confucianism tended to breed authoritarianism (Chua 1995, 32). Its affirmation of individualism is modest—it does not encourage a liberal but a responsible subject committed to helping others.

Some scholars (Kuo 1993, 20) argue that, unlike bilingualism and RK, SV has not been translated into legislation or policies. It remains "a discursive artefact" (Chua 1995, 33), a disembodied, un-institutionalised ideology (Clammer 1993, 42), a pure "ideological" project (Hill and Lian 1995, 219). Firstly, the

government realised that tying material/moral consequences to ideological projects secured pragmatic conformity, not consent. With SV, the government sought to move beyond being an "administrative state" whose rule is based on waning economic hegemony (not because of declining national achievements but due to decreasing priority of economics to citizens) to government based on ideological hegemony.

In its non-multiracial formulation, SV is difficult to implement. Besides being vague (Heng 1990), AV is a metaphor for desirable values that are *missing* in Singapore (Kuo 1990; Rodan 1993a, xiv). Had these values been pervasive, it would not been necessary to enshrine and propagate them (Clammer 1993, 35). AV is less an everyday reality than an ideal, a top-down project with little popular resonance (Clammer 1993, 38). Knowing citizens' dislike of government propaganda, the term "national ideology" was discontinued in favour of "shared values" to give it an aura of popular authenticity (Quah 1990a, 2).

Some scholars argue that without material embodiment, SV would fail and that campaigns have always been *justifications* for policies, not ideological ends in themselves. I do not agree with this position. Firstly, SV is embedded, although not in formal policies but in informal, seemingly "organic" institutions such as the moral gaze and social expectations of one's community. More importantly, its success must not be measured by behavioural changes but by citizens' discursive *reproduction*. To be successful, the ideology does not have to be always adhered to; it suffices that SV serves as a strong normative centre (preferred reading) such that alternatives have to contend with, and thus, reproduce it even as they seek to challenge it. Nowhere is the reproduction of the SV discourse more enthusiastic than in the media. Thus, SV can be seen as a way of *managing the media to manage citizens*. Through the 'mediation' of cultures (J.Thompson 1990) where the media plays an increasing role in commodifying/packaging culture for consumption, the media's construction of SV becomes speech acts that are fulfilled through citizens' articulation of them. The media is not merely a (transparent) government mouthpiece, nor simply a catalyst but a primary definer of culture.

ASIAN JOURNALISM: CONSENSUS, CONTENTION,
CONSULTATION

SV is more than a discursive artefact: communitarianism contributes to the legitimisation of Asian Capitalism and Asian Democracy. Communitarianism absolves the state from providing social welfare and places the responsibility of community welfare on communities themselves – whether in the form of ethnic self-help (during multiracial AV formulations) or as family self-help such as the Parents Maintenance Bill, which allows the state to force working children to support their aged parents. Communitarianism also legitimises Asian Democracy models of journalism. Asian TV news channels have been launched to provide news from an “Asian” perspective while Asian-styled journalism has been hotly debated in the press. While the SV project may be invisible to public eyes, it can be said to be successful if the media disciplines itself to provide responsible “Asian Journalism” and to perpetuate the myth of Singapore’s Asian-ness to its readers.

To secure media support, the government suggested a “development media model” as opposed an irresponsible Western libertarian model, alluded to by headlines such as “Time for the British media to put their house in order” (ST4/4/1988), “Western media’s coverage of Asia is wide off the mark” (ST11/12/1991), “Political journalism in UK turns cheap and nasty” (ST9/9/1993).

What is Asian Journalism? What is a nation-building media? Firstly, Asian-ness is not simply geographical but a quality of being consensual. Such an idealtype of Asian media as consensual ignores the clamorous media in Taiwan and India (Heng 1993, 39). While some Asian media may not be “Asian/consensual,” it is assumed that all Western media are non-consensual. This assumption causes the local English daily to be suspected of being not Asian/consensual enough. As an English language newspaper, the ST does not qualify as “Asian.” Yet, it is the only media to provide a supra ethnic, national perspective on Singapore. Unfortunately, being supra ethnic also means being “de-culturalised,” making ST “the weakest line of defence” against Western influences (Heng 1990). ST compensates by checking itself diligently

(Heng 1993, 36)¹⁰⁰ but is still considered too critical by the government. Ethnic media, on the other hand, are happy to work within the government's multicultural framework by promoting ethnic cultures (Arasu 1990; Heng 1990; Rasheed 1990; Yeap 1994, 64).

Secondly, Asian-ness is not necessarily communitarianism—it is debatable whether its policies are beneficial for the community or for authority (Chan 1971). A central distinction between authoritarianism and communitarianism is whether citizens have a say in what they consider best for their society. In the case of Singapore, it is certainly a case of “the government/father knows best/better.”

Thirdly, Asian-ness is often equated with consensus. However, the definition of “consensual” depends on whether it is considered natural to criticise. Development theorists are divided on the issue. At one extreme, it is held that a nation-building media should provide only positive government news (Ramaprasad and Ong 1990, 43-44) because its role is to integrate not divide (Rosario-Briad 1986, 124). Philippines President Aquino reminded journalists to “build up rather than tear down” (in Petersen 1992, 183).

A more moderate view argues that the media in developing countries should focus mainly on development-related topics, providing criticism only where warranted. Keeping close to popular concerns, the media should focus on the “desire and difficulties of development,” since it is foremost on the minds of Asians (De Jesus 1996, 3).

A parallel debate took place between the ST and Zaobao (ZB), a Chinese daily. ST justifies its critical stance by arguing that it provides what the people want. ZB suggests that ST opposes for the sake of opposition (ST21/12/96), adding that because ZB does not see government as a necessary evil, it “do[es] not suffer from a psychological burden of needing to be critical to be seen as credible or professional.” ST retorted that ‘a patriotic press is not an uncritical press,’ implying that allegiance to the nation was not the same as allegiance to

¹⁰⁰ See T.LTan (1990, 9-10) for an extreme example.

the government/party (Fernandez and Leong 1995). To keep the media ideologically credible, the government realised that it must allow the media to criticise the government. As such, the issue was no longer censorship but how much emphasis to give to criticism (Heng 1993, 39-41; Tamney 1996, 61).

Many ingenious strategies have emerged in the attempt to allow limited criticism. F.Seow (1995, 77) observed that American newspapers anchor their perspective in their editorial, allowing diversity in the rest of the newspapers. Singaporean newspapers anchor their perspective in every article, which allows less ideological diversity. Frequent readers would be familiar with the ABA styles of local commentaries—the critique “B” is always located in the penultimate paragraph. Seasoned readers would know how to “cut to the chase” and read only the last two paragraphs. Another strategy is to begin a report with a positive headline followed by a neutral sub-headline and an increasingly critical text (see insert ST 4/4/1998).

Malayian PM Mahathir provided one of the strongest arguments for a consensual media. Because the press is not elected, the government is the only legitimate and committed guardian of national/public interests:

a newspaper is a private enterprise owing nothing ... to the public... It is therefore affected with no public interest. It is emphatically the property of the owner, who is selling a manufactured project at his own risk” (Hamilton in Mahathir 1985).

While the ideal of public good can hardly be challenged, what can be challenged is the belief that consensus, rather than contention, better serves the public. The “consensus versus contention” frame creates a false dilemma that dismisses other options like compromise or consultation and traps the debate into a question of whether technocratic governments are good for society, overshadowing the more pertinent question of whether investigative journalism also benefits society. Of the many articles on Asian journalism (since 1985, in the quarterly journal *Media Asia*), there were only 2 writers (exiled opposition politician F.Seow (1995, 77) and Australian academic Petersen) who went beyond this framing.

S'pore voted least corrupt in Asia

Singapore has come out tops again in Perc's annual survey, as being the least corrupt. But businessmen surveyed gave it its worst assessment.

By NARENDRA AGGARWAL

SINGAPORE is still the least corrupt country in Asia, an annual survey has once again found, but this time it chalked up its worst assessment since the poll was started a decade ago.

Businessmen in 11 countries are canvassed for the poll, conducted by Hongkong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (Perc).

Their unusually critical stance towards Singapore, Perc said, could be more a reaction to an increased awareness of the cross-border risks of corruption than to an increase in corruption in the country.

It said Singapore's institutions were quite effective in dealing with corruption in the country. But, Perc added, there is little such institutions can do to protect companies whose increasingly regional inter-

ests expose them to corrupt practices in countries, such as Indonesia and Thailand. Singapore, along with Hongkong, also received especially high marks from the businessmen for its legal system and the professionalism of those charged with policing and enforcing laws.

The survey, conducted in January and February, was based on responses from 427 expatriate businessmen. Perc stressed that its surveys were aimed at gauging expatriates' perception of the problem of corruption and not their actual experience. The responses presented a mixed picture for the region.

Perc said the latest perception was that corruption had decreased in five of the

11 countries surveyed, including significant improvements in South Korea and China.

Malaysia was still regarded as being in the middle of Asia's pack in terms of incidents of corruption, but foreign businessmen nonetheless reported an improvement in the situation over the past year.

The bad news was that corruption had deteriorated further in countries like Thailand, Indonesia and Japan.

Systemic deficiencies were complicating the job of fighting corruption in Japan, it added.

Perc noted that "Singapore remains tough on corruption, with both determined enforcement and

heavy penalties".

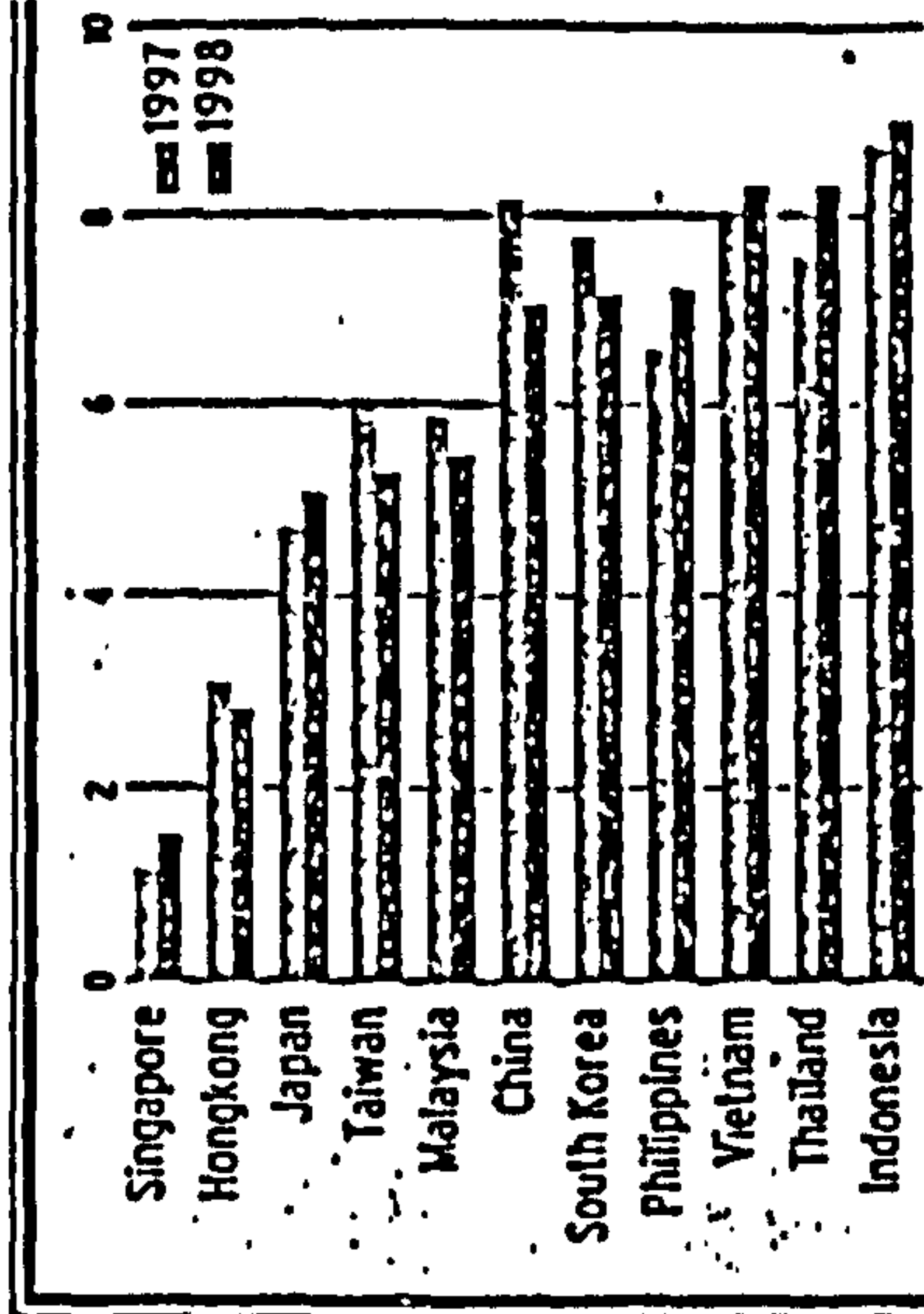
One of the country's more encouraging features is that the "rule of law" rather than "rule by law" prevails, the study said.

And that was probably the main reason the country was likely to continue receiving the best rating of all the countries covered in the survey, Perc said.

The deepening economic problems affecting many Asian countries had greatly raised people's awareness of and concern over corruption, Perc said.

While in good times it was easy for the public to turn a blind eye to corruption, such tolerance disappeared when economic conditions worsened.

CORRUPTION TRENDS IN ASIA



NOTE: Graded on a zero to 10 scale, with zero being the best grade possible. Five an average situation, and 10 the worst grade possible, or a very corrupt business environment.

SOURCE: POLITICAL & ECONOMIC RISK CONSULTANCY (PERC)

The local media is highly co-operative (Heng 1993, 39), resulting in a tame media that is over-anxious to interpret the government's minds and publish compatible views that even a government minister questioned the press' self-censorship (T.L.Tan 1990, 14). Such "nation-building" media can work against the government. The government does not want too subservient a press, knowing that a press that quotes only "PR lines" would lose its credibility and not be able to serve the government (ST4/4/1994).

Clammer (1993, 42-3) argues that in Singapore, "consensus" does not mean consultation or compromise but the imposition of PAP's point of view, *after going through the motions of a public debate*. Despite the rhetoric of 'consensus versus contention,' there is no mechanism (e.g., mass organisations that are genuinely independent with a power base of their own) for a genuine consensus-building to take place. He observes that it is almost impossible to find an example of a government policy that has been fundamentally changed or abandoned because of public pressure.

The frame of consensus versus contention successfully creates an aura of debate. At the same time, it discourages debaters by labelling them as troublemakers and "rebels without a cause." Understood in this way, SV is anti-difference and as such, an ideology par excellence for perpetuating "democratically" the ideological hegemony of a one-party state.

V. The logic of Asian Values revisited: Ideological pluralism without fragmentation

After many trials and errors' at formulating AV and after reaping ideological contradictions and paying the prices of success, with SV, the PAP government has arrived at a crystallised grasp of the logic of maintaining one-party rule democratically and refined the AV project into a lean and focused project that permits pluralism without ideological fragmentation.

The SV project crystallises the logic and premise of the various AV formulations: the myth of the fragile nation (Chapter 4) is perfectly

complemented by the AV myth of the dangerous citizens, which reaffirmed the PAP's role as the guardian of the nation against its dangerous citizens.

AV de-legitimises dissent through a series of strategies, which can be characterised into four "rounds" (each incremental strategy will be discussed in detail for the rest of this section). (1) AV constructs citizens as dangerous (partial and self-interested) subjects and de-legitimises the credibility of their opinion so as to secure their complicity to self-censor. (2) Should citizens fail to be convinced that they are dangerous and practice self-censorship, AV employs a discourse of responsible communitarian behaviour, reminding citizens of society's moral gaze and communitarian expectations to encourage citizens to privatise their dissent. (3) If dissent cannot be stopped normatively, AV legitimises the portioning of spheres of competencies and the limitation of public sphere access to "expert" citizens. (4) Should these public sphere obstacles fail to prevent dissent from surfacing into public discourses, AV trivialises dissent as the voice of a "vocal minority" and subordinates it to the voice of a constructed "silent (Asian) moral majority."

(1) Earlier multiracial formulations (Bilingualism and Religious Knowledge) constituted subjects as *intrinsically*/racially flawed, partial and (racially) biased. Their entrance into the public sphere was deemed dangerous to the multi-racial harmony of a fragile nation and subjects were encouraged to privatise their dissent. This strategy de-legitimised not only Western dreams but also Eastern dreams: views that detracted from official visions were either "too Westernised" or "too Eastern/racially chauvinistic." Within this discourse, it was the PAP government's *duty*, being the only "im-partial" and ethnically neutral (or supra-ethnic) party, to protect Singapore from Singaporeans.

This strategy was especially used against opposition politicians. Yet, such labels were effective only if citizens believe that the opposition posed a genuine national threat. Much ideological work had to be done outside elections to saturate the labels with symbolism and reality so that it strikes sufficient fear in citizens' heart to secure their consent of coercion against the opposition. To this effect, the daily AV project of representing "racial" citizens as dangerously

biased and reminding citizens of the historical reality of racial riots is crucial in setting the scene and inducing latent fears which could then be stoked during elections to legitimise coercion.

(2) With SV, "communitarianism" became a buzzword; citizens ought to be consensual "Asians." Citizens may speak but should not insist and should communitarianly defer to the wishes of the silent/moral majority – a group that only the PAP has the power to represent. Such construction of good/responsible communitarian behaviour and the gaze of the moral majority sought to induce citizens to conform and privatise their dissent.

The way the media sought to ingrain a communitarian commonsense became subtler. In the 1980s, national values were directly discussed and propagated to youths (McDaniel 1994, 178). With SV in the 1990s, commands gave way to gentle voice-overs in campaign advertisements. Instead of lecturing citizens on filial piety, the media showcased the joy of harmonious inter-generation relations. Rather than chiding citizens for irresponsible consumption, the media reported negatively on youths using credit cards, leaving viewers to draw the relevant ideological conclusion for themselves.

However, this is a very weak line of political defence because it is completely reliant on citizens' goodwill, without the state being able to punish non-conformity. The only "punishment" that could be levied upon non-conforming citizens is "public shaming," which the government continues to practise (e.g., publicly naming scholars who break their bonds). However, this is difficult to practice without the keen and active consent of a genuine (rather than a constructed) moral majority.

(3) With SV, citizens are no longer imagined as racial but as "Asian." The SV subject is no longer intrinsically/racially flawed but a communitarian Asian with an active interest and concern for society. The meaning of political participation is transformed from a threatening act of racial chauvinism to a natural extension of a citizens' care for society. No longer able to dismiss "dissent" as chauvinist, new strategies of managing dissent must now be found.

Unable to convince citizens to privatise dissent, the government sought to manage public space. To restrict public sphere access, spheres of competence were created (Hill and Lian 1995, 224) to install a moral and technical hierarchy between experts and lay citizens. Technically, the government recruits from the cream of the crop, streaming students from as early as nine years of age to pick future leaders. Morally, the government presents itself a group of morally upright Confucian gentleman by meting out harsh punishment for corruption and through the myth of LKY/PAP's sacrifice. Being mandated to rule, the Confucian government argued that, "those who want 'political space' must earn it" (ST4/12/95) and that politics is for politicians: if citizens want to "politick," they should join political parties.

Out-of-bounds (OB) markers were used in the 1980s to delimit what consisted appropriate topics and styles of public discussion. Because OB markers are vague (the government refuses to clarify them), the government has the freedom to "keep shifting the goalpost" (ST4/12/1995). Not knowing the boundaries, citizens will tend to prefer to "err on the side of caution," thereby becoming even more cautious, conservative and paranoid.

A distinction was also made between civil society and civic society. As an Asian state, Singapore should not imitate Western liberal models; good Asian citizens should build a "civic society," where community and state relations are not adversarial (Hill and Lian 1995, 233). To rid civil society of its Western adversarial baggage, MITA Minister Yeo (ST25/6/91) argued that "conflict for the sake of a civil society will not do; the result, in fact, will be most uncivil." What Singapore needed was a civic society not a civil society. With this glide from civil to civic, the government shifts the focus away from issues of culture and ideology to civics, administrative and municipal issues. What is achieved with this glide, as with the use of OB markers, is the separation of the civic/civil from the political, and the subordination of civilians to politicians. Diversity is channeled into civic society without being able to affect political society (Clammer 1985, 161).

The problem with these measures is that citizens were not always convinced of the illegitimacy of their opinions, i.e., dissent was not always successfully de-legitimised or neutralised, merely privatised. Where social faultlines had become so developed that it is no longer possible to keep them out of public discourses, new strategies of dissent management must be found – strategies that do not repress or block public sphere access but contain dissent *within* the public sphere.

(4) Dissent containment is a qualitatively different strategy and indicates the emergence of a third-generation style where dissent is not repressed but incorporated/subordinated. This strategy especially targets new media technologies where censorship is no longer possible. The gesture of admitting dissent into the public sphere should not be mistaken as the bestowing of legitimacy on alternative ideologies; even while promoting dissent from the levels of the “streets” and “coffeeshops” into the public sphere, AV simultaneously discredits it within the public sphere.

The Singapore 21 project employs many sophisticated strategies for containing dissent. It aims to rally citizens to the PAP’s vision for Singapore in the 21st century; it is a clear attempt by the PAP to secure a new consensus and rally citizens behind an updated Singapore Dream. Dissent is de-legitimised through a few strategies.

Firstly, recognising that social faultlines and ideological contradictions cannot be easily bridged, the government sought to position itself as an ideological middleground by framing different positions as an either/or dilemma and presenting its position as the best *balance*, after having considered alternative positions. The Singapore 21 project sought to incorporate polar positions within its master discourse of an Asian balance of five dilemmas

(http://www.gov.sg/singapore21/menu_logo.html):

1. Less Stressful Life Vs Retaining the Drive
2. Needs of Senior Citizens Vs Aspirations of the Young
3. Attracting Talent Vs Looking After Singaporeans
4. Internationalization/Regionalisation Vs Singapore as Home
5. Consultation and Consensus Vs Decisiveness and Quick Action.

By using a dilemma frame, the government is able to address citizens' dissent and discursively creates a semblance of democracy. E.g., the demands for a less competitive and more democratic lifestyle is pitted against the worry of official sympathisers that Singapore will lose its international competitiveness if it slows down. In these dilemmas, the underlying theme is the framing of economic prosperity and liberalism (individualism) as mutually exclusive rather than mutually enhancing. Citizens are put in their place—as partial (liberal or moral) individuals with conflicting interests, thereby establishing the government as the impartial arbitrator and sole representative of the “silent majority” and *national* interest. Without representing citizens as liberal and egoistic, the state would not be able to derive its moral legitimacy.

Secondly, pro-democracy voices are typically represented as voices of the “vocal minority” to be pitted against the concerns of the “silent/moral Asian majority.” The “reality” of this “silent majority” is made real through statistical surveys, where the weight of the middle/norm is most convincingly captured with visual bell curves and charts.

Thirdly, the demands of the vocal minority is presented as idealistic and unviable while the silent majority's preference is seen as more commonsensical, reasonable and “middle-ground” compared to the vocal minority, who are often chastised for failing to offer “constructive criticism,” which implies that their participation is desired only if it is constructive towards the goal of the PAP/majority. The demand that criticism be constructive is a strategy that is very powerful and difficult to argue against. Many agree with the sentiment, despite their reservations (Quah 1990c, 96; Rasheed and Mahizhnan 1990, 86). This is a way of securing feedback and improvement without conceding political tenure and implementing two previous ideological values— to de-legitimise opposition for the sake of opposition (plural democracy) and to insist that civilians participate minimally by suggesting viable alternatives and leaving politics to the government.

These strategies allow the PAP to appear tolerant of pluralism when, in effect, they subordinate dissent – citizens have felt so un-consulted that they have

challenged the government to name a policy where it had actually capitulated on a decision because of popular opinion. These strategies ensure that dissent is contained within the public sphere and not allowed to gain parliamentary representation (leading to a two or multi-party government). Such "tolerance" of pluralism and faithfulness to the (silent/moral) majority lends the PAP government an aura of democracy and allows the PAP to legitimately proclaim itself as not only the guardian of multi-racial harmony but also the guardian of democracy.

This strategy of securing hegemony through subordination should be distinguished from the more frequently theorised strategy of incorporation (Hall 1977; 331-333; Brown 1993) and its variations (expansive and transformative hegemony, Gramsci 1971; Mouffe 1982). The communitarian strategy of dissent subordination may even be a more evolved or refined ideological strategy, since, compared to (Western political) liberalism, it allows for purer forms of (non-welfare state) capitalism and (one-party) government. As Huntington (1991, 108) observed, "a political far less skilled than LKY could have produced democracy in Singapore;" instead, Singapore initiates an alternative "Asian" trajectory of political evolution.

The ideology of communitarianism appears to have more "elective affinity" with the hegemonic strategy of subordination while liberalism appears to have greater affinity with the strategy of incorporation. Communitarianism, as an anti-liberal ideology, believes in the subordination of individual rights to community interests. A type of "communitarian governmentality" results: Pye and Pye (1985) observed that Confucian subjects have a high threshold of tolerance for cognitive dissonance, which indicates the successful creation of moral subjects. Unlike liberal ethical subjects, moral subjects value face and conformity to varying social expectations; they are less likely to be concerned with ensuring ideological consistency between their beliefs and practice or attempt to live a principled, context-invariant life. The communitarian state, unlike the liberal state that arbitrates between individuals and groups, is not the sum of its individuals but a transcendental, *sui generis* entity (Durkheim 1965). Especially in Confucian communitarianism, the state is mandated to do what is

best for society, even if this means being unpopular. In this way, AV appears to be an ideology par excellence for the maintenance of one-party ideological dominance.

5D. HEGEMONY INCOMPLETE AND DELAY TACTICS

As an “unrepentant island of discipline,” the PAP’s success in securing obedience without sacrificing its authoritarianism is closely watched and admired by other Asian nations (Newsweek 25/12/1995). For Clammer (1985, 159/166-167), the nature of this hegemony is more of acquiescence than identification, acquired through social control (bureaucracy, economic rewards) and ensuring that dissent is “absolutely subordinated” so that there is no serious alternatives at the articulate level.

Why do citizens obey without believing? Why are campaigns only partially successful? To be successful, ideologies have to be banal—“familiar, continual, not consciously registered as reminding” (Billig 1995, 8) and commonsensical by operating at an unconscious “sub-stratum” level. However, campaigns often aim to change within a short time with scientific rhetoric to change the habits that uneducated citizens have developed over time. Campaigns in Singapore are also accompanied by material consequences (e.g., fines – Singapore is joked as a “fine” country), forcing citizens to be conscious, rational and calculative in their life choices.

The chasm between campaign and citizens’ reality makes citizens suspicious of government propaganda. Far from being “popular-national,” state ideologies are undisguisedly top-down. The head of psychological defence lamented that “the Singapore brand” has always been the government, not the people, making his job very difficult (Gwee 1987, 27). It does not help that the government sends out contradictory messages about themselves as moral Confucian gentlemen (“jun-zi”) while the PM’s pay is four times President Clinton’s.¹⁰¹ Additionally, a government-controlled media compromises its

¹⁰¹ According to Sintercom (http://sintercom.organise/sef/ministers_pay.html), citing the Economist, the annual salaries of some Presidents/PMs are:

Singapore	US\$780,000 (Cabinet ministers’ pay start from US\$419,285)
USA	US\$200,000

credibility (Lull 1991). The head of psychological defence reveals that, because of their cynicism, citizens especially suspend belief in the media during election years, withholding "strong emotions" and initiative when singing national songs (Gwee 1987, 26-27; Hill and Lian 1995, 37).

Even though citizens do not completely accept the government's representation of reality, they also have great difficulty articulating a coherent alternative. Firstly, official frames are difficult to resist, especially when the Singapore government constantly asks citizens to compare themselves with its less fortunate neighbours while omitting information on more successful countries (Ward 1995, 30).

Secondly, where policies are highly questionable, the government represents these issues as technical problems requiring technical solutions. E.g., instead of debating whether censorship is desirable, the Singapore government framed it as a technical challenge to design the world's first Internet censorship software. Citizens joke that they would not be surprised if the government would simply opt for a technical solution to the problem of citizens not flushing public toilets by designing a technology to monitor errant toilet users, completely bypassing debates on personal privacy.

Thirdly, the illusion of democracy and expert rule makes it difficult for citizens to articulate their different opinion/"feeling" with *certainty* (Cf. women's account in Chapter 6C). "Fewer Singaporeans think they affect public policy" (ST28/11/1998) *despite the government's encouragement for feedback*. Citizens joked that "the Feedback Unit" is a blackhole where suggestions disappear. Even votes for the opposition during elections are trivialised as "mere protest votes" (D.Birch 1992, 92). The media, as a stage for democracy, plays an important role in the illusion of participation (D.Birch 1992, 86). While citizens suspect censorship in ST's Forum Page, it is not until a website publishes these uncensored letters ("Not-the-ST-Forum-Page" in www.sintercom.org), that citizens could be *certain* of censorship.

Germany	US\$160,000
Britain	US\$122,000

That citizens conform without believing suggests a form of communitarian governmentality different from liberal/ethical governmentality. Anti-smoking in "liberal" London concentrates on telling individuals about dangers to their personal health. In a communitarian society, we would expect that the same campaign would encourage smokers to create a smoke-free environment for everyone's sake. However, anti-smoking campaigns in Singapore employ a mixture of communitarian and pragmatic discourses. They remind smokers of others' gaze (e.g., a sexy girl saying, "I wouldn't want to kiss a chimney"). Smokers quit smoking to gain popularity rather than for health reasons, or they may not quit but privatise their smoking/dissent (e.g., smoking when "sexy girls" are not present). This is precisely the phenomenon of the "Ugly Singaporean," who leaves behind good habits when freed from constraining contexts – e.g., not flushing in public toilets, spitting and speeding when they cross the Singaporean border.

The PAP's (Asian Values) hegemony on is based on a repudiation of liberalism (and de-legitimisation of individual rights and desires). As such, the PAP's hegemony is tinged with a sour taste; the PAP itself often describes its electoral victory as bitter-sweet while the local presses describe the PAP has having won the people's minds but not their hearts. Where dissent is not neutralised or incorporated but merely privatised or subordinated, the PAP draws upon some delay tactics to sustain its hegemony.

To pressurise citizens into short-term conformity, the PAP often creates moral panics (e.g., "How to destroy Singapore: BGYeo" ST24/8/1992). If citizens believe in the doomsday scenario, or if they value the present enough, they will feel pressurised to "tolerate" coercion.

"Crises" are effective because the Singapore nation is conceived not as an *organic* nation but as a *problematic* nation that is "perpetually plagued by existential crises of national economic survival" (cf. Clammer 1985, 25/165; Ang and Stratton 1997; D.Birch 1992). The mass media are employed to stage

Canada US\$ 98,000

"spectres of crisis" (Hill and Lian 1995, 34; D.Birch 1993; Clammer 1985, 27) so that the leaders can present themselves as saviours. E.g., Singapore was portrayed as an unwilling nation abandoned by the British and the Malaysians and forced to be independent in a cutthroat economic jungle.

These "scenarios" – PM Goh's pet word – create "an atmosphere of psychosis" (Regnier 1991, 230) that speeds up citizens' acceptance of government policies. According to a minister:

one of the things we can do to get a little further down the road a little faster is to raise the spectre of total disaster as the alternative... sooner or later they [the citizens] will change (Betts in Hill and Lian 1995, 34).

The PAP government, although hegemonic, is not a popular one. (Cf. Chapter 4 on how the PAP avoided popularity contests). LKY unrepentantly states that Singapore would not be what it is today had he not dared to be unpopular. Throughout its rise to power, the PAP had never depended on popularity to gain legitimacy. To this day, it still relies on delay tactics to tide it through legitimacy crises and to postpone the moment when it would be forced to rely solely on popular legitimacy.

How likely is a counter-ideology to emerge? Tamney (1996, 192) argues that it is difficult for an alternative ideology to capitalism to emerge. For Leys (1990, 127), ideologies do not have to be loved to become hegemonic, it is sufficient that they have no serious rivals. To this end, the Singapore Dream remains unrivalled in its popularity and taken-for-grantedness (See Chapter 6).

There are also obstacles to a united opposition. Opposition parties lack funds and credibility and are divided along race and class lines. The Workers' Party fights for social equality while the Singapore Democratic Party articulates middle-class concerns (Tamney 1996, 191-2). Civil society groups take a reformist stance, providing "constructive criticisms" that are easily incorporated within the dominant ideology. Laws against public gatherings mean there is no opportunity for dissent to congregate and find enough support to form a united opposition.

Brown (1993, 18) argues that exclusionary corporatism can give way to inclusionary corporatism if there are mass organisations with "relative autonomy" since they can easily slip out of government control, e.g., in Malaysia (Hill and Lian 1995, 183) and one-party states do topple. There may also be cracks *within* the dominant ideology. If these are allowed to widen, the PAP may lose more than the 25-30% of votes that it already concedes regularly to the opposition. When dialect TV was banned, citizens switched over to Malaysian channels. The keen competition from Hong Kong and Malaysia to become a regional IT hub pressurises the government/media to improve Singapore's competitiveness as an open economy.

The project of hegemony is never complete. The PAP's hegemony is sustained by citizens' subordination of dissent, which in turn is based on how much credibility they give to the government's representation of reality vis-à-vis their own. In the next section, I will examine this gap between national and personal reality, whether it exists, how it is bridged, and the consequences they have on the reproduction of the PAP's hegemony.

Chapter 6 Postures towards authority

The everyday legitimisation of authority and de-legitimisation of dissent

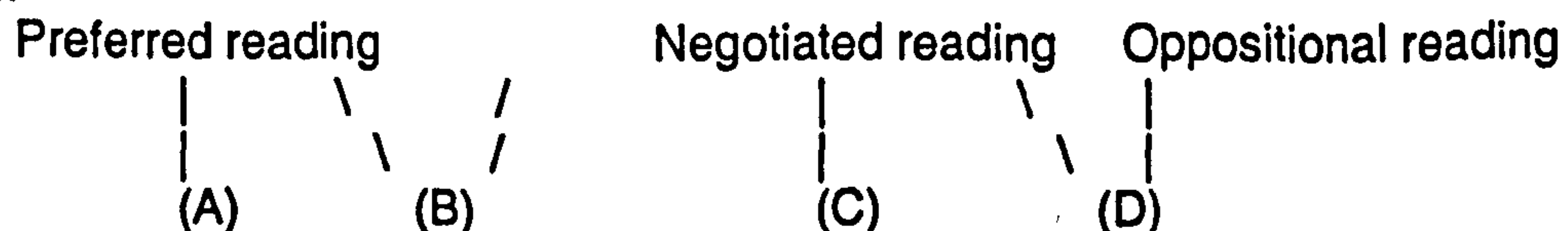
Acknowledging that it is no longer possible or desirable to censor, the PAP's aims to allow ideological pluralism without fragmentation. Rather than work to eliminate differences, authority must work *through, around and despite* dissent. This chapter tries to illustrate how this is achieved in everyday life through focusing on the everyday strategies that citizens use to manage (legitimise or de-legitimise) authority and dissent before evaluating in Chapter 7 whether there is ideological unity amidst such modification, such as a preferred reading against which citizens negotiate, or a central normative system against which citizens feel compelled to justify their non-conformity.

Assuming that ideologies have to be localised and adapted to become popular, this chapter will focus on the *range* and *complexity* of such ideological modification. To this end, "posture" is a superior concept because it bypasses tendencies in cognitive and linguistic approaches to establish coherence and is centrally concerned with hesitations and contradictions. By posture, I refer to the accumulated consequence on one's subjectivity due to the regular practice of strategies of dissent-management. Although there are infinite ways of managing dissent, in this dissertation, I prefer not to list them singly but to categorise them into four postures based on whether and how authority/dissent is (de-)legitimised:¹⁰²

(a) "No dissent" – dissent is refuted

This posture tends to draw upon the subdominant ideology/discourse of communitarianism and the myth of LKY's national sacrifice, which induces unconditional loyalty and renders anti-government criticisms unthinkable.

¹⁰² My scheme has some correspondence to len Ang's (1985) and Stuart Hall's (1973) models:



(b) Dissent is outweighed/neutralised by consent

This posture tends to draw upon the dominant ideology/discourse of pragmatic self-reliance. Although their low expectations of the government makes them easily satisfied, citizens' "consent" is conditional upon the government providing an environment where citizens can "get on with their lives" without governmental disturbances.

(c) Dissent is privatised

In the previous two postures, consent is dominant because dissent is neutralised. Here, dissent is neither neutralised nor fully legitimised for various reasons – the lack of technical/moral qualifications needed to gain credibility in the public sphere and the longing to succeed in the very system that is resented. This identification/discourse of sound social ideals (meritocracy, equality, etc.) despite their flawed implementation diminishes the desire and ability to imagine alternatives.

(d) Dissent is subordinated

Alternative ideals are imagine-able and draw heavily from "Western" discourses of democracy and social welfare. Unhampered by low qualifications or by a longing for social success, dissent is publicly articulated, but may be contained/subordinated by the government.

Although it would be more logical to start from either ends where dissent is least or most pronounced, I prefer a radial approach starting with discourses based on the dominant ideology¹⁰³ because they constitute the centre around which other postures derive their significance and meaning. This centre serves as a type of preferred reading and is prevalent not only numerically but also qualitatively – through being foremost in popular imagination. Without fail, every interviewee imagine "others" in the image of a successful "kiasu Singaporean," competitive, successful (on his way to achieving the 5Cs) and afraid to lose out, a "pure" fictional subject of the dominant ideology. Leaving aside comparisons with pure subjects until Chapter 7, in this chapter, I will explore "real subjects" who often embodies public discourses with less purity, intensity and in more complex ways.

¹⁰³ Ang's (1985) analysis of *Dallas* audience uses this strategy. Audience positions are linked in relation to a centre, which she identifies as "the ideology of mass culture."

6A. PRAGMATIC ACCEPTANCE: THE DISCOURSE OF ECONOMIC SATISFACTION AND THE NEUTRALISATION OF DISSENT

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS POSTURE

Since coming to power in 1959, the PAP has considered the building of a modern economy its most urgent political project. Just as political scientists argue that economics is a very good indicator of whether the incumbent party will be re-elected (CNN, Voice of Democracy, 6/1/2001), the PAP believed that with improvements in living standards would bring an end to socio-political ills. Indeed, if politics is defined as the process through which "groups of people unite behind some leadership to compete, bargain and negotiate in the shaping and sharing of political power to influence or control policy direction" (Chan 1975, 51), then, for Chua (1995, 40), only the decade of transitional rule from colonial rule, attempted merger and independence (1955-1965) can properly be labeled "political." Since coming to power, the PAP strove to render politics irrelevant and install economics as the center and heartbeat of the nation. An understanding of how this economic discourse is translated into commonsense would shed light on the "puzzle" (to Western observers) of why citizens are willing "to trade political rights for economic growth."

The significance of this posture lies in its breadth and depth. Even the most anti-government interviewee (and opposition) acknowledges that, "the PAP has done a good job" and criticizes only its side effects. This is tantamount to a concession that, not only is the PAP an excellent government, but also that economics is a relevant, if not central, criteria for evaluating governance. That the government was "too successful" in inculcating a Confucian spirit of capitalism (so much so that citizens have become too competitive at the expense of valuing community, thereby requiring communitarianism as a cure or supplement) indicates that its dominant ideology of competitive, "rugged individualism" has become deeply entrenched in Singapore society.

More importantly, the perception of national economic prosperity prevents ideological fragmentation and the emergence of credible alternative by providing "proof" of the superiority of PAP and its values (Asian Values). Officially, the name of "economic prosperity" is evoked as a prelude to all sorts

of coercion; popularly, it motivates citizens of all posture groups to adopt various strategies of managing dissent (denial, privatization, subordination). In these ways, the official discourse of (PAP's/national) economic performance and popular discourse of (personal) economic satisfaction constitute the most basic and important basis of government legitimacy, upon which other (official and popular) strategies of legitimating authority and de-legitimizing dissent are founded.

II. THE LOGIC OF THE NEUTRALISATION OF DISSENT: THE DISCOURSE OF ECONOMIC SATISFACTION

This posture is defined by a particular strategy of balancing discourses - the subordination of dissatisfactions so that satisfactions outweigh dissatisfactions:

[AL18]: Everything is good except...

[AZ9]: The government cannot be expected to tackle everything...

Unlike the concept of "subject position," this "posture" is signalled not by the absence of, but by a willingness to subordinate, discontent. Given that the government actively promotes a supplementary communitarian ideology to address the side effects of success in late-capitalism, there are few citizens who are unaware of the contradictions and problems of the Singapore model (e.g., interviewees frequently cite inferiority complex as a side-effect of meritocracy).

In terms of content, the satisfactions (economic satisfaction, orderly society, safety) and dissatisfactions (stressful lifestyle, over-regulation, repression of opposition) expressed by this group is not unlike those of other posture groups.¹⁰⁴ Should the analyst look simply at singular utterances without looking at how interviewees combine various discourses, the qualitative difference between complaining about (inevitable) side-effects and a total rejection based on a disagreement in principle would be lost. In fact, it can even be argued that

¹⁰⁴ PM Goh cited a media survey (<http://www.mita.gov.sg/speech/speeches/v20n6002.htm>). Economy and social harmony were two of the top five things that Singaporeans were proud of. Over-

an acceptance that is based on awareness of "side-effects" may even be a more stable form of support for authority. "Posture," unlike the "subject positions" created by particular discourses, situates utterances within the wider context of the total transcript so as to arrive at an inter-textual or inter-discursive understanding of the meaning of an utterance. "Posture" considers how citizens put discourses into perspectives and decide, *despite complaints*, that the government is a good "package deal."

In a research on hegemony, the crucial question is, to what extent is this phenomenon of "neutralisation of dissent" an effect of the PAP's ideological project, i.e., the successful grafting of PAP values on social values. The rest of this section attempts to discuss the role of the discourse of economic satisfaction in the everyday neutralisation of dissent and the moulding of a posture of pragmatic acceptance. I hope to answer these questions by analysing the basis of their economic satisfaction. To what extent (and how directly) is their satisfaction based on personal (sociological-biographical) or media "ways of knowing" (which includes information, opinions, frames) and how do they bridge contradicting versions of reality? The key argument is that for this posture, obedience/conformity with government projects is accidental and conditional — while citizens' values and practices may coincide and legitimise government authority, they also have some independence and can constitute a challenge to government authority.

III. WAYS OF KNOWING: PRIORITISING PERSONAL KNOWLEDGES

WHEREVER POSSIBLE

When looking at the sources of knowledge interviewees draw on to substantiate their economic satisfaction, a pattern that emerges is that they rely heavily on observations from their personal life and hardly borrow the media's language or opinions, except reluctantly, when asked to comment on unfamiliar or international events. While their discourses may echo certain government frames (e.g., economics as priority, Singapore is economically prosperous),

regulation, lack of freedom and the government browbeating the opposition were among the top ten they were ashamed of.

they do not reproduce others (e.g., fragile country with dangerous citizens, the Singapore Dream).

During interviews, I was struck by how “materialist” the PAP’s basis legitimacy is¹⁰⁵ –all discourses of satisfaction with the government rested on assessments of material accomplishment. What makes its legitimacy “doubly materialist” is that interviewees do not refer to abstract material accomplishment of the nation (which remains too “imaginary” to them) like GDP and “economy” but refer to material improvements that are tangible in their personal life, e.g., traffic efficiency, running taps, improvement in their housing environment.

Discourses of economic satisfactions is always substantiated with detailed empirical observations from daily life, rather than with citations from the media:

[KPT593-602]: Now, lifts ... go up to every floor... traffic lights work fine... I stand at my flat window and look down. Every 10 minutes the light turns red. Even if you rob and get into a car, even if you pass this light, you have to stop at another light. Singapore is the safest place.

Interviewees dedicate themselves to improving their personal material situation and are highly disinterested in politics. Despite having lived through many political upheavals and despite being dissatisfied with the PAP’s treatment of opposition politicians, many were not familiar with the names of opposition politicians nor think them important:

[AZ10]: Me: Do you follow the JBJ (opposition politician) case?

AZ: I don’t think it is important.

Me: Why not?

AZ: This is a very small matter, one person only.

More interestingly, not only do interviewees (in posture 6A and 6B) see politics as less important than economics, they also have a particular conception of *when* politics becomes important. For AZ(10), there is no such thing as political issues, only practical ones – when asked whether he discussed social issues with friends, AZ replied that he solved his problems by going to the Town

¹⁰⁵Realising how much of the PAP’s ideological groundwork is achieved through its public housing and public health policies, I re-drafted Chapter 4 to focus on the PAP’s consolidation of economic legitimacy.

Council, i.e., there are no problems that cannot be solved by the administrative state.

Additionally, many interviewees consider politics relevant only when there are economic problems. Both older and younger interviewees believed that political unrest happens "only if there isn't enough food" (AZ10). This is because *economics is the only real issue*; any power struggle during a period of economic stability/prosperity is excessive and motivated by power-hungry individuals:

[KPT584-587]: Although Singapore is small, we have very high [financial] reserves, it's LKY's good work. The US says our politicians shoot down opposition... Let's not talk about this; those who crave for power will not make good government.

This "almost myopic" focus on personal life and non-concern with national situations come across again in the types of news that interviewees are concerned with. Especially among older immigrant-citizens, a sociological group that corresponds most with this posture, there is a noticeable disinterest in local and especially international news generally, with the exception of the Asian economic crisis. With hindsight, I can see that most interviewees are only interested in news that has a direct impact (especially negative economic impact) on them; they seem uninterested in local opposition parties, campaigns and civil society developments or in international events.

This narrow concern is associated with a heavy reliance on personal ways of knowing wherever possible,¹⁰⁶ to the extent of disregarding the media's representations unless they are "proven" true in their own life. They are so unwilling or unable to rely on media as a source of knowledge that rather than rehash media platitudes, they prefer to not comment even on non-politicised social issues.

[ALI7] Me: is there a Singapore culture that is different from other countries?

ALI: Difficult. If we travel, then we can see.

¹⁰⁶For information on the Asian economic crisis, citizens had little choice but to rely on the media. While it is not surprising that they reproduce the media's comparative frame (comparing Singapore only to worse-off homeland states, e.g., Malaysia, Indonesia), it was surprising that interviewees did not initiate comparisons to better-off homeland states (India, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China).

Me: Do you travel often?

ALI: To quite a number of places, but not long enough to make a differentiation.

This observation of low media-reliance is supported by observations of their media habits. They are not regular media users. This is not surprising since the older generations, being largely illiterate, are not catered to in national media. Interviewees spoke of their altered media habits since the government banned dialects from broadcast media. Neither do they “waste time” (AZ9) with alternative communication channels such as the coffeeshop, preferring to devote themselves to their families.

This contrasts with later postures, where interviewees fabricate information to justify their view (Chapter 6B), seek out rumors to substantiate their counter-hegemonic arguments (Chapter 6C) or rely on foreign media for alternative perspectives (Chapter 6D). By contrast, these interviewees feel no pressure to hide their “lack” of knowledge, which in actuality, is an unwillingness to formulate a (hasty, stereotypical) opinion rather than a lack of knowledge. ALI's position is more significant if we consider that, as a pre-state Malay immigrant-citizen, he would have considerable knowledge of Malaysia that he could draw on to compare Singaporean culture with. By contrast, interviewees in other posture groups were quick to reproduce trite media representations of Singaporean culture and draw upon essentialised stereotypes of Singapore-Malaysian cultural differences. On the topic of “young people today,” this posture group was similarly unwilling to chastise the younger generation, something that the communitarian group (6B) constantly did. Instead, they empathised with the young and spoke about the difficulty of making a living in the present.

Time and again, when confronted with irrelevant topics, this group chooses not to reproduce salient media discourses. The only instance when media discourses were directly drawn upon was the economic crisis; otherwise, wherever possible – to the extent of declining comment – they prefer to rely on personal rather than media knowledge.

Cynics may argue that media effects can still be inferred. Popular discourses of economic satisfaction may clearly be an ideological effect, indeed, that popular discourses coincide or echo pro-government discourses may mean that the dominant ideology or ethic has become so entrenched and localized that its official antecedents is no longer clear. This could be read, furthermore, as an effect of agenda setting, where anti-government discourses are classified out of the media and over time, classified out of popular consciousness. In this way, interviewees become unable to clearly articulate their anti-government dissatisfactions, which serve to neutralize dissent, and in the long run, silence it.

There are some arguments against this position. If interviewees neutralize dissent, it is not because they are persuaded by government justifications but because they witness these tangible changes. If dissent is subordinated, it is not subordinated to state or media discourse, but to their *personal* experience of satisfaction.

Interviewees' discourses echo only certain government ideologies. E.g., interviewees do not subscribe to the myth of the fragile nation and its dangerous citizens. Additionally, despite valuing material well-being, interviewees do not identify with "the Singapore Dream" or the (Confucian) spirit of capitalism. Indeed, many, being from the pre-state immigrant generation, had not even heard of the "Singapore Dream" and certainly did not desire possessing the 5Cs:

[AZ6-7]: I only want to have enough to buy a refrigerator and a colour television so the kids will stay at home.

These are merely some examples of gaps between popular and government discourses. Rather than list gaps between government ideologies and popular values, I prefer to discuss them thematically in the following sections to infer determining influences and establish the relative influence of government, sociology and contextual influences.

IV. SOCIOLOGY: A PRE-STATE MENTLITY OF SELF-RELIANCE AND LOW EXPECTATIONS

To explain the neutralisation of dissent via the prioritisation of economics is insufficient; it would not explain why citizens continue to feel economic satisfaction even their personal economic situation is not rosy. Economic satisfaction and dissent neutralisation appears to be linked to a third phenomenon – interviewees' low expectations, which suggests that there is little dissent for citizens to neutralise in the first place.

Low expectations correlate significantly with a sociological group. Older immigrant-citizens tend to place a high premium on self-reliance and have no expectation that the state will take care of them. My observation is supported by a ST(11/4/1998) survey finding that it was those aged between 35-45 who desired the "Singapore Dream of the 5Cs", rather than the younger "post-65ers" (those born after Independence in 1965) or the older pre-state immigrant generation. This generation difference is reflected in an interview with a 3-tier family. Grandfather KPT(683), like other old immigrants (AZ6, ALI8), wants "enough to pass down to [his] son" and had not heard of the "Singapore Dream." His middle-aged son (CST645), like other pre-state interviewees (BL91), desires the 5Cs but lacks the necessary qualifications. The young graduate (YJT621) has the qualification but believes "there are more important things than these."

The advantage of researching a young nation-state like Singapore is that there is still a generation of citizens who have lived a large part of their life in pre/non-modern- nation-state Singapore. As such, the discourse of these pre-state/immigrant citizens is important as a "control group"¹⁰⁷ and as a comparative "pre-state mentality" against which the nature of discourses of post-state citizens can be contextualized.

¹⁰⁷ This assumes that their discourse have not altered significantly—an impossible situation to "control" outside the laboratory. However, this group appears to be relatively alienated by the media. Their contact with newspapers is also minimal given their illiteracy and high reliance on dialect broadcast, which was banned by the government. All immigrant citizens initiated conversation about this ban and spoke about how they adjusted to it. Many do not watch TV because "there is nothing interesting" and "actors speak (Mandarin and English) too fast."

What is this pre-state/national mentality like and what elective affinities does the pre-state subject have with the subject of Asian Capitalism and Asian Democracy?

The pre-state subject's strong belief in self-reliance and low economic expectations makes him a good Asian Capitalist subject.

Self-reliant citizens who value "face" make good "Asian Capitalism" subjects because they are strongly against welfarism. KPT also praised the government for rewarding diligence rather than handing out welfare:

[KPT589-603]: The government didn't want complacency. Instead of welfare, they think of other ways of caring for people. Now lifts, they go up to every floor ... to take care of the handicapped. This develops the hardworking attitude of Singapore to look for jobs and support family. Everyone must stand on his own.

In a community that shares the value of self-reliance, individuals who are dependent on social welfare suffer shame:

[KPT569-574]: If you do not improve, you will earn [little], you cannot face people, you develop an inferiority complex... If you cannot provide for yourself, you cannot provide for your family or get married; you cannot have children. No children mean you cannot pass down the generation. Then you keep having inferiority complex.

Within (Asian) Capitalism, responsible selves are expected to see to their own needs through private savings and investment – a trait of "Asian" capitalism. The expectation of self-reliance and shame of not being self-reliant explains why one interviewee was shocked that her friend married a man who had no insurance policy, which, in an Asian capitalist system, indicates that the groom was not serious about his future.

Self-reliant pre-state/immigrant citizens believe in high savings and suspect credit spending – features of Asian Capitalism. Without exceptions, all cautioned against spending beyond their means, warning that society will

become messy if citizens "don't know themselves" (HO270-280).¹⁰⁸ The value of self-reliance also makes welfarism un-imaginable, even for those who are young and Western-educated. One Western-educated interviewee asked, "How would we have enough to pay for health and education (i.e., be self-reliant) if we are taxed 50%?"

Additionally, a community that believes in self-reliance is more likely to be anti-protectionism. Asian Capitalism's emphasis on meritocratic competition offers no protection for local labour against international competition. While this is a sore point for a vocal minority, most citizens accept this and try to adapt to the situation. Many take up the government's call to "upgrade" their skills to better compete with foreign labour (ALI1, KPT447) and respond to the government's call to "lower [their] expectations." When asked whether he has difficulty finding a job, RM(125) replied that he did not have difficulties because he was not choosy, unlike (imaginary) Others. ALI believed that it was more "sane" for citizens to upgrade and adjust rather than make demands of the state:

[ALI9]: [During the economic crisis]. People have to reduce their expectations. You have to adjust your expectations to your capability. Any sane person would do that.

Besides having low economic expectations, immigrant-citizens have even lower political expectations. Having witnessed the fragility and temporality of polities (British colonialism, Japanese Occupation, Malayan Federation), Singapore is not a taken-for-granted reality with secure boundaries and essence. KPT, AZ and ALI were keenly aware that Singapore is "a Malay land" where non-Malays stay only if they work for their "board:"

[KPT580-583]: Singapore does not belong to the Chinese. LKY was very shrewd in dealing with the local Malays and give privileges to them. The majority [Chinese] earns and provides for the rest so the locals actually support us to be independent and do not allow the neighbouring countries to attack us.

They do not expect authorities to be concerned with the welfare of the "little man" and would submit to whichever authority is in power, to the extent of

¹⁰⁸ I had a culture shock in the US. My lack of credit history was viewed negatively to disqualify me from renting apartments, rather than viewed positively as an indication that I have never lived on borrowed resources.

speaking English during colonialism, Japanese during WW2 Occupation and Malay during Federation:

KPT(431-443): I came to Singapore when I was 14. During WW2, the Japanese came and threw bombs. We had to "own-self do, own-self eat" [depend on ourselves], the British prisoners of war were kept at Fort Caning... I subject myself to the particular person in authority... What the Japanese wanted, I sold. We had to learn Japanese; I addressed them as masters.

Indeed, this group had difficulty grasping the notion of representative/popular government. When asked about whether the media and government reflected the people's voice, the closest understanding of "representation" that HO could comprehend was aesthetic realism:¹⁰⁹

[HO127-134]: Me: Does the ShinMin [a tabloid] reflects the people's voice?

HO: I don't understand

Me: Do they report things that little people are interested in?

HO: (Silence)

Me: How do local programs compare with imported Taiwanese programs?

HO: Taiwanese shows, they use magic... it's not realistic...

Their lack of expectations of the state is paralleled by a willingness to adapt to coercive policies, rather than resist or criticise them, *even when they perceive policies as unfair*. Self-reliant citizens with low expectations make good "Asian Democracy" subjects. By self-adjusting to, rather than protesting against, unfair government policies, citizens perform the "Asian" duty of avoidance of confrontation with authority, allowing national discourses/policies to be perpetuated despite private disagreement, and to even acquire an aura of consensus.

A topic that interviewees initiate is the banning of dialects in broadcast media, i.e., TV and radio programs became completely inaccessible to dialect-speaking pre-state citizens.¹¹⁰ Rather than protest the ban, KPT(713) simply "[went] to sleep if there is nothing for [him] to watch" while STC(367) sought live street entertainment (Teochew street opera). Many older citizens complained

¹⁰⁹ "Realism" is Hall's (1997) first and most basic of three understandings of "representation."

¹¹⁰ Even in 1979 (14 years after Independence), about 90% of public interpersonal communication was in dialect (Ministry of Communications and Information 1989, 79).

about the quality of TV programmes. For STC(330), TV English was spoken to quickly while KPT knows insufficient Mandarin to watch TV. All minority interviewees complained about the quality of minority programmes but adapted privately. Those who could afford it subscribe to cable TV while others acquired illegal TV boosters to receive Indonesian channels.

Such "tolerance" of state intervention makes citizens appear docile and obedient. However, this may be less an indication of obedience than a manifestation of the immigrant value of self-reliance and survival instinct. Some scholars argue that this indicates ideological success in de-politicising the population.¹¹¹ However, this thesis is unable to explain a phenomenon: if the government is ideologically successful, why does it continue to accuse its citizens of being materialistic (not surrendering their vote until they receive a tangible return) and of seeking greener pastures?

Indeed, the case of illegal TV boosters suggests that this posture group has some degree of independence from state ideologies and that their "reproduction" or non-contest of authority should be seen less as a case of obedience than coincidence between dominant values and immigrant values. Dissent is neutralised less by identification with dominant discourse than by a combination of low expectations and a pragmatic, conditional assessment of the benefits – measured in a solely personal material way – derived from the particular/current authority.

What is important here is less the determination of whether this posture is a result of "popular" or "national" values whose authenticity is questionable, but rather to identify, as any study of hegemony must, the moments when state and popular discourses correspond, and when they do not. Having explored the "elective affinity" between immigrant mentality and Asian Capitalism and Asian Democracy, I will now identify how this immigrant mentality can be counter-hegemonic and present an obstacle to the PAP's hegemonic project.

¹¹¹ Conceptually, media/ideological effects are impossible to refute. Media platitudes like "why the government cannot do more" (ST23/07/1998) can influence citizens to think that, "the government is *already* doing all it can."

V. THE LIMITS OF ACCEPTANCE: PRAGMATISM AND CONDITIONAL COMPLIANCE

The best "evidence" that this posture legitimises authority based on convenience rather than obedience is indicated by how the pragmatic self-reliance of citizens can take on a life of its own, independent of the state's ability to control it.

Firstly, the PAP appears to have successfully proletarianised citizens but not necessarily instil in them the spirit of capitalism to accumulate beyond subsistence. From my own research and from media surveys, the vision of a society of "kiasu" (afraid to lose, to be competitive at all costs) citizens appears to be more utopian than real. Contrary to official discourses, the younger generation is not as materialistic as is thought. An ST (30/06/1996, <http://cyberfair.gsn.org/sngs98/19960630-2.html>) survey based on 418 Singaporeans in their 20s reported that, "they are more realistic and reasonable, and considerably less fickle, than they are often made out to be."¹¹²

If this ethic of accumulation is weak in the younger generation, it is practically non-existent among the older generation,¹¹³ who are unaware of the "Singapore Dream" and are concerned only with "filling stomachs" and securing "a roof over [their] head."

[KPT656-682] Me: Have you heard of the Singapore dream?

KPT: (pause) ... No.... I don't listen to politics... I never care about these things.

Translator: (explains the 5Cs)

KPT: I only care about daily living, enough to eat and spend. These things are not important. I only care about my son, grandchildren. I do business for 50 years to provide children a place to live... If I earn enough, I pass it down to the next generation so they can live more comfortably.

¹¹² Chapter 7 argues that the government/media's insistence on (mis)-representing the youth as materialistic is a strategy to create a moral panic so as to discourage/lower expectations, thereby de-legitimising demands on the state.

¹¹³ HO presents an interesting case of two mentalities in one person. She does not expect prosperity for herself but hope for the 5Cs for her children.

[AZ6-7] Me: Do you know the Singapore Dream?

AZ: I'm not sure

Me: (explain)

AZ: I don't need these... I need television, refrigerator... We need our own colour TV so that the kids can watch and don't go loitering.

Me: Do young people want these things?

AZ: I don't know. Young people have their own reasons.

[ALI8] Me: Do you dream the Singapore dream?

ALI: What is that?

Me: The 5Cs.

ALI: Oh. People like me, we have a roof over our heads, I make enough money to eat.

Me: Do you think young people want this?

ALI: I think most young people don't go all out for them. What they want is a comfortable life, a natural desire ... when I was young, I also.

In AZ's and ALI's accounts, we see them extending their own goal of subsistence to the younger generation. Contrary to media discourse, AZ and ALI do not see the younger generation as materialist, but merely as struggling for subsistence. Although they had ample opportunities and authority (as old people) to criticise the younger generation, they demonstrated a high degree of empathy (awareness of the contextual pressures on others). All defended the young's desire as "natural" (ALI8) or "they have their own reasons" (AZ6-7) and were aware of the social cost ("inferiority complex, KPT572) if they did not succeed. ALI(8) went to the extent of saying, "if I was young now, I would have to do the same."

This deep empathy (sensitivity to individuals' contextual situations) is part of a wider worldview regarding temporality, agency and community. This worldview is instilled by their experience of the transience of Singapore's political structures: in less than five decades, Singapore has been a British colony, a Japanese occupied territory, almost a Malayan federal state, an independent nation-state and, as LKY threatens, could potentially re-merge with Malaysia. Not surprisingly, they see their relation to the environment as one where they have to continually struggle to adapt to an unstable (or temporarily stable) environment. Success and failure is never fully attributed to individual agency, but also partly to one's circumstance ("luck," "fate,"), although one is obliged to

do their best to survive regardless of what changes the environment presents one with.¹¹⁴

This would explain the dramatic lack of a sense of imagined community. In reading the transcripts of immigrant-citizens, I was surprised by the blatant disregard of institutional agency; interviewees framed accounts in terms of individuals embedded in their situations. Unlike coffeeshoppers who blamed the state (Chapter 6C), the state did not even seem to exist in this group's worldview. They did not accord it blame/credit, suggesting that the state is not even considered a well-formed/bounded agent in control of its existence but a temporal/historical entity. This can be seen in two examples.

Firstly, interviewees seemed to have an inability to impute agency (credit/blame) to the state even when its interference in their personal life is obvious. WCM(322-373) lost a large sum in shares during the economic crisis and blamed herself from being "greedy" and not selling them off earlier. Curious about how an uneducated housewife who did not understand decimals and percentages come to have an interest in shares, I prodded her into telling me how she started this hobby. State agency was established momentarily – the government had encouraged housewives to invest their life savings into shares – and forgotten immediately,¹¹⁵ as though the thought was too alien to be remembered. She reverted to blaming herself when while telling me how widespread the problem was (all her friends were in the same situation).

Secondly, even while expressing satisfactions, these interviewees did not necessarily attribute praise to the PAP. KPT(580-583) praises LKY without attributing full agency to him. LKY is not complimented for his power, but for being "shrewd in his dealings" and for successfully cajoling more fundamental

¹¹⁴ Unlike the communitarian group who opts for a moral explanation, this group explains non-achievement in a meritocracy circumstantially.

¹¹⁵ This was not the first time this link had been forgotten by WCM. She had watched the movie "Money No Enough" – a local movie so popular that even housewives and retired citizens watched it—where government blame was implied. In the movie, a woman asked a man which shares to buy. He replied: "Simple! If the government says buy, you buy!" She then asked: "what if I lose money?" He replied: "then blame the government!" Later in the movie, the woman lost her money. While no direct blame

forces to cooperate. LKY is not seen as a primary agent but a survivor who succeeded in a difficult situation.

Similarly, ALI praises Singapore without directly attributing, indeed trivialising, government agency by saying that the PAP had an easy task because of Singapore's small size:

ALI(6): We are more advanced [than Malaysia]. Singapore will be of a higher standard than a country like Malaysia... Because Singapore is a small country, easy to develop, easy to educate people...

The significance of such "faint praise"¹¹⁶ emerges when the reader understands that the preferred reading is one where Singapore's success is *exclusively* attributed to the PAP's governance (especially, as the myth of fragile nation insist, Singapore has no natural resources and was crisis-prone). This view is so hegemonic that even the opposition acknowledges the PAP's success. As such, the slightest deviation/modification in the reproduction of this account constitute an act of resistance—where loud praise is expected, citizens' silence or "faint praise" on this subject can be deafening. Additionally, the significance of such "faint praise" becomes clearer when we recognise that interviewees hold this position *despite the resonance between personal and media realities*.

If interviewees have difficulty attributing agency and reality to the institution of the state, there is even more difficulty in getting them to see Singapore as "nation," as more than just a temporal context, as an imagined community with some organic agency.¹¹⁷ Their overwhelming sensitivity to contextual agency and belief in the impermanence of political institutions breed a particular sense of community – one that is minimally "imagined."

They do not identify easily with essentialized or problematised/hybridised identities. While the communitarian group (chiefly first-generation citizens)

was placed on the government, the government's responsibility has already been implicated.

¹¹⁶ A few years ago, the government accused the opposition of offering only "faint praise" to it.

¹¹⁷ For Durkheim (1947), society is more than the sum of its parts. It develops a life of its own independently of its parts; it is a *sui generis* entity that generates collective effervescence.

struggled to maintain their “ethnic/linguistic culture” (Chapter 6B), this group spoke whatever language was necessary for survival. Many had difficulties subscribing to even the most commonsensical identities. AZ(1) considered himself a Chinese-looking Malay with a Chinese mother and a British colonial birth certificate. He was unconcerned about his racial purity: “as long as nobody bothers me, it’s okay whether I am Malay or Chinese.” For KPT(455-463), his Singaporean nationality was a matter of administrative convenience. When Malaysia and Singapore separated, he choose to register with a Singaporean clan association along with his family for fear that the state officials would misspell his name, thereby breaking up families and clans. Needless to say, none were able to distinguish between ethnicity and nation.

Additionally, although many referred to China as their homeland, the “China” they referred to was clearly not a state, country or a nation – all of which required an “imagined” sense of community — but a metaphor for the provinces/clans their forefathers came from. Whenever interviewees spoke about visiting China, they indicated particular villages and listed the extended family members they had there. E.g., STC visited China 4 times and HO visited China 10 times – but both visited the same village on all their trips. The significance of this devotion emerges when we consider the inconvenience of such journeys. It is common knowledge that when visiting China, one has to distribute large amounts of money to relatives. Although the story is often told about third-world relatives who eagerly acknowledge distant kinsmen from a more developed country for the money and gifts they bring, the fact that interviewees perpetuate these burdensome practice suggests that what is home/homeland is not China as an imagined community but as blood/patrilineal relations.¹¹⁸

Bearing this un-imagined sense of community in mind, previous excerpts bring additional insights. In excerpts on their non-awareness of the Singapore Dream, interviewees also revealed the importance of family. KPT(656-682) wanted only to accumulate enough to “pass down to the next generation.” In a capitalist mentality, accumulation is an end itself. For these interviewees,

¹¹⁸Cf. my critique, via Liang, of the myth of communitarian Asia in Chapter 1.

accumulation appears to be a means to an end—an ensured lineage (KPT569-574).

While the government has successfully proletarianised the population, they have not succeeded in preventing them from becoming what Marx considers “vagabonds” – most clearly indicated by the PAP’s continuous struggle with the problem of emigration (“brain drain.”) The heart of the problem appears to be citizens’ a-nationalism: far from partaking in the myth of the fragile nation and its dangerous citizens, interviewees believe they must survive *despite* political upheavals. In fact, every interviewee in this posture group believed that citizens have no duty to the nation-state (only to their families) and “politics” – including resisting colonialism, communism and authoritarianism – should be left to the politicians. When asked about Singapore-Malaysia border conflicts affecting citizens’ everyday life, all interviewees in my fieldwork immediately translated this national issue into the personal issue of whether their taps would still run while asserting that, “wars are between governments, they have nothing to do with citizens.” This is yet another indication of how citizens believe that life should be guided by sheer survival instincts and not by political/nationalist mobilisations. Needless to say, the discourse of sacrificing for the nation – the defining trait of the next posture group – is completely absent.

VI. REPRODUCING THE STATE THROUGH PRAGMATIC ACCEPTANCE

In detailing this posture group’s mentality, I have sought to argue that their everyday neutralisation of dissent is less a case of a happily ideologised, well-disciplined proletariat than a case of coincidental acceptance of pragmatic anational citizens that the PAP has failed to “nationalise,” a group whose consent is highly conditional upon tangible improvement in the material situation of their personal life. Such a basis of legitimacy is contingent and fragile—the government constantly worries about the erosion of its legitimacy during economic recessions.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Chapter 8 continues where this leaves off: how the PAP attempts to rescue its legitimacy during economic crises through securing an economic legitimacy that is not based on economic performance but on its “track record.”

In this sense, it is inaccurate to identify such "runaway pragmatism"¹²⁰ as the price of success (i.e., that the PAP had been too successful). Being "too successful" ideologically is tantamount to ideological failure because ideological success is not merely the inculcation of a particular (Asian work) ethic because ideologies always contain inconsistencies and contradictions. Ideological success is to be achieved through a fine balance between the dominant ethic (competitiveness) and its negative side-effects (communitarianism). The over-legitimation of either only serves to encourage the development of legitimate/viable alternatives.

Despite its relative autonomy from authority, such "runaway pragmatism" does contribute to the everyday legitimation of the state. State intervention acquires an aura of consensus when citizens self-adjust and do not protest even when they disagree. By not voicing their disagreement, citizens complicitly reproduce state authority. They make real the "silent majority" that the media constructs and that the government claims to represent. They permit the creation of an aura of consensus that allows the government to dismiss alternative opinions as voices of the "vocal minority." Furthermore, as we shall see in the next posture, this "silent majority" is not merely a discursive construct; it also has a material and psychological reality. By imagining that one's significant others are part of this "silent majority," citizens try to second-guess social expectations and fulfil them, thereby intensifying social conservatism, hence reaffirming the hegemony and centrality of state values for the organisation of inter-personal life.

¹²⁰ Hardt (1992, 123) provides an excellent critique of the ideology of pragmatism, citing Horkeimer: "pragmatism reflects a society that has no time to remember and meditate." Pragmatism is often an effective strategy to persuade members to work within social/ideological constraints rather than to "idealistically" long to change the social order.

6B. PATRIOTIC COMMUNITARIANISM: THE MYTH OF THE SACRIFICE AND THE REFUTATION OF DISSENT

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS POSTURE

The PAP's economic legitimacy, no matter how strong and hegemonic, is one that is insecure, being conditional upon economic performance. Furthermore, its achievement of economic prosperity, coupled with its campaigns of the Singapore Dream, may inadvertently raise citizens' expectations to an insatiable level (Cf. Krugman's argument that the Asian economic miracle is unsustainable) and thus make their ideological success more illusive.

"Asian Values" is the PAP's attempt to secure a new basis of hegemony – one that is hopefully less conditional on economic performance – through inculcating communitarianism. However, because the superiority of "Asian Values" is itself an economic argument – its claims are substantiated by "evidence" of outstanding economic accomplishments – it is deeply questionable whether its communitarian ideology would truly achieve relative autonomy from its economics base. To this end, a close examination of this posture would provide insight to this question. How do citizens substantiate the superiority of communitarian values – do they believe communitarianism is superior because it produces prosperity or do they do so for less conditional reasons?

This posture is significant secondly because many scholars have argued that the "Shared Values" project of communitarianism is difficult/impossible to materialize (Chapter 5). They argue that "Shared Values" was an abstract ideology and that it was not translated into policies that could affect citizens' life. The existence of this posture group – no matter how rare and few in numbers – is conceptually significant because it offers an insight into how a seemingly un-materialise-able ideology can filter into everyday popular discourses.

Perlmutter's (1981, 179) theory helps us to understand this process of ideological materialization and to grasp a further reason why this posture group is significant. He argues that modern/soft authoritarianism is sustained less by

ideology than by the legitimized intervention of state institutions into all aspects of life; and that in justifying state interference at the most private levels, economic arguments are less effective than *moral* arguments. Placed within a wider theory of state projects to achieve governmentality, it would appear that authoritarianism is more easily legitimated by moral governmentality (based on non-individualising, anti-liberal ideologies such as communitarianism) than by ethical governmentality (based on liberal ideologies).

This helps us understand the significance of the role this posture group plays in ensuring that Singapore society remains a highly moral one. As the “vocal minority” within the conservative “silent majority,” the tendency of this group to police others embeds communitarianism in everyday life. From the accounts of other groups, this group – imagined by others as representative of the silent majority – seems successful in wrangling rhetorical compliance or display of patriotic communitarianism from others through their articulate social expectations and moral gaze, thereby successfully instilling a moral governmentality where public morality guides inter-personal life..

II. THE LOGIC OF THE REFUTATION OF DISSENT: THE MYTH OF THE SACRIFICE

This posture is characterized by a fervent refutation of the legitimacy of dissent and extensive reproduction of government ideologies. Such unconditional loyalty to the government is substantiated typically upon economic and moral discourses.

The discourse of the PAP's economic performance occurs occasionally, but in a different guise than when it appears in the pragmatic group's discourse. Here, interviewees spoke positively about the *national* economy, *even if* they had not personally benefited from its prosperity. Besides referring to a more abstract or “imagined” community (e.g., “economy”), the communitarian group also saw the PAP's economic performance as evidence of its technical and moral efficiency.

While it is not difficult to see how economic legitimacy can translate into technical legitimacy, the process of translating economic and technical legitimacy into moral legitimacy is subtler. This translation is achieved through drawing upon the Confucian conflation of a moral government as a technical government, where *technical efficiency is achievable only through moral discipline and intense rigour* and where "sages" are expected to provide exemplary leadership

More frequently, this group relied on non-economic substantiation of PAP's moral legitimacy. All interviewees in this group spoke about LKY as having performed the first communitarian act of sacrificing for the nation, which binds citizens in webs of unconditional loyalty to "the father of Singapore." This endows LKY with un-challengeable moral legitimacy to govern and intervene into every aspect of citizens' life.

The construction of this myth of sacrifice requires the postulation of national heroes, villains and scenarios of a threatened nation. For this group, it is very clear who the good and bad guys are. LKY, as the "father of Singapore" (SLH931), could do no wrong while opposition politicians are "traitors" (LDS609) guilty of "moral crimes" (SEW503). LKY's goodness is irrevocably confirmed by his single historical act of "sacrifice," which proves his good intentions towards Singapore beyond doubt; any future mistakes would be more than redeemed by this single act. Citizens who accept this myth accept his authority unconditionally.

When probed further, interviewees were vague about the dire circumstances Singapore was rescued from with this sacrifice (see 6BIII). They preferred to focus on the magnitude of LKY's sacrifice – a lucrative law career.

[LDS639-643]: LKY could have been a very rich guy

Me: isn't he rich now?

LDS: If he practised law, he would be the best! But he gave up all these years. His sacrifice, we should be grateful, it's for our good.

[SLH927-929]: Mr. Lee has done a lot for us. Without him, there's no Singapore, he is a father to Singapore...

Besides LDS and SLH's use of "father", others also described state-citizen bonds with paternal undertones. For CST(895), citizens should not "cha-jui" (interrupt). In daily usage, adults use this term to scold children for not speaking out of turn, i.e., they should be "seen and not heard." PTN(610-621) similarly narrated a Chinese story where a loving emperor sacrificed himself for his beloved subjects.

These familial metaphors perform vital ideological functions. Firstly, they transform authoritarianism into "tough love" or "soft/popular authoritarianism." The paternal sacrifice of a loving father testifies to the saviour's good intentions and benevolence.

Secondly, by representing LKY as "father," an impersonal government is personalised and a historical event is made relevant to present everyday life. Because the sacrifice is unconditionally given, it can never be fully repaid. Eternally indebted citizens can only be "grateful" and pledge their unreserved, undying loyalty.

[PTN610-632]: A general commits a sin. A loving emperor wants to spare him. What can he do? The Emperor stabs himself on the general's behalf. The general cannot say, "I don't want it," or hope to redeem his freedom by fighting a few more battles... This happens in Chinese stories all the time...you have to believe in my good intentions. If you suspect ulterior motive, there is nothing more that can be done.

The sacrifice discourse is an "all or nothing" frame with no in-between positions; one either accepts it wholeheartedly or rejects it. Given LKY's mythical perfection, there are never any "good" reasons to oppose the government; the opposition is merely "opposing for the sake of opposition" (SEW809) – a basic tenet of democracy. This imperative that citizens *trust* their government unquestioningly is consistent with the Confucian belief that leaders are mandated by heavenly will and "without weakness" (Pye and Pye 1985, 66-76). The act of checking on the government is tantamount to ingratitude. Thus any opposition is "traitorous," and a "moral crime." Thus, SLH(913-914) believes that the opposition should be "ashamed" and "apologise" since "leaders are entitled to be hypersensitive to any hint of criticism."

Thirdly, the sacrifice myth legitimises a moral hierarchy. By accepting the sacrifice, citizens accept an unequal relationship where, as "infantile subjects"¹²¹ in need of tutelage, they surrender their rights to self-knowledge and accept that "father knows best." Every interviewee in this group perceived the mass as being incapable of deep thoughts and unworthy of media/government representation [SEW]. LDS(359-361/642) criticises ungrateful young people who think "they know better than LKY" how to run Singapore. While the previous group could not grasp the concept of representativeness, this group believes that the government should represent social ideals, not "the people," and guide them with these ideals.

[SEW681-685]: Those lower society, if you ask an ordinary citizen a social issue, they cannot answer. These little people, you have to sit down and talk to him slowly and lead him.

[SLH788-789]: Those uneducated people who don't know who to think, they can easily fall into traps [and create social disorder]

[HO184-189] Me: Do you like that programme?

HO: I have no authority to do so! ... We are not big shots or have qualifications!

Fourthly, this myth justifies state intervention into citizens' private life. While the previous group (pragmatic acceptance) see themselves as "parts" smaller than the government, they do not see the government as morally superior. On the contrary, they believe that citizens should be self-knowing and self-reliant, rather than be dependent on the state. This group, on the other hand, eagerly awaits government tutelage. SLH explained how 2 "national"¹²² sitcoms educated her about "shoulds" and the "right things to do:"

[SLH578-582]: "Growing Up" is serious. [The actress] has 2 or 3 boyfriends and must choose... For her future, she should choose someone who can take care of her...

[SLH591-594]: [In "Under One Roof"], the father is the one to solve the problem and [give advice], the show always ends with "the moral of the story is..."

¹²¹ Cf. Berlant's (1996) theory of infantile citizenship.

¹²² "National" because "Under One Roof" showcases a multiracial (i.e., national) community and its interaction while "Growing Up" showcases the history of a "typical Singaporean family" from pre- to post-state stages.

Similarly, LDS expects the media to teach good values and complains that tabloids “should” not disseminate representations of low (immoral) culture:

[LDS241-248] [Tabloid journalists] have money in their eyes! The juicier, the more people will wait at the newsstands for sensational news. [We have to teach] what is acceptable, what is to be discarded!

III. WAYS OF KNOWING: PRIORITISING MEDIA IDEALS OVER PERSONAL REALITY

That this group looks to authority and the media for tutelage suggests a strong identification with national ideals as personal values. Indeed, not only are their narration of their lives set against the background of national history, they also constantly underscore the relevance of historical and media events to their present lifestyle.

Media representations of nation influence their discourses at various levels. At the most direct level, they look to the media to teach citizens about making the “right” choices. For SLH (above, also LDS), the media (newspapers, tabloids and sitcoms) should serve as a model for how citizens should interact with multiracial communities and within the family hierarchy.

This group's discourse also reveals the less direct media effect of framing—interviewees appear to have internalised the media's frames without any recollection of the contents of such a frame. A conceptual question emerges at this point: how can we ascertain media effects just because citizens use a similar frame, especially if they hardly draw upon media information or terms? Very simply, we can ascertain media effects because citizens tend to apply these frames on topics that they have no direct access to except through the media, e.g., on government and opposition politicians.

In re-constructing the sacrifice myth, citizens were vague about the threats LKY saved Singapore from, preferring to focus on his personal sacrifice. This selective focus performs an important ideological function, since there were no genuine threats to Singapore's sovereignty. Until the last moment, LKY sought a merger with Malaysia. (In fact, it was the “traitorous” opposition who fought

for independence; LKY fought against it.) Independence was not won by LKY but “imposed” overnight with the failure of the merger. Despite this groups’ familiarity with the circumstances of Singapore’s birth as a nation-state, they continue to insist that LKY sacrificed himself to rescue Singapore from “threats.”

Their discourses echo the media’s moralised frame. Here, media effects does not take place at the level of affecting opinion on specific matters but in creating *a general impression* and the internalisation of a moralising frame where citizens *prioritise intentions over facts*. Frames for thinking about politicians are moralised through a variety of strategies. Firstly, all interviewees (except coffeeshoppers, who actively seek alternative media) had little grasp of the substantive disagreement between political parties. The media hardly reports on opposition activities and almost never on their ideologies. Should the media report on the opposition, it does so in a highly moralised way, criminalizing the opposition as not only inefficient but also dishonest and, dangerous with “hidden agendas” (LDS). Even if citizens are unwilling to consume such moralised media products, they have little alternative sources. Starved of substantive information, many citizens turn to easy judgements of intentions. In this way, the media streamlines the citizen’s way of thinking into a highly moralised one.

Secondly, the media reifies LKY’s sacrifice into a national myth. From citizens’ accounts, this myth is particularly disseminated through visual and audio media. In recent national history revival, the image of LKY overwhelmed by tears at the announcement of Independence is firmly etched in every citizen’s mind. It is constantly telecast in black-and-white, a reminder of a time when Singapore was backwards and its future uncertain. In expressing their pride in Singapore, citizens often reproduce lyrics used in National Day songs:

[LDS363]: There was a time, when people said that Singapore won’t make it, but we did...

[RM196]: This is my country, my home

Because their identification with LKY’s sacrifice is based on a generalised and emotional sentiment that suggests audio and visual media effects, they are

placed in a strange situation where they are convicted of the correctness of their opinion but are unable to explain their position (because audio and visual media content are difficult to reproduce conversationally). It is in this context, where media effects are so deep yet almost untraceable informationally, that we can appreciate their creative attempts to substantiate their beliefs. Compared to other posture groups, this is the only group that fabricates information—the pragmatic group avoids commenting on topics they do not have first-hand knowledge about while later groups seek alternative information sources (rumours, Western media) to substantiate their positions.

SLH and LDS draw from unverifiable sources in their criticisms of the opposition. Even though LDS was from the police force in pre-state Singapore, he could recall why the opposition was repressed and relied on me for information. His language was highly metaphorical and empirically unverifiable, being constructed by pejorative allusions (e.g., rubbish, criminal, traitor, transparent, black, vested interest, hidden). Yet, despite the non-credibility of their sources (friends in intelligence, parents), LDS and SLH spoke confidently:

[SLH926-929]: My parents say JBJ [opposition politician] is a really stubborn man. It's true. They said Mr. Lee has done a lot for us. Without him, there is no Singapore.

[LDS608-625]: I have friends in intelligence. The opposition talks rubbish. TanWahPiow is a criminal, a traitor of Singapore... He cannot return because he's writing rubbish, our courts are very transparent, I'm sure.

Me: What about SingaporeHerald and NanyangSiangPao [banned newspapers]

LDS: Er... (pause)

Me: It was a case of black operation

LDS: Yes, black operations. Who financed it? I was in the police force then, they were inciting races against races. NYSP was taking the Chinese issue.

Me: What about SingaporeHerald?

LDS: SingaporeHerald, who were the financiers?

Me: Ow family.

LDS: Yah, Ow family, they had vested interest. They had a hidden agenda.

Me: What was their agenda?

LDS: To cause conflict in Singapore for their own good.

Drawing on unverifiable sources, SLH imagined a dangerous Malaysia. When her credibility was challenged, she argues that her imagination was more

credible than the media because the well-intentioned government censors "scary" information. [Meanwhile, she contradicted herself: censorship was needless because people would continue to cross the border.]

[SLH814-832]: [Malaysians] find faults with Singaporeans. If the taxi-driver is against Singapore, he can drive to lonely places and kill us!

Me: Has this happened?

SLH: Eh, so far, no.

Me: But you imagine it happens?

SLH: Yah! You never know! Even if [authorities] know, they won't tell. Common people may feel frightened! People cross the causeway[border] everyday, they need money to feed their families so I don't think [people] will bother about that.

This group uses unique, informal "word-of-mouth" sources ("friends in intelligence," "parents" and even imagination). Such sources have low "public" credibility and high "private" credibility. Because it is personalised (friends, parents), they are very believable, especially when disseminated by "well-intentioned" others. In the case of SLH, she uses a combination of reliable sources (her parents) and her imagination to substantiate her belief that the government has good intentions.

Such a moralising frame, where the focus is shifted away from a substantive evaluation of government/opposition to an evaluation of its intentions, performs an important ideological function. By focusing on intentions, support for the government is rendered *unconditional* because the government's intentions have been fixed and frozen at the moment of LKY's sacrifice. Short of being guilty of corruption (see Chapter 8), such moral legitimacy is almost impossible to uproot.

IV. SOCIOLOGY, MATERIALISM AND COMPENSATORY MORALITY: THE PERFORMANCE OF PATRIOTIC COMMUNITARIANISM

Although there seems to be strong media effects, it is imprudent to pronounce media effects simply by looking at the contents of interviewee's discourse without considering the contextual meanings of their acts, e.g., from what contexts do they draw upon communitarian discourses. When interviewing interviewees in this group, I was constantly faced with "irrelevant replies"

(Chapter 3). It was not until I saw conversation as a speech act rather than strings of factual utterances that I realised that interviewees were not necessarily speaking to me but to some "hidden audiences," especially significant others that they could not publicly confront.

Looking at when and against whom communitarian discourses were deployed, I discovered that the target groups were usually significant others from interviewees' immediate community who were more materially successful. Indeed, LDS, SLH and HO spoke about how they had been ridiculed previously by these more successful others; for them communitarianism seemed to provide a way for them to regain social status through moral capital.

In the following excerpt, HO was bothered that her neighbours thought her stupid for sending her children to Chinese (i.e., inferior) schools. The problem was that she herself was not confident that her choice was a good one — she did not say that Chinese schools were equally good. She accepted that she was "stupid" and argued that these "inferior" Chinese schools were better for children of people like her with backwards (village) thinking. At the same time, she tried to "get back" at her ridiculing neighbours through the interview, transforming her choice-less act as the choice of a good moral person who knows her place, who tried to be self-sufficient and not be a drain on society:

[HO146-171]: We have ancient China thinking. Children should understand China's culture, our villages, agriculture, streets... If we say "Shantou" province, they will know. If they study English, everything will be messy. They wouldn't even know their grandparents! It's about respecting seniors, one's ancestors. Our neighbours sent their children to English schools and [the children] scold their parents vulgarly: "You people from China are useless, you are pigs." Previously, it was those of us who send our children to Chinese school that got scolded!

Me: who scolded you?

HO: Neighbours looked down on us for sending our children to Chinese school... Each child cost 100 dollars ... and we have 6 children. Where are we to get the money? We are not thick-skinned enough to borrow! We work hard to raise our kids!

In the following excerpt, HO's "irrelevant replies" to my question suddenly become very meaningful when read in this context of how communitarianism (not being selfish by being uncaring towards world events) provides

compensatory morality. I was clearly not HO's intended audience—HO was clearly responding to an accusation that was definitely absent in my question:

[HO55-67] Me: What newspapers do you read?

HO: ShinMin[tabloid], I read everything, from front to back.

Me: Any particular section?

HO: All! Whatever happens, I want to know about it. If not, I [will be] sitting at home stupidly, knowing nothing about the outside world, I must know a bit!

LDS used communitarian discourses for a similar rhetorical goal of getting back at those who jeered at his relative lack of social success. LDS presented himself as a good citizen who respected other races, unlike his brothers-in-law, who were "fanatics jealously guarding [their] culture." From his statement, "I am not too educated to respect other religions," it seemed that he had been made to feel inferior before because of his education:

[LDS180-190]: Certain people are fanatics... My mother-in-law goes to my father-in-law's grave every ChengMeng[Chinese festival of the dead]. Her sons are all highly educated and have no time for these. So who helps her? Me! I drive her there at 5am! Her sons won't do it; they are too highly educated, university educated.

How is it possible that materialism and morality are so intricately linked? These biographical experiences of ridicule suggest a politics of compensation, a rhetorical goal that communitarian discourses of patriotic morality appear to readily lend themselves to. Within a meritocracy, less-educated citizens are regarded as inferior and this communitarian group has by and large, internalized others' gaze of them as "stupid" and "uneducated."

Communitarianism, which aims to de-legitimise over-competitiveness, adopts a language of patriotic duties and national sacrifices and offers an alternative way of gaining the social status interviewees fail to achieve through meritocracy. With communitarianism, they can now decry the immorality of materialism and of those who are preoccupied with materialistic pursuits. E.g., while the pragmatic group and the communitarian group both value self-reliance and is against credit spending, the pragmatic group is more concerned with the consequences on themselves and their families (immediate community), while the communitarian group worries about the consequences on society (imagined community), to the extent of fearing that "society will be messy!" (HO151/270).

In an extended excerpt, HO insisted on exaggerating the dangerousness of citizens – quantitatively (“a small sector”) and qualitatively (“necessary”) – when though she was forced to concede that it was not really so:

[HO261-280]: Young people want material luxury. I may be kiasu [afraid to lose out] but I don't borrow! Some people borrow. Even if a small sector do so, it's bad enough. Society will be messy. Now people use credit card, it's terrible!

Me: What about borrowing to buy homes?

HO: It is necessary but if you can't return, you shouldn't borrow. You must know yourself!

Such exaggeration despite concession suggests that a performance of patriotic communitarianism also accords the speaker moral capital. Admitting that borrowing was “terrible” but necessary, HO narrowed her criticism to a smaller group (defined *post-facto* by their inability to repay loans). She was determined to represent the practice of this small group as a social disease that could tear society asunder. Her statement that “society will be messy” is telling: living of credit was (not “could be”) dangerous not only for personal lives or the economy, but for “society.” HO's moral panic might have been induced by the “Asian Values” campaigns where Asian capitalism, with its unique feature of high savings, is presented as a superior way of organising a national economy *and* society. While she did not use the rhetoric of Asian Values, HO saw borrowing and credit-spending as symptoms of an alternative (non-traditional, perhaps Western) value system that threatened social order.

The depth to which materialism is valued in Singapore society can be seen by interviewees' almost-automatic self-defence of their lack of education and by their enactment of “revenge” in front of the researcher rather than the intended audience (where they risk being called “bad losers.”) Had they truly rejected materialism, they would not perceive themselves (as others perceive them) as “lacking,” and there would be no need to seek communitarianism for compensatory morality.

Such “elective affinity” between the needs of the underclass with the myth of the sacrifice has been theorised by Weber (1996a, 95-117). Weber argued that to accommodate the needs of the masses, religions might be formulated

generally with the emergence of a personal, divine or human-divine saviour as the bearer of salvation. Additionally, religious relationship to this saviour personality becomes the pre-condition of salvation. If Weber is right, this group's receptiveness to myths and exemplary salvation must be understood in the context of their under-privileged social position. Within Confucianism, citizens' (internalised) perception of their material inadequacy translates into a sense of moral inferiority. The sacrifice myth (of a charismatic and exemplary leader) gives hope of salvation and provides an alternative source of social/moral status.

The extent to which citizens require such salvation myths seem to correlate with the intensity of their feelings of being "stuck here." Unlike older immigrants who consider China or India as their first home, the communitarian group comprises of first-generation citizens who, being born and raised here and being not well educated enough to be geographically mobile, experiences a sense of "stuck-ness" not just geographically but especially in their class trajectory. (This feeling becomes stronger as we move to later postures dominated by young uneducated citizens).

V. THE LIMITS OF ACCEPTANCE: CONVENIENT COMMUNITARIANISM

Besides raising one's inferior social/moral status, communitarian discourses also conveniently imbue the speaker with a cultural-moral authority to impose and interfere in others' life. The best indication that this communitarian group is ultimately guided by pragmatic instincts is how they choose when to use which communitarian discourses.

Firstly, this group consistently chooses to understand culture as ethnic (multiracial CMIO) culture, rather than as "shared values." What is ironic is that this group thinks that they are performing patriotic duties and being loyal to the PAP by paying tribute to an outdated PAP ideology, whether out of non-awareness (that multiracialism has been superseded by communitarianism) or for personal convenience. There is some indication that they are at least partially aware of the "Shared Values" project since they only argue for the maintenance of ethnic culture in the private sphere, acknowledging that citizens

should still be Singaporeans in public. E.g., SLH(272-275) explained that she considered herself Singaporean at work and Indian during "traditional times," when they were no other races around.

In dramatic contrast to the pragmatic groups' lack of need for ethnic identity,¹²³ this group is deeply anxious about any perceived loss of cultural values. HO and SEW sent their children to Chinese schools so that they will not forget their ancestry. However, this "Chinese-ness" appears to be a metaphor for something else – for HO (see HO146-171 above), it does not symbolize Chinese fine arts or language, but a respect for authority, as opposed to Western disrespect for one's parents.

For this group, ethnic cultures can be clearly distinguished and are mutually exclusive (note LDS's use of "although.") LDS was very critical of Eurasian values, which to him, meant the lack of respect for authority, seniority and other races—the qualities that the government associates with Western values. He actively tried to deny his Eurasian-ness through "sino-cising" himself.

[LDS260]: When we make decisions, it's far from the Eurasian style. They think they are above everyone because they are Eurasians. My family, we mix freely (with other races).

[LDS280]: *Although* I am Eurasian, there is Chinese respect in my family. Before (the children) eat, they have to address the grandmother.

When this group speaks about preserving ethnic values, the primary value to be preserved is respect for authority and seniority (filial piety). HO and LDS argued for the importance of obeying authority/seniority for its own sake, regardless of whether seniors were, as the younger generation would typically complain, deserving of respect. For the young, respect is an achieved, not ascribed (with age), status.

Communitarianism is also used to legitimise a cultural respect for authority outside the family (Cf. five key hierarchical Confucian relationships). Authority often takes a patriarchal form, the clearest example being the extension of familial metaphors to LKY as "the father of Singapore." Communitarian

¹²³ Clan identity (based on blood) is somewhat less "imagined" than ethnic identity.

discourses representing citizens as "selfish" or "dangerous" are also mobilised to legitimise authority's intervention into citizens' private lives. Echoing the PM's complaint, SLH(460) criticised young educated women for being "fussy" about marriage partners and rejecting arranged marriages. Women are also criticised if they did not stay at home, act shy and were unobtrusive in public. Citizens who interrupted ("cha-jui") the government with their criticism were also chastised as little children who didn't know how to be "seen and not heard."

In terms of state-citizen relationships, "respect for authority" means citizens should be "open to suggestions" from the government because LKY deserves citizens' unreserved loyalty.

[SLH343-344]: Singaporeans are open-minded. The government, whatever they do to us, the people accept it. Now during hard times, citizens can really co-operate.

[LDS359-361]: People in their 20s, 30s, they think LKY is very strict. If he allows everyone to run their own way, we won't have MNCs and a multiracial country.

By framing their actions as cultural defence, this group bestows on itself the duty to intervene in others' life. Citizens profess to have no self-interest and to be guided strictly by communitarian instincts. While the pragmatic group believed "politics should be left to the government," this group believes in actively supporting government. LDS writes to the media regularly to support government policies. HO believed citizens who are unconcerned about community are "selfish:"

[HO89-93]: If the whole world is [unconcerned] and things don't improve, that's tragic. I cannot be so selfish. All of us must care, surely we cannot just think of ourselves, isn't that selfish?

Such an interventionist posture requires a particular conception of agency that conforms with the myth of the fragile nation and its dangerous citizens. Unlike the pragmatic group, to them, national threats are embodied by malleable forces, particularly "people with no moral fibre" (LDS522) rather than by the context. This differential attribution of agency/blame explains why the pragmatic group refuses to chastise the younger generation as materialist and immoral, preferring to empathise with "I may have to do the same," while this communitarian group actively singles out groups for criticism.

The strategies citizens use to secure moral capital have important ideological effects. LDS used a rags-to-riches story to construct his moral legitimacy to intervene. His meritocratic fairy tale was used to conclusively prove that Singapore is meritocratic, "if [I] can do it, so can you." Failure was explained by personal weakness and "lack of moral fibre", echoing the Confucian equation of success with moral discipline.

A second strategy is to insist on the public relevance of laws despite personal irrelevance. Many argued along the lines that one could not be so "selfish" as to only want programmes that one likes, i.e., no one should complain about programmes they dislike since others (the majority) probably like it. While later groups would criticise some laws as a sign of over-regulation, this group defends them, arguing that although personally irrelevant, these laws are necessary for "lesser-educated people who don't know how to think" (SLH798) so that Singapore would not end up a "mess" like China (HO211-212).

A third strategy of interference is through social work, especially religious social work. Many religions, along with communitarian ideology, believe that a moral self triumphs over, not adapts to, the context (versus the pragmatic group, where life is about endless adaptation to survive). SLH(399/848) gave alms to her temple to help her ethnic community; LDS(462) and his wife helped those who have strayed by counselling them; SEW (and PTN) were pastors in Chinese churches. Together, they performed very important ideological functions. Firstly, by proving that meritocracy works ("if I can do it, so can you), they encourage citizens to be "long-suffering" towards the system while delegitimising the voices of those who were less successful by representing them (e.g., coffeeshoppers) as "sour grapes" or "complainers." Secondly, by attending to those "poor in spirit" (PTN308),¹²⁴ they give hope, thereby performing the psychological defence duty of being optimistic about the system ("to believe in Singapore's future"). Such social work provides private solutions to social problems and resolves dissatisfactions on a "case-by-case" basis.

¹²⁴ In a meritocracy, this means those with blocked social trajectory.

By insisting on the relevance of public values, a moral community is created where everyone has to fit in. This moral economy has a certain *objective* reality –it interpellates individuals against their will. Even the most “bo-chap” (Singlish slang, referring to the “switched-offs”) citizen is aware of the “invisible pressures” of others’ gaze and what others will say behind his back. He can choose not to respond, but he cannot shut them out (see Chapter 6C).

To what extent does this communitarian group practise what they preach, especially when personal and national ideals contradict?

The gap between patriotic words and deeds is most visible on the issue of Singaporeans shopping in Malaysia (which is less expensive), thereby stimulating Malaysia’s, rather than Singapore’s, economy). Other groups dismiss the PM’s call for patriotic sacrifice to shop domestically, arguing that the PM has no rights to make such demands. Only this communitarian call (SLH, LDS and WCM) supported the PM’s call. Yet, even while claiming to be patriotic, WCM explained that she stopped going to Malaysia because there were too many complex forms to fill, i.e., she stopped shopping in Malaysia for reasons of administrative convenience, not communitarianism.

SLH conveniently distinguished between what was good and what was practised. She believed it was right for the PM to teach people what to do. While criticising “others” who do not follow his instruction, she excused her lack of obedience as an exception and even represented it as obedience to a higher communitarian value. Her (not other’s) patriotic duty was to spend her money wisely, and even to help Singapore’s neighbours!

[SLH406-411]: I go fo Malaysia whenever I am free, things are cheaper.

[SLH711-722] Me: The PM said people should spend locally

SLH: Yah! *They* must try to spend the money in Singapore. *Many* take advantage of the exchange rate, *we* spend a lot there! It’s not true that we are not spending! Some Singaporeans are selfish; they don’t want to help our neighbour [Malaysia] grow!

This group is not as communitarian as they claim to be, especially when it comes to decisions about their children’s future. Then, communitarian discourses give way to pragmatic justifications about why communitarianism

should be suspended on particular issues. Although eager to maintain Chinese culture, LDS and SEW's children did not study Chinese as first language because it was a difficult subject to score in. LDS(148) even said that had he married an Indian wife, he would still insist that his children study Chinese as their "mother-tongue" because "that's where their bread is buttered."

While all interviewees seemed to be guided by pragmatic concerns, this is the only group that tries to represent their pragmatism as communitarianism. Most of the time, citizens simply conflate national duty with personal pragmatism: when asked what their national duties were, AS, PRL and LYN replied that it is their duty to study hard and succeed (individually). When confronted with situations requiring personal sacrifices, such as not shopping in Malaysia, many again argued that their first responsibility was to their family, arguing that, "without the family there is no state."

VI. REPRODUCING THE STATE THROUGH COMMUNITARIAN ACCEPTANCE

By actively reproducing public values, this group exerts a significant pressure on all citizens, especially through their self-bestowed duties of cultural defence and "well-intentioned" social work. In any society, socially pessimistic members constitute a dangerous force: the credibility/inclusivity of the nation and its values are threatened by their existence. The state must find ways to prevent them from contending publicly for a counter-hegemonic redefinition of nation. The social work that this communitarian group performs does precisely this task of psychological defence of encouraging those without hope to be "optimistic about Singapore's future" (Cf. Total defence cartoon). Social workers and Chinese(-educated) churches are especially complicit in maintaining the meritocratic system by encouraging citizens to be "long-suffering" and seeking private solutions to social problems.

Despite their communitarian discourse, the meaning of such discourse appears to reside less in its substantive content than in the rhetorical goals (of compensatory morality). Taking into consideration their actual practice and what they wish for their children, they appear to be strongly guided by pragmatism. In this sense they are not unlike the previous pre-state immigrant

ground, except that they excuse/justify their pragmatism as communitarianism towards "others" (non-national, non-imagined) "communities," like the family.

Despite its (substantive) meaninglessness for this group and those they successfully pressurise into conformity, the hegemony of AV is maintained. Despite private irrelevance, interviewees' continued reproduction of communitarian discourses serve to reinforce the centrality and relevance of communitarianism as a moral/respectable discourse for public life, delegitimising discourses that promote Western Values of liberalism and individualism/personal desire.

The value of "respect for authority" and the communitarian discourse of patriotic duties works to de-legitimise discourses of personal desire and rights and ward off values of individualism, liberalism, democracy and welfarism. Resentment towards communitarian discourses is especially felt by minorities and by women (Chapter 6C). RAS(590), a Malay woman, feel doubly burdened by her ethnicity and her gender; she felt "owned by society," burdened by so many social expectations and was tired of having to find acceptable/legitimate justifications for her personal desires.

Such experience of frustration and communitarian ownership indicates the power this small communitarian group wields in upholding patriotism as society's preferred meaning and to force others to become morally accountable. Indeed, the hegemony of Asian Values is not merely indicated by citizens' reproduction of its discourses. Hegemony is better indicated by citizens who, against their will, find themselves having to use it as the only publicly (inter-personally) legitimate frame and feel the need to justify themselves to an imagined moral majority.

6C. CHOICELESS TOLERANCE: THE DISCOURSE OF "NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVES" AND THE PRIVATISATION OF DISSENT

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS POSTURE

If Leys (1990, 127) is right that, "for an ideology to become hegemonic, it is not necessary that it is loved; it is merely necessary that it have no serious rival," then this posture group may be the most crucial target group in the government's hegemonic project. Instead of preaching to the converted (Chapter 6A, 6B) or to the un-convert-able (Chapter 6D), this is the group that will decide the PAP's margin of electoral victory. Since the opposition vote has consolidated at a consistent 25%, whether the PAP manages to maintain their total percentage votes above the 66.6% benchmark crucially depends on its ability to woo this group.

As a group that must be won constantly, this group is significant in the way that it has "perfected the art of pressurising the government with [their] votes," thereby limiting the types of victory that PAP can have. Although it is not impossible to win them over and make them less "angry," these cases of ideological successes are so few that the PAP needs to rely on more ad-hoc, policy-based strategies (especially during pre-election periods) to temporarily "sweeten the ground."

As a group that is ever ready to defect (to a viable alternative), the PAP government frequently resorts to overtly or covertly coercive policies, which suggests that the PAP has not succeeded in developing a strategy for containing such dissent. Whereas dissent among the challengers (posture 6D) is contained within the public sphere, this group's dissent resides in the cracks and crevices of the social fabric, in the semi-public/semi-private spheres of national political life. This group's discourses filter so easily beneath society's "social skin" (Noelle-Neumann 1984) because their dissent is motivated/embedded in everyday life¹²⁵ and resonates easily with other citizens. This resonance accords further significance to their role in the (counter-)hegemonic process: they serve as primary group leaders who

articulate and disseminate everyday dissatisfactions that may otherwise not surface into popular discourse and imagination.

II. THE LOGIC OF THE PRIVATISATION OF DISSENT: THE DISCOURSE OF "NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVES"

In this posture, dissent is not neutralised/outweighed by satisfaction so that there is overall satisfaction (as in 6A). However, unlike the next posture group (which similarly harbours a high level of dissent), this group is compelled to privatise its dissent.

Interviewees who exhibit this posture speak about a wide range of dissatisfactions that could be loosely described as anti-modernity. However, this broad generalisation is barely useful given opposing complaints – some long for a more traditional social order while others want a more liberal one.

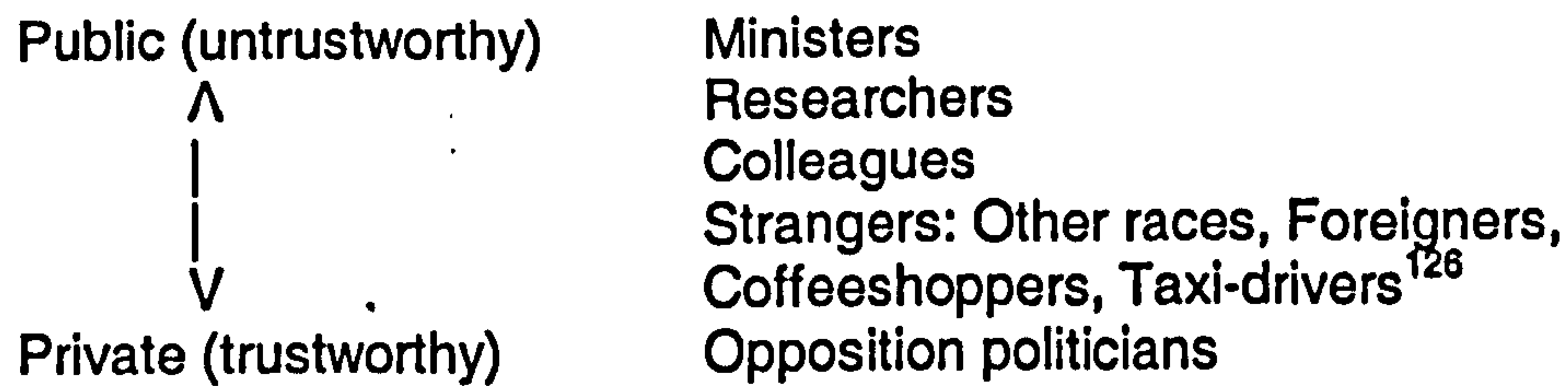
In terms of the content of their dissatisfactions, this group is not dissimilar to other groups. What distinguishes this posture is how this dissent is unresolved, which gives this group a restless quality. Recall that for the pragmatic group, dissent is neutralised. For the "challengers" (Chapter 6D), dissent is "resolved" through the identification of a viable alternative. By contrast, this posture appears "closeted" – their desire to criticise the system is intense but they lack the (technical, moral) credibility to do so publicly. Publicly de-legitimised but privately unconvinced of such de-legitimation, this group refuses to be silenced and develops highly sophisticated strategies of articulating and re-legitimising dissent in semi-public/private spheres.

III. WAYS OF KNOWING/TALKING: STRATEGIC SELF-BELITTLING

How does this group cope with the public perception of their lack of credibility and their own belief in the legitimacy of their opinions? This group develops a unique strategy based on the principle of "sensitivity" so that they can articulate their dissent without suffering consequences.

¹²⁵ By this I mean that this group does not draw upon abstract discourses (e.g., democracy and equality in chapter 6D) but upon everyday problems (e.g., cost of living.)

When asked about what “sensitive topics” are, most declined comment and even chided me for asking about such “open secrets.” However, they were willing to explain to me (as a “Westernised” scholar who has lost touch with Asian political protocol) *why* certain things were sensitive. To help me secure the cultural literacy to navigate social communications, JIM(312-408) and BL simplified my “crash course” in political sensitivity into a list of when dissent should be most covert or overt depending on how trustworthy (public/private) the audience:



It seems that “sensitivity” is a combination of content, context and consequences. “Sensitivity” directs speakers to strategically/selectively manage the overt/covert of his dissent to match (what he anticipates as) the audience’s position. Interviewees classify audiences as “private” (trustworthy) or “public” (untrustworthy). What is “private” for a group may be “public” for another group. E.g., the coffeeshop, as men’s “hang-out,” constitutes a semi-private space for men but a “public” for women. I.e., “public” and “private” are not absolute categories but qualities referring to the trustworthiness of the audience.

What is interesting, secondly, is that audience trustworthiness is not a matter of inter-personal familiarity or personal qualities but the social and political consequences of discourse. Socially, sensitive topics may cause a loss of face when speakers are forced to take sides on a sensitive topic (BL56). Face is lost by “saying things that people don’t like to hear, that people cannot accept” (MRT601-609). Politically, for MRT(254) and BL(42-61), sensitive topics are topics where one could be sued for commenting on. Discourses that are likely to fetch the least political consequences are those speaker-audience

¹²⁶Taxi-drivers are usually people who are “fed-up” with the system and decide to become their own boss. Within Singapore Inc., they would constitute a kind of escaped proletariats.

exchanges based on anonymous and informal interactions. Thus, JIM would trust an anonymous jogger more than a fellow colleague. Before the interview, JIM and I also explicitly negotiated the degree of covertness—he explained that he would speak differently if I chose not to take notes, to take notes only or to tape-record the interview.¹²⁷

Having partitioned public/private, this posture group adopts a duplicitous strategy of (seemingly) de-legitimizing their dissent in public while legitimizing their dissent in private. There is considerable gender difference in how this strategy is achieved. Both uneducated coffeeshop men and educated professional women cannot advocate alternative social orders without compromising their credibility. Professional women cannot support an alternative social order (e.g., greater liberalism) without losing their moral credibility (being labelled “immoral”) while coffeeshop men cannot do so without losing their technical credibility (being labelled “non-expert”), which in a Confucian society signifies a lack of moral discipline.

The different credibility problems of these two groups generate different strategies of managing dissent. Coffeeshoppers try to gain credibility without being accountable; they typically make claims with some degree of certainty but do not substantiate them. In fact, they seem eager to deny that they are the original source of their claims, preferring to attribute it to anonymous sources such as jokes, rumours and alternative media. At the same time, they display a high distrust in local media, which they see as the mouthpiece of the government. THM(322) and MRT believed the local media could only be “half-trusted” and argued that because Singapore is so small and orderly there was insufficient daily news to report, hence the media had to construct fictions to fill pages.

Another strategy of denying their culpability of disseminating dissent is to ensure that the interviewee knows that it was only because of the interviewer's initiative that they converse about such “political” topics. E.g., BL(216) uses the

¹²⁷ Unwilling to sacrifice the flow of the interview by my slow shorthand, I opted for an in-between format where he or I could choose when to have the tape-recorder switched off.

phrase, "since you mentioned it...." to prefix his politically incorrect opinions. By waiting for others to initiate conversations, coffeeshoppers present themselves as merely passive followers.

Even after such abdication of discursive originality, coffeeshoppers continue to be careful when articulating dissenting statements, such as by speaking indirectly. MRT(350) answers questions indirectly, criticising media censorship in Asia *generally* to imply that it exists in Singapore:

[MRT347-360] Me: Is media coverage balanced in Singapore?
MRT: Western countries wouldn't hide events. Taiwan, HK, China, I think their reports are biased towards government. Countries that says good things about themselves, the credibility is suspect.

Generally, my interviews with coffeeshoppers tended to be based on a game where they would only reveal as much as I would, and where each person's incremental revelation of dissent serves to up the stake for the other.¹²⁸ At no point did any coffeeshopper give up; they usually outlasted me. However, there seemed to be a point beyond which they trusted me enough to speak relatively freely. This point seemed to precipitate whenever I spoke about my dissertation – a public statement of my political incorrectness. While I may not be more politically incorrect than them, the fact that I was willing to "come out" and take responsibility for it seemed to earn their trust and bring on their concern for me. At the end of the interview, they always cautioned me not to write about sensitive topics in my dissertation.

Finally, should they speak directly, coffeeshoppers belittle their own authority. Although BL claims to know "nothing," his grasp of historically significant dates indicates otherwise. Additionally, his abdication of discursive authority is insincere because his "excuse" – that he had no first-hand knowledge — applies equally to any living person:

¹²⁸ I am aware that such interview strategy deviates quite far from the ideal of qualitative interviews where the interviewee speaks and the interviewer listens. With coffeeshoppers, I felt the interview was as much about my opinions as about theirs and was concerned that I could be "leading" them. However, at no point did I feel that I was rigid and the conversation contrived, as I did with some other informants. In this way my interviews with coffeeshoppers may be thought of more as a type of (recorded) ethnographic research rather than "interview" because I had to be a participant to be an observer (Cf. Chapter 3, especially with Thomas).

[BL42-61] Me: The media says Singaporeans are kiasu, what do you think?

BL: I refuse to speak about [coffeeshop talk]; it's all politics. I know nothing about politics, I am not a politician; it's too dangerous. I can't say that in 1819 this happened. It's only hearsay; it's very dangerous so I don't know.

The coffeeshoppers' style of talking does not aim to alter the discursive certainty of the speaker, but rather to avoid accountability. Their belittling of their own discursive authority is rhetorical. Such posturing of self-de-legitimation differs dramatically with the professional women's ways of self-de-legitimation, which embraces accountability. They emphasise the subjective *accuracy* of their claims but limit their universality (or universal relevance), and thus political challenge.

This difference can be seen in the way both groups speak about media censorship. While coffeeshoppers *pronounce* there to be media censorship without substantiation, professional women cite their *observations* and offer *speculations*. They prefer to first *appeal* to the listener on an emotional basis ("you can feel it") before substantiating their "sixth sense" with intelligent and detailed media analyses. It is curious that individuals so skilled in rational analysis should so dis-empower their discourse by almost dismissing their opinions as no more than a "feeling." Such a posturing of uncertainty should not be attributed to insufficient "rationalisation" but needs to be explained otherwise.

When the women speak, they tend to be deferential and pose counter-hegemonic views hesitantly (e.g., "the economic crisis may not be a bad thing.") The effect of using double negatives is the reaffirmation of the hegemonic, which has to be deferred to even as it is being negated. Unlike the direct disagreement of coffeeshoppers, women's use of double negatives performs respect and demonstrates linguistically the burden of hegemony (preferred reading) that these women have to bear.

They also use a highly metaphoric and emotional language. DEX framed the desire for less authoritarianism in terms of a *request* to the government to

consider the people's feelings, unlike coffeeshoppers, who framed this as a *demand* that the government fulfils its election promise of a more consultative style. Despite having the "rights," women shun legal discourses in preference for emotional discourses, thereby maintaining an appearance of meekness and morality (to "request," not "demand" or even "suggest").

DEX belittles her discursive authority *despite knowing that she represents the view of her cohort*. She would say, "We Nantah [Chinese university] graduates feel that ..." While the use of "we" should have significantly strengthened her claim, the use of emotional verbs like "feel" exert such a powerful weakening effect that the overall claim, no matter how substantive and representative, remains weak. This is one of the many instances where professional women "deliberately" fail to allow their claims to realise their full discursive potential.

Many professional women were at a loss for words during interviews and resorted to metaphors (compare this with coffeeshoppers' familiarity with media/political language). In criticising the government's shutting down of Nantah (a Chinese university funded by the Chinese community) and the subsequent Speak Mandarin Campaigns, DEX(324) used metaphors such as "killing the mother (Nantah) and then saving the eggs (Mandarin)" and that the government was "insincere" towards citizens. She was also angry that the state demolished the National Theatre, which was funded by citizens' contribution, without consulting the people. To her:

[DEX379/387]: A lot of things in Singapore, "national" doesn't mean alive... whatever you contribute is wiped off straight away.

Instead of using these metaphors, coffeeshoppers would have succinctly charged the government for not respecting Chinese culture and for wanting to create a "safe" Chinese culture that could be moulded by the government rather than by the Chinese community itself. Of course, coffeeshoppers would then suffix this claim with, "but we cannot be sure about it, we don't know politics."

To an extent, media habits can explain the two different styles of talking—coffeeshoppers use a sharper language while women use a weak(-ened)

emotional one. All five coffeeshoppers read at least three newspapers a day to increase their chance of collecting useful (politically incorrect) information. JIM even tapped into Reuters to widen his repertoire of "quotable" information, which allowed him to speak credibly while allowing him to abdicate discursive responsibility and originality since he was merely be citing others. By contrast, the professional women's average is a dismal zero, worse than that of uneducated housewives who at least flip through evening tabloids.

This astounding statistic becomes understandable when we hear their explanations. SE, being unmarried, lives with her family; she said she would read the newspapers regularly if her father subscribed to an English daily. Through SE's case, we can see how women's media habits are constrained by government housing policies, which are in turn based on an "Asian" sexual morality that frowns upon cohabiting couples. Land-scarcity and housing laws which prevent owners of public housing to rent their rooms means there are few rooms for rent in Singapore, i.e., there are hardly opportunities for unmarried people to become householders and to make household decisions regarding media consumption. In nuclear families, women tend to be busy with children and media consumption, again, becomes a matter to be decided by the husband. In dual-income (young professional) families, newspapers are available at work and given the long working house, it seems pointless for them to subscribe from home. This explains RAS's situation: she does not subscribe to newspapers from home because she has access to newspapers at work and because she has no time to read at home. If she has time off from caring for her children after work, she would rather go online.

With so many patriarchal constraints, professional women are perhaps, sociologically, the group with the least "time" or freedom from social expectations (versus "time-wasting" coffeeshoppers). If they have difficulties consuming mainstream media, they have even less access to alternative media.¹²⁹ Furthermore, some public spaces like the coffeshop are regarded as "men's space" and are usually unwelcoming to women.

The two groups' differential access to (alternative) information sources could explain why, despite being highly educated, professional women's discourse is characterised by uncertainty and dis-empowerment. It would appear that, unlike coffeeshoppers, their thoughts/dissent are not reinforced by any media and thus, they have not developed a shared language or frame of reference.

Media habit may explain the differential style of talking between the two groups, but it cannot explain the more important question of why this posture group co-operates to belittle their discursive authority. Are they convinced that they lack public credibility; what motivates them to privatise dissent?

IV. SOCIOLOGY: THE BURDEN OF SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS AND THE TRAP OF DESIRE

The modernisation of Singapore society and economy required that certain social values be inculcated into the citizenry. To this end, the PAP government has very successfully mobilised citizens to embrace a national consensus based upon a dominant ideology of national economic competitiveness, which requires citizens be consumed by a desire to succeed materially. Grafted upon the discourse of Confucian meritocracy, material success becomes a signifier of personal moral discipline – one's social/moral status or credibility is based upon one's material achievement. What is achieved with the embedding of the material onto the moral is the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann 1984) – dissent dies out because citizens do not articulate them for fear of social isolation ("losing face") – a strategy that, incidentally, allows state authoritarianism to be transformed into societal authoritarianism.

It is in this context that we understand why citizens are willing to conform to various social expectations—non-conformity would not only compromise their personal economic success but also their moral status. In a Confucian meritocracy, one either succeeds or feels inferior (Cf. KPT569-574), and this is

¹²⁹ Several minority women express irritation at being cut off from the grapevine because they do not speak Mandarin (LV412).

precisely the strategy the government and its silent majority uses to de-legitimise the complaints of “losers.”

Unlike the pragmatic group who is barely nationalised and lacking a sense of (imagined) community and a grasp of state agency, this posture group has anti-government complaints. They consist largely of first-generation citizens who grew up under the first-generation PAP government and received centralised/nationalised education. While they do not have high expectations of the state or employ discourses regarding “rights,” they are impatient that the government should ensure that Singapore economy and society is as fair (to them) as it should be. Being non-immigrants and with heavy family commitments, there is a sense that they are “stuck” here geographically and in terms of class trajectory as prosperity intensifies class stratification.

Coffeeshoppers are especially sore about their blocked social trajectory. All of them were aware of the Singapore Dream but said they did not have the qualifications, thus luxury, to dream the Dream (BL105). While successful citizens may consider this the “jealousy” of the uneducated, it is also necessary to consider if their complaints are legitimate. Coffeeshoppers typically consist of Chinese-educated men (non-tertiary educated) whose Chinese education was devalued (because of its links to Chinese communism) for the creation of a modern Singapore economy.¹³⁰

In a society that values self-reliance so highly, it is easy to represent coffeeshoppers as “bad losers” or “sour grapes.” The media presents coffeeshoppers as inferior citizens not because of their lack of material success but also because they are (morally) lazy time-wasters who spend their time complaining in the coffeeshops instead of upgrading their skills. Such representations de-legitimise their authority to speak and trivialise the content

¹³⁰ I suspect coffeeshoppers are basically people who originally wanted to be left alone and not be drawn into a national economy. When they were forcibly deprived of their means of production by a benevolent paternal state, they were caught in a dilemma – should they be self-reliant (which is no longer possible given their proletarianised state) or to be rewarded for their compliance (in return for proletarianisation, the loving “father” should take care of them). It is in this context that we can understand the angst behind the coffeeshop slogan: “it is better to die than to be hospitalised” (because hospitalisation bills can kill).

of their dissent. These simple labels easily enter the public's imagination and becomes quickly internalised as society's gaze, exerting pressures on coffeeshoppers to self-censor or expect to have their "inferior" ideas jeered at.

The effectiveness of such societal authoritarianism cannot be underestimated. SE(365-368) felt so inferior and insecure that she could not retort to English-educated classmates who called her "china" (pronounced "chee-na," a slang for country bumpkin). It was only with the rise of the Asian Values campaign, which re-legitimised Chinese values, that the idea of retorting with the term "bananas" (slang for Westernised Asians; for being yellow outside, white inside) became imaginable. However, that Chinese values became imaginable does not mean that the status of the Chinese-educated has improved. Many Chinese-educated interviewees spoke angrily that when the government sought Chinese elites, they did not mean the Chinese-educated but English-educated scholars who were fluent in Mandarin.¹³¹

The Chinese-educated display such a high level of class consciousness that the label of Chinese-educated has been widened to include non-Chinese who feels similarly alienated from the nationalisation (Singapore Dream) process. Not dissimilar to the use of "black" in England, the meaning of "Chinese-educated" transcends ethnicity to refer to a loose collection of "social failures" who experiences a similar structure of feeling as "second-class citizens" in their own country (MRT318, VH564, TSK373/380).

If coffeeshoppers are alienated from the nationalising process, professional women are overloaded with national duties. They are expected to be career women and producers of genetically superior children for the nation. While men's patriotic status is assured by their conscription, women have to achieve this through communitarianly conforming to social expectations of moral mothers. Even then, this male freedom is a "privilege of the majority." If a Malay male speaks out against the state, he would be morally suspect and

¹³¹ This resonates with the observation that "Asian Values" is a subdominant ideology; at no point was the goal of an Asian nation prioritised over the goal of global economic competitiveness.

considered pro-Malaysia while a Chinese male would suffer no such consequences:

[AL12-3]: That is the dilemma [Malays] face. Sometimes you have to support Singapore although you are Malay. Especially on Malaysian issues, although they are Malays, blood brothers...

Women, especially minority women, do not have this freedom. Had they spoken like men, they would have been labelled “aggressive” and their sexuality questioned (as “butch.”) They have to maintain their national and private selves through privatising, hedging, justifying, etc.

As a mother and successful Malay professional, RAS felt worn out by the number of people she had to please. RAS was angry that as long as she spoke English with greater ease, she would be deemed “an insufficient Malay” because Malays were expected to speak Malay regularly. (English-educated Chinese suffers no such expectations.) It did not matter, she added, that her command of Malay language was probably far better than those who criticised her with their market Malay (RAS145). She was frustrated that she has to continually “prove” her Malay-ness, “I cannot do something because I want to, I always have to justify, people will talk” (RAS643). The pressure on her was greater because she is a Malay professional woman.

[RAS589]: As a minority, you are not owned by yourself but by the community. Your success will be the community’s success. If you want to give up being a doctor and become an artist, do you know what flak you will get! Being a majority, you have the freedom; as a minority, you have to care about what the community thinks.

RAS was keenly aware of how her burden of social expectations was constructed by media representations. She criticised the media’s moralisation and criminalisation of Malays:

[RAS730-749]: When a girl who fell onto train tracks], the TNP [tabloid] talked about what type of family she came from, she was jobless and her mother mentioned she didn’t return home the night before. What has that to do with her falling?

In court cases, it’s even worse. Defendants should be anonymous but the media will give pseudonyms, an obviously Malay name. What I really cannot stand is when they do not reveal names but say, “speaking in Malay, the criminal said...”

Professional women are very aware that they carry the burden of the nation and sometimes wish for a different type of nation, one that is less burdensome on women. Professional women unanimously shared the very rare (and politically incorrect) opinion that the economic crisis "might not be a bad thing." Tired of old definitions of success, DEX hoped to see a less materialistic nation, RAS hoped to see less pressures on her to be a role model for her community, SE hoped for less arrogance among the English-educated so that she would not have to feel so ashamed of not being one.

Although deeply dissatisfied with "the system," both groups believe there is little they can do. What motivates them to privatise their dissent? What holds them back from turning their backs on the system? Why do they perceive there to be no viable alternatives?

Although both groups feel compelled to conform to social expectations to avoid being discredited in public, moral explanations are hardly sufficient given the extreme pragmatism of Singapore citizens. What do citizens fear they will lose if they become morally discredited?

Coffeeshoppers are paranoid about being arrested for speaking their minds. It is not clear how much the discourse of political repercussion reflects coffeeshoppers' real fears, or if this was a way of masking less macho, less heroic fears. It is unlikely that they are truly paranoid—they are well aware that they are not opposition politicians and that very few opposition politicians are actually repressed. It is possible that they may fear the economic consequences of publicising their dissent, which could land them with "social bad luck" when it comes to public ballots and job promotions. At heart, coffeeshoppers are men with families; they are pragmatic and would not risk their family's well being. As such, their self-censorship may be more economically motivated than politically motivated. Furthermore, the successful embourgeoisement of the population makes its newly rich citizens more prone to conservatism and to prefer "erring on the side of caution." It does not help

that coffeeshoppers pay too much attention to rumours, which often create a paranoia that conveniently reproduces the status quo.¹³²

At the heart of this posture and its inability to see viable alternatives is the niggling desire to succeed within the system, or at least, have their children attain the Singapore Dream. Despite their deep dissatisfaction with the system, all interviewees invest considerable resources in their children's education to give them a head start (along the path to the Singapore Dream).

The most convincing evidence is the non-resolution of this conflict (to be pro-system or anti-system) can be seen in Thomas, an interviewee who was already highlighted in chapter three for his violent and thorough anti-system attitudes. Thomas was extremely sensitive to any signs of social optimism, which I suggest be read as an aversion to the dominant ideology. He was dedicated to living a life opposed to everything the system encouraged. He insisted on a life of waste and was angered even by my recorder and notepad, which I now recognise, upon hindsight, as icons of our differential ideologies and trajectories. Thomas was so sensitive to my every act of system-affirmation that, when he asked me what my hobbies were and I replied "let me think," he erupted into violent anger and banged on the table. After mulling over this and other episodes when he became angered whenever I was being "too busy," I realised that the fact that I had little time and recollection of my hobbies signified that I was preoccupied with being gainfully employed – a definite sign of being system affirming.

It is in the context of Thomas' thoroughness in being anti-system that we can appreciate his next comment, made when he was drunk. While sobbing over the phone, Thomas admitted that he wanted his children to grow up just like me – socially and ideologically optimistic.

It is only upon understanding how deeply rooted is the desire to be successful within the system that we can appreciate the sense of "trapped-ness" that this

¹³² It would be interesting to consider the source of rumours. E.g., the rumour that "There are identification numbers on the voting slip" would surely benefit the incumbent ruling party.

posture group feels. They are "stuck" here not only geographically and in terms of class trajectory, but also ideologically. Their desire for material success - Singapore style - requires that they embrace the very ideology and system-affirming practices that they criticise. Thus, it is not completely accurate to say that this posture group's dissent is de-legitimised by society's moral gaze and social expectations. It is more accurate to say that it is their desire to succeed in the very system they criticise that trivialises and de-legitimises their dissent.

V. THE LIMITS OF TOLERANCE: THE DE-LEGITIMISATION AND RE-LEGITIMISATION OF DISSENT

As a group that experiences the flaws of the dominant ideology on a regular basis and who is "ready to defect," the Chinese-educated constitutes a sizeable group that, potentially, can be rallied by counter-hegemonic ideologies. In this section, I want to look at the ongoing battle between the government and the citizens to de-/re-legitimise dissent by considering how successful the government is in convincing citizens of the inferiority and illegitimacy of their dissent.

Among those whom the government manages to win over, the role of social workers and churches¹³³ were cited as institutions that helped them rehabilitate, repent a life of waste and embrace the value of hard work and the value of social success/status. These institutions, by attributing responsibility for the self away from the system to the self, promotes the ideology of meritocracy -if citizens do not succeed, it is because they did not work hard and that if they choose to work hard, success will always be within grasp.

The state/media's success in convincing citizens of the illegitimacy of their dissent can be seen in interviewee's rehabilitated discourses. CST, despite complaints about costs of living, learnt to be a "good loser" and accepted that the English-educated deserves the best jobs. VH(17/34/61) admitted defeat ("how could I compete?") when his girlfriend left him for a more highly educated

¹³³ As another example of Thomas's thoroughness at blocking off the system's attempt to make him less angry: he refused to be interviewed until he was sure that I would not evangelise to him.

man, believing that she acted wisely. XX understood that his credibility is permanently compromised by his criminal record and struggled to regain his dignity as a responsible, self-knowing person who did not need supervision (by probation officers). However, a little dissatisfaction still lingers as an “inner voice” in his heart – a voice that he knows he could never articulate publicly:

[XX112]: If you do something wrong, [adults] will nag at you, ... “didn’t I tell you to study hard?” In my heart, I think: “We have already tried our best, what else do you want from us?”

During the economic crisis, SE(400) kept quiet when she was made redundant through “a conspiracy.” She was afraid of being labelled a “trouble-maker” and become blacklisted by other companies. To explain her lack of retaliation, she blamed herself for being “lazy” and rationalised that she did not want to be uncooperative, rather than blame the state for not protecting workers. By framing herself as lazy, SE’s discourse renders invisible the bureaucratic obstacles that encourage citizens to take the “lazy” way out and accept their situation.

That there are instances of discursive rehabilitation do not necessarily mean the government has succeeded in recovering the consent of this group. Very often, the same interviewee can be persuaded in one instance and unconvinced in another. There are also instances when rehabilitated citizens “fall back” into being anti-government. As a Chinese-educated person, SE’s attitudes towards English-speaking girls in her school changed from admiration/imitation (SE140) to helpless anger (SE350) with the “Speak English” campaigns, where Mandarin speakers were punished and made to feel ashamed of their inability to speak English. Finally, there is a core group that seems impervious to the government’s attempt to court them. They are likely to have experienced extreme personal injustice, e.g., MRT and Thomas, whose educations were halted respectively by the closure of a Chinese-university and by a change in the national grading system.

Where citizens remain unconvinced, they tend to engage in rhetorical compliance. Women were especially skilled at appearing obedient. Knowing how burdensome it is to comply with traditions, most perform them to maintain face but would not demand it of their children. RAS protested against the Malay

but un-Muslim wedding custom where bride and groom sit on a raised platform, a Hindu custom. As a compromise, she agreed to sit on it briefly to have her photograph taken, which can then be circulated to the relatives. Similarly, WCM knew her sons-in-law were unable to pay her daughter's brideprice. To maintain her status (a mother's worth is indicated by how much her daughters fetch), she instructed her son-in-law to write her a cheque (which would be displayed to relatives) that she would not cash.

Although such rhetorical compliance can be said to reproduce authority, it is nevertheless important to recognise the potential for resistance in these practices. Wanting the best for their children, these women have decided that these burdensome expectations and traditions would not plague the next generation. Additionally, they are aware that it is only through conformity that they can secure the moral credibility they need to re-legitimise dissent, i.e., they understand that resistance often requires an indirect route and that resistance is sometimes only possible or more effective from within.

Although RAS(116/121) find her ethnic duties inconvenient, she tries to do enough to satisfy others, refusing to give anyone an excuse to criticise her private life. She reads the Malay newspapers whenever she feels guilty of being "an insufficient Malay." When criticised for giving her son piano (i.e., Western) lessons, she compromised by immediately giving him Arabic lessons as well. RAS understands that she can legitimately be free from criticism only if she is above reproach, i.e., if she conforms and fulfil their expectations.

While the women are generally content with privatising their dissent, coffeeshoppers work to re-legitimise their dissent so that their opinions can be articulated publicly, e.g., by scrutinising alternative media,¹³⁴ popular literature, jokes and rumours for information to substantiate their opinions. Another strategy of re-legitimising is to denounce government experts as textbook administrators with "paper qualifications," in contrast to coffeeshoppers, who are schooled in the "university of life." Thomas even considers his education in the coffeeshop more significant than his school education.

A third strategy of re-legitimising dissent is to posit the Chinese-educated as the authentic and rightful repository of "Asian Values." Using a discourse of (citizens') hearts and minds, coffeeshoppers argue that the culture of the Chinese-educated is more sincere while the government's "Asian Values" project is merely an odd mix of values packaged together and labelled Asian "to keep minorities happy." With this culturalist twist, their dissent can no longer be trivialised as complaints of "bad losers" but is now re-legitimised as defence of an "Asian" way of life.

VI. REPRODUCING THE STATE THROUGH UNCONVINCED TOLERANCE

This posture reveals that the government has very successfully mobilised citizens to exert their moral gaze on errant citizens, i.e., the government's hegemony is achieved through a sophisticated inculcation of fear of society's (meritocratic) gaze and the creation of self-governing moral subjects.

This posture reflects an ideological "stalemate" between the government and citizens. The government is unable to successfully de-legitimise their dissent while citizens are unable to completely re-legitimise their dissent either. While it is debate-able whether "tolerance" is "acceptance," stalemates must be considered as a victory for one-party governments because its one-party dominance/hegemony, even if incomplete, remains unchallenged. As Leys argue, hegemony is not maintained by citizens' affirmation of public consensus but by the absence of counter-hegemonic discourses.

The government's legitimacy is not reproduced without costs. Economically, MRT(549) notes that even foreign talents who are recruited to rejuvenate the economy are unable to do so because they have to be careful to avoid sensitive subjects. Socially, should dissent be consistently denied redress, it may become so saturated as to implode. After all, this posture group has very strong counter-hegemonic potential. They only await a "viable" alternative, or leaders to rally them. As such, the government's project of hegemony is far

¹³⁴ For MRT(409), there is hardly any media that has relative autonomy from the local media.

from secure. Besides discouraging these groups from entering the public sphere, it must also prevent these groups from being rallied by activist groups who are not discouraged from contesting the government publicly. It is this group that we will meet next.

6D. CHANNELLED CHALLENGE: THE DISCOURSE OF “NO CREDIBLE OPPOSITION” AND THE SUBORDINATION OF DISSENT

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS POSTURE

Inspired by a viable alternative vision of nation, and possessing the technical-moral credibility to disseminate this vision, this posture groups' public challenge to authority is something that the government cannot afford to take lightly.

Firstly, their public articulation of alternatives exposes the population to possibility of a viable alternative. Should their visions take root in the popular imagination, they could emerge as organic intellectuals leading supporters towards a political alternative. Secondly, this group refuses to be trivialised. Their expert style of speech is usually very convincing and has on occasions caused bureaucratic civil servants to stumble in the public's eye. Thirdly, their social success gives them “role model” status, which significantly boosts the credibility of their opinions. The government is sometimes hard-pressed to find a way to handle this group, since it is precisely the credible opposition that the PAP government rhetorically invites.

Managing the dissent of this group requires great sophistication. Sociologically, this group is the nation's most talented but ideologically, they are perhaps the nation's most alienated citizens. Being highly educated and internationally mobile, the government is aware that this group cannot be won over¹³⁵ – since their broad international exposure brings them into direct knowledge of viable political alternatives to the PAP's one-party domination – it can only try to slow down their physical and ideological migration.

However, even this is difficult and can be achieved only at great cost to the PAP government. Despite communitarian campaigns to de-legitimise pluralism and to represent those who desire opposition for the sake of opposition as “rebels without a cause,” this group remains unaffected and has even grown.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ As the economic crisis deepens and as popular sentiments against foreign expatriates in Singapore mounts, the government, unable to justify its preference for foreign talent, faces increasing moral and popular pressure to bring local talents home.

¹³⁶ Election analyses observe that the opposition vote has consolidated at 25%.

Because this group desires political pluralism, the PAP knows that their consent can only be gained at the expense of its one-party domination.

At the same time, to retain a semblance of democracy, the PAP cannot deploy coercive policies to contain their dissent and must invent very sophisticated strategies to, if it is even possible, allow ideological pluralism without ideological fragmentation. The significance of this group lies then in the way it captures the ongoing struggle between the PAP government and its finest talents-turned-dissidents and in the way it gives us a glimpse into the future of the art of government. The PAP government is already admired and closely studied by world governments for its resistance to liberal democracy and its ability to sustain popular dictatorship ("Asian Democracy"). Can the PAP further improve on its already sophisticated strategies of maintaining one-party ideological dominance?

II. THE LOGIC OF THE ARTICULATION OF DISSENT: THE DISCOURSE OF SINGAPORE INC.

This posture group is characterised by their insistence on not privatising their dissent and their demand for a public (rather than a case-by-case) solution to social issues. In popular songs, this posture group distinguishes itself from citizens who tolerate authority without complaint. Using popular song analogies, if the acceptance groups (Chapter 6A and 6B) "swallows shit" and if the tolerance group (Chapter 6C) "holds shit in their mouth" (or even spitting in private), then challengers "vomit shit" back out. These metaphors of swallowing, spitting and vomiting recur in the lyrics of local bands: Detragrammatos uses vomiting sounds as a symbol of their non-conformity while Opposition Party sings (Phua and Kong 1996, 226):

Everyone tells us what to do
Everyone forces shit down our throats
They expect all their shit to be swallowed
Quietly by us without a single choke.

This group understands the importance of not speaking "off the record" and of being "quotable." A non-elected MP Walter Woon caught the public's eye as an MP who was not afraid "to go on record." This group understands that if they go

off the record, the media cannot publish their views and what is achieved is the non-circulation of alternative perspectives in credible media. "Speaking on record" can spark a filter-down effect; it empowers listeners by giving them quotable/credible resources that they can use to (re-)legitimise their previously de-legitimised dissent. It can also reverse "the spiral of silence" (Noelle-Neumann 1984); it may successfully set public agenda and spark public discussions that could help individuals clarify if they are indeed the vocal minority or part of a not-so-moral majority, i.e., whether the articulation of their dissent would reap social isolation or solidarity.

This insistence on public-ness is remarkable in a society where paranoia is rife and where "covering one's back" is a deeply entrenched survival instinct. This insistence also brings challengers head to head with the government's classification of sensitive topics. What the government regards as sensitive is partly the "public-ness" of an opinion. "Public-ness" is firstly quantitative – "on the record" opinions can be circulated in the credible media without restrictions and secondly qualitative – opinions that threaten the government's authority are sensitive. Catherine Lim, a local writer, was chastised by the PM himself when she voiced coffeeshop rumours on the national daily. There was nothing wrong with what she said, it was where she said it; she did not recognise that the government tolerates rumours on "sensitive" subjects but not their public articulation in credible public spheres.

So far, I have not discussed in detail the content of any interviewee's dissatisfactions; this is because this final posture group's discourses best articulate the dissatisfactions that other groups experience in milder degrees. A theme that sums up the dissent of various groups is the discourse of Singapore Inc. versus Singapore as a home. All citizens complained about "the rigid path" that they are compelled to follow, with no second chance and where deviations are de-legitimised and made un-walk-able. It is also impossible to legitimise "alternative paths" because such attempts would be read as a political challenge of the superiority of the PAP's national vision and values.

What citizens detest about this rigid path is not only its rigidity and the way it forbids other paths, but also the “ugliness” and “soul-less-ness” of this path. Interviewees complain that Singapore economy/society has become focused on materialism (and instrumental rationality) such that means (e.g., wealth) have become ends in themselves, and that citizens are roused to dedicate themselves fully to the achievement of economic personal and national ends at the expense of all other goals. EH and TL were especially critical of the “technologisation” of society, where citizens are encouraged to pursue whichever path is most lucrative. Their concerns are echoed widely in popular discourse that Singaporeans are “insincere” and do not follow their “hearts,” and by the popular metaphor of “engineers” as the epitome of such “lack of soul:”

[TL304-309]: The government said we needed more engineers ... Suddenly, everyone wanted to be an engineer. They didn't consider what is it that [I] want, is this really [me]? ... This takes conformity to an extreme, [they want] a comfortable lifestyle at the expense of personal integrity.

[EH398-407]: On TV, children were asked whether they want to study EM1 [English and Mandarin as first languages] or EM2 [English as first and Mandarin as second language]. The child said EM1. Why? The child replied: “Because my mother says it's better.” The child was then asked if he knew what EM1 meant. The child said: “I don't know but I know it's better.”

A teacher was quoted as saying “Instead of trying to quantify what is valued, Singapore values what is quantifiable.” In Singapore Inc., what are valued are quantifiable indicators of success such as the “5Cs.” Many interviewees complained about Singapore being too competitive, small and expensive - even everyday items have become items of competition for status (EH477). To avoid losing face, people conform to material standards and try to attain what others see as icons of success. In popular music, local band Global Chaos (Phua and Kong 1996, 223) criticises Singaporeans for their

Uncontrolled greed
Impetuous desire to be rich
Immune to worldly issues
Addicted to worldly pleasures

That the government has successfully inculcated in the citizenry such "uncontrolled greed" and instituted (through social expectations) a "rigid path" indicate the successful inscription of the dominant ideological values unto citizens' everyday life and unto collective dreams/fantasies. It is precisely citizens' adherence to this path/ethic that produces "the Ugly Singaporean" that citizens and local pop bands criticise. In actuality, "the Ugly Singaporean" and "Singapore Inc." are merely part of the wider side effect that results when the dominant ideology is inscribed to the extreme.

III. WAYS OF KNOWING: KNOWING AND ARTICULATING IDEOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVES

Challengers exert deliberate control over their media consumption. Poor students like EB and her friends prefer pooling their resources together to take turns to buy a newspaper of their choice to reading newspapers their families subscribe to. The significance of such practices should not go un-noticed – these practices create new media consumption units based on friendship and common interests, rather than on patriarchal and authoritarian relations (where the head of the household, usually the most senior male, makes media decisions for the household.)

All challengers exhibit a high reliance on foreign media. All have access to foreign media, usually via the Internet or foreign newspapers at public libraries (EH) and work spaces. Additionally, for minority challengers, their families tend to serve as an alternative public sphere; EB's awareness of racial discrimination was heightened through listening to her grandparents' and parents' criticisms of the different types of discriminatory practices levied against them.

Such reliance on foreign/alternative media is premised upon a perception of the local media as "dangerous" and the foreign media as a "refuge." How is the local media "dangerous" and what does it endanger? In my own experience, it is an uphill task to maintain ideological distance and to not give in to enjoying "the world's (third) best home." Every time I return to Singapore, I experience the same ideological struggles while watching local drama serials with my

family. In the first week I would fume and refuse to sit through the programme. In the second week, I would shake my head throughout the programme, which seriously compromised my family's viewing pleasure. By the third week, I could be bored. In a few more weeks, I could even cry with the characters. In a situation where it is easy to become happy living in a gilded cage – at least one that is prettier than “other backward Asian countries” – it is too easy to lose one's ideological distance without communities and networks of support. It is in this context that we can appreciate the “alienation” challengers experience and what the Internet means to them.

The local media is strongly distrusted as something “appalling” (LV84) and misguided (EH628), not only because of its promotion of materialism but also because of its pro-government coverage. While the communitarian group expects the local media to provide moral guidance, challengers see the local media as something they have to “protect” themselves against (LV56/84, EH), usually through avoidance, refusing its preferred meaning or reading only to “fuel [their] anger at social injustice” (LV601). They expressed disappointment in Singaporeans' lack of courage to veer off the rigid path and stated that, rather than form a community with “such Singaporeans,” they would prefer to be socially isolated, or retreat into cyber-community. Many challengers (TL583) are cyberspace junkie for whom the Internet is a “lifesaver” and a “refuge;” they explicitly say that without the foreign media to provide a resonating perspective, their mental alienation would be complete.

Challengers do not only feel a strong need to communicate with each other, they also feel the need to communicate their dissent to the public. Here, I want to discuss some strategies challengers use to articulate dissent, beginning from the least to the most directly confrontational.

(1) Humour is a strategy where social issues are confronted publicly but indirectly. Usually anonymous, (a) political jokes and songs can be found at websites and bookshops. The dominant theme in this type of literature is political repression, usually captured in a caricature of events surrounding opposition politicians. At Sintercom's website

(www.sintercom.org/sef97/songs.html), there is "a collection of politically incorrect songs." Out of 5 songs, 3 portray light-heartedly the PAP's pursuit of the opposition. The other 2 short songs are National Day Parade songs modified, one of which comment strongly on political repression.

This is my country, this is my luck
There's a SDU, to choose my wife [Social Development Unit]
There's a ISD, to guard my life [Internal Security Department]
We are Singapore, Singaporeans...

These jokes and cartoon often filter into mainstream media. In the Singapore Bulletin, the PM was reported to have quoted the joke that "Singapore wants to go global? Okay, I'll leave!"

(b) Humour is also employed to remind readers that the PAP and citizens that the PAP is only human. In a tabloid, an anonymous cartoon column entitled "murmur" was at time used to de-mythologize the PAP by pointing out its human weakness. This discourse of the PAP as "only human" de-mystifies their authority and legitimises articulations of PAP's (humanly) flaws. Such establishment of the PAP's humanness can be further used to ameliorate the PAP's harsh criticism of flaws in citizens. E.g., journalist Cherian George (ST7/4/1998) argued that young should not be criticised for being idealistic because they were behaving exactly like the PAP founders were when they were young, adding that the PAP took pride in their idealism in envisioning an independent Singapore.

(c) In daily life, humor can also be used to turn the tables on normative expectations. EB494 joked herself out of difficult social expectations. Refusing to feel ashamed of her inability to pay for restaurant dinners, EB confronted the expectations that Eurasians were rich by telling her friends that, "If you are so rich, you can treat me."

(2) *Mis-applying the government's discourse*: This strategy mischievously mis-applies the government's values to produce counter-hegemonic readings. A common example is the government's call to citizens to do their best ("Productivity campaign") and to make Singapore "world-class." Many worn-out citizens point out that this call to be "world-class" is a rod the government uses

to discipline citizens into workers. Mischievous citizens mis-apply it to "bad values." In a popular local movie "Money No Enough," there was a funny and solemn moment when a gang pledged solemnly to be "world-class" gangsters. The movie then proceeded to show how Singapore gangs invited "foreign experts" from Hong Kong to train them into "world-class" gangs. Another example is to parody the local media's journalistic awards. Citizens decided to give the award of "Photographer of the Year" to "the photographer who captured the tranquillity at Cheng San" during the 1997 elections. This is an ironic award—the local media had severely distorted the image of the huge supportive crowd who supported the opposition at Cheng San.

(3) Insisting on a public dialogue: (a) Although "challengers" have increasingly turned to alternative media to publicise their views, they are aware that it is important to disseminate their views and challenge the government in the *mainstream media*. LV explained that other media, especially specialised media (e.g., financial or sports), are likely to be read by a niche group who already share the writer's opinion; as such, it is not worthwhile to "preach to the converted." More importantly, activists strive to stir public consciousness and this public (in the quantitative sense) can only be reached via mainstream media and (in the qualitative sense) through engaging the government and convincing the public of the superiority of their opinions to the government's.

(b) Challengers define what is seen by the state as success into something negative. They do not see negative consequences as merely side effects but re-frame the issue into one where the negative consequences outweighs success, or even claim that targeted goals (success) are undesirable for *society*. E.g., "challengers" argued that suing the opposition might, in the short term, "successfully" preserve PAP's position but in the long term would stunt the development of democracy. They further argued that the development of democracy was more important and beneficial for society than the maintenance of PAP's position (ST27/6/1998).

[BJ566-571]: The PAP always says that we are a democracy, we believe in consultation, we believe in consensus and that is exactly the line I take. We [a media organisation] are about consensus.

Me: You make them put their words into practice?

BJ: Yah, we are about thinking intelligently about the future, no short-term solution, no ad-hoc solutions.

(c) With Internet technology, the Sintercom website created a way of monitoring the censorship activity of the local media. It started a "Not the ST Forum Page" column. This website encouraged readers who sent letters to the ST Forum Page to forward a copy to it. All these letters would be published on the webpage in full, allowing readers to see even the letters that did not get published and what was censored (by highlighting censored sections in red).

(d) Challengers criticise the government's sincerity by holding it to its rhetoric, e.g., "(world-class) democracy." By appropriating government rhetoric, challengers' demands cannot be so easily dismissed. Through this strategy, challengers force the government to close the gap between rhetoric and reality. TL334 quoted the national pledge, which includes the value of democracy and equality and argue that it is the "purest" and "highest" embodiment of the values of a people and these values should not be bent to what the government may consider "contingencies." Challengers using this strategy are quick to latch on to the government's rhetoric, e.g., election promises of a more consultative style.

(e) Challengers challenge the rigor of the state by pointing out contradictions *between* policies. Strategies 3d and 3e are confrontational because "challengers" point out the inefficiency of the government in achieving *its own goals*, i.e., the government fails by its own standards. This internal critique (disagreement with means not ends), gives challengers an appearance of agreement with government goals and also a certain expert status to point out the flawed logic/inefficiency of the government's means in its pursuit of its goals. To use strategy (3d) and especially (3e) requires hard work and citizens must follow issues consistently to develop a long-term understanding. E.g., LV44 collects newspaper cuttings as a resource to debate with the government.

One notable Internet example comes from "Mr. Brown," who parodied the government's campaign of "Singapore National Education." Many of his grouses repeat the themes discussed previously (Appendix 8):

I have learned lately:

1. That we need to set up a Committee to discuss systematically how we can have Creativity.
2. That our leaders say we must be creative and independent of spirit, therefore we must do as they say and be creative and independent of spirit.
3. That we are given a choice on upgrading our flats but when we choose not to and convince others, it's not desirable, we are selfish...

An example from my sample of inter-policy contradiction includes the contradiction between materialism and Singapore's soul (EH251), between the call to be more competitive (putting self above others) and the Gracious Society Movement (putting others above self.) The government responded to such exposure of its contradictions by refining its ideological strategies; it reframed social issues as dilemmas¹³⁷ through the Singapore 21 project (http://www.gov.sg/singapore21/menu_logo.html):

- Less Stressful Life Vs Retaining the Drive
- Needs of Senior Citizens Vs Aspirations of the Young
- Attracting Talent Vs Looking After Singaporeans
- Internationalization/Regionalisation Vs Singapore as Home
- Consultation and Consensus Vs Decisiveness and Quick Action.

Confronted with these new dilemma frames, most people find their "alternative" positions absorbed into the mainstream representation. This dilemma frame paralyzes and channels debate within pre-empted either/or options. E.g., either Singapore become more competitive or lags behind the rest of the world. Framed as such, Singaporeans who argue for less competition are represented as the "vocal minority" and charged as "selfish" (and "un-Asian"). Within this frame, the government takes the subject position of the neutral outsider who must co-ordinate the selfish interest of partial citizens to prevent chaos. Within this frame, alternative causes are already "dead on arrival" because the dilemma frame expects challenges (as "vocal minority") to be ready to compromise for the silent majority on the other end of the dichotomy.

¹³⁷ Cf. Billig (1988) on how ideological contradictions can be reproduced/naturalised as personal ideological dilemmas. This seems to be precisely the PAP's goal here.

(f) Challengers challenge the accuracy/technocracy of the state by pointing out that policies do not attain targeted goals, i.e., the government has not been diligent/rigorous enough in thinking through policies before implementing them; the legitimacy of the policy is thus questioned. This is similar to (d) but requires more technical rigour. Francis Chong is a citizen who has caught the eye of many challengers because of his balanced and close checks on the government's figures and arguments. His exchanges with the government tend to be continuous because he relentlessly pursues civil servants until they give him a satisfactory explanation. His strategy is especially complemented by the Internet medium. It is not easy to publish the entire chain of correspondence in print media. At www.sintercom.org, the chain of correspondences can be read continuously and a unique and strategic effect is achieved—the reader can see how civil servants keep changing their stance or repeat standard bureaucratic replies. The reader can also see that although civil servants always end their correspondence with “feel free to call or write to us.” As the correspondence dragged on, they were so exasperated by Chong's persistence that they no longer welcome his “feedback.” More significantly, the correspondence between Chong and the government was always terminated by the government's reply that they would look into the matter for an indefinite period, and that “it will be at the discretion of (the government) whether they would comment on your latest comments.” Chong's relentlessness reveals that the government is not as accountable as they claim, and that its call for citizens to give feedback is mere rhetoric.

IV. SOCIOLOGY: ENVISIONING A SOCIETY BEYOND MATERIALISM

This group is highly reliant on foreign media to sustain their perception of viable alternatives. Besides relying on foreign media, this group is also well travelled; their conviction also stems from having witnessed the viability of alternative ideological systems. Their media habits and “ways of knowing” ideological alternatives immediately suggest a very particular sociology.

Who are “the challengers”? Because of their antagonistic stance and high public profile, their background has been the subject of several media articles (ST4/7/1998, ST6/10/1998). The Feedback Unit reported that more people are

giving feedback across the board. Two in three want to be consulted on policies that affect them, while two in five want to be consulted *even* on policies that would not affect them personally. The number of people giving unsolicited feedback via email has doubled from 1996 to 1998. They have become more confident, as indicated by the significant decrease in the number of anonymous Internet postings (less than 30 out of 300). This means that "challengers" are not sociologically confined and that *more* citizens are becoming *more* "intense" challengers. This makes it difficult to speak about "challengers" as a specific group; it is more useful to think of a posture of challenger than to think of a "challenger."

Educated under the national education system and influenced by the national identity campaigns (during the transition from first to second generation rule), challengers are exclusively post-state citizens who display an intense sense of imagined community. Their desire for political participation and concern about their society is evident in their discourse about "the kind of society I want my children to grow up in." They appear as a group who, because they have expectations (unlike the pragmatic group), are deeply disappointed. Many citizens express anger at the "blackhole" that their feedback to government ends up in, and many interviewees express extreme frustration at their concern and inability to influence policies. Statements like "Why do I even care?" recur frequently in many interviews. Their mental migration appears to be a way of coping with such intense frustration.

As a post-state generation, citizens were born into a prospering Singapore. Materially comfortable, they are uninterested in the Singapore Dream and long for freedom to pursue their non-material goals.¹³⁸ During the duration of my fieldwork in Singapore, I met many graduates who were happy living in 3-room flats (a type of poor man's apartment). A media poll also concluded that young Singaporeans are not as materialistic as the government represents them to be (<http://cyberfair.gsn.sngs98/19960630-2.html>). Because this group is uninterested (rather than unable, like the communitarian and coffeeshoppers) in material accomplishments, this means that government attempts to secure

national or party loyalty through economic stakeholding are likely to achieve limited success. This group values freedom too much to, as interviewees reveal, be tied down by private property (one of the 5Cs) that would take 20 years to pay for, in which time they would not dare to change jobs and have no chance to travel.

It is not clear whether this indicates the onset of a neo-liberal mentality (Cf. Rodan 1993b) that is desirous of personal freedom, or more left-leaning inclinations. Perhaps there is a little of both. There is a very small but specific cluster of interviewees who display a high level of class consciousness, a concern for the underdog (de Cunha 1997) and a deep commitment to the social re-distribution of income, at the expense of their own privileges. Additionally, they display a strong sociological imagination and understand that it is necessary to change the system to change citizens' mindset because citizens are highly "moulded" by media campaigns. They do not blame individuals for conforming to the rigid path but blame the state for making it difficult for citizens to behave otherwise. Whereas SE blamed herself by being lazy, challengers argue that overcoming government bureaucratic obstacles could tire even the most ardent citizen.

This left-leaning sub-group is identifiable by occupation: they have a strong belief in the importance of providing public service and display a strong disdain for corporation because they "cannot imagine working overtime so that my boss can buy another yacht." This sub-group appears to have made their existence felt as early as 1984 when graduate women (who could have benefited) protested the "Graduate Mother Scheme" – a scheme that sought to reward graduate mothers with tax incentives. During the economic crisis, many graduates (e.g., YJT) voluntarily accepted pay cuts so that fewer workers would be made redundant. Such willingness of graduates to sacrifice their material benefits indicate firstly that the younger generation has developed a strong sense of imagined community and secondly, that their sense of national solidarity is one that takes communitarianism much further than the government would like it.

¹³⁸ Challengers are reflexive about how their ideological position may be a luxury that

V. THE LIMITS OF CHALLENGE: THE DISCOURSE OF "NO CREDIBLE OPPOSITION" AND THE SUBORDINATION OF DISSENT

Very few challengers give in to their migratory inclination. Even those who have exited the country may not be completely sure of the correctness of their decision — TL fears that compared to his Singaporean peers, his British university programme would not push him hard enough and that, "not reading a ton of books a week," he would slacken off and lose his competitiveness. Clearly, TL was not fully prepared to turn his back on the imperative of being competitive.

Those challengers who stay within the system fight a different battle — to "resist being sucked into the system." This is especially the case in Confucian societies where mandated rulers are "entitled to be hypersensitive to any hint of criticism" (Pye and Pye 1985, 66)—citizens who wish to criticise the government would have to do so deferentially¹³⁹ and perhaps, from within its ranks. Where resistance is possible only with conformity, there is always the possibility that dissent would be incorporated, neutralised or if it is "constructive," harnessed to strengthen the very system the challengers want to put an end to.

Challengers' fears of being sucked into the system or being "normalised" come from a range of sources. Here, I will begin with those sources of normalisation that are perceived as most external to the self — sources that tend to work through the subject's context to impact his posture to authority — and proceed to sources that increasingly works through the citizens' subjectivity.

The most external of these sources of normalisation include being subdued by the fear of political repercussion. Many minority challengers fear being accused of stirring up racial tension when they speak about racial discrimination against them. Should the government punish a challenger, paranoia would spread

their economic/class position can afford.

¹³⁹ Examples have already been given throughout the dissertation, e.g., double negatives (EH359), criticism of side effects, and the ABA format of criticism.

especially quickly in a society where people already prefer to err on the side of caution.

Bureaucracy is also a formidable obstacle that can break a challenger's spirit and alter the expectations that challengers have of their (imagined) supporters. When LV(300) had to deal with extensive bureaucratic procedures over a prolonged period, she began to feel weary and redirected her frustration to "the ungrateful masses" – "if they don't care, why should I waste my time fighting for them?" For those challengers who work within the civil service, there is the fear that everyday routine and organisation culture would blunt their posture of criticism. LV(521) spoke reflexively about how she struggled and then gave in to the restrictions of being a civil servant.

While the above forces of normalisation works through the challengers' context, there is another type of forces of normalisation that works through the challengers' subjectivity. Firstly, it is not easy for any citizen to completely relinquish the dominant ideological values and desires (for material success) that they have been ingrained with since childhood. As such, there is always the possibility that challengers would be "sucked back into the system" or trapped by their own desires.

However, this seems to be a weaker force of normalisation than the normative pressures of communitarian compliance. Challengers have very little weapons to fight against the label of "vocal minority," unlike the government's arsenal of economists, demographers and other social scientists who lend their academic authority to the construction of the silent majority. Should challengers refuse such de-legitimisation of their voice, it would be difficult for them to build a strong case against the silent majority.

Should challengers "truly" believe that they are the vocal minority, they would internalise the communitarian dilemma of whether the government should carry out the will of the majority or minority. Such a dilemma would lead naturally to a subordination of one's dissent to the wishes of the majority – dissent is not necessarily privatised since citizens can still speak about their *subjective*

especially quickly in a society where people already prefer to err on the side of caution.

Bureaucracy is also a formidable obstacle that can break a challenger's spirit and alter the expectations that challengers have of their (imagined) supporters. When LV(300) had to deal with extensive bureaucratic procedures over a prolonged period, she began to feel weary and redirected her frustration to "the ungrateful masses" – "if they don't care, why should I waste my time fighting for them?" For those challengers who work within the civil service, there is the fear that everyday routine and organisation culture would blunt their posture of criticism. LV(521) spoke reflexively about how she struggled and then gave in to the restrictions of being a civil servant.

While the above forces of normalisation works through the challengers' context, there is another type of forces of normalisation that works through the challengers' subjectivity. Firstly, it is not easy for any citizen to completely relinquish the dominant ideological values and desires (for material success) that they have been ingrained with since childhood. As such, there is always the possibility that challengers would be "sucked back into the system" or trapped by their own desires.

However, this seems to be a weaker force of normalisation than the normative pressures of communitarian compliance. Challengers have very little weapons to fight against the label of "vocal minority," unlike the government's arsenal of economists, demographers and other social scientists who lend their academic authority to the construction of the silent majority. Should challengers refuse such de-legitimisation of their voice, it would be difficult for them to build a strong case against the silent majority.

Should challengers "truly" believe that they are the vocal minority, they would internalise the communitarian dilemma of whether the government should carry out the will of the majority or minority. Such a dilemma would lead naturally to a subordination of one's dissent to the wishes of the majority – dissent is not necessarily privatised since citizens can still speak about their *subjective*

preferences in public while deferring to what is good for community (as defined by the government.)

Where the will of the majority is presented as the prioritisation of prosperity over democracy, such compliance with the will of the majority is also compliance with the dominant ideology. Such compliance and subordination of dissent is especially likely because challengers genuinely care for the welfare of the underdogs. Should they be persuaded that prosperity is what the majority wants, they would see their compliance as a heroic/patriotic act of sacrifice of their own preferences. Challengers certainly do not want to become leaders without followers and given the many repressive and bureaucratic obstacles, would not want to fight for something that the masses do not want.

A final strategy that is successful in subordinating dissent – which interviewees reproduce – is the discourse that there is “no credible opposition.” This discourse can be seen as a sequel to the discourse of “no viable alternative.” Knowing that it cannot convince challengers of the illegitimacy or non-viability of ideological alternatives, the government now seeks to convince challengers that, despite there being viable hypothetical alternatives, there are not credible politicians to lead the country towards that direction. As such, the project to realise the viable alternative must be postponed. [This ideological strategy of “no credible opposition” is accompanied by a policy to prevent credible members of civil society from becoming credible opposition politicians. The PAP machinery conscientiously checks whether civil society leaders intend to run for office. As long as they have no such intentions, their criticism will be tolerated.]

Despite their distrust of the local media, many challengers unquestioningly accept the media’s representation of opposition politicians as incompetent and dishonest. What is impressive about the PAP’s hegemony is that it has even convinced human rights activists that the PAP government welcomes opposition but “there just isn’t any good men in opposition.”

However, the perceived lack of "credible opposition" does not signify the end of dissent. Such discourse merely slows down, re-channels and re-invents the demands for multi-party system ("opposition for the sake of opposition") as demands for a responsive government. Since the 1980s, citizens have successfully pressurised LKY's early retirement with the promise of a consultative government under PM Goh. In the liberal mood in the 1980s amidst citizens' clamours for participation, the Feedback Unit and other similar government institutions were set up. By 1990s, citizens realised that these institutions were "a blackhole where feedback disappears into" (ST04/07/1998). These perceptions so compromised the Feedback Unit's credibility that ministers now bear the burden of proof; they have to "prove" that "public input can lead to policy changes." To ensure that the government does not only listen but also act, the 1980s call for feedback has sharpened into the 1990s demand for "pre-policy consultation." Although the discourse of a "responsive government" is not necessarily a challenge to one-party dominance, it clearly has the potential to serve as or usher in a discourse that is more directly challenging to one-party rule.

VI. REPRODUCING THE STATE THROUGH CHANNELLED CHALLENGE¹⁴⁰

Although the strategy of subordinating dissent appears successful, its success is diluted when considered in the light of the PAP government's broader goal of inculcating a sense of belonging so as to deter the migration of its best talents ("brain drain.") The irony is that if the government successfully convinces challengers that they have nothing in common with the moral majority, this would only intensify their alienation and speed up their (mental) migration, i.e., the more successful the government is in containing (subordinating/privatising) dissent, the less successful it will be in reversing the alienation and (mental)

¹⁴⁰ While this group may give in to the dull compulsion of the economic (Abercombe et al 1980), challengers are hardly a group of happily alienated workers. Their "consent" or tolerance is better characterised by Sloterdijk's (1988, chapter 1) notion of "enlightened false consciousness," where people who "support" capitalist values may do so out of ironic awareness of the relations of reproduction and their systematic alienation.

migration of the very talents that could lead the nation towards greater economic prosperity – the key basis of PAP legitimacy.¹⁴¹

Challengers exhibit a deep sense of alienation (to the extent of not being able to befriend or trust “soul-less” Singaporeans and hopelessness (“why do I even care?”). This “structure of feeling” must be understood within a context of the contradictions of the dominant and subdominant ideologies. Challengers are rightly the “trophies” of the PAP’s success in developing local talents and instilling a sense of national belonging in its citizens. However, the Asian Values project might have over-legitimised communitarianism, with the consequence that challengers prioritise it over the dominant ideology and imagine an alternative community based on solidarity rather than a community based upon competition (Singapore Inc.), as envisaged by the PAP.

Furthermore, the government’s success in subordinating dissent may have created the unintended consequence of strengthening challengers’ solidarity with each other. TL and VG find it difficult to befriend people who are not like themselves and form strong friendships with those who reject dominant ideological values. There is also a sub-cultural norm within “hip” humanities circles where it is not “cool” to be pro-PAP. In coffeeshops and among intellectual circles, it is a taboo to ask citizens who they voted because even if citizens voted for the PAP, there is a counter-hegemonic subcultural norm that pressurises them to do otherwise.

By legislating anti-democratic policies and singling out civilians for punishment/shaming (e.g., naming bond-breakers), the government may sharpen challengers’ definition of their community. Phua and Kong (1966, 222) argued for the existence of a subculture that is recognisably different from, and to me, even opposed to mainstream culture. Regardless of whether challengers feel themselves a community, the ruling elite has identified them as a subculture and banned their activities. For these challengers, the coercive government serves as a common enemy that not only unifies them but also provides a better defined ideological-substantive basis for the emergence of an

¹⁴¹ MRT commented that foreign talents have difficulty contributing to Singapore’s

anti-government community. By enraging challengers, such coercive acts often serve to weed out less committed challengers (who may be frightened into privatising their dissent) and “fuel the anger” and commitment of others.

These developments indicate that even if the PAP succeeds in blocking “viable alternatives” and “credible opposition” in public and succeeds in securing citizen complicity in privatising dissent, its success is only temporary. This is because dissent is not neutralised/vanquished, merely postponed, privatised or subordinated. Over time, underground/privatised dissent may become more saturated and pointed in its challenge, even causing an implosion. As such, the PAP’s hegemony is not “maintained,” merely “prolonged” since its present ideological “victories” only serve to weaken and render less secure its hegemonic basis in the long term.

Admittedly, it is very difficult for the opposition to appear credible in citizens’ eyes, which means that challengers are, for now, reduced to dancing around the issues and having to fight for political freedom through civil (rather than political) opposition. To this end, Singaporeans seem well equipped; journalists often remark that Singaporeans have perfected the art of pressurising the government with their vote. They have not succeeded in institutionalising democracy but if democracy is not thought as a stage but as an incremental process or a utopia, then Singapore society has certainly inched forward.

With this group, we arrive at the crystallisation of the contradictions of the system: the logic and contradictions of capitalism clashes head on because challengers insist on public confrontations. It is no longer possible to refute, neutralise, privatise or subordinate dissent against capitalistic rule. This brings us to an important question: having observed the everyday process of legitimating authority, it is now necessary to identify the bases of legitimacy/hegemony of the PAP government and the moments of hegemonic crisis. Here, the PAP’s hegemony appears so plagued by internal contradictions that it can hardly move forward without unintentionally over-legitimizing either its dominant or subdominant ideology.

economic development because they are not allowed to be creative.

This motivates us to think about the art of government and especially the art of prolonging one-party dominance in a situation where its hegemony is so saturated with ideological contradictions and where governments can no longer censor or bully the opposition or citizens into compliance if it is to remain credible, where compliance has to be secure through Confucian (“gentlemanly”) rule.

Having identified some delay tactics such as the creation of moral panics and spectres of crises (Chapter 5), in the conclusion chapters, I want to move on to consider how governments in different countries navigate such challenges, and particularly to examine why some one-party states collapse while other thrive. Has one-party rule indeed reached the end of its history as Fukuyama (1992) suggests, or is it possible for authoritarian governments to evolve, e.g., into “soft authoritarianism” or “popular dictatorship?” How is it possible to sustain, without coercion, consent on authoritarianism, or consent on coercion?

Chapter 7 Hegemony without popularity

The moral centre as the foundation of soft authoritarianism

I have often been accused of interfering with private lives... I say without the slightest of remorse... we would not have made economic progress if we did not intervene on very personal matters – who your neighbour is, how you live, the noise you make, how you spit, or what language you use. We decide what is right. Never mind what the people think. That's another problem. (LKY, National Day Rally 1986).

Beneath Leys (1990, 127) assertion that, "for an ideology to be hegemonic, it is not necessary that it is loved, merely that it has no serious rivals" lies an important but rarely pondered issue of the place of dissent. In a hegemonic state, what is the configuration or balance of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic elements? If hegemony is not the absence of dissent, what then is the balance between consent and dissent? Where does dissent reside?

Theories of ideological incorporation abound (Cf. Mouffe, Brown, Gramsci). They tend to be highly theoretical and vague about the constellation of consent-dissent – what does it mean to say that state ideologies "seep" into popular imagination, "fuse" national and popular dreams or "provide a language" to articulate collective fantasies (Hall 1988b, 176)? In these observations of the hegemonic process, there is a focus on consent without the theorising of dissent, which is necessary for a more rounded understanding of the hegemonic process and for thinking about counter-hegemony and hegemonic crisis. Indeed, Leys' assertion implies that in securing hegemony, the process of defusing dissent is more important than the securing of consent.

Especially in the case of Singapore – where its citizens are described as "famous for complaining," it is important to investigate how hegemony can reign amidst rampant dissent. In Part 2 and 3, I have identified several strategies of defusing dissent practised by the state and by citizens, suggesting that dissent that cannot be de-legitimised "hides" in the underground or cracks and crevices within public discourse while attempting to re-legitimise itself. On a broader picture, such privatisation and subordination of dissent indicate that

rather than being based on identification, the PAP's hegemony is based upon rhetorical compliance – one where citizens feel compelled to comply in public despite disagreements. Taken further, the PAP can even be described as unpopular, but hegemonic¹⁴² —the local Chinese press described the PAP's electoral victories as “bitter” and the PAP as having “won the people's minds but not their hearts.” Thus, especially in the case of Singapore, there is a need to go beyond the theorising of consent to a theory that actively focuses on the particular configuration of consent/dissent.

In the absence of suitable theories, I want to draw upon an observation that emerged during fieldwork – the ubiquitous presence of hidden audiences and interviewee's fierce dialogues with them. This observation is theoretically important firstly because the characteristic of this imaginary audience is consistent across *all* interviewees and secondly, because this imaginary audience resonates with the media portrayal of the Ugly Singaporean – Mr Kiasu (Afraid-to-lose, i.e., competitive).



¹⁴² Cf. Chapter 4's observation that the PAP had never been truly popular prior to securing to its one-party dominance and after that, has always avoided elections based on popularity.

Mr Kiasu has obvious links to the dominant Ideology; he is the embodiment of the ethic of capitalist accumulation as well as its side effects of ungraciousness and absurd competitiveness; he is the ideal competitive worker-citizen of Singapore Inc., but “ugly” when judged by non-capitalistic standards. Although there is indication (see later) that he does not represent that majority or the average Singaporean, yet, by embodying the contradictions of the system, he captures the popular imagination by allowing citizens to articulate their everyday dilemmas, anxieties and by situating them within a national structure of feelings.

Although Mr Kiasu is not a “normal” Singaporean in the statistical sense, he has become synonymous with the “moral majority” and the “rigid path” that my interviewees believe other Singaporeans are walking and which they believe other Singaporeans expect them to conform to. Through Mr Kiasu, the dominant ideology becomes a moral centre that guides citizens' everyday interpersonal and personal conduct through mediating social expectations and one's self-image.

My concept of a moral centre draws from Neale's (1977, 14) observation of an ideological centre that, while being an analytical construct, appears to subjects as subjectively real. Dominant yet invisible, this concept of an Ideological/moral centre also resonates with the PAP's explicit ideological strategy of “holding the middleground” – where state values serve as the norm or preferred reading, against which deviations must be justified. By representing it as the commonsense or will of the moral majority, the moral centre induces competitiveness and conservativeness, which in turn sustains Asian Capitalism and Asian Democracy and fenders alternatives unthinkable. In the following section, I will explore the breadth, depth and exclusiveness of this moral centre in the popular imagination while analysing the ideological function it serves.

7A. THE PERVASIVENESS OF A MORAL CENTRE: RHETORICAL COMPLIANCE AND THE EVERYDAY LEGITIMISATION OF AUTHORITY

A recurring theme throughout my fieldwork was the presence of a strong normative centre (“the rigid path”) that exerts pressure on citizens to conform to

the norm of being successful (rather than being communitarian). Against the wishes of many citizens, the centrality and dominance of the PAP's Confucian work ethic and economic ideology (Singapore Dream) continue to be reproduced, serving as frames through which citizens make sense of how society perceives them (successful or not) and as a standard against which failure must be justified. Through being institutionalised as the (imagined) gaze of society, the centrality/hegemony of official values in everyday inter-personal life is ensured.

The reach of the moral centre. The strength and breadth of this moral centre is most convincingly indicated by how citizens see no alternatives to the PAP and to meritocracy, which PAP represents as the superior "Asian" way of self-reliance (Vs inferior "Western" welfarism). The consensus that the PAP has "done a good job" is unchallenged. Even the opposition accepts this, preferring to criticise the *side effects* of the dominant ideology in favour of (PAP's subdominant ideology of) communitarianism. In Singapore, opposition parties aspire to become a supplementary party, not the dominant party. The notion of an opposition government remains unimaginable to citizens, indicating that as an ideological construct, "no viable alternatives" has secured near complete consent.

The reach of this centre is also convincingly signalled by how the "have-nots" - those with the greatest cause to disbelieve in meritocracy - is often its strongest proponent. Despite (or because of) their lack of "qualifications to dream" the Singapore Dream, working-class parents invest their hopes in their children. HO(185-303) did not even feel qualified to comment on media programs but spoke angrily about the discrimination against her daughter. Even Thomas, who lives out his belief that he has no future by wasting his money, confessed that if he had children, he would want them to grow up like me— well educated and socially optimistic. In securing the hopes of the have-nots for their children, the PAP prevents them from constituting a mass that can be readily rallied by alternative ideologies.

Those who criticise meritocracy do so without rejecting it. They may question whether the good life is equally accessible and cite racial/linguistic discrimination to argue that meritocracy is not functioning properly. Such criticisms do not challenge the ideal of meritocracy but rather its implementation. In fact, such (constructive) criticism assists the government to ensure genuine meritocracy, rather than pose an ideological alternative. By and large, citizens/"workers" ("Singapore Inc.") believe that they must be self-reliant and upgrade their skills if they want a better material life; i.e., citizens believe meritocracy to be a fair way of distributing rewards. That none reject the principle of meritocracy indicates the government's unbroken hegemony on its economic ideology.

The exclusivity of this moral centre. The strength of this moral centre is indicated by the way it excludes or renders unthinkable alternative lifestyles. Many found it stifling to have to conform to expectations, calling this centre "the rigid path" with "no second chance" (TL393/423), full of "invisible pressure" (TEO225), where one has "no room to breathe" (EB441).

What is stifled is not merely personal and social liberty but also the ability to act on human nature. Jokes about Singaporeans are inevitably punchlined by the stereotype that Singaporeans cannot act without government instructions:

Two men and a woman are marooned on an island. If they were British, the two men would share each other; if they were French, the two men would share the woman. What would they do if they were Singaporeans?

Answer: Wait for instructions.

Citizens complain that Singaporeans are penalised for following their hearts. EH(251-260) complained that the government raised the university fees for arts faculties to "encourage" students towards engineering degrees. For BL(155-162), it was "unnatural" and hypocritical to ban Singlish, since "even judges and lawyers talk like that." TEO was irritated that citizens were not allowed to express their human emotions:

[TEO329-331]: Why are we always discussing how to cope and welcome foreign talents? Of course, it is hoped that we will welcome them. But it is human nature, if they are here to snatch your rice bowl, you will be unhappy!

The intensity of citizens' exasperation with what they see as unreasonable government regulations is best glimpsed by a joke. Citizens claim they would not be surprised if pigeons were fined for shitting on the streets, indicating that citizens have given up trying to understand the government's justification; they will simply obey its incomprehensible demands.

Besides alienating citizens from their personal desires and human nature, the centre also renders alternative ideologies unthinkable, thereby maintaining the hegemony of Asian Capitalism and Asian Democracy. The typical response to the viability of welfarism is, "how can we afford health and education if we pay 50% tax?" Similarly, the coffeeshop slogan of "it's better to die than to go to the hospital" (hospitalisation bills can "kill") protests against the cost of health care without demanding state assistance. Despite the complaints about high costs of living, coffeeshoppers ultimately believe in self-reliance. Such absence of "Western" welfarist demands should be seen as an ideological success of the PAP's Asian values. The PAP government has successfully promoted a model of state-citizen relationship where the state, despite being portrayed as a loving father, has no such responsibilities towards its children.

Alternatives to Asian Democracy – e.g., multi-party democracy – though imaginable, are rendered non-credible partly because the opposition is presented as incapable of delivering economic prosperity since it lacks the PAP's "track record."¹⁴³ More crucially, this criterion/definition of good governance is premised upon the assumption that the moral Asian majority values prosperity over all other national goals, i.e., that the moral centre or popular will is, as journalists frequently remarked, one that is happy to trade political freedom for economic prosperity.

The depth of the moral centre. The depth of citizen's internalisation of the centre's values can be seen in how all interviewees take materialistic competition as a frame of reference, even if as a point of departure. Citizens feel disciplined/framed in against their will and compelled to comply.

One such guiding frame is the preoccupation with self-improvement and with "not wasting." This has unique implications for what constitute status symbols within "Asian capitalism," which is characterised by high investment and high savings (unlike Western capitalism's high investment and high spending). While needing to display material wealth, status items must both be costly (high spending) and wealth generating (high investment/savings). Not surprisingly, the status symbols in Singapore are the 5Cs (car, condominium, career, cash, credit), which have high "re-sale" values, unlike concert attendance, expensive holidays or designer clothes.

The preoccupation with self-improvement ("upgrading") and being productive indicate a high degree of social optimism and identification with the centre. By contrast, the act of "wasting" is a sign of refusal of the centre's values. Most citizens display an aversion to wasting. For WCM(235-236), anything that does not have "use value" is a waste of money. For PTN, to not be busy doing night-courses is to waste time. TL, who is studying overseas, worries constantly that his university will "waste" his potential by not making him "read a ton of books a week" as Singaporean students do.

It is also in this context that we can appreciate Thomas's defiant display of "wasting." He describes himself as a "wastrel", a "good-for-nothing" and angrily accused me of "insincerity" when I could not remember what my hobbies were, i.e., that I do not "waste" time on them. In a highly competitive society where every moment/resource counts, where one has to keep running to maintain one's social position (and where relaxing means losing any advantage one has gained), Thomas's courage in daring to waste is tantamount to burning his bridges. The more he wastes, the more difficult it is for him to catch up. Yet, Thomas's practice of "wasting", however oppositional in symbolic terms, is meaningful only when framed against the dominant ideology of material aspiration.

¹⁴³ This is something the opposition can never secure without first being voted into government so that it can start building up its "track record."

The strongest indication of the hegemonic strength of this moral centre lies in citizens' rationalisation of the negative effects of "kiasuism."¹⁴⁴ All interviewees are aware of "kiasu-ism" and struggled to distinguish between good/bad/"super-hyper" kiasuism (EB376, JIM, AS, RM). What is the point of all these distinctions? Such rationalisations allow citizens to see themselves not as ugly individuals who compete for socially meaningful but personally meaningless success, as individuals who have "sold out." Such rationalisations indicate how deeply hegemonic the dominant ideology is — despite its inconvenience and meaninglessness and its despite undesirable manifestations, interviewees struggle to conform to the dominant ideological values of competitiveness, considering them as evil but *necessary*.

This illustrates the degree of ideological success (hegemony) of the PAP. It succeeded in getting citizens to internalise ideological contradictions (competitiveness and its ugly side-effects) as personal dilemmas. Billig (1988) uses the term "ideological dilemma" to underline that it is not only consistent ideologies that are reproduced but that ideological contradictions can also be reproduced/naturalised as personal ideological dilemmas, i.e., that ideological contradictions need not be reproduced as counter-hegemonic dissent. This is precisely the PAP's ideological success, where dissent is transformed into consent by inscribing ideological contradictions organically into citizens' everyday "structure of feelings."

* . * . *

If I were to reconstruct an image of Singapore from interview transcripts, the image of "an unbearable heaviness of being" and the metaphor of "pressure cooker" would certainly apply. Rapid modernisation in Singapore has not led to anomie but to the enthusiastic over-interpellation of every citizen into nation-

¹⁴⁴ Mr Kiasu originated as a popular movement that was critical of PAP's dominant ideology. However, before this counter-hegemonic movement could dent the PAP's hegemony, the PAP embraced Mr Kiasu and embarked on a "Gracious Society Movement" to incorporate this counter-hegemonic discourse into its new subdominant ideology of communitarianism. By representing Mr Kiasu sympathetically rather than critically, kiasuism was made to appear necessary and more amusing than ugly. Additionally, through the Movement, contradictions (competitiveness vs. communitarianism) were represented as personal dilemmas requiring citizens to find

building projects (for the “total defence” of Singapore). Most interviewees complained about the “invisible pressures” they face, how they are “owned by the community” and are not free to act on their own preferences. EB complains that there is “no room to breathe;” TL and many young professionals complain about the “rigid path” and many professional women were secretly delighted with the economic crisis because they hope it will dilute society’s high expectations of them to attain ever higher levels of success.

These pressures are also incessant and interminable because, true to the capitalist ethic of accumulation, the PAP always ensures that there is always either a higher (economic) goal in sight or a crisis just around the corner that the nation must unite to triumph over. With a never-ending stream of crises and national expectations, the privatisation or subordination of personal difference/dissent becomes a habitualised practice, a taken-for-granted defence mechanism against the need but inability to act on one’s preferences.

Why do citizens conform? Firstly, to a large extent, the PAP has succeeded not only in creating proletariats, but also to see to their “embourgeoisement” (Goldthorpe and Lockwood 1969) – if not materially then at least ideologically through giving them hope of attaining the Singapore Dream.

However, this identification must be qualified – it is only a partial one. An ST poll (30/6/1996) reported that young Singaporeans are “more realistic and reasonable, and considerably less fickle than they are often made out to be.” Yet, while none of my interviewees longed for the Singapore Dream, all wanted a “comfortable life” and “would not mind” if their children could secure the Singapore Dream. This indicates that the Singapore Dream and Mr Kiasu embodies an extreme or ideal that citizens, *in principle*, identify with but which they do not *realistically* believe they can/want to achieve.

To understand why citizens conform, it may be helpful to think about what penalties they perceive there to be if they do not conform. My interviewees explained their conformity with social expectations, which suggest that the

their own subjective balance rather than as a national problem requiring a nationwide

dominant ideology of being competitive and materially successful has become so deeply lodged in popular imagination that citizens simply assume that others think like this and feel they have to either behave similarly or justify their deviation.

That citizens are motivated by social expectations, or "face" indicates that they practice a type of rhetorical compliance – they would comply in public despite their private disagreement. Although this may appear to be a weak basis for government hegemony, I would argue in the next section that rhetorical compliance or governmentality by "face" constitute a good enough basis of authoritarian legitimacy/hegemony. Such moral governmentality allows non-liberal governments to secure hegemony without having to be popular in (Asian) societies with weak/absent civil societies.

7B. THE SOFTENING OF AUTHORITARIANISM: EMBEDDING COERCION IN PUBLIC MORALITY AND THE CREATION OF "FACE" GOVERNMENTALITY

That the PAP's hegemony is founded upon rhetorical compliance may be interpreted as a sign of the limit of the PAP's ideological success (Cf. Kwok 1981 later). However, such an interpretation exposes liberal assumptions, where ethical compliance or convicted consent is the only measure of ideological success against which other forms of compliance are found wanting. It is through such liberal lenses – which the local Chinese newspapers does wear – that criticisms such as "the government has won the people's minds but not their hearts" can be made. These criticisms reflect a gross misunderstanding of the ideological goals of the PAP – LKY very clearly states that he is not concerned about "what people think," only what they do.

Such an interpretation also fails to consider other ways (besides the liberal preference for ethical self-government and emphasis on cognitivist subjects, Cf. Neale 1977, 10/11/18) through which state ideologies can be inscribed onto the popular body.

de-emphasis on competitiveness.

Looking at Singaporeans' everyday discourse, there is clearly an alternative site/strategy of Ideological Inscription. Pro-PAP values are presented as public morality and inscribed onto inter-personal relations through citizens' concern for "face" (what others think of oneself). It is in the context of this alternative site of ideological inscription that the concept of "hidden audience" becomes theoretically significant.¹⁴⁵

While interviewees hardly talk about "face", they do constantly invoke a "hidden audience" – a group of generalized others, whose expectations of the interviewee could not be known to the interviewee directly (since these others are not limited to one's significant others), but, I would argue, through the media's construction of a "silent majority." Indeed, interviewees perceive that "others" expect them to conform to the norms and values caricatured by Mr. Kiasu – an ugly (grace-less), over-competitive Singaporean. In this sense, the concepts of a "hidden audience" and a "moral majority" allow us to see the process through which public morality and official discourses are normalized in a communitarian fashion (as social expectations rather than as an individualistic fashion, as ethics) to serve as a "middleground" – a term the PAP uses to describe its political strategy – social life.

Through equating state ideologies with the values of the moral majority – something that communitarian ideologies with their emphasis of "community/majority before self" is especially prone to do – state coercion is

¹⁴⁵ I would like to explain the relationship between the different analytical sections. In writing this dissertation, I had some difficulties in deciding which analysis should structure the other: media coverage or interview transcripts. To some extent, it is prioritising the analysis of popular discourse over media coverage that led me to posit the presence of hidden audiences, which further allude to the existence of a normative/moral centre, and finally to trace it to the media construction of the "silent moral Asian majority." Had my starting point been an analysis of media coverage for media discourses/frames and then an investigation of popular discourses to see if particular discourses/frames were repeated, I might have focused on those aspects of popular discourse that reproduce media discourse, while ignoring those aspects that stem from other "ways of knowing" (e.g., jokes and rumours). Because my starting point was patterns in popular discourse (without trying to structure them according to media frames/discourses), which were then traced to various media and non-media sources, media effects (along with effects of other non-media forms of communications) were deduced post-hoc. I.e., only those media discourses that could be traced in the interview transcripts were described; my analysis of media coverage was far from comprehensive.

transformed into the societal discipline while legal penalties are transformed into the (imagined) disapproving looks of the moral majority. In this way, "face," as the society's moral gaze, allows for state coercion to be embedded into the popular body and to appear indirect, organic and more legitimate (since the state is merely following the will of the majority), thereby transforming hard (governmental) authoritarianism into soft (societal) authoritarianism.

To understand how face works to become pro-status quo, it is necessary to understand what face is and how it is gained and lost. Face is a combination of social-economic and moral status, the two being conflated through Confucianism where one's material achievement is regarded as a signifier of one's moral discipline. Within Confucian discourse, the good citizen works incessantly for material goals and *not beyond it* because these material achievements are the expression of one's morality and an end in itself.¹⁴⁶ This explains why Confucian societies do not have higher social goals than materialism – something that neo-liberals see as disturbingly superficial. Here, SEW seems to have difficulty imagining non-material Eastern dreams:

[SEW194-221]: From an Eastern perspective, people want to fill their stomachs before they think about democracy.

Me: Singapore has quite successfully fulfilled that goal. What's next?

SEW: Mmm... In some Asian countries, people still live below the poverty line

Me: What about Singapore?

SEW: If you take Singapore 30 years ago, standards were not high. We needed a strong government to implement the right policies. Ideals of democracy must be introduced slowly or it will create a disorderly situation.

Me: What Eastern goals are there after filling stomachs?

SEW: (long pause)

As a moral status that is completely derived from the material, "face" strongly encourages citizens to be "competitive" and conservative. Face encourages incessant competitiveness because one's material-moral status is always

¹⁴⁶ There is so much resonance with Weber's Calvinists here that it is impossible to not mention it. The Calvinists have no way of being assured of the status of their (predestined) salvation, thus, material achievement becomes the only signifier of how close/far they are to their ideal state. Where material accomplishment becomes conflated with morality, and where it is moral to "work for the sake of working," – In the Confucian case, for the sake of moral training – what is produced is a cultural ethic that easily "electively affiniates" itself with the spirit of capitalism.

positioned relative to others'. I.e., even if a person is highly accomplished, his material-moral status will decline if he becomes complacent and allow others to "close ranks." The concern for face also dictates that a person acts according to social/other's expectations. Singaporeans are often thought of as slippery, with ultra-sensitive antennae to help them avoid "sensitive topics" that could cause themselves and others to lose face. MRT explained that face is lost when an "aggressor" traps a "victim" into a situation where the latter cannot respond without suffering moral consequences, i.e., where contradictory moral expectations clash and prevents the victim from being able to perform rhetorical compliance. Face is "saved" by maintaining social harmony, which, in inter-personal interactions, means that spheres of legitimate controversy must be avoided and that conversations should take place strictly within spheres of consensus (Hallin 1986, see chapter 8). What citizens' preoccupation with face achieves is a situation where citizens, through policing themselves and others into conformity, embed state morality as organic social values.

The significance of the PAP's inscription of its values onto public morality can be better appreciated when situated into the historical and theoretical puzzle of hegemonic authoritarianism. Brookner (1995, 2-6) noted the emergence of modern authoritarianism, where one-party governments retain dominance by evolving into "ideological one-party states." For Perlmutter (1981, 174/179), whether authoritarian governments can successfully achieve this evolution depend on whether they can "command ideological commitment" or "[turn] ideology into organisationally and politically successful arrangements." I.e., whether ideologies become institutionalised, since "authoritarianism is based on the intervention of auxiliary instruments into all aspects of life – private, group ..."

In the PAP's case, its ideologies are grafted onto the institution of face, public opinion and especially the media's construct of "the moral majority." It is through such inscription that the PAP government inserts itself *organically* into inter-personal and personal interactions and installs its ideology as society's moral centre and as the commonsensical "middleground" in which all social

Interactions take place, thereby ensuring its relevance/centrality in citizens' everyday life.

"Face" or moral governmentality is not necessarily inferior to the liberal mode of ethical governmentality. Indeed, it may even be more suited for the purpose of maintaining authoritarian (one-party) rule because, firstly, authoritarian governments require that citizens support its policies despite inconsistencies and contradictions. Because moral subjects conform to contextual moral expectations rather than adhere to context-invariant principles or ethics, they are likely to be more tolerant of inconsistencies in state policies and would not feel motivated to check on the government. Such ideological flexibility is complemented by what Pye and Pye (1985) observed as a high threshold of tolerance for cognitive dissonance. Indeed, it is necessary that subjects of authoritarianism be ideologically versatile in public while in private, be oblivious to their double-faced-ness or double standards. Without such heightened sensitivity (antennae for "sensitive topics") and simultaneous oblivion, should authoritarian subjects attempt to establish ethical/ideological consistency, they may suffer severe cognitive dissonance and compromise their ability to negotiate the many "sensitive" situations in social life.

Secondly, communitarian/moral governmentality is also preferable to liberal/ethical governmentality because it allows authoritarian governments to achieve ideological pluralism without fragmentation, even if this unity is only rhetorical.

Communitarian ideologies, including "Asian Values," are highly suited for the purpose of keeping out ideological alternatives without resorting to coercion. By emphasising community over self, communitarian ideologies seemingly allow ideological pluralism while preventing ideological fragmentation. Logically, communitarian ideologies better allow authority to retain its values without their being compromised or diluted by popular demands because communitarianism is based upon the *subordination* of personal interest to community interests.

Liberal Ideologies¹⁴⁷ tend to see individuals as constitutive of community rather than as a threat to community and thus, tend to more readily *Incorporate* dissent so as to achieve a "truly popular-national" consensus while communitarian subordination is more likely to achieve a rhetorical hegemony.

LKY (1998) highlights the importance of this strategy for one-party states in an age where new media technologies make censorship impossible. The PAP aims to keep the official voice above the din of democracy by establishing a clear moral centre (voice of the moral majority) that any dissenting opinions would have to contend with and ultimately, be subordinated to. LKY likens the PAP's middleground strategy to the Vatican's:

The Vatican maintains Catholic unity around the world by clearly communicating its official or doctrinal position... Catholics may read other views... but they make a distinction between the official view and the other views. Whether or not they accept the official view is a different and separate matter. In the same way, Asian governments will require the official view to be carried in the media, along with other views over which they have no control.

LKY clearly acknowledges the rhetorical nature of such hegemony – it does not matter if citizens *accept* official opinion insofar as it serves as a frame of reference in interpersonal life, insofar as it constitutes the "middleground" in which social interactions take place.

Thirdly, a rhetorical consensus may be superior to ethical compliance because it is easier to attain since it does not demand citizens' identification, merely their deference. In fact, citizens' rhetorical compliance produces a hegemonic effect—citizens' subordination/privatisation of dissent serves to fragment dissent and lends an aura of consensus to official values while concretising the otherwise mythical existence of the "silent (major) majority." By contrast, a hegemony based on identification is risky because it may over-legitimise citizens' rights to prioritise their preferences over society's. Subjects who comply out of conviction would be less willing to subordinate their dissent or

¹⁴⁷ I am aware that my dichotomies of moral-ethical and communitarian-liberal may not be meaningful in Western countries. Recently, Danish right-wing parties have begun to employ communitarian discourses in defence of liberalism (against foreigners). US President Bush similarly exhorts Americans to, as a community, "protect their rights to be free."

tolerate a consensus that they believe is misguided. In Durkheimian terms, liberalism could intensify "the cult of individualism" and tear asunder a society's collective conscience or moral centre.

Fourthly, a rhetorical unity is also likely to be more broad-based and thus more "national;" a liberal-ethical consensus is likely to be supported in a partisan way – with more depth but less breadth. A limited consensus, no matter how deep, would not suffice since one-party governments can be legitimated only by a nation-wide consensus. On the other hand, a broad consensus, no matter how shallow, would suffice.

7C. CREATING "FACE" GOVERNMENTALITY: DE-IDEOLOGISATION AND THE SUPPRESSION OF AUTONOMOUS ASSOCIATIONS

The importance of securing the appropriate mode of governmentality can be most clearly seen in the problems that arise when subjects develop the "wrong" governmentality. Citizens who are more likely to be concerned with ethical consistency tend to be highly ("Western") educated. Deemed as "idealistic" by pragmatic others, some challengers experience an overwhelming sense of helplessness and frustration at their inability to live consistently with their beliefs, to "practise what they preach." The communitarian group frequently remarked that, "society will be messy!" if people no longer conform to what they consider are reasonable moral expectations. Three interviewees even implied that self-centredness (i.e., ethical governmentality) to be an infectious moral disease that causes the young "follow-your-heart" generation to get off the tried and tested (rigid) path and to want to take the easy way out to relax, enjoy and be complacent. Indeed, nothing is more threatening to the PAP's moral centre than liberal governmentality and its imperative to "forget about "face" and to "do it because you want to, not because others expect you to." Such liberal governmentality would trigger the fragmentation of society's moral centre and usher in the end of ideological consensus and the end of legitimate one-party rule.

Recognising that the inculcation of the "wrong" governmentality can seriously threaten its one-party dominance, and that late-capitalistic consumerist

societies increasingly legitimate discourse of self-desire, the PAP painstakingly tries to prevent liberal governmentality from taking root in Singapore society. The complexity and difficulty of the PAP's task cannot be underestimated. It is a feat to work against the global hegemony of liberalism (promoted through consumerism) and to not drift towards the end of history as society increasingly acquires the cultural infrastructure to evolve into a liberal democracy (Fukuyama 1992). To pull off such a "detour at history's end" (C.George 2001) and hold fast to authoritarian rule in late-capitalism requires exceptional leadership skills.

Here, I want to describe some strategies that the PAP government undertakes to ensure the creation of moral governmentality and non-creation of liberal governmentality. Unlike the liberal (Western) subject, the Asian subject must possess sufficient ideological flexibility to manage contextual expectations and to be comfortable with rhetorical compliance. Although I use the terms "Western" and "Asian" to distinguish between different cultural psychologies, it is not my intention to reproduce Orientalist stereotypes but to examine these cultural psychologies so as to underscore the political projects undertaken by authorities to socially engineer whichever types of subjecthood is convenient for the perpetuation of their rule.

To this end; the PAP sought to firmly install its values as society's moral centre to de-legitimise ideological alternatives. Firstly, challengers have difficulties articulating counter-ideologies because the PAP refuses to define its own ideological position. As Chapter four observes, the PAP has always displayed a high degree of ideological flexibility, affiliating itself with whichever party is dominant. Indeed, the PAP presents itself as a party beyond ideological politics, as a party that is guided by pragmatism.¹⁴⁸

Upon securing state power, the PAP presented itself an "administrative state" run by technocrats-managers rather than by politicians. Such self-representations tantamount to the "depoliticisation" (Chua 1995, 41) of the political field and a de-legitimation of political contestations as "political,"

which among older generations connotes “wanting power for its own sake” – something the pragmatic PAP is perceived not to be doing.

By claiming to be value-neutral administrators, the PAP establishes itself as experts. Since they are logical and rational, anyone who disagrees with them must be inaccurate or illogical. Additionally, within the discourse of Confucian meritocracy, the PAP's technical expertise translates into moral authority because of the Confucian belief that only those with the moral discipline can reach the pinnacles of academic/expert achievement.

Secondly, the PAP government prevents individuals and groups/institutions from attaining relative autonomy from its moral centre.¹⁴⁹ For Perlmutter (1981, 179), this refusal to grant relative autonomy to society constitutes the quintessential feature of authoritarianism. Authoritarianism is not defined by the use of coercion or the ideological justification of coercion — most states do this. The unique feature of authoritarian regimes is that it penetrates all aspects of life, leaving no institutions with relative autonomy. Modern authoritarianism is further characterised by the use of ideology to co-ordinate institutional penetration into social and personal life. By this criterion, AV, which sets out clear guidelines on good citizenship and nation-building duties, is an ideal authoritarian ideology to legitimise state intervention since it demands consensual participation from *all* citizens.

Ensuring individuals do not have relative autonomy. Even during rapid social change where anomie (normlessness) is a likely consequence, the PAP government embarked on an array of ideological projects to ensure that individuals did not become relatively autonomous from the system. Of course there were “vagabonds” who refused to be proletarianised and there continues to be a “brain drain” of local talents who have mentally migrated from the system – in these situations, the Singapore government is less concerned with winning

¹⁴⁸ Of course, such pragmatism aims at very particular goals:- capitalist expansion rather than welfarism.

¹⁴⁹ Gramsci (1971, 245) observed that, in the West, the separation of civil and political society is unique to liberal ideologies. This hints of yet another difference between how liberal and communitarian ideologies choose different apparatuses (civil society and moral community respectively) to inscribe/naturalise themselves.

them back than in substituting them with foreign talents who are eager to secure a share of the Singapore Dream. By and large, the PAP government seemed to have successfully bound citizens to its nation-building projects – interviewees complain about over-regulation and having to follow the “rigid path.” Clammer (1985) and Tremewan (1994) noted a “militarisation” of Singapore society and where individuals were interpellated as soldiers for the total (including psychological) defence of Singapore. Such militarisation worked towards the creation of a disciplined society where communities are encouraged to police each other (shaming remains a strategy of punishment) and where the intervention of society’s moral gaze into citizens’ private life is legitimised (e.g., through sacrifice and moral obligation).¹⁵⁰

An example of the inculcation of moral governmentality can be seen in the way anti-smoking campaigns are advertised. In many countries, anti-smoking campaigns would concentrate on conveying facts to convince smokers that smoking is dangerous for them, i.e., campaign advertisements aim to secure smokers’ willingness to voluntarily stop smoking. A particularly memorable anti-smoking campaign in Singapore featured an attractive young woman telling her audience (presumably male) that she would not kiss a chimney. I.e., smokers are encouraged to quit smoking so that they would become more attractive. These campaigns seem to be successful in the PAP fashion – students smoked in school toilets to avoid teachers’ gaze while men avoided smoking in front of women they want to attract. Other campaigns are just as “successful” – leading to the phenomenon of the Ugly Singaporean who refrain from spitting, littering and speeding in Singapore but would so do so readily once across the border in Malaysia (SLH describes this behaviour as that of “birds out of a cage”).¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Shame appears to have more association with moral societies while guilt is more associated with ethical societies, the difference being whether one’s moral crime is inflicted by one’s (ethical) self or but (moral) others. In local soaps, shame, sacrifice and emotional obligations are dominant themes.

¹⁵¹ One side effect of rhetorical compliance that bothers the government is the phenomenon of dirty public toilets, perhaps because toilet behaviour is un-police-able by the moral gaze nor technologically (e.g., hidden videos) without incurring public wrath. Since citizens keep private toilets clean, a campaign to convince citizens of the hygiene benefits would not work. Until citizens become “genuinely” civic-minded and flush toilets voluntarily, the government has opted for a technological solution: installing public toilets with sensors that flush automatically.

Campaigns appear to be highly suitable for (rhetorically) installing state values as society's moral centre. Kwok (1981, 96) argues that "campaign as a technique of persuasion easily lends itself to rhetoric, and that campaign messages and slogans may be promoted or accepted without any real 'ideological conviction as to its validity'" because it induces in citizens a "pragmatic efficiency" to respond in some positive or at least meaningful way ("We don't have a choice so why don't we stop arguing and do what we have to do.") Kwok goes on to argue such rhetorical compliance makes government projects appear more successful than they are since campaign organisers and target populations are often pressurised to attain predicted outcomes. He believed that such compliance do not enhance campaign objectives and even "significantly detract from them." While I agree with his observation that campaigns induces rhetorical compliance, the judgement that rhetorical compliance is a form of ideological failure reflects a misunderstanding of campaign goals. If the PAP's campaigns are aimed at installing state values as a moral centre rather than securing identification, then citizens' rhetorical compliance sufficiently accords this moral centre (based on PAP values) an aura of consensus.

Ensuring groups/institutions do not have relative autonomy. Although the PAP government clearly desires an ideologically united society, it opposes a unity that is independent of the state. Indeed, it prefers a rhetorically united statist consensus to one that is organic and built upon bottom-up consensus. As such, one-party governments may find it beneficial to discourage the development of a civil society or any organic community that has relative autonomy and that can potentially serve as an alternative ideological/political centre.

The PAP's careful social engineering means that, at present, Singapore has no "civil society" to speak of. There are no groups or institutions that can escape government jurisdiction since gatherings of four or more individuals are considered illegal unless they are registered with the government. When faced with citizens eager for political participation, the PAP tries to steer them into "civic society" and (municipal) community centres instead.

As a part of the strategy of depriving groups and institutions of relative autonomy from the government, the PAP must also prevent the formation of organic communities (e.g., subcultures based on Singlish) because these bottom-up solidarities may over-legitimise alternative ideologies and serve as alternative centres of morality. In multi-racial Singapore where ethnic identities are more organic than national identity, extreme care must be taken to ensure that ethnic identities be recognised as legitimate without being so over-legitimate that ethnic groups feel they have the rights to exert ethnic pressures on the state. This was exactly the lesson the PAP learnt with the Religious Knowledge Experiment, which turned (wrongly) to religion as an (Asian) ballast to liberalism, with the "disastrous" consequences of Islamic groups attempting to influence the PAP's foreign policy towards Israel and of citizens converting to Protestantism, which emphasised ethical consistent selfhood (Cf. Chua 1995, 31).

It is ironic that a government that preaches communitarianism actually suppresses the development of organic/autonomous communities (that has relative autonomy from it). How then are we to make sense of the PAP's communitarianism and more generally, the myth of communitarian Asia? It is vital to remember that when Asian (Confucian) governments speak about "community," they do not refer to *organic communities* but to either the state or the family, which is technically not a "community." Thus, it would be more accurate to say that Asian societies are pro-family rather than pro-community (Cf. Liang in De Bary 1998, 140-141). Indeed, the dominant ideology of Confucian meritocracy promotes inter-citizen competition and is too internally divisive to encourage the building of horizontal bonds of solidarity that Andersen (1983) considers the basis of imagined communities. Within Confucian meritocracy, any horizontal identification is more likely the recognition of fellow citizens as rivals for upward mobility.

Although communitarianism seeks to produce citizens who would be willing to sacrifice for the nation, what constitutes communitarian success in Singapore must be understood within the wider context of the dominant ideology of

competitiveness. Communitarianism does not seek to devalue competition or to prioritise community but to create a caring (communitarian) capitalism where social welfare is provided by communities and not by the state. Despite the claim of Asia as pro-community, Confucian societies ironically come closer than Britain to Thatcher's (market liberalism) ideal that there is no such thing as society, only individuals and families. This myth of communitarian Asia also explains some puzzling features of political subjectivity in Singapore. Interpersonally, citizens see each other as slippery and "insincere;" at the same time, citizens are also known to be very dedicated to their families. Again, keeping in mind that being pro-family is not necessarily pro-community helps us understand that Singaporeans feel no solidarity with their fellowmen (imagined community), but only with their immediate (especially kin-based) community.

What "Asian Values" produces then is not communitarian subjects who would be willing to sacrifice for the nation but pragmatic economic subjects whose acquiescence is conditional upon their personal material-moral gains. I.e., the communitarian or "face" governmentality that underlies citizens' everyday life is less a "genuine" communitarian instinct to do what is good for the community but more a pragmatic and moral instinct to consider what the community would think of oneself.

7D. THE BASIS OF PAP HEGEMONY: FROM ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE TO CONSENT ON COERCION

Before investigating the nature of PAP's hegemony, it is necessary to first consider whether "hegemony" as a concept can still be accurately applied to Singapore. "Civil society" occupies a central role in Gramsci's theory of hegemony but is an entity that is absent in many Asian societies. Gramsci (1971, 238/263) himself commented that the state is everything in the East but in the West, merely an "outer ditch" or "an armour of coercion" which encompasses a more sturdy center of "collective will" *represented* by civil society. Especially in Singapore, not only is "civil society" historically absent, it is also consistently prevented from emerging by the Singapore government.

Before concluding that "hegemony" is therefore non-applicable to Singapore, let us understand what Gramsci considers "civil society" a metaphor for. By calling "civil society" a representation (see italics in previous paragraph), Gramsci seemed to use "civil society" to signify institutions that have a certain relative autonomy from the state (e.g., relatively organic/authentic "centres of collective will"). The role of civil society in his theory suggests that he is not interested in it for its own sake but in its potential to function as a site and as its apparatuses for the embedding of state ideologies or incorporation of popular ideologies.

It is because civil society is seen as a crucial apparatus of the state's ideological project that its "organicity" and relative autonomy become an issue. Gramsci (1971, 124) was aware that leadership involved "a dialectical unity the two levels of force and consent, authority and hegemony." I.e., hegemonic elite is not distinguished by the lack of use of coercion but rather by its ability to legitimise (secure consent on) coercion. Gramsci was most articulate on how consent and relative autonomy relate—the autonomy of civil society allows civil and political society to be confused so that "coercion is not a State affair but effected by public opinion" and confronts citizens as their free choice, more effectively transforming single individuals into "collective man" (1971, 196/242/254/262-263.) I.e., "civil society" is an apparatus that naturalises (renders organic) state ideology and that legitimises/disguises coercion. The more autonomous and "organic" this moral centre is, the more useful it is in securing citizens' identification and in disguising coercion.

This description of the role of civil society in liberal societies correspond to the role of moral community in Singapore, which has less but still some degree of relative autonomy from the state.¹⁵² "Asian Values" is materialised and inscribed unto society as a moral "centre of collective will," particularly the will of the silent, moral Asian majority.

¹⁵² There are signs that media and social institutions would become increasingly autonomous. In Parliament, the process has already begun to design schemes (NMP, NCMP) to incorporate a "loyal opposition." A media founder explains, "the official media is always somewhat compromised by the fact that it is so obviously pro-PAP despite all the denial; nobody believes it is not pro-PAP and the PAP knows it as well. So it would be good to have independent sources that are not hostile."

The difficulty of applying Gramsci's theory of hegemony to Asian societies is not the lack of institutions that can perform the role civil society performs in liberal societies – the moral centre serves quite well as an Asian alternative to “civil society.” Rather, the difficulty is that their (civil society and moral centre) differential degree of relative autonomy so strongly impacts the type of consent that it is doubtful whether this type of “consent” counts as consent by Gramsci's standard. E.g., through liberal lenses, rhetorical compliance appears to be an inferior or even non-existent form of consent, where dissent is subordinated rather than incorporated.

This leads us to the question of what is meant by “consent” or “hegemony.” A critique of Gramsci is that what is considered “consent” is often better described as apathy, acquiescence, conformity or even the dull compulsion of economics (Cf. Key, Partridge, Abercrombie et al). Often, what is meant by consent or hegemony is merely the absence of resistance or a “serious rival” (Leys 1990), rather than the absence of dissent. Indeed, citizens' willing subordination of dissent may be a better indication of consent since no significant ideological work is necessary to ensure that citizens reproduce ideologies when it is convenient; true ideological success lies in elite ideologies being reproduced/superordinated despite dissent and meaninglessness in private life.

A final argument for the relevance of “hegemony” to Singapore is the observation that rhetorical compliance and the subordination of dissent are the *desired* outcomes of the PAP's ideological project. With “Asian Values,” what the PAP has achieved is not an imperfect state of (rhetorical) consent but an outcome that is painstakingly engineered. Indeed, the PAP undertakes extensive projects to under-develop civil society and to pre-empt the formation of organic, autonomous popular communities – the very tools that would create the liberal governmentality so dangerous to one-party governments. This is because the PAP recognises that while these tools (autonomous communities) may aid liberal governments to gain hegemony, they actually stand in the way of one-party hegemony.

* * *

What then is the basis of PAP hegemony and what would constitute moments of hegemonic crisis? To what extent is the second-generation PAP government still reliant on its economic performance and if so, how useful is economic legitimacy during economic crises, when the PAP most needs it?

The answer to this question appears to differ depending on whether we evaluate the PAP's ideological projects as abstract ideologies, or as embedded ideologies/practices. As abstract arguments, the superiority of "Asian Values," "Asian Capitalism" and "Asian Democracy" must be proven by Asia's superior economic performance, i.e., "Asian Values" does not have a relative autonomy from its economic "base structure."

However, in terms of embedded ideologies, the PAP appears to have secured considerable legitimacy. Its legitimacy is no longer dependent on economic performance but on a combination of economic and cultural legitimacy. The most convincing proof of this is that, during economic crises, citizens "tighten their belts" without complaints and continue to support the PAP, to the envy of the Hong Kong government, its closest economic rival.

Even though Asian Values is premised upon economics, in practice, these values have become entrenched in the popular body and have acquired a relative independence from economic conditions. Through inscribing party values unto citizens' everyday habits, routines and postures, and through subjectifying social contradictions as personal dilemmas requiring private solutions and balances, the PAP has created for itself an "inner ditch" (to paraphrase Gramsci) that generates a social/ideological lag to economic developments such that an economic crisis need not translate immediately into an ideological/hegemonic crisis (Chapter 8).

To identify the basis of PAP legitimacy, it is imperative to ask why citizens tolerate authoritarianism and why they continue to support the PAP during economic crises. The nature of the PAP's hegemony is highly complex and multi-faceted and requires that we find a way to unite the many feelings that

citizens experience towards authority—their simultaneous pragmatism and rhetorical compliance, the fear, anger and yet desire for social status.

Citizens do not support the PAP because they believe in “consensual politics” (Asian one-party Democracy) but because they see the PAP as an acceptable (least-worst) package deal. Certainly, they have a lot of dissatisfactions towards authority but they also see no alternatives, accepting that the PAP (and its authoritarianism) is necessary for economic growth, and that it is worthwhile to exchange political freedom for economic prosperity. This is precisely the wider “Asian Values’ argument that economic development requires political stability (unchanging government) and that democracy would bring economic disruption. This wider AV project is complemented by Share Values’ emphasis on communitarian “consensual politics” to create an environment conducive for governmental stability and economic growth.

The key to understanding the nature of *the PAP's hegemony* is to understand that citizens (and opposition) see the PAP as Singapore's best option. As such, they accept and conform to its (economic/capitalistic) values and culture. There is an economic consensus on national goals (economic prosperity) that is a coagulation of the private hopes and aspirations. There is also a collective recognition that this goal requires a certain collective morality (competitiveness or kiasu-ism) and the acknowledgement that the moral path to this goal is a “rigid” one and one that may even require that citizens not be afraid to appear “ugly” (Mr Kiasu) to themselves.

That citizens see competitiveness as ugly but necessary really tells us about the nature and strength of PAP hegemony. Their personal aspiration for prosperity (Singapore Dream) is the foundation of their tolerance of authority. Because they identify with the goals (Asian Capitalism) and accept the PAP as their best option to reach this goal, they are motivated to tolerate the means (Asian one-party Democracy) to reach these ends.

This puts into perspectives the many facets of PAP hegemony: that what it points to is that the PAP is hegemonic but not popular: citizens may not

consider coercion legitimate but would tolerate it – in true pragmatic style – because such (authoritarian) means are seen to be justified by their ends (prosperity).

I would argue that this combination of legitimacy is tantamount to consent to coercion. That Singaporeans are “famous for complaining” not only indicates the magnitude of their dissatisfactions but also indicates that they are aware what they are trading off when they vote for the PAP. In accepting the PAP as a package deal, they make deliberate, weighted decisions and give their consent to tolerate coercion in exchange for economic prosperity.

Because ends justify (authoritarian) means, the primary basis of the PAP's hegemony and the minimal conditions for the maintenance of its one-party (authoritarian) rule is the achievement of a consensus on national goals and to ensure that this goal is relevant and accessible to all.

While first-generation PAP leaders founded their economic legitimacy on material prosperity during the boom years of an early economy, second-generation leaders were faced with a maturing economy and an increasingly stratified society, one where the “Singapore Dream” was no longer relevant or accessible to all citizens. As such, economic satisfaction had increasingly to be achieved ideologically; regardless of economic performance, citizens must be persuaded that the PAP is Singapore's best chance for (economic) survival. The challenge then is to keep the Dream alive for all, since it is *belief* in the Dream, rather than its achievement, that motivates citizens to accept/legitimise authoritarianism as an economic necessity, thereby giving their consent to coercion.

Chapter 8 Asian Democracy

Its challenges and its futures

8A. THE “PUZZLE” OF HEGEMONY WITHOUT POPULARITY AND THE LOGIC OF ONE-PARTY RULE

What makes long-term rule by a single political party an enticing puzzle is not just that it is rare but that it is not supposed to happen; and the longer the period of uninterrupted single-party rule, the more tantalising the puzzle (Pempel 1990, 5). Its contemporary endurance is especially puzzling, given that with globalisation, new media technologies and the hegemony of (Western) democratic values, it must have become even more difficult to keep ideological pluralism at bay. Indeed, many one-party governments often find themselves having to appear tolerant of opposition and employ a rhetoric of democracy to acquire popular legitimacy.

The task of maintaining one-party dominance may be difficult, but it is not impossible, as the continued existence of ideological one-party states demonstrate. Indeed, many note the emergence or even evolution of a qualitatively different form of authoritarianism— “modern authoritarianism” (Perlmutter 1981), or “twentieth-century dictatorships” (Brookner 1995). Authoritarianism is softened or popularised when dominant ideologies, as “organisational weapons” (Perlmutter 1981, 176), are mobilised to organise and intervene in all aspects of life, thereby inscribing party values unto the citizenry.

For Pempel (1990, 7), such inscription constitutes one of the most important but least analysed factors for long-term single-party dominance and goes some way in explaining the puzzle of the durability of one-party states. Indeed, Panebianco (1988, 4) argues that the longer a party is in power, the greater the opportunity to shape its following and the more compelling the pressures for social groups, even those originally hostile to the party, to accommodate themselves to its seemingly unshakeable control.

Seen in this light, we can see that enduring one-party rule is “puzzling” because of certain assumptions about the nature of legitimacy and hegemony. By

focusing on inscription and (Leninist) mass organisation, these authors suggest that one-party governments secure ideological dominance because of the *centrality* of their party values/organisation, rather than through citizen identification. If popularity is not assumed to be the sole basis of government legitimacy, it is possible (and not puzzling) that governments can be hegemonic without being popular. Seen from this light, the puzzle then is not the tenacity of one-party governments but their downfall. If a party's tenure is seen as the opportunity to inscribe party values onto the nation, then the PAP must have made better use of its 42 years of dominance to set in place a pro-party consensus that may allow it outlast Taiwan's KMT (55 years in power) and Mexico's PRI (a record 71 years in power).

However, especially among "Western critics," there is an inclination to sustain the puzzle and abnormality of one-party rule; its endurance is always seen as something requiring explanation, unlike the endurance of its purported antithesis – democracy, which requires no explanation. This moral-political desire to sustain the myth that "the West is democratic, the Rest is authoritarian" is especially promulgated by the discipline of political science and severely limits the usefulness of studies of democratisation (Cf. Hutchinson and Smith 1994; Curran and Park 2000). If "democracy" is to remain conceptually relevant, it cannot simply describe the nature or goal of governments. It cannot be characterised by "popular government" since it is present in authoritarian and democratic societies alike.

Democracy is also more than the absence of coercion since firstly, by Weber's definition, state power is ultimately protected/outlined by an outer ditch/armour of coercion (Gramsci). Secondly, authoritarian governments increasingly soften/evolve into ideologically dominant one-party states that are less reliant on coercion to contain dissent and do develop an aura of democracy.¹⁵³ More importantly, constructivists argue that the distinction between coercion/consent is not always clear since over time, (ideologically justified) coercion becomes internalised as commonsense (Partridge 1975; Key 1961) and every

¹⁵³ It may be that authoritarian states depend, on the last instance, on coercion. But this is so with any state, defined as an institution with a legitimate monopoly over the use of coercion (Weber 1946, 78-79).

consensus implies an Other against which coercion is justified. Finally, democratisation and hegemonic projects have opposite goals. While democracy aims to make available "real/viable" alternatives for citizens to choose from, the attainment of hegemony requires that alternatives are rendered "unviable." Indeed, the presence of democracy ("viable alternatives") would constitute a hegemonic crisis for *any* (democratic or authoritarian) governments since its hegemony is to be indicated by the absence of viable alternatives (Leys 1990).

Yet, despite these deconstructions of the myth, many theorists remain eager to view one-party rule as an oddity and work to refine their theories to identify its wellspring so as to bring to an end to this political "deformity."¹⁵⁴ Instead of coercion, economic performance is now identified as the key basis of one-party government's legitimacy¹⁵⁵; governments have to maintain a minimal level of economic satisfaction to secure votes. As proof, researchers cite both successful and unsuccessful governments. In Asia, the political legitimacy of Asian Democracies (especially in ASEAN) is crucially premised upon good economic performance. In Eastern Europe, there was popular support for communists parties and for remaining in the "pre-democracy" stage (Dobbs 1992, 11-12) because citizens believe that the transition to market democracy would mean the loss of job security and workers having to work harder for less money (Kelly et al 1993, 13). I.e., citizens were willing to vote against democracy to maintain a basic standard of living. In Poland, a virtually unknown candidate - Stanislaw Tyminski - posed the most serious challenge to President Walesa in the 1990 elections by "offering an escapist dream to ordinary Polish voters unwilling to accept the downhill slide of their standard of living in the name of economic recovery" (Remington 1993, 157). The downfall of dominant parties in Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan and Mexico during their recent economic crises was also cited as evidence that the tenacity of one-party governments is

¹⁵⁴ America's humanitarian war against Afghanistan – to be fought with food aids and the seduction of popular culture – epitomises the self-righteousness of the "West" and represents a minor refinement of Fukuyama's theory that prosperity (consumerism of late-capitalism) brings liberal democracy.

¹⁵⁵ This theory is also "true" in the economically developed "West." Political scientists argue that the shape of the economy is a very good indicator of whether the incumbent party will win the presidential elections (CNN, Voice of Democracy, 6/1/2001).

premised upon economic satisfaction, i.e., that economics is the driving force behind political change.

However, even this refinement was problematic – some prosperous one-party states simply refused to evolve into liberal democracies and even became more hegemonic during economic crises. Although there were only a few such counter-examples (and none as outstanding as Singapore), these counter-examples were significant enough to indicate that the theory's faulty prediction of hegemonic crises in these countries rest upon a mistaken understanding of these governments' true basis of hegemony. While economic legitimacy does matter, hegemony can be better understood as a complex *balance* of legitimacies, or rather, a balance between legitimacies (consent) and illegitimacies (dissent) such that citizens consider it worthwhile to keep tolerating authority.

This understanding of hegemony offers us a more rounded view on how various legitimacies – economic, popular, moral, etc. – are situated within the wider question of the basis of hegemony. The project of convincing citizens that it is “good enough” is one that usually requires a two-pronged approach — governments must attempt to secure consent while de-legitimising political alternatives.

In securing consent, economic performance is merely one among many bases of legitimacy, which puts into perspective and explains why it is insufficient to explain one-party dominance with economic performance. Even if economic performance represents a government's chief basis of consent, it would still be an insufficient explanation because hegemony is a particular balance of consent and dissent; it would still be necessary to consider if dissent is sufficiently de-legitimised so that it is subordinated and outweighed by consent, such that subjects perceive that the incumbent government is their best option and that there are “no alternatives.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ This is Leys' (1990) point, although a more intricate point can be made from the Singapore case. The PAP tries to ensure that alternatives are not viable; however, should alternatives become viable, the PAP would argue that there is “no credible opposition” to implement this viable alternative.

Conceptualising hegemony as a balance between consent and dissent helps us identify the minimal condition, or the logic of one-party ideological dominance. Hegemony is not the absence of dissent or the presence of ideological pluralism, but rather the subordination of dissent to consent so that pluralism does not bring about ideological fragmentation. Such consensuses give off an aura of democracy, allowing one-party governments to deny opposition representation and to legitimately claim to represent the nation.

In this final chapter, I will take a comparative approach to identify some challenges that have led to the termination of one-party governments and consider how existing one-party governments overcome them. In studying strategies of maintaining contemporary one-party dominance, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) deserves close attention. Not only have many ASEAN countries prospered, they also remain stubbornly authoritarian, to the extent of sparking off a "second wave of authoritarianism" in Asia (Öjendal and Antlöv 1998, 525). O'Leary and Coplin (1983, 13-15) described Southeast Asia as the strongest bulwark against democracy globally and unique in its resistance of universal human rights. What ASEAN has in common is "Asian Values"—*only* Southeast Asian nations use it to defend their authoritarianism (Petierri 1999). How and to what extent does AV enable one-party governments to perpetuate their rule and evolve into models of "soft authoritarianism?" How viable are "Asian Democracies" and what could constitute a hegemonic crisis for them?

8B. ECONOMIC LEGITIMACY AND ITS RELATIVE AUTONOMY FROM MATERIAL/ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

If it is true that hegemony depends on a minimal level of economic performance, then economic crises should precipitate a severe legitimacy crisis, especially for "Asian Democracies." Firstly, the superiority of Asian Democracy requires economic "proof." Secondly, the Asian economic miracle may not be sustainable. Krugman (1994, 70-71), an eminent economist, argues that the Asian economic miracle, like the Soviet miracle, was propelled

by "perspiration, not inspiration."¹⁵⁷ Thirdly, economists argue that the structural weaknesses of Asian Capitalism constitute "fertile ground for a financial crisis" (Krugman 1998). Its features of high savings and low spending stunt the development of strong local markets, rendering Asian economies susceptible to global fluctuations. Fourthly, "face" and corruption seem intimately linked. The Asian economic crisis was precipitated by banks giving out loans not based on commercial feasibility but by personal/political connections (Rahim 2000, 4), which thwarted the emergence of entrepreneurs and the spirit of innovation needed to sustain growth. In Indonesia, "Asian Values" have come to signify "KKN" (Indonesia pro-democracy slogan for corruption, cronyism and nepotism). The "Asian" practice of telling superiors what one thinks they want to hear can hide warning signs of structural crises – which explains why American economists and journalists were puzzled by the lack of warning signs of such a huge financial meltdown; Ex-President Habibie (Indonesia) also complained that he could not have a good grasp of the seriousness of civil unrest because his officials presented him with sugar-coated reports.

However, the structural susceptibility of Asian Capitalism to economic crises does not mean that the economic legitimacies of Asian governments are necessarily compromised by poor economic performance. During the economic crisis, not only was the PAP's economic legitimacy un-dented, it even managed, to Hong Kong's envy, to rally citizens to "tighten [their] belts" and accept harsh policies aimed at restructuring the economy. During the November 2001 General Elections, when Singapore was experiencing its deepest economic recession since Independence, the PAP managed to improve their electoral percentage by 10% to 75.3%.

The PAP was able to maintain economic satisfaction through extensive ideological projects aimed at altering expectations and perception and at sustaining faith in the PAP. Even before the crisis, the PAP had become aware that increasing social stratification rendered the Singapore Dream out of reach

¹⁵⁷ He argues that Singapore's 8.5% annual growth over 30 years is unsustainable: the workforce grew from 27% to 51%, investments as a share of output rose from 11% to more than 40%. Such growth is based on one-time increase in changes that cannot be repeated since it is based on increased input rather than efficiency (Krugman 1998).

for many citizens and undertook a campaign to lower expectations. During the crisis, the PAP convinced citizens that the crisis was “regional” and thus beyond the control of the government. Many interviewees also reproduced the government’s comparative frame, where economic satisfaction was based upon how well Singapore was doing relatively to worse-off neighbours. Indeed, the PAP was so successful that citizens, despite believing that the crisis was “regional” and beyond the PAP’s control, also believed that the PAP was the only option to lead Singapore out of the economic storm. This requires an ideological short-circuiting: the logical questions (that citizens in many other countries ask) that “if the government is so good, why did the crisis happen?” was not even thought.

The Singapore case is an important exception that helps us crystallise the genuine basis of economic legitimacy — perhaps the most fundamental basis of legitimacy for any governments. It demonstrates the incomplete correspondence between economic performance and economic legitimacy and reveals that economic legitimacy is as much an ideological project to secure citizens’ *economic satisfaction* as actual *economic performance*, since economic satisfaction is always ideologically mediated/defined (Katz 1996, 16). Gramsci (1971, 145) noted the importance of perception on citizens’ consent:

A company [military officers] would be capable of going for days without food because it could see that it was physically impossible for supplies to get through; but it would mutiny if a single meal was missed as a result of neglect or bureaucratism.

The Singaporean case demonstrates that a government’s economic legitimacy has relative autonomy from actual economic performance. Indeed, the reverse may be true—prosperity may create different dissatisfactions and hegemonic challenges. While economic crises render the Singapore Dream inaccessible to citizens, prosperity can make the Dream irrelevant because prosperous citizens may decide that it is not longer worthwhile to exchange political freedom for incremental material improvement (Cf. Rodan 1993b). If, as Althusser (1969, 234) observes, ideology “expresses a will, a hope or a nostalgia, rather than [describes] a reality,” then the project of securing economic legitimacy is less about sustaining double-digit growth than in keeping citizens’ dreams and hopes alive.

This is precisely Hall's and Leys' disagreement with Jessop et al (1998, 1990). Jessop and colleagues attributed Britain's economic decline in the late 1980s to Thatcher's weak economic policies, further suggesting that this political failure could mean a "farewell to Thatcherism." For Hall and Leys, Thatcherism was not a failed project but an ideologically successful one — best indicated by how even critics of Thatcher could not bring themselves to support Labour (Leys 1990, 127-128). Hall (1988b, 167) argues that Thatcher had so captured the social imagination and commonsense that Labour did not have the cultural and imaginative resources to offer a potentially counter-hegemonic alternative. Thatcher successfully attributed Britain's economic decline to the market, not to the government, thereby invoking popular fears of global competition in support of economic protectionism (anti-EU, anti-immigration). Labour, on the other hand, was seen as being soft on crime and lacking in strong economic policies to deal with global capitalism — i.e., incapable of protecting white working-class Britain against the world.

If there is some autonomy between economic performance and economic legitimacy, why are economic crises threatening? That there is relative autonomy does not mean that the ideological (economic legitimacy) is completely autonomous from the material (economic performance) and that material conditions no longer matter — they matter profoundly. Hall (1988b, 170) argues that hegemony is a product of specific conjunctures and material conditions:

Gramsci always insisted that hegemony is not exclusively an ideological phenomenon. There can be no hegemony without "the decisive nucleus of the economic." On the other hand, do not fall into the trap of the old mechanical economism and believe that if you can only get hold of the economy, you can move the rest of life... The question of hegemony is always a question of new cultural order... The notion of a "historical block" is precisely different from that of a pacified, homogenous ruling class. It entails a different conception of how social forces and movements, in their diversity, can be articulated into strategic alliances.

In what ways does the material matter? Economic performance matters because, not only is it the default basis of legitimacy that governments depend on to sustain their rule ("economics as the driving force of politics," as political

scientist believe), but also because the material serves as a "base" for the ideological. The success/legitimacy of economic ideologies is accumulated over long periods of good economic performance.

Furthermore, there appears to be a simple relationship between hegemony, economic performance and economic legitimacy – to remain hegemonic, governments must have either economic performance or economic legitimacy. This is borne out in the interesting case in Indonesia and Mexico where corrupt (economically illegitimate) governments were tolerated during decades of slow economic growth and were not seen as a problem until the recent economic crisis (The Age 04/07/2000). Rahim (2000, 2-6) observed that during the miracle years in Southeast Asia, "corruption and authoritarian rule were commonly trivialised and not considered as serious impediments to long term economic development. Indeed, authoritarian rule was viewed by many business leaders... as providing the economic prerequisite for future political development."

This seems to indicate that, at any one time, citizens would tolerate only either economic illegitimacy or poor economic performance, not both. This also indicates that during economic crisis, governments sustain their hegemony by letting the ideological (economic legitimacy) takes precedence over the material (economic performance). However, because economic legitimacy is also dependent on the material condition, an extended economic crisis can wear off a government's economic legitimacy.

With this understanding of how governments can lose their economic legitimacy – through corruption or extended economic crisis – we can appreciate the PAP's foresight in averting a hegemonic crisis.

Corruption poses the most lethal challenge since it challenges not only economic legitimacy but also moral legitimacy. Such moral discrediting of a government seems to put a quick end to any ongoing ideological debates and makes the termination of its office inevitable. The PRI's 77 years of one-party rule was terminated by corruption, not by popular/ideological alienation. "There

was little substantive difference ... between Mr Fox and Mr Labastida. Both favoured Mexico's pro-market course and promised economic growth" (The Age 4/7/2000). C.H.Lee argues similarly that it was less ideological division than charges of corruption (during the economic crisis) that terminated the KMT's 55 years of one-party rule. Taiwanese election campaigns in 2000 were not focused on pro/anti-China issues but on the KMT's corruption. In Indonesia, such doubts were deeper than in many other Asian countries. What was doubted was not the only the integrity of individual politicians but also the values of the party, which meant that citizens could only be appeased by a change of party, not merely a change of its leader.

Cognizant of the threat of corruption, the PAP takes extreme precaution to avoid it. Besides their all-white dress code to signify their political purity and the constructed myth of LKY's sacrifice that places the PAP's integrity above question, the PAP also dissociates itself from corrupted officials (punishments range from expulsion to "suicide.") To prevent ministers from being tempted by high pay, the government pay ministers an extremely high salary that is tied to the top salaries of the private sector.¹⁵⁸ The Singapore government appears to be very successful in its war against corruption—not only is it voted the least corrupt in Asia (ST04/04/1998), many interviewees contrasted its non-corruptibility compared to those of neighbouring countries.

Secondly, the PAP takes on many ad hoc ideological projects to lower citizens' expectations and alter their perception of the economic crisis. All interviewees reproduced the media's comparative frame and believed that Singapore's situation was not as bad as its neighbours. They also attributed the crisis to "regional" or "market" forces, rather than to the government, and believed that the PAP was their best chance out of the economic storm.

Aware that sustaining its hegemony in an extended crisis requires more than merely altering citizens' expectations/perceptions and to "sweeten the ground" for oncoming elections, the PAP initiated a S\$11.3 billion stimulus package

¹⁵⁸ Implemented in July 2000, civil service salaries were raised by 13%; a small elite saw a 50% rise while the bottom 10% of the population witnessed an almost 50% fall in income from 1998 to 1999. (<http://www.singapore-window.org/sw00/000803fe.htm>).

(comprising of measures of various fronts – tax cuts, rebates, concessions, etc.) to combat the recession. A new scheme to give all Singaporeans a tangible monetary share in the nation (popularly thought of as a scheme to buy all Singaporeans' heart), called the "New Singapore Shares" (AWSJ, 17/10/2001), was launched, with a caveat that low-income residents stood to benefit more.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, the PAP is aware that these are merely short-term measures and that in the long term, its economic legitimacy would have to be sustained through economic performance. Deeply aware that ultimately, economics matter profoundly, the PAP is quickly implemented austere programmes to restructure the economy because it is also aware that such "bitter medicine" had the best chance of being "swallowed" when the ground is sweet, when its legitimacy is still strong.

Contrast the PAP's foresight to governments in Thailand and South Korea, who blamed previous governments for exacerbating the economic downturn and the Malaysian government, who blamed foreign (especially Western) investors for irresponsible speculations in the Malaysian economy – these governments seem to prioritise ideological projects over industrial re-structuring. The Hong Kong government, by contrast, is urgently aware of the need to restructure their economy but is unable to do so because it does not have sufficient economic legitimacy to convince citizens to accept the bitter pill. Because of its foresight, the Singapore government is likely to recover quickest among its competitors and significantly strengthen its "track record" when the economy recovers, rendering O'Leary and Coplin (1983, 21)'s prophetic insight that the PAP regime "is likely to continue indefinitely" as relevant today as it was in the past.

8C. BLOCKING THE DEVELOPMENT OF "VIABLE ALTERNATIVES"

When we say that economic crises can threaten governments' economic legitimacy, what is meant is that economic crises could potentially become hegemonic crises if previously unthinkable alternatives become suddenly viable, leading to an ideological/political fragmentation of society. If hegemony is understood as the absence of a "serious rival" rather than as a popular

¹⁵⁹ As usual, the scheme was picked up the following day by the Hong Kong government, who expressed admiration and intentions of imitating it. Chinese scholars

government (Leys 1990), then the project of de-legitimizing dissent may be more important than the project of securing consent. Indeed, it seems that increasingly, governments are elected or become hegemonic not on the basis of their popularity but on the basis that they are the least-worst options, and this observation applies equally to authoritarian and democratic governments.¹⁶⁰

In this section, I want to identify some sources from which "viable alternatives" emerge and examine how governments try to block them. Perlmutter (1981, 178-179) noted that modern authoritarianism was constituted radially with a party centre that intervened in/organized all aspects of citizen life through auxiliary (state) instruments. Diffused but not de-centralised, authoritarianism is sustained by the saturation of the political arena with party values (Chan 1976, 202) so that it is difficult for alternative ideologies to gain a foothold and fragment the society's ideological unity.

With the view that authoritarianism is organized with the party as the heart of mass/society organization, I will look at ideological alternatives that emerge from within the centre and from outside it. Challenges from within the centre are rare but difficult to contain. They tend to be high in credibility and, if allowed to secure a popular following, could develop into a strong counter-hegemonic movement. Challenges from outside the centre are more likely to exist in one-party societies.¹⁶¹ Such challenges tend to have lower credibility but are threatening because they tend to develop bottom-up from relatively autonomous, organic communities and are likely to resonate deeply with popular sentiment.

have expressed similar interest.

¹⁶⁰ Hall (1977, 337) described Thatcherism as a form of "authoritarian populism" while the New York Times (05/06/2001) described Blair's Labour Party as "not lovable, but electable." Similar sentiments applied to President Bush during the US Presidential elections.

¹⁶¹ In ideologically plural societies, there are usually already more than one moral centre.

I. Cracks from within

Sparks (2000, 39-40) observed that in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, elite fissures "made it much easier for journalists to say ... what they saw as important," triggering a "golden age of freedom and independence for journalists." Because elite consensus is crucial for popular consensus (Zaller 1992), even if there is elite dissensus, it is crucial for party members to maintain an aura of unity in public. Coming from the highest sources, such challenges exist within "the sphere of legitimate controversy" (Hallin 1986) and are vocalised by individuals/elites who cannot be easily discredited in public. If such credible dissent (viable alternatives) are allowed to circulate publicly, they could polarise public opinion, making it impossible for dissent/dissenters to be completely purged and causing the system to implode. Factionalism is so damaging that even after a victor (victorious ideology) is identified, the project of rebuilding consensus and "political orthodoxy" - one that reshapes the "spheres of consensus and dissent" (Hallin 1986; C.C.Lee 2000, 130) - is difficult and dependent on the margin of victory.

Factionalism can emerge from a few sources. Within the vassal-state system, when authority is perceived as "foreign," pro-independence elite (or a rebel local government) may emerge to rally citizens against authority (Slovenia against Belgrade, Taiwan against China), thereby whetting an irreversible popular appetite for freedom. In Taiwan, it is "indisputable that the in-fighting ... within KMT" on the issues of pro-/anti-China "made it possible for [the opposition] to come to power" (C.H.Lee 2000).

A second common source of factionalism is the prolonged suppression of internal ideological difference. In the PRI (Mexico), party splits had become so irreconcilable as to warrant voting reforms (Lapper 2000). Presidential candidates were no longer handpicked by an "all-powerful president (who) ruled like a monarch" (The Age 04/07/2000) but are selected through internal democracy (Hallin 2000, 97)¹⁶² or primary elections.

¹⁶² Cf. Bass (1993, 77-78) on the 4 ways that succession crises precipitate internal democracy.

More frequently, factionalism emerges in post-colonial states with the retirement or death of first-generation leaders with revolutionary/mythical legitimacy, creating a situation where second-generation leaders have to find alternative bases of legitimacy. In many post-Soviet Central Asian countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, NYT20/02/2001), there is a struggle between monarchical and democratic succession, which tends to be “resolved” with a democratic justification of monarchy through presenting the successor as being popular as well.

The PAP took many precautions to avoid allowing the issue of succession to trigger off factionism. Firstly, LKY understood that as long as he lived, party unity would be maintained because PAP factions would respect his choice of successor. This led LKY to retire early – something atypical by Asia’s gerontological standards. In Malaysia, citizens joke about DPMs who tire of waiting to become the boss (Rodan 2000, 175; BT18/06/1999), implying that like Suharto (Indonesia), Mahathir may stay on until unceremoniously booted out; in Turkmenistan, Niyazov was declared president for life in 1999.

Additionally, LKY did not retire to give his son (DPM Lee) a smooth succession. Wary of popular criticisms of “dynastic authoritarianism” (TIME08/09/1986) and of popular rumours about PAP factionalism between LKY’s son and Chok-Tong Goh, LKY bypassed his son for the post of PM. Goh was ushered in promising a new consultative style of government. However these gestures were not effective in quelling popular criticisms and rumours. Despite LKY’s endorsement, PM Goh’s team secured only 61% of the votes in his first elections as PM in 1991 – a landslide victory by Western standards but an infirm mandate by Singaporean standards. It was enough to win but not enough to repudiate party-internal doubts about his leadership. Goh’s immediate reaction was one of desolation and defeat; he had lost an invisible battle to prove that he was not the “second choice” and to prove that he was not chosen as PM merely to dispel popular dissatisfactions.

This show of a united PAP front to disprove rumours of “dynastic authoritarianism” and factionalism reflects not only the attempt to maintain PAP

unity. Such privatisation of elite dissensus is also aided/guided by Asian Values of face, respect for authority and avoidance of confrontation. These values also guide inter-state relations between ASEAN states. Unlike the "Western way" of (humanitarian) intervention, the "ASEAN way" was one of "non-interference," particularly to give face¹⁶³ and protect each other's sovereignty but not criticising and thereby legitimating ideological alternatives in public. Compliance to the ASEAN way would ensure that there would always an elite consensus that upholds a normative (moral) centre that would make it difficult for ideological alternatives to be legitimised publicly.

However, Ramacharan (2000, 60) argues that members' compliance with the "ASEAN way" is rhetorical. "Publicly, ASEAN leaders adhere to the vaunted 'ASEAN way' of non-interference" while privately, behind-the-scenes, quiet diplomacy interference take place to resolve issues causing tensions between states." Nischalke (2000, 105) argues that the ASEAN way is a myth, an ideal and rhetoric rather than a common practice. The Philippines and Thailand's efforts to find an appropriate alternative ("constructive engagement," "flexible engagement," "enhanced interaction" ST5/7/1998, ST26/6/1998) were met with vehement protests. Even though compliance has a high cost,¹⁶⁴ clearly, the advantages of maintaining the ASEAN way (e.g., the blocking of credible criticisms from other ASEAN states) are seen to outweigh its conveniences and costs. It is precisely such rhetorical compliance and "behind-the-scene" diplomacy that allows the ASEAN unity to be perpetuated despite contradictions and inconveniences.

II. Cracks from without

There is a consensus among political economists and liberals that a free media is the cornerstone of democracy, although they disagree about what constitutes a free press (Whistler et al 1993, 224). Liberals argue that the market frees the

¹⁶³ DPM (Singapore): I don't think I will be able to tap my neighbour on the shoulder to tell him ... This is not how our relationship work... (We, the ASEAN) are not one EU, not NAFTA. (ST23/7/98)

¹⁶⁴ "Non-interference" incurs high costs to individual nations. In 1997, an Indonesia forest fire created a haze over many ASEAN nations. Singapore lost an estimated US\$8.8 million in short term damage to health, US\$4.8 million in tourism and US\$6.9 million in airline revenue (Ramacharan 2000, 68).

media from state dependency. Because competition is associated with freedom, commercial media are believed to be better at presenting political alternatives than state-controlled media. This liberal paradigm is partly borne out in Korea, Taiwan and Mexico, where market competition has stimulated ideological pluralism. Rapid economic growth has allowed big capital to surmount the high financial barriers to entry to compete against official media (Park et al 2000, 116; C.C.Lee 2000, 129). In Taiwan, Rongsan Lin, a real-estate tycoon, declared war on the "Big Two" (two main newspapers) by distributing free newspapers, successfully pulling in many new converts after the trial period. In Mexico, the launch of a rival television network Azteca spurred the pro-official Televisa to realise the costs of aligning itself with the ruling elite rather than the populace—the mere presence of a contender motivated the dominant media to be less self-censoring (Hallin 2000, 106).

The BBC is an obvious counter-example to the liberal paradigm; it is better able to present political alternatives even-handedly than many unregulated commercial media. The issue, as Sparks (2000, 47) succinctly points out, is that the entry of new media players is no guarantee of pluralism because democracy may be negotiated and organised for the benefit of elite groups. The state and the market can both be enemies of popular expression and democracy.

This is the gist of a political economy approach, where the free press is a democratic ideal. In reality, it is difficult for the media to be truly independent of the market or the state. Media control is concentrated in the elite, limiting the range of views represented. Political economists argue that a market-based media system, considered "free" by liberals, may be directed towards maintaining control rather than serving democratic ideals (Hallin 1994; Curran et al 2000, 5). Park's argument against the globalisation thesis (Featherstone 1990) applies to many Asian states where state power is strengthened by the "collusive relations" and interpenetration of state and media elites (Park et al 2000, 121/113; Curran et al 2000, 14).

The political economists' acknowledgement of the limitations on the media's democratic role does not mean that the project of democratisation needs to be abandoned. Rather, its aims can be better achieved by identifying the ways in which the media are restrained from representing alternatives as viable and prevented from constituting a hegemonic threat to one-party states.

Technological controls. Louise Williams (2000, 5-7) observed that governments have always tried to control tools of dissemination. In the late 1960s, Soeharto (Indonesia) deprived political prisoners of pencil and paper. In Ceasescu's Romania, typewriters had to be registered; in the Philippines, photocopying machines had to be registered. This is still the case in Myanmar today with fax machines. Insufficiently managed, new technologies can serve guerrilla purposes, such as the VCR in Thailand, the "mobile phone revolution" in the Philippines, the Internet for Falungong members in China and the guerrilla Internet newspapers in Laos.

Today, many ASEAN governments continue to rely on technological control. In many countries (Vietnam, Brunei, Cambodia, Myanmar), the media is either state-owned (Mares 2000, 247; L.Williams 2000, 13) or overseen by government bodies (Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Nain 2000, 14). While ownership successfully deprives ideological alternatives of media access, the Internet is a medium that cannot be easily owned or controlled. For this reason, many Asian governments study Singapore's "firewall" strategy of managing the Internet. While Myanmar and North Korea prefer isolation, the Singapore government is intent on building the entire communications network itself ("Singapore One"). By 2001, every household in the island will be "online," which allows the government to "wander into ... computers of Internet users" (Rodan 2000, 169).

Coercion. Should such technological controls fail to curb the emergence of viable alternatives, many ASEAN governments resort to coercion to suppress dissent. What is considered anti-government behaviour ranges from locking doors at night (North Korea), spreading anti-government rumours in personal email chains (Malaysia) to gatherings in groups of more than 4 persons

(Singapore). Failure to comply can result in "punishment" that ranges from suspended media license, public shaming, "drinking tea" with officials (Vietnam, Mares 2000, 247/254), being sued for libel (Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, see Coronel 2000, 163), expulsion (China, Indonesia), jail (Burma) and even murder (Cambodia, Thai massacre in 1992).

Such "hard" control does not necessarily work in governments' favour. In Malaysia, harsh punishment "outraged the public's sense of natural justice and ... eroded the traditional Malay reverence for the 'leader'... significantly weaken[ing] the UMNO's one party hegemony [and] causing it to be defeated in several by-elections" (Rahim 2000, 15). Additionally, the media can remain an effective ideological tool only if they appear relatively autonomous, balanced and not simply as a government mouthpiece (Heng 1993, 41). Citizens can signal their displeasure with state-controlled media through their non-consumption. In Mexico, independent newspapers are more successful in competing for readers than the traditional, official press (Hallin 2000, 104). In Thailand, the government newspaper - *Chao Phraya* - was so unpopular that it folded up after only three months (Chongkittavorn 2000, 223). In Vietnam, citizens consider party broadcasts (over nation-wide loudspeakers) "white noise," while party newspapers often remain neatly folded and untouched on desks (Mares 2000, 240). In Taiwan, the United Daily News' circulation fell by 90,000 copies as a result of a boycott campaign (C.C.Lee 2000, 129). When the South Korean government forced advertisers to cancel advertisements placed in *Dong-A Ilbo* (an independent newspaper), it triggered an unprecedented number of personal advertisements by readers to encourage the journalists; civic groups also boycotted subscription fees for Korea Broadcasting System (Park et al 2000, 119; J.K.Lee 1996, 86-87).

In the long run, hard authoritarianism fuels and focuses dissent—in Poland, the imposition of Martial Law (1981) did not break the opposition but merely drove it underground to reorganise until it became strong enough to force concessions from the government. The Polish experience was repeated throughout Eastern Europe with delayed success. In the Hungarian "media wars," the government experienced a brief victory in quelling independent

media chiefs but their success in controlling the media cost them very heavy losses during the 1994 elections (Sparks 2000, 39/41).

Market strategies. Knowing that hard authoritarianism can backfire, governments often try to soften their control. Increasingly, state power is exerted through the market so that the media appears relatively autonomous. The miracle years saw a media boom in Asia, with Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Hong Kong competing to become the regional media hub. However, the trend towards commercialisation and liberalisation was reversed in the economic crisis of 1997. In Thailand, advertising revenue plunged 60%; minor media ceased operations while major newspapers halved their number of pages and reduced colour printing (Chongkittavorn 2000, 230).

Besides having to cope with “free” market forces, media companies have also to endure governments’ intervention into the media market. Foreign media eager to break into the China market have no choice but to court the Chinese government (L.Williams 2000, 9). In dealing with local media, Doronila (2000, xv) observes the commonplace strategy of economic strangulation of the press through withdrawal of advertising, often by or at the instigation of governments. In Singapore (Rodan 2000, 184), amendments to the Films Act in 1998 banned political advertising. Even in democratic states like Philippines, President Estrada engaged “godfather” strategies (Coronel 2000, 161) in dissuading business-owners from advertising in newspapers critical of him.

Asian media are highly susceptible to governments’ financial influence because of the clientalist relationships between state and media, which can be traced to Confucianism’s emphasis on harmonious and paternalistic political relationships, where society does not seek autonomy from the state but support in official and unofficial ways (J.K.Lee 1996, 88; Park et al 2000, 112/116). Some economic strategies for encouraging dependency – which Pye and Pye identifies as the key concept for understanding Asian political subjectivity - include government patronage (Philippines, Cambodia, Lao, see Coronel 2000, 162; Rich 2000, 26/34) and ensuring low salaries for journalists so that they are reliant on supplies of rice, food (Myanmar, Rich 2000, 20-21) and “envelope

journalism" ("taxi" or "lunch" money are given to journalists for attendance at press conferences in the Philippines, Thailand. Cf. Doronila 2000, 13; Coronel 2000, 153; Chongkittavorn 2000, 221). The most direct strategy for ensuring the "interpenetration of elite" is the South Korean strategy of dangling lucrative civil service careers and preferential tax treatments to induce journalist compliance (C.C.Lee 2000, 126; Park et al 2000, 114).

How beneficial are these "market" pressures in maintaining government hegemony? In Thailand, Vietnam and Philippines, intense competition and uneven literacy precipitated the phenomenon of tabloidization. Homogenous reporting results because the media produce only stories that are guaranteed to sell (Coronel 2000, 152). It is not clear if such market-led developments exert a positive or negative effect on government hegemony. On the one hand, tabloidisation can threaten the integrity/centrality of the social-moral values that buttress Asian (authoritarian) democracy. (In Hong Kong, tabloidisation is so serious that a local group felt the need to set up a "pollution index" to monitor sleaze, fabrication and scandals. Cf. C.Yeung 2000, 58.) On the other hand, in Vietnam, tabloidisation can also create a moral panic about social crime and convince citizens that yet more social controls are needed (Mares 2000, 246).

Ideological strategies: Justifying unpopular governments. Many governments do undertake nationalist projects to achieve popular consensus and avoid ideological fragmentation to achieve political legitimacy for one-party rule. Bass (1993, 74-77) highlights three regional variations on this theme: In Latin America, governments engaged in pseudo-democratic electoral practices (stuffing ballot boxes, The Age 04/07/2000) to appear truly popular; Leninist Eastern European governments claimed to be protectors of proletariat/mass interest; third-world governments equated the party with the nation and represented themselves as the guardians of the nation.

The project of maintaining popularity is hard work. In Mexico, the PRI was able to bridge various class interests only through compromising its own ideological values to incorporate a wide range of political tendencies – including revolutionary populism and international corporatism. Hallin (2000, 98-99)

noted that Mexican political history is often recounted as a series of shifts in political direction, by which the PRI maintained the loyalty of its various political currents. What caused the PRI to lose its one-party rule after a record of 71 years was that it tried to legitimise itself on the basis of popularity. For a one-party state for whom party-internal and popular ideological unity is vital, such attempts to "follow" the masses meant that over time, different ideological values become over-legitimated to the extent of causing the party – as an authoritarian society's moral centre - to fracture from within.

The PAP understands this very well and consistently refuses to acknowledge that governments ought to be popular. LKY remains unapologetic about his views ("never mind what the people thinks") while PM Goh told off some citizens who tried to "threaten" him with their votes, cautioning that governments that allowed themselves to be swayed by popular whims would not make strong/good governments. The PAP is keenly aware that popularity is an inferior and unstable basis of legitimacy for one-party governments. Firstly, it prevents the party from being a firm moral centre because the society's core values are being dictated by current fashions. Contradictory popular values, if over-legitimated, could bring about ideological/political fragmentation. Secondly, popularity is a problematic basis of legitimacy because it focuses inter-party (and intra-party) competition on individuals; such popularity contests may over-legitimate charisma as a criteria of good government. Under such circumstances, a hegemonic crisis would be precipitated every time a charismatic opposition leader emerges.

Singapore is not unique in its caution against popular legitimacy. However its invention of AV represents one of the best strategies at re-constituting a sound alternative basis of government legitimacy. The daring and brilliance of the Singapore government's "Asian Democracy" emerges especially in comparison to other governments' attempt to legitimise their unpopularity (to de-legitimise the relevance of popularity and legitimise alternative basis of legitimacy).

Third-world governments use several strategies to legitimise their non-popular rule. The most radical of this is the complete repudiation of democracy as a

colonial institution that the West continues to impose on the third-world, i.e., it is a form of postcolonial imperialism. Harbeson (1986, 10-11) observes that the more negative their colonial experience,¹⁶⁵ the more African nations are likely to perceive democracy as an alien imposition.

Given the global hegemony of democracy, many third-world governments understand that it is impossible to completely refuse to base their authority on popularity without incurring international sanctions. Instead, most governments try to subordinate democracy without excluding it; e.g., most do not challenge the (intrinsic) desirability of democracy but "resist" from within. Of these attempts, the "development model" of democracy is perhaps the most common. It argues that democracy is a luxury that young nation-states cannot afford in the crucial period of nation building (Apter 1970). Malaysian PM Mahathir is especially fond of this model and modifies Singapore's model of "Asian Values" to argue that while democracy is relevant for Asia, now is not the time.

This model accepts the intrinsic desirability of democracy as defined by the West—i.e., democracy is not de-legitimised, merely postponed. Because democracy is not repudiated, domestic pro-democracy movements easily acquire a certain legitimacy in their resistance of one-party governments. I.e., although this model aims to secure hegemony for non-popular governments, it actually also legitimises domestic counter-hegemonic movements.

By contrast, Leninist and (Singapore's) Asian Democracy models challenge the West's monopoly over the definition of democracy and argue that their unique blends of democracy are "superior" to the West's. The Leninist model considers itself superior not only electorally and organisationally (high voter turnout and mass integration, Bass 1993, 74-77) but also morally/ideologically

¹⁶⁵ Democracy as *self-rule* is difficult to implement because African nation-state boundaries often include a plurality of kingdoms (Tanzania, Uganda). Democracy within the boundaries of the nation-state would entail breaking up ethnic groups and rendering ethnicity as little more than folklore within an invented nation (Ronen 1986, 194/197). This means, ironically, that democratisation in African states can only come about with a strong state to suppress ethnic conflicts and challenges to political centralisation.

through representing itself as the guardian of proletariat interests against exploitation.

By making universal claims as to the superiority of its variety of democracy, the Leninist model may be perceived as "aggressive/expansionist" and expose itself to intense international criticism. This is precisely one of the many advantages of the Asian Democracy model— by representing itself as culturally particular, it is not accountable to "Western" standards and in fact, delegitimises non-Asian (Western) criticisms as cultural interference. Yet, although too culturally particular to tolerate international criticism, it is simultaneously not too culturally particular to rally regional solidarity and legitimacy among Confucian, Buddhist, Islamic, Jewish and Hindu nations.

Indeed, its appeal to Asian culture makes authority appear organic and natural. Confucianism is especially effective at naturalising authority since its emphasis on "face" and hierarchical relations dictates that subjects obey authority for its own sake. Scholars have noted that Confucianism is guided by ceremony/form rather than by ideology (which corresponds with earlier analysis that the PAP presents itself as a pragmatic government with no ideological affiliations). Besides reifying obedience to authority as an intrinsic social-moral value, "Asian Democracy" also does not require that a government be ideologically consistent. AV is a discourse that is flexible enough to hold together ideological contradictions, especially through representing these contradictions as dilemmas facing a moral Asian nation. Its two-tiered formulation (dominant ideology of competitiveness and subdominant ideology of communitarianism) offers, like Thatcherism, a way of reconciling and addressing the contradictions of international and late-capitalism.¹⁶⁶

While many third-world governments aim to deter democracy by deconstructing the primacy of popular legitimacy, Asian Values is outstanding in that it does so with fewer side effects. For many ASEAN countries, this new basis of legitimacy comes from their phenomenal economic performance. Basing

¹⁶⁶ In Singapore, contradictions between protectionism and global competitiveness and between accumulation and gratification are popularly framed as the stressful lifestyle of a productive worker versus the less stressful lifestyle of the consumer.

government legitimacy on this has the distinct advantage of allowing the dominant government to not even concede to the opposition a fighting chance to contest for government. Öjendal and Antlöv (1998, 528) observed that precisely because elections are based on how well the government has delivered the goods ("track record"), there is little chance of opposition coming to power democratically.

The balance between popular and economic legitimacy is particularly skewed in Singapore, which testifies to the hegemonic success of the PAP. With the AV project, citizens learnt to disdain popular governments as "weak" and become convinced that a good government is a strong government who is not afraid to be unpopular and to undertake austere policies for long-term economic prosperity.

How far are citizens willing to tolerate authoritarian practices? The PAP appears to have successfully legitimised a national closure to ideological contestation. In terms of electoral practices, Huntington (1997, 10-11) observes that elections in Asia are "designed to produce consensus rather than choice." ASEAN governments prefer a "quantitative" model of democracy where democracy means submitting to the wishes of the majority ("first-past-the-post" system) rather than the "qualitative" pluralism model (proportional representation). In Indonesia, Suharto's *Pancasila* democracy permitted only two opposition parties on the premise that a multiparty system was culturally alien and inherently destabilising (Rahim 2000, 10-11).

In terms of collective bargaining, Asian and Western democracies seek to contain challenges to authority to different degrees. Pempel (1990, 10) observed that in western democracies, bargaining among interest groups is legitimised as the primary procedure for setting national policies, thereby removing important policy decisions from electoral politics. For Olsen (1983), such incorporation (collective bargaining) emerged in western democracies as a paradigmatic alternative to pluralism. Among Asian Democracies, even collective bargaining – already a strategy of incorporating dissent – is de-legitimised in favour of "consultative government," where civil society and trade

unions are state-led and where "bargaining" takes place outside the parliamentary process, invisible to the public eye (thereby preventing criticisms of government from being publicised.)

In terms of the public sphere, participation is limited and "credibility" is awarded only to good/moral citizens – citizens who would subordinate their dissent to communitarian interests (as defined by the PAP), who as moral Asians would not contemplate immoral (counter-communitarian) alternatives, and who would be supportive of nation-building and not express doubts about the system.

This means that public sphere participation/credibility is granted only to citizens who happen to be sporting a posture of compliance, which is tantamount to abstracting citizens from their lived experience (of frustrations/dissent), sociology and all the particularities that make them individuals. To paraphrase McSherry (http://www.his.latrobe.edu.au/jilas/journal/vol5_2/mcsherry.html, 2), the legitimisation of only *one* type of citizen serves as a (effective) way to ensure conformist public expression. Furthermore, this is not just any type of citizen but an abstract and ideal citizen, for whom, to paraphrase Warner (1993, 235), the moment of apprehending oneself as a public, ideal or abstract citizen is a moment when one becomes indifferent to those particularities¹⁶⁷ – one's biography, sociology, psychology, etc. – that constitute one. By delegitimising non-abstract and universal concept of citizenship, the public sphere is made a safe place where race, class and gender differences or any dissent that threatens to fragment national consensus cannot find voice.

While in some societies, the ideal subject could be described as white, male and middle-class, what is interesting is that in multiracial Singapore, this is an empty category since all citizens are "racially-hyphenated" (Chua 1997). Always and already racialised, Singaporeans are irrevocable marked as dangerous citizens in a fragile multiracial nation that needs a guardian to protect it from its citizens.

¹⁶⁷ In Singapore, this would especially correspond to the privatising/subordinating of particularities such as ethnicity and religion.

By limiting access to abstracted citizens, ideological contestation is rendered impossible and national consensus inevitable. While Garnham and Habermas believed that such an abstract, universalised public sphere consensus would serve to coalesce collective will and encourage the emergence of a rationally determined course of action, Fraser (1992, 125) and McSherry (http://www.his.latrobe.edu.au/jilas/journal/vol5_2/mcsherry.html, 4) argue that such a consensus is one that can be legitimately imposed on citizens to exact submission. For Eley (1992, 306-307), such public spheres serve to contain rather than stimulate citizenship participation.

The success and contribution of AV in perpetuating one-party dominance and warding off hegemonic crises can be most clearly seen by comparing ASEAN and non-ASEAN states. Where democracy is not de-legitimised, governments find themselves hard-pressed to accede to popular pro-democracy demands. This is the case in Taiwan (C.C.Lee 2000, 131) and South Korea (J.K.Lee 1996, 86), where official endorsement of democratic values legitimises journalists' embrace of their "watch dog" role and fuels citizens' democratic imagination to boycott and protest. By contrast, the media in ASEAN countries accepts their nation-building role. In Myanmar, dissident journalists and politicians are criticised as anti-national (Rich 2000, 23). In Vietnam, journalists are reminded that they are "revolutionary soldiers in the field of culture ideology" (Mares 2000, 244). By de-legitimising the role of watchdog journalism, liberal democracy and ideological contestation, AV plays a crucial role in assisting one-party regimes in ASEAN to evolve into ideological one-party governments.

8D. THE RESURGENCE OF AUTHORITARIANISM

Not only does AV help one-party states to cope with pro-democracy demands, it also gives a new lease of life to authoritarianism. Already a region especially resilient to democracy (Emmerson 1995), the use of the AV discourse by ASEAN governments provides an additional defence against the "third wave of democratisation" (Huntington 1991) and even brings about the resurgence of authoritarianism. By accepting Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam as new members in spite of Western pressure, ASEAN is in effect, bestowing upon

these countries international recognition of their national sovereignties.¹⁶⁸ This can be seen in ASEAN's decision to admit Cambodia, its latest member.

After the failure of UN's "quick-fix democracy" in Cambodia in 1993,¹⁶⁹ Cambodia needed a political form that would secure it international recognition as a sovereign state. Many options were no longer possible: UN-styled democracy had failed, old-style Soviet socialism had become obsolete, military dictatorship had become undesirable, while monarchy had become outdated. Lacking a definite political programme, Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen (CPP) both reverted from the rhetoric of democracy (employed during the phase of UN democracy) to a discourse of developmentalism:

Democracy means food for the people's stomach, shelter and education ... This is democracy in the Cambodian sense... It is easy to preach or advocate democracy when one has a full stomach... but what about the poor rural people? ... To them... democracy is just a phrase to be talked about in idle gossip. (Prince Ranariddh, Phnom Penh Post 25/08/1995)

Such discourses of developmentalism has strong similarities with the AV discourse (especially Mahathir's 1985 development model.¹⁷⁰) Indeed, "Asian Democracy" would be a most suitable political programme, given how Hun Sen models himself as a Cambodian version of LKY (Öjendal and Antlöv 1998, 534) and prefers a political system build on consensus where "everyone co-operates with each other in the Malaysian way" (Phnom Penh Post 04/10/1995) and where foreigners (especially Westerners) are prevented from interfering.

Before seizing power through a very violent coup against the Prince in 1997, Hun Sen had to anticipate international reactions. By 1997, the UN had become a marginal actor. Japan, the largest aid donor, was reluctant to tie aid to political outcomes, despite US pressures. China no longer supported the Khmer Rouge against CPP. Thus, ASEAN's reaction was of primary consideration.

¹⁶⁸ Benjamin argues that nation-statehood is mutually conferred (Chapter 4).

¹⁶⁹ Many explain this culturally — democratisation was doomed because of Cambodia's deep-seated notions of hierarchy and lack of inclination towards pluralism (Boua et al in Öjendal and Antlöv 1998).

¹⁷⁰ For differences between LKY and Mahathir's formulations of AV, Cf. www.apmforum.com/news/apmn88.htm.

Öjendal and Antlöv (1998, 535) argued that the CPP expected a mixed reaction from ASEAN and considered it worth the risk to execute a coup. While ASEAN members may not condone Cambodia's violent authoritarianism given their attempts to dissociate themselves from hard authoritarianism, the CPP counted on ASEAN's "non-interference" policy since ASEAN could not criticise Cambodia without risking the credibility of the "ASEAN way."

Furthermore, it is possible that ASEAN's previous acceptance of serious human rights violation in Myanmar led Cambodia to believe ASEAN would similarly tolerate its violence. Nischalke (2000, 102) noted that ASEAN had accepted Myanmar's military regime in a "perceived need to display unity in the face of Western pressure." For Muzaffar (in Nischalke 2000, 102), what most likely tilted the balance in favour of Myanmar were vociferous Western demands to deny Myanmar's entry to ASEAN. Perceived as undue external interference, all ASEAN members felt "somehow they had an obligation to re-assert their own sovereignty" and to show that "this is our region, our part of the world, and we know what to do."

ASEAN's reaction to Cambodia's violence was more vocal than their reaction to Myanmar's violence. ASEAN expressed deep regret, demanded a cease-fire and suspended Cambodia's admission into ASEAN. Even while reaffirming the principle of non-interference, ASEAN attempted to broker peace between Hun Sen and Prince Ranariddh. However, the integrity of ASEAN and the "ASEAN way" was severely damaged when Hun Sen accused ASEAN of interference (Ramacharan 2000, 68-69) and successfully pressured ASEAN to admit Cambodia in 1998.

The admittance of Cambodia into ASEAN is a good example of the diffusion of authoritarianism. AV is no longer mere rhetoric but the medium through which authoritarian regimes can "inspire and clear the way for each other" (Öjendal and Antlöv 1998, 527). This is precisely the goal of the "Commission for a New Asia," a semi-official forum organised in Malaysia in 1993 to outline Asia's role in international political development and especially "Winning the Struggle for Human Rights and Responsibilities" (Commission for a New Asian 1994, 2).

"Asian Values" was to struggle against other political ideologies in the world arena and especially against Western democracy, "a highly imperfect form of government." The Commission proposes a "political democracy" where governments are "strong and stable," the mass media "responsible" and decisions made through "harmonious exchanges and consensus" (Ibid, 32-34).

AV is not the first wave of "Asianisation of Asia," or the first "pro-authoritarianism" wave. In 1945, Sukarno claimed *Pancasila* (see appendix) as Indonesia's national values while Ho Chi Minh fought for Vietnam's independence based upon traditional peasant culture. What is unique about the 1990s AV wave is that Asian countries now have the economic muscles to enforce their new political ideology. Öjendal and Antlöv (1998, 530) argued that just as the spread of socialism and liberalism in Europe was closely linked to the interest of the working class and the bourgeoisie. In the same way, AV may become the new political ideology of a powerful Asian conservative middle-class.

The contributions of AV to the perpetuation of authoritarianism can be best appreciated if we recall that the extreme heterogeneity of Southeast Asian societies "conspire[d] against the countries of ASEAN to make their task of nation-building and economic development more difficult" (Tilman 1987, 154). In this sense, AV is alchemic, not only in legitimising authoritarianism as a cultural ideal, but also in transforming the most culturally impure and heterogeneous states into ideologically cohesive one-party nations. AV was rejected by culturally "purer" nations who could claim "Chinese," "Japanese" or other organic ethnic values and employed only by culturally "impure" nations. Yet, it is precisely because AV lacked specificity and purity that it is able to rally regional solidarity and secure strong regional legitimacy against international criticism. With AV, "cultural poverty" is turned into ideological strength.

AV contributes significantly to the regional and domestic legitimisation of authoritarianism. Regionally, ASEAN's "non-interference" policy and legitimisation of Asian Democracy provide an environment where one-party governments can mutually reinforce their legitimacy. The cultural vagueness of

what can count as AV allows it to rally regional solidarity and enables Asian Democracy to develop beyond a convenient excuse for authoritarianism into a pan-(Southeast) Asian phenomenon, into a genuinely Asian cultural phenomenon.¹⁷¹

Domestically, as an ideology, AV's emphasis on consensus over conflict delegitimises ideological alternatives and prevents their circulation in public spheres and discourses. As a norm, AV sets up social expectations of good (Asian) citizen behaviour and successfully secures complicit co-operation to subordinate and privatise their dissent. In this sense, AV serves more as a doctrinal/rhetorical centre (cf. LKY's Vatican analogy) – a centre that is publicly or inter-personally meaningfully but not necessarily meaningful privately. LKY clearly understands that rhetorical compliance is a sufficient basis for the PAP's hegemony.

The fact that government hegemony is based not upon consent but rhetorical conformity suggests that social and ideological order is maintained through the creation of a particular governmentality. As Perlmutter (1981, 176/179) observes, authoritarianism cannot be sustained merely by ideological consent, but through the "ideology becom[ing] an organisational weapon" – in the case of "Asian Democracies," through AV becoming the social gaze of the moral majority. By encouraging citizens to police each other, state/government authoritarianism becomes softened into societal or popular authoritarianism.

The enormity of this feat cannot be understated. Many dictators (civilian and military) have tried to stamp out unofficial representations of nation but without success. In the former Soviet Union, unofficial versions of national history continued to circulate (Wertsch 1998) while among Malaysian peasants, "hidden transcripts" circulate healthily (Scott 1990). Worldwide, citizens protest authoritarian governments and do not accept state coercion against civil and political leaders.

¹⁷¹ Could Asian Values spark off "Caribbean Values" in Singapore's latest admirer, Jamaica?

While there are many challenges to the hegemony of one-party states, they are not insurmountable, especially among ASEAN states where AV serves as a sophisticated anti-pluralist tool to ensure national consensus. Within a global pro-democratic hegemony, AV's justification of authoritarianism gives one-party governments cultural legitimacy and a new lease of life. If hegemony can be sufficiently maintained not by consent but by the perception that there are no viable alternatives, then AV's ability to de-legitimise ideological alternatives and prevent social fragmentation makes it a very effective social technology for the sustaining of ideological dominance. AV does not require citizens' identification, merely their deference. Indeed, the best proof of ideological success is not the absence of dissent, but rather citizens' willing subordination and privatisation of dissent.

8E. CODA: "WINNING MINDS BUT NOT HEARTS"

From the beginning, this research was partly motivated by a desire to explain a puzzling statement made by the local Chinese press, that "the government has won the people's minds but not their hearts." This statement in turn implies two more puzzles: firstly, while coercion is clearly present in an authoritarian society such as Singapore, there is also consent. Secondly, while the PAP government has secured some form of consent, it is far from complete.

In trying to find a theoretical paradigm to articulate these puzzles in a meaningful way, I found Gramsci's theory of hegemony useful. Instead of dichotomizing authoritarianism and popular sovereignty as distinct/polar types of political forms and marginalizing "soft authoritarianism" and "popular dictatorships" as oddities, I sought theories that would be useful in studying the particular balance of consent and coercion – something that Gramsci's theory of hegemony does centrally. I especially found Stuart Hall's interpretation of Gramsci's theory and his elaboration of Poulantzas' idea of "authoritarian statism" useful. His description of how Thatcher created consent for her authoritarian rule ("authoritarian populism") led me to think about the similarities and differences in the PAP's hegemonic project.

Through the "Asian Values" project, the PAP sought to present themselves as Singapore's only alternative and as the representative of the wishes of the silent, moral Asian majority. By urging citizens to be good Asians who value consensus over conflict, and who place the community's interests before their own, deviations from the middleground are de-legitimized, as merely the voice of the un-communitarian vocal minority.

To investigate the success of the PAP's ideological project, I sought to investigate the extent and ways in which official discourses are reproduced/contested in popular discourses. Popular discourse was collected through in-depth interviews with 32 ordinary citizens (of different generation, ethnicity, class) and through collecting jokes and rumors.

The interview material, upon analysis, reveals the many reasons why citizens accept the PAP. Without exception, citizens believed that the PAP has brought economic prosperity to Singapore. Their faith in the PAP is not based only on past accomplishment, but also in hope for the future: many believe that the PAP will continue to bring prosperity and that the Singapore Dream is something that will be accessible to their children, if not to them. In these discourses, echoes of official/media discourses could be traced in the way citizens consistently compared Singapore's plight (during the economic recession) with those of worse-off countries, and in the ways citizens expressed their belief in the PAP's capabilities.

Even for those who do not consider economic success as a sufficient basis for government legitimacy, they nonetheless feel compelled to comply with social expectations based upon an economic culture of competitiveness. The success of the PAP and the media, in normalizing official values as public morality, can be clearly seen in the ubiquitous presence of "hidden audiences" in interviewees' transcripts. Interviewees feel a strong pressure ("the burden of social expectations") to follow "the rigid path" and succeed by society's materialistic criteria (of the 5Cs), thereby, whether willingly or reluctantly, legitimizing/reproducing the dominant ideology of competitiveness.

That official values have not been internalized as personal ethics but rather as inter-personal social expectations (of generalized others) and that official values are not perceived as reasonable, but as stifling, suggest that the PAP's hegemony is based less on strong beliefs than on tolerance and conformity. This means that authoritarianism is tolerated, on a weighted consideration that it is worthwhile to trade freedom for prosperity. Fuelled by personal desire for prosperity and pressurized by social expectations of material success, citizens privatize/subordinate their dissent, which produces an aura of public support for the government. This appearance of ideological unity crucially accords the one-party government the legitimacy to claim to represent the nation and to deny multi-party representation.

The realization that the PAP's hegemony is based less on conviction or identification and more based on conformity and tolerance led me to posit the presence of an alternative mode of governmentality – a “moral” one, based on conforming to other's expectations, rather than an “ethical” one based on personal identification. I further highlighted the fact that these two “governmentalities” have strong links to social ideologies. A further possible avenue of research for the future would be a closer investigation of how communitarian and liberal ideologies may encourage the emergence of different governmentalities. The nature of governmentality in liberal societies has been well researched by Nikolas Rose (1988, 1992) Barry, Osborne and Rose et al (1996) and Burchell, Gordon and Miller et al (1991). However, no such studies exist in studying governmentality in illiberal communitarian societies.

Although the PAP's hegemony may be based on conformity rather than conviction, I have argued that this is not an 'inferior' form of hegemony. Indeed, with Asian Values, the PAP government seemed to have refined and crystallized an ideological tool *par excellence* to allow ideological pluralism without fragmentation. Developed to deal with the challenges of an Internet age where informational borders could not longer be policed, the “Asian Values” strategy sought to manage dissent *within* the public sphere (through subordination) rather than through blocking its access to the public sphere

(through censorship and privatization). In this way, the "Asian Values" strategy calls into question beliefs about the potential of the un-censor-able media technologies (e.g., the Internet) to undermine one-party ideological dominance.

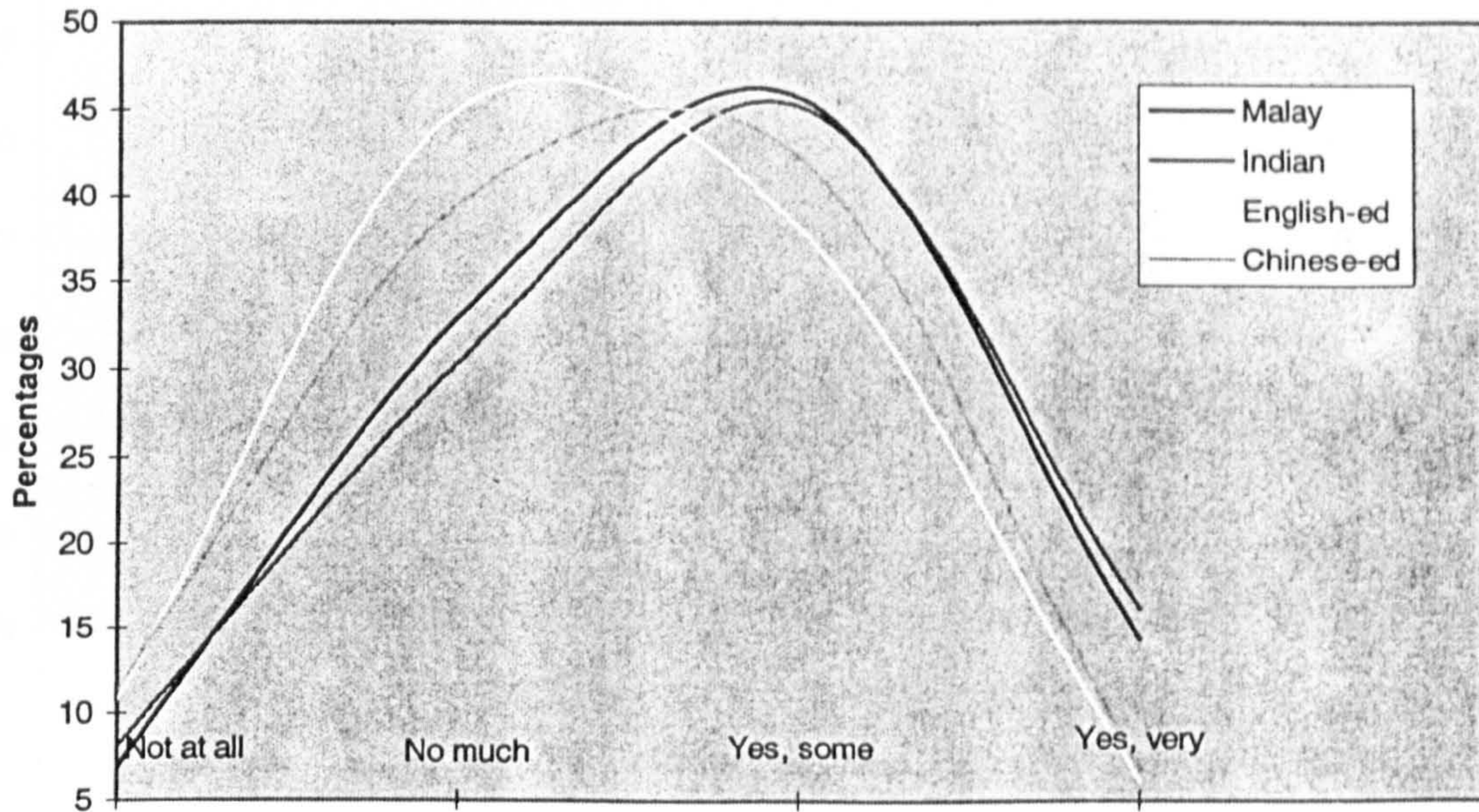
However, just because the PAP has refined their ideological strategy does not mean that it is immune to hegemonic crises, nor is the Internet the only or key source that has counter-hegemonic potential. It would be also interesting to consider where other sites, where legitimate ideological alternatives can emerge to fragment national consensus, both within Singapore and in other one-party states. A particularly noteworthy site that is prevalent outside Singapore is "civil society." Among (Southeast) Asian countries with strong civil society (e.g., Islamic or Buddhist societies) where Asian Democracy is advocated, how useful is the Asian Values discourse in de-legitimizing "organic" political alternatives that cannot be so easily de-legitimized? Outside Asia, how useful would a communitarian ideology be in helping one-party states sustain ideological dominance?

While it is not clear how useful communitarianism could be in preventing ideological fragmentation in other one-party states, in Singapore, the "Asian Values" strategy of de-legitimizing dissent certainly goes a long way in helping the PAP perpetuate their one-party ideological dominance.

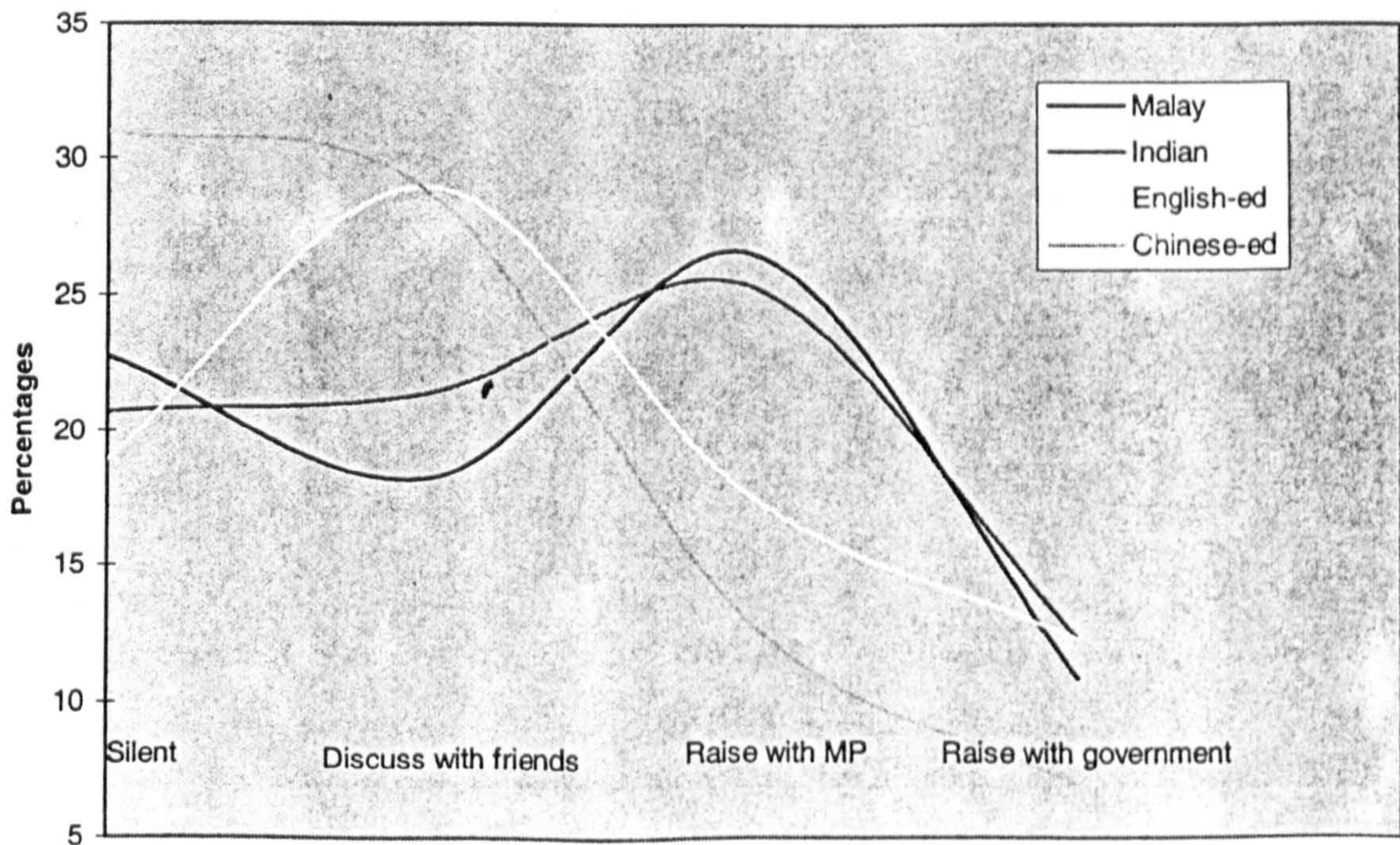
Appendix 1: Politically significant "ethnic" groups

In Aug 1998, the Straits Times report of a national survey on citizen's preference between consultation and decisiveness, 4 categories were used: "English-educated," "Chinese-educated," "Malays" and "Indians."

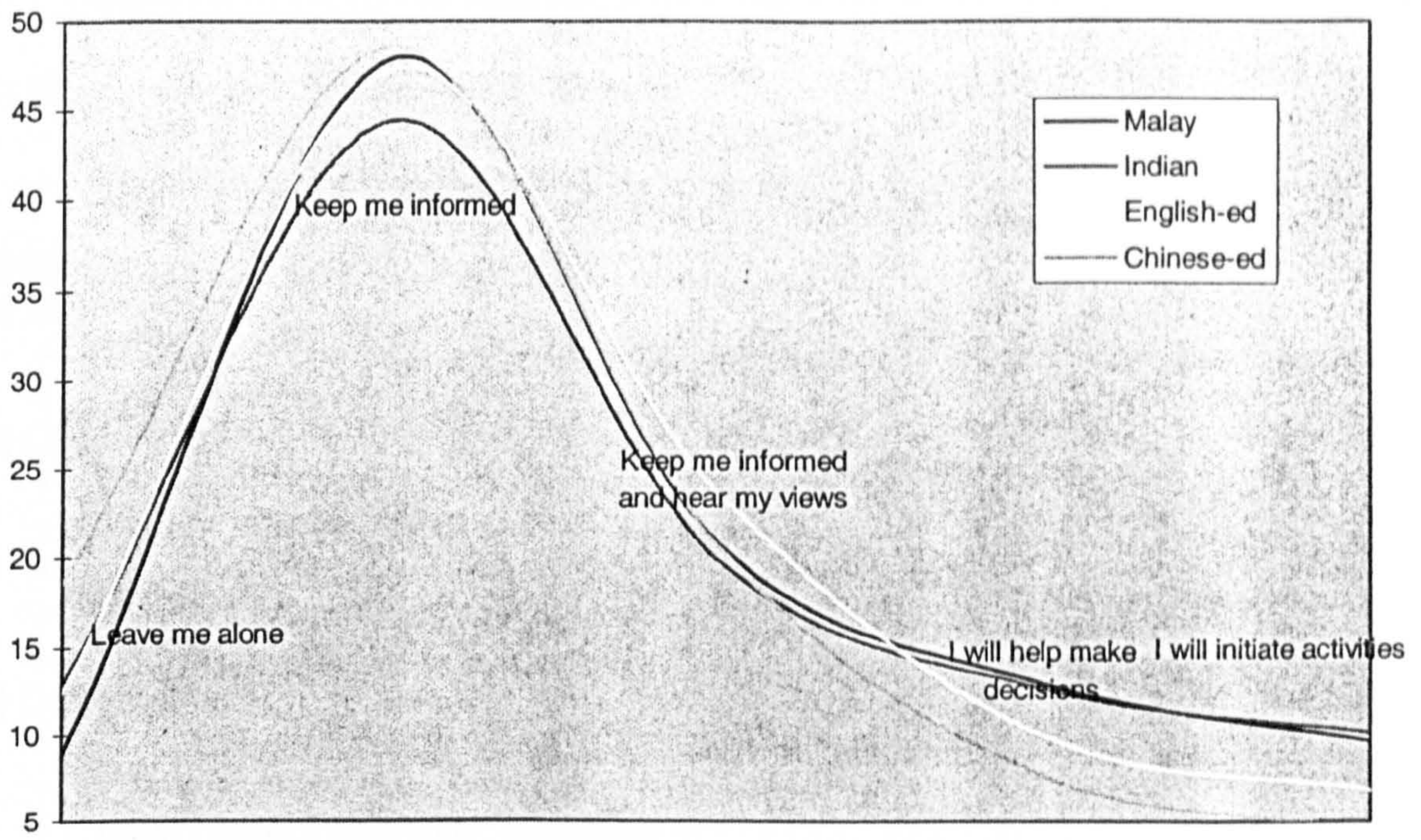
Does the government consult the public enough when implementing policies?



What are your reactions to policies you see as unreasonable?



How much do you want to get involved in your neighbourhood?



Appendix 2: The types of links I had with my interviewees

- (1) Special reasons: 2 out of 32 interviewees
 - LV: Friend of a friend, writes frequently to the Forum Page
 - SE: Friend, unique anti-competitive mentality.
- (2) Mediated by formal institutions: 22 out of 32
 - (a) Advertisement
 - Thomas: advertised himself as a “Chinese-educated” 27 year old in a Friends column.
 - TL: college advertisement
 - (b) Church networks
 - BC: Family’s church-mate, immigrant Indian citizen
 - PT: An ENG pastor in a Chinese church
 - EH: A foreigner who has lived in Singapore for a long time
 - HC: An ENG pastor in a Chinese church
 - SEOW: A retiree in a Chinese bible college
 - (c) Office networks
 - SLH: An Indian clerical officer in family friend’s company
 - JIM: Worker in family friend’s company
 - DEX: Family’s colleague, graduated from a Chinese-university in the 1960s
 - RAS: Family’s colleague, Malay professional
 - HO: mother of DEX, selected because she is an immigrant citizen (from China)
 - TEO: Family’s colleague, Chinese and English educated
 - (d) Schools and tuition agency
 - RM: A student of family, who teaches early school leavers, Indian and working class
 - AS: A student of family, who teaches early school leavers, Malay and working class
 - LYN: Family’s schoolmate, represents “the bright future generation of Singaporeans.”
 - PRL: Family’s schoolmate, celebrates hybridity and Singlish.
 - VH: Ex-student
 - (e) Family counselling centre
 - XX: a teenager in Normal (inferior education) stream
 - EB: a 17-year-old Eurasian girl, selected because she was Eurasian.
 - (f) Journalist friends’ contact
 - TSK: A Chinese intellectual
 - LS: A middle-aged Eurasian man
- (3) Informal links, family and friendship: 8 out of 32
 - (a) Translator’s contacts
 - AZ: A retired Malay working class man
 - AR: A Malay schoolteacher and an active social worker in his mosque.
 - (b) My extended family
 - WCM: An aunt, selected because of her involvement with grassroots organizations.
 - STC: Family, civil servant during the colonial and post-colonial administration.
 - (c) Friends of family
 - BL: Perankan (Straits Chinese, i.e., a mix between Malay and Chinese).
 - CST: a Chinese businessman.
 - KPT: CST’s father, an immigrant citizen from China.
 - YJT: CST’s son

Appendix 3: Determination of class

[Income, property and education]

Upper Class: 2 out of 32

- TL: A university student, his father has business and property in different countries.
- LYN: A medicine student, her father is the director of an MNC

Upper-Middle Class: 12 out of 32

Small business proprietors

- BL: Owns small business, forced to wind it up because of the economic crisis.
- CST: Inherited father's business, forced to wind it up because of the economic crisis.

Graduates (living in above average homes)

- YJT: CST's son, a fresh graduate working as a civil servant
- VG: Family of lawyers, lives in a private house in an expensive part of Singapore
- HC: University graduate training to become a Chinese pastor
- TEO: University educated, refused to declare his income, owns private property
- DEX: University educated woman teaching in a tertiary institution
- SEOW: University educated retiree attending a Chinese bible college
- TSK: A Chinese intellectual
- PT: English-educated pastor of a Chinese church
- RAS: Professional, teaches in a tertiary institution
- PRL: university medical student

Middle Class: 7 out of 32

- Low education but high income or position
- JIM: 'O' levels and has a high household income
- LS: 'O' levels but holds a very high post
- VH: rich but not well educated

High-education but poor family

- SE: University educated but poor family.
- EH: University-educated but poor and unemployed.

Old-generation elite

- KPT: Started a small business and retired
- AR: schoolteacher

Lower-Middle Class: 3 out of 32

- Brother C: 'O' level educated retiree who lives in a small flat
- WCM: semi-educated housewife, depends on children for income.
- STC: retiree living at an old-folks home

Working Class: 8 out of 32

- Thomas: factory worker
- SLH: clerical officer
- HO: uneducated housewife, dependent on her children for income.
- RM: 'O' levels, no private property
- AS: 'O' levels, no private property
- XX: teenage dropout
- EB: teenage dropout
- AZ: A retired technician

Appendix 4: Interview questions (detailed)

National identification

What does Singapore mean to you? What do you think it means to be a Singaporean?

[E.g., how would you introduce Singapore to other people?]

What issues are important in Singapore?

What issues are important to you?

Do you think they have been addressed?

What do you think about the Singapore dream? Is it **your** dream?

What do you expect or want from Singapore?

Do you think Singapore meet these expectations? [Is the government doing a good job or is the government successful in persuading people that it is doing a good job?]

Do you think Singapore has a good economy and good society? [Encourage examples from personal life]

What are some positive/negative things about Singapore? [Encourage examples from personal life]

What are some positive/negative things about the economy? [Encourage examples from personal life]

How can Singapore society be improved? [Encourage examples from personal life]

What are some positive/negative things about the society? [Encourage examples from personal life]

How can Singapore society be improved? [Encourage examples from personal life]

Jokes

What do you think other people, especially foreigners, think about Singapore?

What are some positive comments you have heard from foreigners?

What are some negative comments you have heard from foreigners?

Have you heard any Singapore jokes?

Where did you hear this joke? Have you told it to others? [Circulation of information]

Do you find them interesting? Why?

I heard these rumours, what do you of them?

Singlish

What do you think of Singlish? Should it be encouraged?

Do you watch the sitcom "Under one roof"? Do you think that it is "Singaporean?" Why or why not?

Can you identify yourself with any of the characters in there?

Do you think the issues that the character faces are similar to yours?

Do you think the portrayal of everyday Singaporean life is accurate?

Foreigners

Do you know any foreigners personally?

What do you think of there being foreigners in Singapore?

Is it a good or bad thing? Why?

Migration

Have you ever thought of migrating, or do you have friends who have done so?
What are the reasons for migrating?

Travel

How is Singapore different from other countries?

Media exposure

Newspapers

Do you read newspapers? Which? Why? [State-media relation] Why not others (especially ethnic newspapers)?

Which sections of the newspapers do you read? Why?

Why do you not read the other sections (give e.g.)? Why?

Television/Radio

Do you watch television?

Which programmes do you usually watch? Why?

Which channel do you usually watch? Why? Why do you not watch the other channels (give e.g.)?

Relevance of media issues

Do you think the media / newspapers report issues that are important to you? [E.g., what would you like to see more in the newspapers?]

Do you think the media / newspapers / radio report issues that are of concern to you? [See question on what are the things that you think you ought-want to have?]

What do you think the media ought to provide to their readers/listeners? What should people be able to expect from their media?

Does the media / newspapers meet these expectations?

(Prompt if necessary: Do you think this newspapers are accurate, balanced, current?)

What sort of **changes would you like to see** in the media?

Have you ever tried to make yourself heard on the media (especially radio)?

If yes, how, where, when and on what issue? / Do you have friends who have made themselves heard?

How successful was it? [What (real) obstacles were there?]

If not, why not? [**Perceived obstacles**, how are people made to feel small]

Why do you have this opinion? Why gives you this impression?

Alternative public sphere and rumours

Are there places where you can discuss social issues with your friends, or where you can be "heard"?

When and where do you usually do it? With whom (strangers in coffeeshop or friends)? [How are these places created?]

What are some social issues that are of concern to you and your friends? What are some issues that you talk about?

In these places, do you get extra information that you do not usually get from the papers, e.g., rumours?

Have you heard any rumours lately?

Where did you hear these rumours? Have you told it to others? [Circulation of information]

Do you find them interesting? Why?

Do you think they are true? Why?

I heard these rumours; do you think they are likely to be true?

Appendix 5: Interview questions (general)

1a. National identification

What do you consider yourself? A Singaporean, Chinese, etc. Why? What does it mean to be a Singaporean? Is there something called "Singapore culture?" Are Singaporeans special and different from others? How? The media and popular literature portrays Singapore in certain ways. What do you think are the positive and negative things about Singapore? Do you long for the Singaporean dream? Why or why not? [Follow up with: do you think it is attainable?]

b. Under One Roof

Would you say that "Under One Roof" is a Singaporean sitcom? Why? Do you identify with any of the characters? Which one and why? [Trigger off discussion on Singlish]

2. Current issues in Singapore society

General: What are some issues that Singapore society faces? How can the situation be improved?

[(1) Bypass criticism, appear constructive, (2) hypothetical dimension, non-accountability, (3) indirect question about personal issues.]

Specific issues (to be raised if interviewees do not bring them up spontaneously)

(a) Economic crisis: (are people satisfied with Singapore's situation?)

How have you been affected by the crisis (shares, property values, etc.)? [Do the governments' policy have an impact on you? (E.g., POSB, Housing Loans, etc.)] What do you think can be done to improve the situation? [Do they compare it with Malaysia and Indonesia?]

(b) Race crisis:

Do you think it is likely that race politics will develop in Singapore? [Do you think there is a potential that race politics will develop in Singapore?] If yes, in what situations?

(c) Malaysia crisis:

Do you follow this event? Have you been affected by this crisis? What do you think is the problem? What can it be solved? Do you support the call by some Singaporeans to boycott Malaysia?

(d) Migrants and foreigners

Do you follow this event? What do you think should be done about the migrant issue? (Not problem).

Do you think it is a problem? Why?

(e) JBJ (an opposition politician taken to court for defaming the PAP)

Do you follow this event? Do you think the verdict of the JBJ case is important? (Will it affect your life?)

[Would you consider Job's case a political (government) issue or a social-national issue?

Media and Communications

How do you keep in touch with "Singapore"? How do you find information about Singapore?

Does the media supply you with what you want to know? If not, how can it be improved?

Do you know of any jokes or rumours? Why are they interesting? Where did you hear it from and have you told it to others? In what situations?

Do you discuss social issues? With who? Where?

Have you ever tried giving feedback before? Can you describe the process? Does it work? Which body?

Appendix 6: Socio-economic survey questionnaire

Name:
Contact:

General

Age (in 1998):
Generation:
Gender:
Marital status:
Nationality:

Ethnicity

Race:
Language stream:
Languages spoken:
Language preferred:

Class (the 5Cs)

Education:
Occupation:
Disposable household income:
Car ownership:
Type and size of home:

Cultural capital/family background

Father's education/occupation:
Mother's education/occupation:

Media habits

Newspapers read:
Reasons for reading that newspapers:
Sections interested in:
TV channels watched:
Types of programmes watched:
Radio stations listened to:
Other media habits:

Appendix 7: Media indicators in Asia

Source: Shelton A. Gunaratne (2000) "Overview" in *Handbook of the media in Asia*. Edited by S. Gunaratne. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Country	Media indicators per 1000 people				
	Daily newspaper circulation (1996)	Radio receivers (1996)	TV receivers (1997)	Main Tel. lines (1998)	Internet hosts per 10,000 (1999)
South Asia	1.8	12.2	3.9	6.58	4.00
Maldives					
Sri Lanka	2.9	21.0	9.2	2.84	0.29
Pakistan	2.1	9.2	2.2	1.85	0.22
Bhutan		1.9	1.9	1.04	0.58
India	3.1	10.5	6.9	1.85	0.78
Bangladesh	0.9	5.0	0.7	0.26	0.00
Nepal	1.1	3.7	0.4	0.77	0.07
Southeast Asia					
Singapore	32.4	73.9	29.2	54.29	259.84
Brunei	6.9	30.0	41.7	24.68	38.98
Malaysia	11.0	43.2	16.6	19.49	30.21
Thailand	20.1	20.4	23.4	8.02	7.25
Philippines	27.9	15.9	10.6	2.87	3.00
Indonesia	11.3	15.5	9.7	2.70	1.97
Myanmar	5.7	8.9	0.7	0.48	0.00
Laos	1.6	13.9	0.4	0.55	0.00
Cambodia	1.6	12.7	12.3	0.18	0.06
Vietnam	4.1	10.6	18.0	2.07	0.00
East Asia					
Japan	58.0	95.7	70.6	47.86	133.64
Hong Kong	80.0	69.5	41.2	56.08	356.67
Macau	44.8	35.2	28.9	40.91	3.41
Taiwan		40.1	32.7	49.96	142.75
Korea (S)	39.4	103.7	34.2	44.40	60.47
Korea (N)	20.0	14.7	11.5	4.82	0.00
China	4.2	19.5	27.0	5.62	0.84
Mongolia	2.7	13.9	5.9	3.66	0.08

Appendix 8: Mr Brown's list

Singapore National Education (Part 3)

I have also learned lately:

1. That we need to set up a Committee to discuss systematically how we can have Creativity.
2. That our leaders say that we must be creative and independent of spirit, therefore we must do as they say and be creative and independent of spirit
3. That we are given a "choice" on upgrading our flats but when we choose not to and convince others it's not desirable, we are selfish (ST Forum Page 27/5/97).
4. That Unselfishness means choosing upgrading like everyone should.
5. That we should be creative and mentally independent, as long as we choose upgrading, or else it would be selfish.
6. That we have Freedom of Choice, even in upgrading, as long as we choose correctly and vote for upgrading.
7. That Johor (Malaysia's border state with Singapore) is an evil place and Singapore is a crime-free haven, that Johor is an evil place and Singapore is a crime-free haven, that Johor is an evil place and Singapore is a crime-free haven, that Johor is an evil place and Singapore is a crime-free haven, that Johor is an evil place and Singapore is a crime-free haven. At least that is what the papers say.
8. That the way to mend ties with an angry neighbour is to keep printing statistics of his higher crime rate.
9. That Engineering and Science Graduates are better than Arts Students, but we want a creative society where the Arts flourish too.
10. That Creativity is so important to our Economic Survival that we set up a Committee to look into developing the Arts, but we want our students to choose an Engineering or Science if they can.
11. That making the University fees relatively higher for Arts Courses will make better students choose Engineering and Science Courses because they are better value for money.
12. That losing your queue in the HDB (Housing Development Board) is not penalty enough for the 230 young couples out of 29,000 who changed partners but an additional fine is necessary.
13. That we can solve the problem of young couples changing their partners in the HDB queue by penalising "everyone" in the Fiancé Fiancée scheme with a \$5000 deposit.
14. That women will have children earlier given enough monetary incentives in the form of income tax rebates ("I had my 5th kid by the time I was 28 and look how much I saved!!!")

15. That the Govt wants us to get married but when we rush to the ROM (Registrar of Marriage), we are not really ready for marriage (Cf. 8/6/97 Sunday Times front page).
16. That according to a local MP, 24 year-olds and below should think carefully about getting married, but the ideal age for marriage is 26 and above.
17. That HDB and ROM should consider merging to take advantage of economics of scale and unity of purpose.
18. That Population control and Family Planning can be controlled with housing policies.
19. That the Male Fertility problems can be cured with Guinness Stout (ad in ST6/6/97, p52).
20. That plugging a housing loophole can also create a nice little profit.
21. That marriage has nothing to do with love but whether we can find the \$5000 to make a home we won't see till more than 4 years later.
22. That we are told to look beyond material gains and materialism, but come Election Day, we are to look at the Rewards of Upgrading that come with voting correctly...
23. That a 20-year-old sci-fi movie trilogy can be re-released after a little cleanup and still make tons of money.
24. That despite HDB assurances, couple will still get registered to avoid the \$5000 deposit and the July 12 deadline because they are not sure when the HDB will change its collective mind again.
25. That the way to increase the availability of cabs to be booked, even though many cabbies are turning off their satellite sets in protest, is to increase the booking charges to a point where less people want to use the booking service.
26. That the way to encourage the use of public transportation and discourage the use of private cars is to increase the costs of transportation for ALL transportation.

References

- Abercrombie, Nicholas, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner (1980) *The dominant ideology thesis*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Alatas, Syed Hussein (1977) *The myth of the lazy native*. London: Frank Cass.
- Althusser, Louis (1969) *For Marx*. London: NLB.
- Althusser, Louis (1971) "Ideology and the state" in *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*. London: New Left Books.
- Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Thetford Press Ltd.
- Ang, Ien. (Translated by Della Couling) (1985) *Watching Dallas: soap opera and the melodramatic imagination*. London: Methuen.
- Ang, Ien and Jon Stratton (1997) "The Singapore way of multiculturalism: western concepts/Asian cultures" in *New Formations*, No.31, Spring/Summer, pp51-66.
- Ang, Peng-Hwa (1998) "Singapore" in *Asian Communication Handbook 1998*. Edited by Anura Goonasekara and Duncan Holaday. Singapore: Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, pp159-170.
- Apter, David (1970) "Some reflections on the role of a political opposition in new nations." *African politics and society*, edited by Irving Leonard Markovitz. New York: Free Press.
- Arasu, V. T. (1990) "What more?" Singapore Press Holdings Seminar on The social role of Singapore newspapers in promoting Asian cultures and values" at the Newscentre on 20/12/1990.
- Arblaster, Anthony (1987) *Democracy*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Armentrout, Fred (1995) "Freedom isn't a Western gift" in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 8 Nov 1995, p6.
- Arnold, Matthew (1932) "Culture and anarchy" in John Storey (1998) ed., *Cultural theory and popular culture: A reader*. Athens, University of Georgia Press, pp7-12.
- Austin, J. L. (1975) *How to do things with words*. Edited by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist) (1981) *The dialogic imagination: four essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Baksh, Mohd. Ali (1987) "Allies in service to public." The journalist seminar on "Together for a Better Informed Society" jointly organised by IPRS Institute and SNUJ (Singapore National Union of Journalist). June/July, 1987, pp 14-15.
- Baradat, Leon P. (1988) *Political ideologies: their origins and impact*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Barry, Andrew, Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose (eds) (1996) *Foucault and political reason: liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government*. London: UCL Press.
- Bass, Harold F (Jr.) (1993) "Change and democratisation in one-party systems" in *Building democracy in one-party systems: Theoretical problems and cross-nation*

- experiences*. Edited by Gary D. Wekkin, Donald E. Whistler, Michael A. Kelly and Michael A. Maggiotto. Connecticut, London: Praeger, pp70-84.
- Beardsmore, Hugo Baetens (1994) "Language shift and cultural implication in Singapore" in *Language, society and education in Singapore: Issues and Trends*. Edited by S. Gopinathan, Anne Pakir, Wah-Kam Ho and Vanithamani Saravanan. Singapore: Times Academic Press, pp47-64.
- Bellows, T.J. (1970) *The People's Action Party of Singapore: emergence of a dominant party system*. New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.
- Benjamin, Geoffrey (1976) "The cultural logic of Singapore's multiracialism" in R. Hassan (ed.) *Singapore: society in transition*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, pp115-33.
- Benjamin, Geoffrey (1988) "The Unseen Presence: A theory of the nation-state and its mystifications." Working Paper No.91, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore.
- Bennett, Tony, Graham Martin, Colin Mercer and Janet Woollacoot. (1982) "Editor's Introduction" in *Culture, ideology and social process: A reader*. Edited by Tony Bennett, Graham Martin, Colin Mercer and Janet Woollacoot. London: The Open University, pp9-16.
- Berlant, Lauren (1996) *The theory of infantile citizenship*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp495-508.
- Billig, Michael (1987) *Arguing and thinking: a rhetorical approach to social psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Billig, Michael (1991) *Ideology and opinions: studies in rhetorical psychology*. London: Sage.
- Billig, Michael (1992) *Talking of the royal family*. New York: Routledge.
- Billig, Michael (1995) *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.
- Billig, Michael, Susan Condor, Derek Edwards, Mike Gane, David Middleton and Alan Radley (1988) *Ideological Dilemmas*. London: Sage.
- Birch, Anthony H. (1989) *Nationalism and nation integration*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Birch, David (1993a) *Singapore media: Communication strategies and practices*. Sydney: Longman Chesire Pte Ltd.
- Blumler, J.G. and Gurevitch, M. (1985) "Reaching out: a future for gratifications research." In K.E. Rosengren, L.A. Wenner and P. Palmgreen (eds) *Media Gratifications Research*. Beverly Hills: Sage, pp255-274.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (translated by Richard Nice) (1984) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (translated by Richard Nice) (1992) *The logic of practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Breuilly, John (1992) *Nationalism and the state*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Brookner, Paul (1995) *Twentieth Century Dictatorships: The ideological one-party states*. New York: New York University Press.
- Brown, D. (1989) "Ethnic politics and the state in Southeast Asia." Paper presented to the Asian Studies Association of Australia: *New Directions in Asian Studies Conference*, 1-3 February 1989, Singapore.

- Brown, David (1993) "The corporatist management of ethnicity in contemporary Singapore" in *Singapore changes guard: social, political and economic directions in the 1990s* edited by Garry Rodan. New York: Longman Cheshire, pp 16-33.
- Brummett Barry (1991) *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*. Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press.
- Castells, Manuel (1988) *The developmental city-state in an open world economy: the Singapore experience*. Working Paper No. 31. Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy, University of California, Berkeley.
- CDIS (1985) *Confucian ethics textbook secondary three*. Singapore: Educational Publications Bureau.
- Chan, Heng-Chee (1971) "Comment" in *Commentary*. September 1971, Vol 4, No. 1.
- Chan, Heng-Chee (1975) "Politics in an administrative state: where has all the politics gone?" in *Trends in Singapore*. Edited by Chee-Meow Seah. Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Chan, Heng-Chee (1976) *The dynamics of one party dominance: The PAP at the grass-root*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Chan, Heng-Chee (1985a) "Legislature and legislators," in Jon S.T. Quah, Heng-Chee Chan and Chee-Meow Seow (eds) *Government and politics in Singapore*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, pp71-91.
- Chan, Heng-Chee (1985b) "Political parties," in Jon S.T. Quah, Heng-Chee Chan and Chee-Meow Seow (eds) *Government and politics in Singapore*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, pp146-172.
- Chessbro, J.W. and Hamsher, C.D. (1975) "Contemporary rhetorical theory and criticism: Dimensions of the new rhetoric." *Speech Monographs*, 42, pp311-33.
- Chiew, Seen-Kong (1990a) "Nation-building in Singapore: An Historical Perspective" in *In search of Singapore's national values*, edited by Jon S.T.Quah. Institute of Policy Studies: Singapore, pp6-23.
- Chiew, Seen-Kong (1990b) "National identity, ethnicity and national issues" in *In search of Singapore's national values*, edited by Jon S.T.Quah. Institute of Policy Studies: Singapore, pp66-79.
- Chongkittavorn, Kavi (2000) "Thailand: all politics, no privacy" in *Losing control: Freedom of the press in Asia*, edited by Louise Williams and Roland Rich. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, pp219-238.
- Chua, Beng-Huat (1995) *Communitarian ideology and democracy in Singapore*. London: Routledge.
- Chua, Beng-Huat (1997) "Between economy and race: the Asianisation of Singapore" in *Space, culture and power: new identities in globalising cities*, edited by Ayşe Öncü and Petra Weyland. London: Zed Books.
- Chua, Beng-Huat (1998) "World cities, globalisation and the spread of consumerism: A view from Singapore" in *Urban Studies*, Vol. 35, no. 5-6. (www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/Deadline/MegaCities/articles/Chua.htm).
- Clammer, John (1985) *Singapore: Ideology, Society and Culture*. Singapore: Chopmen Publishers.
- Clammer, John (1993) "Deconstructing values: the establishment of a national ideology and its implications for Singapore's political future" in *Singapore changes*

- guard: social, political and economic directions in the 1990s* edited by Garry Rodan. New York: Longman Cheshire, pp34-51.
- Clutterbuck, Richard (1984) *Conflict and violence in Singapore and Malaysia 1945-1983*. Singapore: Graham Brash.
- Colucci, Francesco Paolo (1999) "The relevance to psychology of Antonio Gramsci's ideas on activity and common sense" in *Perspectives on activity theory*. Edited by Yrjö Engeström, Reijo Miettinen and Raija-Leena Punamäki. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Commission for a New Asia (1994) *Toward a New Asia*. A report of the Commission for a New Asia. Kuala Lumpur.
- Connor, Walker (1994) "A nation is a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group, is a ..." in *Nationalism*. Edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp36-46.
- Corcoran, F (1984) "Television as ideological apparatus: the power and the pleasure" in *Critical Studies in Mass Communications*, 1, pp131-45.
- Corner, John (1991) "Meaning, genre and context: the problematics of 'public knowledge' in the new audience studies." In *Mass media and society*, edited by James Curran and Michael Gurevitch. London: Edward Arnold, pp267-284.
- Coronel, Sheila S. (2000) "Philippines: Free as a mocking bird" in *Losing control: Freedom of the press in Asia*, edited by Louise Williams and Roland Rich. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, pp147-168.
- Cotton, James (1993) "Political innovation in Singapore: the presidency, the leadership and the party" in *Singapore changes guard*, edited by Gary Rodan. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Curran, James (1996) "The new revisionism in mass communication research: a reappraisal" in *Cultural studies and communications*, edited by James Curran, David Morley and Valerie Walkerdine. London: Arnold, pp256-278.
- Curran, James and Myung-Jin Park (eds, 2000). *De-westernizing media studies*, edited James Curran and Myung-Jin Park. London: Routledge.
- Dahl, Robert A. (1966) *Political opposition in Western democracies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dahl, Robert A. (1973) 'Introduction' in *Regimes and opposition*, edited by Robert A. Dahl. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Davidson, James West, Mark H. Lytle and Michael B. Stoff (1992) *American Journey: the quest for liberty since 1865*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- De Bary, Wm. Theodore (1998) *Asian values and human rights: a communitarian perspective*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- De Certeau, Michele (translated by Steven Rendell) (1984) *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- De Cunha, Derek (1997) *The price of victory: the 1997 Singapore general election and beyond*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- De Jesus, Melinda Quintos (1996) "Asian values: Do they exist" in *Media Asia*, Vol 23, No. 1, pp3-6.
- Deutsch, Karl W. (1994) "Nationalism and social communication" in *Nationalism* edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp26-29.

- Diamond, Larry (1966) "Is the third wave of democratisation over?" in *Developing democracy: Towards consolidation*. New York: John Hopkins University Press.
- Dobbs, Michael. (1992) "Is the old regime truly gone in Russia?" in *Washington Post Weekly* 9 (38):11-12.
- Doronila, Amando (2000) "Preface. Press Freedom in Asia: an uneven terrain" in *Losing control: Freedom of the press in Asia*, edited by Louise Williams and Roland Rich. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, ppxi-xvi.
- Drysdale, John (1984) *Singapore: struggle for success*. Singapore: Times Books International.
- Durkheim, Emile (translated by George Simpson) (1947) *The Division of Labour in Society*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Durkheim, Emile (translated by Sarah A. Solovay and John H. Mueller) (1965) *The rules of sociological method*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Eccleshall, R. (1984) *Political Ideologies*. London: Hutchinson.
- Eley, Geoff (1992) "Nations, publics and political cultures: placing Habermas in the 19th century" in *Habermas and the public sphere*, edited by C. Calhoun. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Eley, Geoff and Ronald Grigor Suny (1996) "Introduction: From the moment of social history to the work of cultural representation" in *Becoming national*. Edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny. New York: Oxford University Press, p3-38.
- Emmerson, Donald K. (1995a) "Region and recalcitrance: thinking democracy through Southeast Asia" in *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp223-248.
- Emmerson, Donald K. (1995b) "Singapore and the 'Asian Values' Debate" in *Journal of democracy*, October 1995 Vol.6 No.4, pp95-105.
- Fairclough, Norman (1989) *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Farr, Rob (1990) "Social representations as widespread beliefs" in *The social psychological study of widespread belief*, edited by George Gaskell and Colin Fraser. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp47-63.
- Featherstone, M (1990, ed.) *Global culture: nationalism, globalisation and modernity*. London: Sage.
- Fernandez, Warren and Ching-Ching Leong (1995) "Two sides to every story" in *Scribe*, a newsletter by the Singapore Press Club. Nov/Dec 1995.
- Fish, Stanley (1980) *Is there a text in this class: the authority of interpretative communities*. Cambridge; Harvard University Press.
- Fishman, J. (1989) *Language and ethnicity in minority sociolinguistic perspective*. Clevedon-Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.
- Fiske, John (1986) "Television: polysemy and popularity" in *Critical studies in mass communications*. Vol. 3, No.4, pp391-408.
- Fiske, John (1987a) "British cultural studies and television" in *Channels of discourse*. Edited by R. Allen. London: Methuen, pp254-290.
- Fiske, John (1987b) *Television culture*. London: Methuen.
- Fiske, John (1992) "Popularity and the politics of information" in *Journalism and popular culture*, edited by Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks. London: Sage, pp45-63.

- Foucault, Michel (Translated by Richard Howard) (1965) *Madness and civilization; a history of insanity in the Age of Reason*. New York, Vintage Books.
- Foucault, Michel (1979) "Governmentality" in *m/f* no.3 July, pp5-21.
- Foucault, Michel (1986) *The Care of the self*. New York: Pantheon.
- Fraser, Nancy (1992) "Rethinking the public sphere: a contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy" in *Habermas and the public sphere*, edited by C. Calhoun. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Fukuyama, Francis. (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: The Free Press.
- Gans, H. J. (1980) *Deciding What's News. A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*. New York, Vintage Books.
- Garnham, Nicholas (1992) "The media and the public sphere" in *Habermas and the public sphere*, edited by C. Calhoun. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Garrett, Peter and Allan Bell (1998) "Media and discourse: a critical overview" In *Approaches to media discourse*, edited by Peter Garrett and Allan Bell. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp1-20.
- Geertz, Clifford (1988) *Work and lives: the anthropologist as author*. Stanford: Standford University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford. (1973) *The interpretation of cultures; selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gellner, Ernest (1974) *Legitimation of belief*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Gellner, Ernest (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- George, Cherian (2000) *Singapore: the air-conditioned nation. Essays on the politics of comfort and control, 1990-2000* Singapore, Landmark Books.
- George, Thayil Jacob Sony (1973) *Lee Kwan Yew's Singapore*. London: Andre Deutsch.
- Giddens, Anthony (1971) *Capitalism and modern social theory: An analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Giddens, Anthony (1994) "The nation as a power-container" in *Nationalism* edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp34-35.
- Giddens, Anthony (1994a) *Beyond left and right*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Gitlin, Todd (1980). *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Goffman, Erving (1973) *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: The Overlook Press.
- Goldthorpe, John H. and David Lockwood (1969) *The affluent worker in the class structure*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Gomez, James (2000) *Self-censorship: Singapore's shame*. Singapore: Think center.
- Gopinathan, S. (1994) "Language policy changes 1979-1992: politics and pedagogy" in *Language, society and education in Singapore: Issues and Trends*. Edited by S. Gopinathan, Anne Pakir, Wah-Kam Ho and Vanithamani Saravanan. Singapore: Times Academic Press, pp65-91.
- Gramsci, Antonio (Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith) (1971) *Selections from the prison notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

- Gumpert, G. and Cathcart, R. (1982) *Inter/Media*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gunaratne, Shelton A. (2000) "Overview" in *Handbook of the media in Asia*. Edited by S. Gunaratne. New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp1-26.
- Gwee, Monica (1987) *Asian advertising and marketing*, Dec 1987, p25-27.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1975) *Legitimation crisis*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen (translated by Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence) (1962) *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Hagen, Ingunn and Janet Wasko (2000) "Introduction: Consuming Audiences? Production and reception in media research." In *Consuming Audiences? Production and reception in media research*. Edited by Ingunn Hagen and Janet Wakso. USA: Hampton Press, pp2-28.
- Hall, Stuart (1973) "Encoding/decoding" in *Culture, Media and Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79* edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis. London: Unwin Hyman, pp128-138.
- Hall, Stuart (1977) "Culture, the media and the 'ideological effect'" in *Mass communication and society*. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Wollacott (eds). London: Arnold, pp 315-348.
- Hall, Stuart (1980a) "Encoding/Decoding in television discourse," in *Culture, Media, Language*. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis (eds). London: Hutchinson, pp128-138.
- Hall, Stuart (1980b) "Nicos Poulantzas: State, power, socialism" in *New Left Review* Vol.119, pp60-69.
- Hall, Stuart. (1982) "Culture and the State" in *The State and Popular Culture*. Milton Keynes: Open University.
- Hall, Stuart (1986) "Variants of liberalism" in *Politics and Ideology, A reader* edited by James Donald and Stuart Hall. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, pp34-69.
- Hall, Stuart. (1988) *The hard road to renewal: Thatcherism and the crisis of the Left*. London: Verso.
- Hall, Stuart (1996a) "Introduction: who needs 'identity'" in *Questions of cultural identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London: Sage, pp1-17.
- Hall, Stuart (1996b) *Race: the floating signifier*. A videorecording directed and produced by Sut Jhally. Northampton: Media Education Foundation.
- Hall, Stuart (1997) "The work of representation" in *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. Edited by Stuart Hall. London: The Open University, pp13-64.
- Hall, Stuart, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts (1978) *Policing the crisis: mugging, the state, and law and order*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Hallin, Daniel (1986) *The uncensored war: the media and Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hallin, Daniel (1994) *We keep America on top of the world: Television, journalism and the public sphere*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Hallin, Daniel (2000) "Media, political power and democratisation in Mexico" In *De-westernizing media studies*, edited James Curran and Myung-Jin Park. London: Routledge, pp99-110.
- Hamel, Jacques (1993) "Sociology, common sense and qualitative methodology: the position of Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Touraine" at www.ualberta.ca/~cjscopy/articles/Hamel.html.
- Hamilton, Clive (1983) "Capitalist industrialization in East Asia's Four Little Tigers" in *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol 13, No. 1, pp35-73.
- Harbeson, John W. (1986) "Constitutions and constitutionalism in Africa: a tentative theoretical exploration" in *Democracy and pluralism in Africa*, edited by Dov Ronen. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp7-18.
- Hardt, Hanno (1992) *Critical communication studies: Communication, history and theory in America*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Harris, Nigel (1986) *The End of the third world*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Hayek, F.A. (1973/1986) "Economic freedom and representative government" in *Politics and Ideology*, A reader edited by James Donald and Stuart Hall. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, pp23-26.
- Heng, Russell (1990) "The role of the media in promoting Asian cultures and values." Singapore Press Holdings Seminar on The social role of Singapore newspapers in promoting Asian cultures and values" at the Newscentre on 20/12/1990.
- Heng, Russel (1993) "The problem of 'tradition' in contemporary Singapore" in *Heritage and contemporary values*. Institute of policy studies. Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1994, pp32-43.
- Hewison, Kevin, Garry Rodan and Richard Robison (1993) "Introduction: Changing forms of state power in Southeast Asia" in *Southeast Asia in the 1990s: Authoritarianism, democracy and capitalism*. Edited by Kevin Hewison, Richard Robison and Garry Rodan. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp2-8.
- Hill, Michael and Lian Kwen-Fee (1995) *The politics of nation building and citizenship in Singapore*. London: Routledge.
- Hitchcock, David I. (1994) *Asian values and the United States: how much conflict?* Washington, DC: Centre for Strategic and International Studies.
- Hitchcock, David I. (1994) *Asian values and the United States: how much conflict?* CSIS: Washington.
- Hobart, Mark (1986) "Thinker, thespian, soldier, slave? Assumptions about human nature in the study of Balinese society" in *Context, meaning, and power in Southeast Asia*. Edited by Mark Hobart and Robert H. Taylor. Ithaca: Cornell University, pp 131-156.
- Hroch, Miroslav (1996) "From National movement to the fully-formed nation: the nation-building process in Europe" in *Mapping the Nation*. London: Verson, pp60-78.
- Hua, Wu Yin (1983) *Class and communalism in Malaysia – politics in a dependent capitalist state*. London: Zed/Marram.
- Huntington, Samuel (1997) "The erosion of American national interests," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 5, pp28-49,
- Huntington, Samuel (1991) *The third wave: democratisation in the late twentieth century*. Norman University, Oklahoma Press.

- Huntington, Samuel P. (1993) 'The Clash of civilization?' in *Foreign Affairs*. Vol.72, No.3, pp22-49.
- Hutchinson, John and Anthony D. Smith (eds). *Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hyug, Baeg Im (1991) "Hegemony and counter-hegemony in Gramsci" in *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp123-156.
- Jayasuriya, Kamishka (1997). *Asian values as reactionary modernisation*. (Unpublished seminar paper, Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University.)
- Jessop, Bob, Kevin Bonnett and Simon Bromley (1988) "Farewell to Thatcherism? Neo-Liberalism and the "New Times"" in *New Left Review*, Vol. 179, pp81-102.
- Jessop, Bob, Kevin Bonnett, Simon Bromley and Tom Ling. (1988) *Thatcherism: A tale of two nations*. London: Polity Press.
- Katz, Adam. "Postmodern Cultural Studies: A Critique" in *The Alternative Orange*, Volume 5, number 1, Fall/Winter 1995-96. Also available at <http://eserver.org/clogic/1-1/katz.html>.
- Kedourie, Ellie (1990) *Nationalism* (4th expanded edition). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kelly, Michael A., Michael A. Maggiotto, Gary D. Weckin, Donald E. Whistler. (1993) "The democratic impulse and the movement toward democracy: an introduction" in *Building democracy in one-party systems: Theoretical problems and cross-nation experiences*. Edited by Gary D. Weckin, Donald E. Whistler, Michael A. Kelly and Michael A. Maggiotto. Connecticut, London: Praeger, pp1-17.
- Key, V. O. (1961) *Public Opinion and American democracy*. New York: A.A.Knopf.
- Kim, Dae-Jungu (1994) "Is culture destiny? The myth of Asia's anti-democratic values" in *Foreign Affairs*. Vol.76 No.6, pp189-194.
- Knorr-Cetina, Karin (1988) "The micro-macro order: towards a reconception" in *Actions and structure: Research methods and social theory*. Edited by Nigel G. Fielding. London: Sage.
- Kohn, Hans. (1994) "Western and eastern nationalisms" in *Nationalism*. Edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp160-162.
- Krugman, Paul (1994) "The myth of Asia' miracle" in *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1994, Vol 73 No.6, pp62-93.
- Krugman, Paul (1998) "Paradigms of Panic: Asian goes back to the future." <http://slate.msn.com/Dismal/98-03-12/Dismal.asp>
- Kuah, Khun-Eng. (1991) 'Confucian ideology and social engineering in Singapore,' *Journal of contemporary Asia* Vol.20 No.3, pp371-83.
- Kuo, Eddie C.Y. (1984) "Mass media and language planning: Singapore's "Speak Mandarin" Campaign" in *Journal of Communication*, Spring 1984, pp24-35.
- Kuo, Eddie C.Y. (1990) "The Singapore Press and Asian values: some sociological observations." Singapore Press Holdings Seminar on The social role of Singapore newspapers in promoting Asian cultures and values" at the Newscentre on 20/12/1990.
- Kuo, Eddie C.Y. (1992) *Confucianism as political discourse in Singapore: the case of an incomplete revitalisation movement*. Singapore, National University of Singapore, Department of Sociology, Working Paper No.83..

- Kuo, Eddie C.Y. (1993) "Communication scene of Singapore" In *Asian Communication Handbook* edited by Anura Goonasekera and Duncan Holaday. Singapore: Asian Media and Communications Research and Information Centre, pp243-266.
- Kuo, Eddie C.Y. and Peter S.J. Chen (1983) *Communication policy and planning in Singapore*. London: Kegan Paul International.
- Kuo, Eddie C.Y. and Björn H. Jernudd (1994) "Balancing macro- and micro-sociolinguistic perspectives in language management: the case of Singapore" In *Language, society and education in Singapore: Issues and Trends*. Edited by S. Gopinathan, Anne Pakir, Wah-Kam Ho and Vanithamani Saravanan. Singapore: Times Academic Press, pp25-46.
- Kuo, Eddie C.Y. and Peng-Hwa Ang (2000) "Singapore" in *Handbook of the media in Asia*. Edited by Shelton A. Gunaratne. New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp402-428.
- Kwok, Kian-Woon (1981) *Language planning in education: a case study of the 1980 "Speak your school languages" campaigns*. BA (Hons) thesis in National University of Singapore, Sociology Department.
- Kwok, Kian-Woon (1993) "The problem of 'tradition' in contemporary Singapore" in *Heritage and contemporary values*. Institute of policy studies. Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1994, pp1-24.
- Lai, Ah-Eng (1995) *Meanings of Multiethnicity: a case-study of ethnicity and ethnic relations in Singapore*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Lapper, Richard (2000) "Election Diary: Bolstering democracy," at www.ft.com/specials/spcc7e.htm.
- Leary, Virginia A. (1990) "The Asia Region and the international Human Rights movement" in *Asian Perspectives on Human Rights* edited by Claude E. Welch Jr and Virginia A. Leary. San Francisco: Westview Press, pp13-30.
- Leavis, F.R. (1930) "Mass civilization and minority culture" in John Storey (1998) ed., *Cultural theory and popular culture: A reader*. Athens, University of Georgia Press, pp13-22.
- Lechte, John (1994) *Fifty key contemporary thinkers*. London: Routledge.
- Lee, Chih-Horng (2000) "Mr Democracy's dictatorial rule" in <http://zaobao.com.sg/zaobao/bilingual/papges/bilingual020400.html>
- Lee, Chin-Chuan (2000) "State, capital, and media: the case of Taiwan" in *De-westernizing media studies*, edited James Curran and Myung-Jin Park. London: Routledge, pp124-138.
- Lee, Jae-Kyoung (1996) "A crisis of the South Korean media: the rise of civil society and democratic tradition" in *Media Asia*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp86-89, 94.
- Lee, Kwan Yew (1998) Speech at the Asian Media Conference in Los Angeles, 29/10/1998.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude (translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf) (1972) *Structural anthropology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Leys, Colin (1990) "Still a question of hegemony." *New Left Review* Vol. 181, pp119-128.
- Lian, Daniel (2001) "City-state aberration?" at *Sgdaily*, 4 Sep 2001, sg_daily_subscribe@yahoo.com.
- Lim, Jenette (1986) "Media Laws and Regulations in Singapore." Paper presentation at AMIC Seminar of Media laws and regulations in Asia. Singapore: January 7-8.

- Lim, Linda Y.C. And E.F. Pang (1991) *Foreign direct investment and industrialization in Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand*. Paris: Development Centre for the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- Lim, Linda (1989) "Social welfare" in K.S. Sandhu and Paul Wheatley (eds) *Management of success: the moulding of modern Singapore*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp171-197.
- Linz, J. (1974) "Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes" in *Handbook of political science*, edited by F. Greenstein and N. Polsby. Vol 3., MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Lippman, Walter (1956) *The public philosophy*. New York: Mentor Books.
- Lipset, S.M. (1960) *Political Man*. London: Heinemann.
- Locke, John (1690/1986) "Two treatise on government" in *Politics and Ideology*, A reader edited by James Donald and Stuart Hall. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, pp2-3.
- Lodge, George C. and Erza F. Vogel (1987) *Ideology and national competitiveness: an analysis of 9 countries*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Lukes, Steven and Andrew Scull. (1983) *Durkheim and the law*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Lukes, Steven. (1974) *Power: a radical view*. London: Macmillan.
- Lull, James (1988) *World families watch television*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Lull, James (1991) *China turned on: television, reform and resistance*. London: Routledge.
- MacPherson, C. B. (1966) *The real world of democracy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Mahathir, Mohamad (1985) "A prescription for a socially responsible press" in *Media Asia*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp212-215.
- Mahathir, Mohamad (1995a) "Let's have mutual cultural enrichment" in *New Straits Times*, 16/3/1995:10.
- Mahathir, Mohamad (1995b) "No freedom without responsibility" in *New Straits Times*, 20/5/1995:10.
- Mahbubani, Kishore (1993) "An Asian perspective on human rights and freedom of the press" in *Media Asia*, Vol 20, No.3, pp159-166.
- Mares, Peter (2000) "Vietnam: propaganda is not a dirty word" in *Losing control: Freedom of the press in Asia*, edited by Louise Williams and Roland Rich. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, pp239-257.
- Marriott, McKim (1963) "Cultural policy in the new states" in Clifford Geertz (ed) *Old societies and news states: the question for modernity in Asia and Africa*. New York: The Free Press.
- Mason, Jennifer. (1996) *Qualitative researching*. London: Sage.
- Mattelart, Armand (1983) "Introduction: for a class and group analysis of popular communication practices" in *Communication and class struggle Vol 1: Capitalism, imperialism*. Edited by Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelaub. New York: International General, pp17-67.
- Mauzy, Diane K. (1997) "The human rights and 'Asian values' debate in Southeast Asia: trying to clarify the key issues" in *The Pacific Review*, Vol 10. No. 2, pp210-236.

- McDaniel, Drew O. (1994) *Broadcasting in the Malay world—radio, television and video in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore*. New Jersey: Ablex publishing.
- McSherry, Corynne (unknown) "Todas las Voces: Indigenous language radio, state culturalism and everyday forms of public sphere formation." *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Culture*, Vol 5:2. Also available at www.his.latrobe.edu.au/jilas/journal/vol5_2/mcsherry.html.
- Miliband, Ralph (1973) *The state in capitalist society*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Mills, C.W (1959) *The sociological imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Milney, Robert S. and Diane K. Mauzy (1990) *Singapore: The legacy of Lee Kwan Yew*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Minchin, James (1986) *No man is an island*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Ministry of Communication and Information (1989) *A Decade of Mandarin 1979-1989*. Singapore: Mentor Printers Pte Ltd.
- Ministry of Communications and Information (1989) *Speak mandarin campaign launching speeches*.
- Mirza, Hafiz (1986) *Multinationals and the growth of the Singapore economy*. London: St. Martin Press.
- Moody, Peter R Jr (1999) "Confucian affinities" in *The Review of politics*, Spring 1999, Vol.61 No.2, pp338-339.
- Morley, David (1980) *The 'Nationwide' audience: structure and decoding*. London: British Film Institute.
- Morley, David (1992) *Television, audiences and cultural studies*. London: Routledge.
- Morley, David (1996) "Populism, revisionism and the 'new' audience research" in *Cultural studies and communications*, edited by James Curran, David Morley and Valerie Walkerdine. London: Arnold, pp279-293.
- Morley, David and Kevin Robins (1995) *Spaces of Identity: Global media, electronic landscapes and cultural boundaries*. London: Routledge.
- Morris, Richard B. (1969) *Alexander Hamilton and the founding of the nation*. New York: Harper Torchbacks.
- Moscovici, Serge (1981) "On social representations" in *Social cognition: Perspectives in everyday understanding*, edited by Joseph Forgas. London: Academic Press, pp181-209.
- Moscovici, Serge (1984) "The phenomenon of social representation" in R.M. Farr and S. Moscovici (eds) *Social Representations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mouffe, Chantal (1981) "Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci" in *Culture, Ideology and Social Process: A Reader*. Edited by Tony Benentt, Graham Martin, Colin Mercer and Janet Woollacott. London: Open University Press, pp219-234.
- Nain, Zaharom (2000) "Globalised theories and national controls: the state, the market, and the Malaysian media" in *De-westernizing media studies*, edited James Curran and Myung-Jin Park. London: Routledge, pp139-154.
- Neale, Steve (1977) "Propaganda" in *Screen*. Vol 18. No. 3, pp9-40.
- Nelson, Katherine (1985) *Making sense: the acquisition of shared meaning*. Orlando: Academic Press.

- Nischalke, Tobias Ingo (2000) "Insights from ASEAN's foreign policy co-operation: The "ASEAN Way", a real spirit or a phantom?" in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Vol. 22, No. 1, pp89-112.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. (1984) *The spiral of silence. Public opinion—our social skin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nonis, George (1991) *Hello Chok Tong, Goodbye Kuan Yew: The untold Singapore story*. Singapore: Angsana Books.
- Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (1977) "Gramsci and the national-popular" In *Screen education*. Spring 1977, no.22, pp12-15.
- Nugent, Daniel and Gilbert M. Joseph (eds) (1994) *Everyday forms of state formation: revolution and the negotiation of rule in modern Mexico*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo and Phillippe C. Schmitter (1986) *Transitions from Authoritarian rule: tentative conclusions about uncertain democracies*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- O'Leary, Michael K. and William D. Coplin (1983) *Political Risks in Thirty-Five Countries*. London: Euromoney Publications Ltd.
- Öjendal, Joakim and Hans Antlöv (1998) "Asian values and its political consequences: is Cambodia the first domino?" in *The Pacific Review*. Vol 11 No. 4, pp525-540.
- Olsen, Johan P (1983) *Organised democracy*. Oslo: Universtetsforlaget.
- Østerud, Svein. "How can audience research overcome the divide between macro- and microanalysis, between social structure and action?" In *Consuming Audiences? Production and reception in media research*. Edited by Ingunn Hagen and Janet Wakso. USA: Hampton Press, pp123-144.
- Pakir, Anne (1993) "Two-tongue tied: bilingualism in Singapore" in *Bilingualism and national development* edited by Gary M. Jones and A. Conrad K. Ozóg. Exeter: Short Run Press, pp73-90.
- Panbianco, Angelo (Translated by Marc Silver). (1988) *Political parties: organization and power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pang, Cheng-Lian (1971) *Singapore's People's Action Party*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Park, Myung-jin, Chang-Nam Kim and Byung-Woo Sohn (2000) "Modernization, globalization, and the powerful state: The Korean media" in *De-westernizing media studies*, edited James Curran and Myung-Jin Park. London: Routledge, pp111-123.
- Parkin, Frank (1971) *Class Inequality and political order*. London: Paladin.
- Parkin, Frank (1974) *The social analysis of class struggle*. London: Tavistock Books.
- Partridge, P.H. (1975) *Consent and Consensus*. London: The Macmillan Press.
- Paul, E. C. (1992) *Obstacles to democratisation in Singapore*. Working Paper No. 78. Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, Australia.
- Peckham, Morse (1965) *Man's rage for chaos: biology, behavior and the arts*. Philadelphia: Chilton Books.
- Pempel, T. J (eds.) (1990) *Uncommon democracies: the one-party dominant regimes*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

- Percy, Walker (1975) *The message in the bottle: how queer man is, how queer language is, and what one has to do with the other*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Perlmutter, Amos. (1981) *Modern authoritarianism: a comparative institutional analysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Pertierra, Raul (1999) "Introduction" in *Sojourn*, Vol.14 No.2, pp275-294.
- Peters, Ann (1989) "Campaign Country" in *Asia Magazine*. October 1, 1989.
- Petersen, Neville (1992) "Asian news values" in *Media Asia*, Vol. 19, No. 4, pp183-190.
- Phua, Siew Chye and Lily Kong. (1996) "Ideology, social commentary and resistance in popular music: a case study of Singapore" in *Journal of popular culture*, Summer 1996, Vol 3, No 1.
- Pollock, Friedrich (1976) "Empirical research into public opinion" in *Critical Sociology*, edited by Paul Connerton. Middlesex: Penguin Books, pp225-236.
- Potter, Jonathan and Margaret Wetherell (1987) *Discourse and social psychology: beyond attitudes and behaviour*. London: Sage.
- Poulantzas, Nicos (translated by Timothy O'Hagen) (1968) *Political power and social classes*. London: NLB.
- Poulantzas, Nicos (translated by Patrick Camiller) (1978) *State, power, socialism*. London: NLB.
- Poulantzas, Nicos (1972) "The problem of the capitalist state" in *Ideology in social science: readings in critical social theory*. Edited by Robin Blackburn, pp238-253.
- Pugh, Cedric (1989) "The political economy of public housing" in K.S. Sandhu and Paul Wheatley (eds), *Management of success: the moulding of modern Singapore*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp833-859.
- Purushotam, Nirmala (1995) *Disciplining differences: "Race in Singapore"*. Working paper No. 126, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore.
- Pye, Lucian W. with Mary W. Pye (1985) *Asian power and politics: the cultural dimensions of authority*. London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Quah, Jon S.T. (1990a) "National values and nation building: defining the problem" in *In search of Singapore's national values*, edited by Jon S.T. Quah. Institute of Policy Studies: Singapore, pp1-5.
- Quah, Jon S.T. (1990b) "Government policies and nation-building" in *In search of Singapore's national values*, edited by Jon S.T. Quah. Institute of Policy Studies: Singapore, pp24-44.
- Quah, Jon S.T. (1990c) "Searching for Singapore's national values" in *In search of Singapore's national values*, edited by Jon S.T. Quah. Institute of Policy Studies: Singapore, pp91-105.
- Radway, Janice A. (1984) *Reading the romance: Women, patriarchy and popular literature*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Rahim, Lily (2000) "Economic crisis and the prospects for democratisation in Southeast Asia" in *Journal of contemporary Asia*, vol. 30, no. 1. Also <http://www.ntu.edu.acu/faculties/arts/pol203democratisation.htm>.

- Rajaratnam, S (1990) *Demystification of ethnicity*. Speech given at the National University of Singapore Society talk on "Ethnicity and Singaporean Singapore" on 14/6/1990.
- Ramacharan, Robin (2000) "ASEAN and non-interference: A principle maintained" in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Volume 22, No. 1, pp60-88.
- Ramaprasad, Jyotika and James Ong (1990) "Singapore's guided press policy and its practice on the forum page of the Straits Times" in *Gazette* Vol. 46, pp41-56.
- Rasheed, Zainul Abidin (1990) "Myopia, Utopia and the Singapore Media." Singapore Press Holdings Seminar on The social role of Singapore newspapers in promoting Asian cultures and values" at the Newscentre on 20/12/1990.
- Rasheed, Zainul Abidin bin and Arun Mahizhnan (1990) "The new environment, the young Singaporeans and national values" in *In search of Singapore's national values*, edited by Jon S.T.Quah. Institute of Policy Studies: Singapore, pp80-90.
- Regnier, Philippe (1991) *Singapore: City-state in South-east Asia*. London: Hurst and Company.
- Remington, Robin Alison (1993) "Democracy and the market in East Central Europe: the hard choices" in *Building democracy in one-party systems: Theoretical problems and cross-nation experiences*. Edited by Gary D. Wekkin, Donald E. Whistler, Michael A. Kelly and Michael A. Maggiotto. Connecticut, London: Praeger, pp139-168.
- Renan, Ernest (1994) "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" in *Nationalism*. Edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp17-18.
- Rich, Roland (2000) "Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia: a few rays of light" in *Losing control: Freedom of the press in Asia*, edited by Louise Williams and Roland Rich. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, pp16-36.
- Robison, Richard (1996) "The politics of 'Asian Values'" in *The Pacific Review*. Vol.9 No.3, pp309-327.
- Robison, Richard, Kevin Hewison and Garry Rodan (1993) "Political power in industrializing capitalist societies: Theoretical approaches" in *Southeast Asia in the 1990s: Authoritarianism, democracy and capitalism*. Edited by Kevin Hewison, Richard Robison and Garry Rodan. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp39-74.
- Rodan, Garry (1989) *The political economy of Singapore's industrialization: national state and international capital*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Rodan, Garry (1993a) "Introduction: challenges for the New Guard and directions in the 1990s" in *Singapore changes guard: social, political and economic directions in the 1990s* edited by Garry Rodan. New York: Longman Cheshire, ppxi-xxii.
- Rodan, Garry (1993b) "The growth of Singapore's middle class and its political significance" in *Singapore changes guard: social, political and economic directions in the 1990s* edited by Garry Rodan. New York: Longman Cheshire, pp52-71.
- Rodan, Garry (1993c) "Preserving the one-party state in contemporary Singapore" in *Southeast Asia in the 1990s: Authoritarianism, democracy and capitalism*. Edited by Kevin Hewison, Richard Robison and Garry Rodan. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp75-108.
- Rodan, Garry (1996) "Theorising political opposition in East and Southeast Asia" in *Political Oppositions in Industrialising Asia*, edited by Garry Rodan. London: Routledge, pp1-39.

- Rodan, Garry (2000) "Singapore: Information lockdown, business as usual" In *Losing control: Freedom of the press in Asia*, edited by Louise Williams and Roland Rich. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, pp169-189.
- Ronen, Dov. (1986) "The state and democracy in Africa" in *Democracy and pluralism in Africa*, edited by Dov Ronen. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp189-204.
- Rosario-Briad, Florangel (1986) "A development-oriented communication approach: some perspectives" in *Media Asia*, Vol 13, No. 3, pp123-127.
- Rose, Nikolas (1988) *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self*. London: Routledge.
- Rose, Nikolas (1992) "Towards a critical sociology of freedom." An Inaugural Lecture given by Professor Nikolas Rose on 5 May 1992.
- Rose, Nikolas (1996) "Governing "advanced" liberal democracies" in *Foucault and political reason: liberalism, neo-liberalism and the rationalities of government*, edited by Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose. London: UCL Press, pp37-64.
- Said, Edward (1978) *Orientalism: Western conceptions of the Orient*. London: Penguin Books.
- Schiller, Herbert (1989) *Culture, Inc.—The corporate takeover of public expression*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schmiegelow, Michele (ed) (1997) *Democracy in Asia*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Schudson, Michael (1982) "The Politics of Narrative Form: The Emergence of news conventions in print and television" in *Daedlus*, Vol.111, pp97-113.
- Schumpeter, Joseph (1947) *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. New York: Harper.
- Scott, James C. (1968) *Political ideology in Malaysia; reality and the beliefs of an elite*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, James C. (1976) *The moral economy of the peasant: rebellion and subsistence in Southeast Asia*. Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, James C. (1985) *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, James C. (1990) *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts*. Haven: Yale University Press.
- Seow, Chee-Meow (1985a) "The Civil Service," in Jon S.T. Quah, Heng-Chee Chan and Chee-Meow Seow (eds) *Government and politics in Singapore*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, pp92-119.
- Seow, Chee-Meow (1985b) "Parapolitical Institutions," in Jon S.T. Quah, Heng-Chee Chan and Chee-Meow Seow (eds) *Government and politics in Singapore*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, pp173-194.
- Seow, Francis T. (1998) *The media enthralled: Singapore revisited*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Seow, Francis T. (1995) "A free and flippant media" in *Media studies journal*. Vol. 9 No. 4, pp77-81.
- Silverman, David (1998) *Harvey Sacks: social science and conversation analysis*. New York: Oxford University.
- Slater, Don and Fran Tonkiss. (2001) *Market society: markets and modern social theory*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers.

- Sloterdijk, Peter (translated by Michael Eldred) (1988) *Critique of cynical reason*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Soysal, Levant (1999) *Projects of culture: an ethnographic episode in the life of migrant youth in Berlin*. Thesis (Ph. D)--Harvard University.
- Sparks, Colin (1992) "Popular journalism: theories and practices" in *Journalism and popular culture*, edited by Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks. London: Sage, pp24-44.
- Sparks, Colin (2000) "Media theory after the fall of European communism: Why the old models from the East and West won't do anymore" in *De-westernizing media studies*, edited James Curran and Myung-Jin Park. London: Routledge, pp35-49.
- Stalin, Joseph (1994) "The nation" in *Nationalism* edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp18-21.
- Tamney, Joseph B (1996) *The struggle over Singapore's soul: Western modernisation and Asian culture*. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Tan, Kevin (1997) "The presidency in Singapore: constitutional developments" in Kevin Tan and Lam Peng-Er (eds) *Managing political change in Singapore: the elected presidency*. London: Routledge, pp52-87.
- Tan, Kevin and Peng-Er Lam (1997) "Introduction" in Kevin Tan and Lam Peng-Er (eds) *Managing political change in Singapore: the elected presidency*. London: Routledge, pp1-8.
- Tan, Su-Hwi (1995) *The manufacturing of social consent- the dynamics of language planning in Singapore*. Working paper No. 8. Department of English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore.
- Tan, Teng-Lang (1990) *The Singapore press: Freedom, responsibility and credibility*. Singapore: Institute of policy studies.
- Thompson, E.P. (1965) "The making of the English working-class" in John Storey (ed) *Cultural theory and popular culture: A reader*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, pp57-60.
- Thompson, George G. (1974) "Communication's tasks in a city state: Singapore's unique experience" in *Media Asia*. 1984, Vol 1, No. 1, pp23-30.
- Thompson, John (1990) *Ideology and modern culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Tilman, Robert O. (1987) *Southeast Asia and the enemy beyond*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Tremewan, Christopher. (1994) *The political economy of social control in Singapore*. London: Macmillian Press.
- Tu, Wei-ming (1984) *Confucian ethics today*. Singapore: Federal Publications.
- Turnbull, C. M. (1989) *A History of Singapore 1819-1988*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- van Dijk, Teun A. (1982) "Opinions and attitudes in discourse comprehension" in *Language and comprehension*, edited by J.F. Le Ny and W. Kintsche. Amsterdam: North Holland, pp35-51.
- van Dijk, Teun A. (1985) "Cognitive situation models in discourse production. The expression of ethnic situations in prejudiced discourse" in *Language and social situation*, edited by J.P. Forgas. New York: Springer-Verlag, pp61-80.

- van Dijk, Teun A. (1998) "Opinion and Ideologies in the press" in *Approaches to media discourse*, edited by Peter Garrett and Allan Bell. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp21-63.
- Vasil, Raj K. (1984) *Governing Singapore*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.
- Vogel, Ezra F. (1989) "A Little Dragon Tamed" in *Management of Success: The moulding of modern Singapore*. Edited by Kernial Singh Sandhu and Paul Wheatley. Singapore: Westview Press, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp1049-1066.
- Volosinov V. N. (1973) *Marxism and the philosophy of language*. London: Seminar Press.
- Ward, Peter (1995) "The Singapore paradox" in *The Australian magazine*. March 25-26, pp30-35.
- Warner, Michael (1993) "The mass public and the mass subject" in *The phantom public sphere*, edited by B. Robbins. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Weber, Max (1946) Translated by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Weber, Max. (Translated by Talcott Parsons) (1956) *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. York: C. Scribner.
- Weber, Max (1966a) Translated by Ephraim Fischhoff. *The sociology of religion*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd.
- Weber, Max. (1966b) Translated by Edward Shils and Max Rheinstein. *Max Weber on law in economy and society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Weber, Max (1994) "The nation" in *Nationalism* edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp21-25.
- Wertsch, James V. (1998) *Mind as action*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Westgaard, J. H. (1972) "Sociology: the myth of classlessness" in *Ideology and social science: readings in critical social theory*. Edited by Robin Blackburn. London: Fontana, pp119-163.
- Whistler, Donald E, Michael A. Maggiotto, Gary D. Wekkin and Michael A. Kelly (1993) "Conclusion: Devising democracy" in *Building democracy in one-party systems: Theoretical problems and cross-nation experiences*. Edited by Gary D. Wekkin, Donald E. Whistler, Michael A. Kelly and Michael A. Maggiotto. Connecticut, London: Praeger, pp223-231.
- Whorf, Benjamin Lee (1956) "The relation of habitual thought and behaviour to language" in *Language, thought and reality: Selected writings*. Edited by John B. Carroll. Cambridge: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, p134-159.
- Willemsen, Paul (1978) "Notes on subjectivity: on reading Edward Branigan's 'Subjectivity Under Siege'" in *Screen*, Vol 19, No.1, pp41-69.
- Williams, Louise (2000) "Censors: at work, censors out of work" in *Losing control: Freedom of the press in Asia*, edited by Louise Williams and Roland Rich. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, pp1-15.
- Williams, Raymond (1965) *The long revolution*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Willis, Paul (1980) "Notes on method" in *Culture, media and language: working papers in cultural studies, 1972-79*. Edited by Stuart Hall. London: Unwin Hyman Ltd, pp88-95.

- Yeap, Soon-Beng (1994) "The emergence of an Asian-centred perspective: Singapore's media regionalisation strategies" in *Media Asia*, Vol 21, No. 2, pp63-72.
- Yeung, Chris (2000) "Hong Kong: a handover of freedom?" in *Losing control: Freedom of the press in Asia*, edited by Louise Williams and Roland Rich. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, pp58-73.
- Yeung, Yue-man (1973) *National development policy and urban transformation in Singapore: A study of public housing and the marketing system*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Yoshihara, Kunio (1988) *The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in South-east Asia*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Zaller, John (1992) *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zinn, Howard. (1980) *A people's history of the United States*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Zou, Gary (1991) "Transition toward Democracy in comparative perspective" in *Asian Perspective*, Spring-Summer 1991 Vol/15 No.1, pp99-121.