

CHAPTER 15

Era of Globalisation: Singapore's New Urban Economy and the Rise of a World Asian City

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Introduction: The Rise of a World Asian City

Fifty years represent a sufficient time period to take stock of the economic changes arising from our plans to create a competitive city, some of which are dramatic, while others represent a more gradual path constructed by putting new pieces in the ground-work laid out by masterplans. Given the general readership of the book, this chapter will endeavour to develop a narrative without an extensive review of the academic literature on the topic.

In addition, my take as a sociologist on urban planning may be different from my co-writers in this volume in several ways. First, urban planning has to be related to the economic planning in city building, with economic planning providing the broad strokes in shaping the Singapore economy and urban planning in facilitating and housing the activities that are the result of economic planning. Second, I see urban planning as a set of trade-offs, developing what is prized, and minimising the costs. Understanding this trade-off is important, so this chapter will provide a context for the reader to understand these trade-offs. A third related point is that the notion of “what is prized” is of course a political decision, but it is a decision made within a certain economic context. The logic which led to a certain course of economic action and which has consequences in terms of the built form of the city is made within a specific historical time period. And so an excavation of this context is important. While Singapore's 50 years of urban planning is largely celebratory, understanding the costs and efforts to minimise this are also important. Lastly, sociologists have been described as people who go to a football game and watch the crowd. This is an apt description for our concern as sociologists is always with society. Therefore, my take on the last 50 years of urban planning is also to see how such plans and its consequences have an influence in the way our society and our city are shaped.

The title and the collection of concepts in it give me a chance to weave a story out of the work which I have already done. First, the notion of globalisation in the Singapore case is really not recent and will require the reader to take a leap back 200 years with Singapore as a port city, since international shipping traffic going through Singapore was part of the globalisation developed during the colonial period. As a port city, Singapore had arguably already achieved “world city” status as an entrepôt along with other strategically-located port cities, and acted as crucial elements in the development of the global economy as collection points for regional produce and distribution nodes for western products. Understanding where we came from is essential as a marker of the changes we have experienced, and so, some focus on Singapore’s economic history is necessary.

Second, the idea of Singapore’s “new urban economy” is also interesting. We usually think of the new urban economy as giving more priority to services (finance, business services like legal and accounting, real estate) and the chapter will be contrasting this with Singapore’s previous economic phases. Lastly, is Singapore a “world Asian city”? Singapore is certainly a world city and while Singapore may be geographically in Asia, our continued openness to global influences and our lack of an illustrious cultural history, make us less of an Asian city.

For the above-mentioned reasons, it is necessary to mark out two earlier phases in Singapore’s economic history, namely its development as a port city and later as a manufacturing center. Two other reasons for examining the historical aspect are, firstly, because the previous economic phases are never absent; they continue to be a significant factor even in Singapore’s present economic base. Secondly, the reader needs to understand the previous phases in order to have a greater clarity to the “new urban economy” as a contrasting form.

Singapore as a Port City

There are many excellent historical texts detailing Singapore’s economic history as a port city. The Dutch already had a presence in Indonesia in the early 1800s but were more interested in developing Indonesia’s resources. In contrast, the British focussed on developing Singapore as a free port, with the result that the trade of the Indonesian islands began to centre around Singapore. The 1860s represented a significant decade in the urban development of Singapore for two reasons. The shifting of administration from the East India Company to Singapore being a Crown Colony in 1867 resulted in an expanded government capacity with new legislative and specialised agencies to manage the affairs of the colony, reigning in, but in no way effectively solving the rather chaotic attempts to manage the settlement. The Tanjong Pagar Dock Company had already developed the new harbour in Tanjong Pagar, but as Bogaars (1955: 136) pointed out, “the opening of the Suez Canal (in 1869) revived the flagging trade

of the port, and brought in a new era of prosperity: it set the Tanjong Pagar Dock Company firmly on its feet, and within a decade turned attention from the area of the Singapore River to New Harbour: it established a pattern of development which lasted for fifty years”.

The following two quotes are useful in giving the reader a sense of the priorities of the colonial government:

The British in Singapore measured success by the amount of trade secured and the miles of roads paved. But what about schools, hospitals, and low-cost housing? In the matter of schools and hospitals, the government invoked *laissez-faire* principles and expected philanthropic contributions from private individuals who had benefited from the free trade system. (Lee, 1989: 40)

Though the interests of the local manufacturer would be best served by protection, the interference with the freedom of the port which would be involved might be disastrous to the *entrepôt* trade... The prosperity of Singapore has been built on its *entrepôt* trade. Industrial development is a later growth and has not begun to approach the *entrepôt* trade in importance. To disturb this merely for the sake of protecting still problematic industries would be to throw away the substance and grasp the shadow”. (quoted in Pang and Tan, 1981: 141)

Edwin Lee's point allows us to understand the strengths of the economic infrastructure. The British approach to urban planning in Singapore was clearly aimed at making sure main source of revenue of the country was not jeopardised, thus resulting in an excellent transportation and communications infrastructure that was in many ways, the most advanced in the region. The economic success of the port was clearly a significant factor in building a set of activities which supported the trade of Singapore: the banks and financing activities, warehousing, import-export businesses, and transportation-related services (including boat building, ship chandlers).

The flip side of Lee's point is also significant, for the indifference of the administration to social policies had meant that different communities had to provide for services such as education and health. Such provision, along with the central role played by ethnic and religious associations, kept affiliation and identification within communities, creating a plural society where people looked inward to their own communities. Thus the state-society relationship in Singapore during the colonial period was characterised by a strong society as individual communities were well organised and had the loyalties of the people, and an indifferent state which saw its responsibilities and therefore directed its urban planning focus on tending to the economic infrastructure, leaving the various communities to fend for themselves.

However, even the best effort of the community was insufficient. The surveys conducted by the Department of Social Welfare in 1947 and 1954 on the residential

arrangements of Singapore's central area are worth repeating as an indicator of the congested conditions in the city. In both surveys, the term "space" is used to denote the most congested sleeping arrangement: "places like bunks in passage ways, the tiered bed-lofts common in Singapore, sleeping selves under or over staircases, sleeping arrangements in five-foot ways, kitchens and backyards, and other places used for sleeping without enclosures or partitions" (Department of Social Welfare, 1947: 70). In 1947, the percentage of household using such spaces consisted 21% in ward 1 (the harbour area stretching to west Chinatown), 16% in ward 2 (the rest of Chinatown, including the business district, extending east to Middle Road) and 26% in ward 3 (comprising areas east of Middle road, bounded by Serangoon Road and the Kallang River) (Department of Social Welfare, 1947: 71). By 1954, when the second survey was done, the figures had increased to 38% for wards 1 and 2, while remaining unchanged at 25% for ward 3 (Goh, 1956: 68–69).

The second quote offered by Pang and Tan (1981) reveals just how narrow this economic pre-occupation is. While the port was the main economic activity of Singapore, there had in fact developed a range of manufacturing which consisted essentially of the processing of sub-regional products like timber, rubber and tin smelting, and also basic production of goods such as clothing and furniture making, which were focused on the local and sub-regional market. Rubber-related goods such as shoes and tyres were the only export-oriented products that came out of Singapore in the inter-war years (Huff, 1994: 217–218). The colonial government had considered the possibility of providing some support such as tariff protection for local manufacturing. It is important to locate this set of comments within the context of the 1930s, when the Colonial government had considered manufacturing and industrial development "a later growth", taking the prevailing thought that there is a "natural" economic division of labour between the developed world which should focus on industry and while the colonies supplied the raw materials and agricultural products.

It is significant to note that both the colonial and Singapore governments' approach to governing Singapore were overwhelmingly economic. British intentions for Singapore were economic and economically narrow because they had no other ambition for the colony. When Singapore became independent, the government's intention for Singapore was also overwhelmingly economic because Singapore had to succeed despite its tiny size.

Singapore as a Manufacturing Platform

By the late 1960s, Singapore had achieved what Gamer (1972) called the capacity to plan, having secured the political mandate as well as built the organisational and legal and regulative capacity. The Singapore story on manufacturing, like that of the port city, is a well-trodden path, except that this story is told through the activities of

the EDB (Economic Development Board) which focused on investment promotion, JTC (Jurong Town Corporation), responsible for industrial planning and industrial estates, the URA (Urban Redevelopment Authority) which oversaw the movement of old trades out of the Central Area of the City and the HDB (Housing Development Board), that housed people and activities in new towns.

The period from the 1960s to the 1980s was a period of rapid growth and development. The city-state had gone through a make-over with core features such as the port being enhanced, the congestion and mixed development of the city centre being removed, and a comprehensive transportation network which linked the new towns in the suburban fringes of Singapore through a concerted planning and implementation which is well documented in the preceding chapters.

The manufacturing phase in Singapore's development is significant for several reasons. First, it was a very different system of economic organisation and consequently a different economic globalisation process. While the colonial period involved trade between Europe and the Far East, in contrast, the manufacturing that occurred from the 1960s was driven in part from European, American and later Japanese manufacturers seeking low cost production sites away from their increasing expensive home countries. The nature of this production had advanced to a point where parts and components could be produced in different parts of the world and assembled somewhere else and sold worldwide, adding increased complexity to logistics and transportation. This new process of organising industrial production resulted in what Froebel and associates (1981) termed as the "new division of labour". Singapore was able to tap into this newly emerging system by offering a production site with relatively low cost and productive labour source and efficient transport infrastructure developed during the colonial period as a port city. This new way of organising production meant a new transnational management system embodied in multinational companies, with their multi-product, multidivisional structure dominated global production (Hymer, 1972) and brought a transnational class of managers and professionals to Singapore as overseers of various production activities. The new system of global production meant an increase in movements of components to different factories around the world. While all merchandise during the colonial period was carried through ships and therefore facilitated by ports, the manufacturing that occurred involved air-cargo in addition to shipping, since the electronic components and products were high value items which could be air-lifted. Therefore, airport capacity was increased to supplement this type of traffic.

Second, this new system of industrial production of which Singapore was now a part of also resulted in a new spatial economic organisation. The centre of entrepôt trade activities was concentrated in the Tanjong Pagar and Singapore river area with the merchants, shipping companies, banks, docks and godowns located there. By the 1970s, the enhanced capacity for planning and implementation, and the coordination between different government agencies created three types industrial sites. The site of

major heavy industrial activities was located in Jurong Industrial Estate. The planning of this estate in 1960 by Dr Goh Keng Swee, who was Finance Minister at that time, was visionary if we mark 1960 as the beginning of the shift from port-related activities to manufacturing. At that time, the creation of the estate was tantamount to the assumption that if we were to build a hotel, the tourists would come. The pessimists of the day labelled Jurong Industrial Estate “Goh’s Folly”, but by 1976, 650 factories were located in Jurong.¹ Besides Jurong, smaller types of industrial estates developed throughout Singapore, partly in response to resettling the local economic activities. So, for example, boat building activities which had concentrated in the Tanjong Rhu and Kallang basin were moved to the newly-built Kallang Industrial Estate in the 1970s. Various motor vehicle repairs were relocated to the Sin Ming industrial estate, also built in the 1970s. A third type of industrial estate was the light non-polluting manufacturing activities such as electronics and these were located at the periphery of New Towns so that the factories could tap into the resident labour pool in these new towns. By 1972, 22% of Singapore’s manufacturing workforce was located in the nine industrial estates within public housing estates (Pang & Khoo, 1975: 242, 246).

The third significant impact brought by the industrial phase was the changes to the labour force. The rapid growth of Singapore’s manufacturing industry was not matched by domestic labour growth. Rather than lose momentum, and also to keep the better paying managerial jobs in manufacturing in Singapore, the policy to use foreign workers on short term work permit schemes was created. This policy brought in cheap labour from the surrounding region as a solution to the chronic labour shortage that had started to build up in the 1970s. This dependency on a foreign workforce has over time increased and broadened beyond the industrial sector to fill areas of work which local workers shunned. Foreign workers have become an everyday reality.

Singapore’s New Urban Economy and Consolidation as a Global City

Unlike the shift to manufacturing where there was a bold and decisive step based on the advice of Dr Albert Winsemius and under the direction of Dr Goh Keng Swee, the policy shift to services was more gradual. Manufacturing continued to yield good returns to Singapore and it made economic sense to keep a viable industrial base in Singapore through technical upgrading of production facilities as well as to attract new higher value-added and skill-intensive manufacturing like chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Manufacturing also involved management, financial and business functions to support production operations. And so when rising manufacturing costs drove production out of Singapore, the realisation was that Singapore needed to hold on to and become a base for strategic control, innovation and key operations (MTI, 1986, 1991).

¹ <http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/article/in-memory-of-dr-goh-keng-swee>.

By the 1990s, Singapore had already built up a strong set of business services. Good land-use and transport planning had ensured a wide array of office facilities and an excellent airport hub, essential elements for a service economy (Ho, 2000). A 2001 study of firms with regional headquarters highlighted good quality business services as a key reason for companies choosing to site their regional headquarters in Singapore (Yeung, Poon and Perry, 2001). It is also important to note that aside from production-based administrative centres, there are also consumption-type sales and distribution centres. As the growth of the middle class expands in Southeast Asia, Singapore will also most likely be the regional centre of companies wanting to expand their brand presence in this region.

The growth of the services economy in Singapore can be noted from number of employees in services in contrast to manufacturing. The manufacturing industry, which was dominant in the 1970s and 1980s, had already started weakening (in terms of employment) by the 1990s. In 2001, 19.5% of the resident labour force was employed in manufacturing. This share declined rather dramatically over the decade and in 2013, only 13.6% of the resident labour force was employed in manufacturing (Figure 1). In contrast, three sub sectors of services recorded steady growth: the social services (which incorporates personal and community services) share of the total resident employed labour force grew from 20.4% in 2001 to 23.6% in 2013; the business services share of employment grew from 12.6% in 2001 to 14.2% in 2013; and the financial services (which included insurance services in 2009 and 2013) expanded from 5.6% in 2001 to 7.2% in 2013.

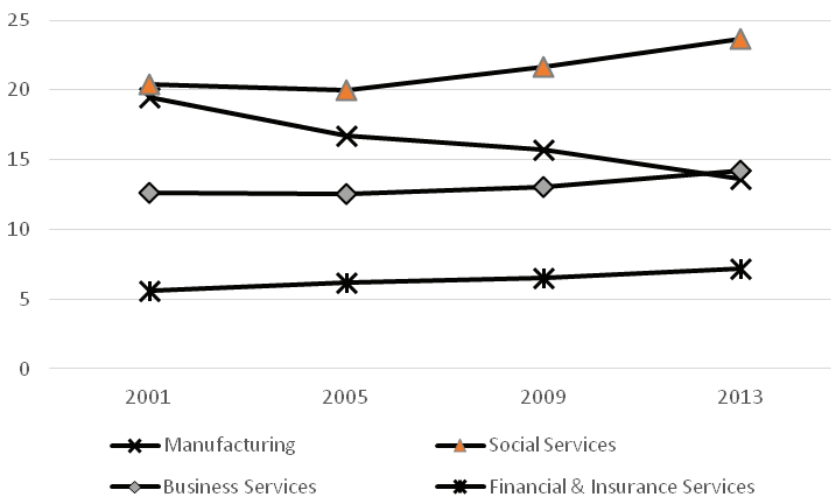


Figure 1. Sector Employment Shares (%) 2001–2013.

Note: Employed Singapore residents.

Source: Singapore, Department of Statistics, Yearbook of Statistics Singapore, various years.

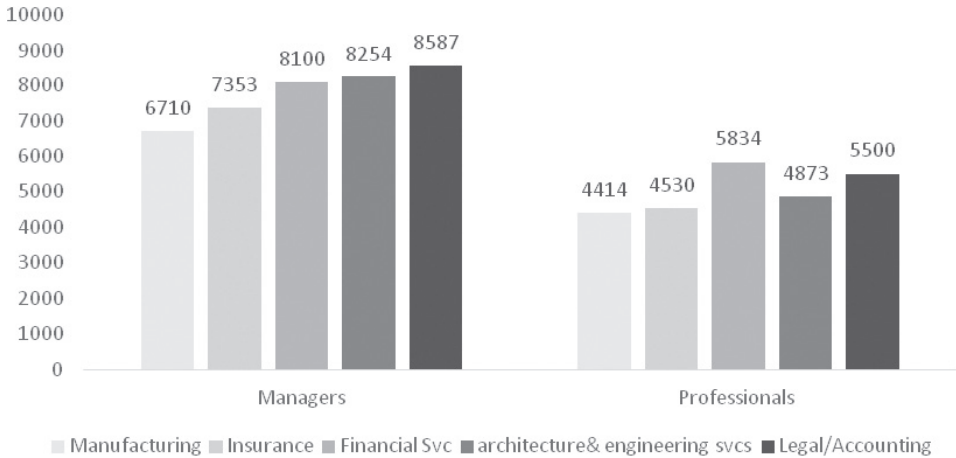


Figure 2. Median Monthly Gross Wage of Top Occupations in Manufacturing and Key Service Sectors (2011).

Source: Singapore, Ministry of Manpower, Report of Wages in Singapore, 2011.

It is important to understand how Singapore's shift to a new services economy has changed the complexion of the city. As manufacturing presence declined and the services economy took root in Singapore, a key change was the rise of income levels at the managerial and professional ranks. Figure 2 shows the managerial and professional monthly wages in manufacturing and four other services sector: insurance services, financial services, architectural and engineering services, and legal and accounting services. Figure 2 also indicates that the managers and professionals of these selected sub sectors earn significantly more than those in manufacturing.

Alongside the increased propensity to spend with increased income levels of managers and professionals in service occupations is the link between consumption and services work. The nature of client-based work in services work requires the need to style the self when taste and decorum is linked to work performance. Advertising services represent perhaps one extreme of such styling work as the following quote from a Hong Kong advertising firm creative director illustrates:

"Of course, it is important to dress decently for my job, because what I sell are ideas, my brains... It is not the same as selling a fax machine or a microwave oven, where the consumer can check out the product, and hold it in his hands and look at it before deciding to buy it. For advertising, if you cannot show the client you have good taste, how can they trust you enough to put their products into your hands? (field material from Chan, 2000: 121–122).

While this need to style the self is of a varying intensity depending on the particular nature of services, the nature of client-based work in the service industry means

that self-presentation is essential, along with the need to entertain clients as part of work, and the acquisition of taste and cultural capital as prerequisites in relating to affluent clients.

It is this nature of services work, along with the increased incomes at the top end of services industry occupations, which is at work in reshaping the consumption terrain of the city. Services, with its need for self-presentation coupled with the ability to spend, results in the opulence of financial services clustered in the central business district from Shenton Way to the new Marina Bay Financial Centre. The design-based services with their sensitivity to aesthetics result in a more refined presentation variety and are located smaller scale clusters in the shop house conservation areas of the Central Core (Ho and Hutton, 2012).

The dominant financial and business services economy forms one of triggers of the new consumption landscape in Singapore. Tourism forms the second pillar of consumption.² The F1 night races were introduced in 2008 and the two casino resorts in Marina Bay Sands and Sentosa in 2010. A feature article³ prepared by three economists from the Ministry of Trade and Industry for the Economic Survey of Singapore 2010 estimated that tourism spending supported about 111,500 jobs in 2010 compared to the average of about 99,800 jobs in 2007 and 2008 and suggested that these new attractions played a pivotal role in boosting tourism numbers and spending (Tan, Kuan and Yong, 2011: 75–76). The rising importance of the Integrated Resorts to tourism can be deduced from the Singapore Tourism Board annual visitors' survey. In 2011, of the visitors surveyed on paid access visits, 10% mentioned the Integrated Resorts, and 29% Sentosa (STB 2012: p.51). A year later in 2012, the Integrated Resorts climbed to the top of the paid access venues with 31% of the visitors, while Sentosa dropped to second place with 20% (STB, 2013: p. 36).

While these three attractions represent the latest additions to a stable of attractions, they are significant not just for the size of investments and the physical scale of the venues, but for the connections these attractions make to the city and to the tourism industry. Since the Singapore F1 event is a night race that occurs in the city rather than on a purpose-built track located outside the city, this event allows for Singapore's night skyline to be broadcast worldwide, thus strengthening the city's marketing efforts. The night is of special relevance as well since the race allows associated late night party activities like food, music, drinks and dancing to be added as a run on to the race. And because the F1 is an event-based attraction, the city takes on a festival atmosphere (despite the usual grouches of merchants and people affected) as roads are closed, the circuit built, and life for that week revolves around this event.

²See Chapter 11 for a more complete treatment on the tourism industry.

³Source: http://www.mti.gov.sg/MTIInsights/Documents/app.mti.gov.sg/data/article/24184/doc/Feature%20Article%202_AES_2010.pdf.

The Integrated Resorts represents a constellation of amenities and attractions. True to the idea of an integrated resort, the casino takes only 3% of the Marina Bay Sands's gross floor area and 5% of Resort World Sentosa's gross floor area (Henderson, 2012: 141).⁴ The two resorts have added 4,100 rooms to the city's inventory and over 180,000 square metres for meetings, conventions and exhibitions. Each of the resorts has five celebrity chefs anchoring its restaurants (*Inside Asia Gaming*, 2014). Resorts World brought Universal Studios to Singapore. According to Henderson (2010: 254), Universal Studios Singapore has a comparable number of attractions to Universal Studios Orlando, and of the 24 rides, 18 are described as "original or redesigned especially for Singapore". Thus, the entry of Universal Studios to the already well-developed tourism venue of Sentosa significantly added to Sentosa's overall attractiveness to visitors and Singaporeans, providing a fuller array of options for the visitor to Sentosa.

Marina Bay Sands has all the trappings of an iconic building: conceived by a famous architect, the most expensive building at the time of construction, and the world's largest cantilevered sky park on top of the building with views of the city skyline. Most significantly, the site which was given to Marina Bay Sands was meant to highlight the iconicity of the trophy building. It is at one end of the Bay, opposite the Singapore River, sandwiched between Suntec City and the New Financial Centre. With the low rise Gardens by the Bay at its back, the waters of the Marina Bay in front and without any competing building in the immediate vicinity, office workers, visitors and shoppers have an uncluttered view across the Bay. Arguably, in spite of the gaming-related issues surrounding Marina Bay Sands, this structure at the centre of the city represents the jewel centrepiece of the new services urban economy, the pendant with the necklace formed by tourism and business services located at Suntec City and financial services at the Marina Bay Financial Centre.

Singapore, as the export manufacturing platform for multinational companies in the 1970s and 1980s, developed a built environment comprising of industrial estates that was efficient but bland in its outlook. The new urban services economy, with its focus on financial business and tourism, is decidedly more glitzy because it has to be. While the spotlight of manufacturing is in its products, services requires a different outlook. If opulence is required of banking and business services, then taste is necessary for design services, and fun for tourism. The city for services is a city of both day and especially the night as it is a city where entertainment is work and consumption is taken seriously. In a city-state where land is scarce, tourism development is moving into event-based attractions. Mega events like F1 in September create a city of seasons, where residents and visitors alike catch the mood of sporting, music and arts events.

⁴In spite of the small percentage of floor area given to gaming, the Marina Bay Sands derives 75% of total revenue from gaming while it is 76.8% for Resorts World (*Inside Gaming Asia*, 2014).

At the same time, Singapore as a world city is inauthentic. The city is up for show because of the innate logic and desire of world city managers to impress as a condition for competition. A city of services is a cosmopolitan city comprising a transnational workforce which coordinates Singapore with other key nodes in the rest of the world, and a city where visitor numbers are significantly higher in the central city. Because of this, heritage assumes a greater instrumental value because projects like Kampong Glam, Chinatown and Little India are always on display to others, as an aesthetically pleasing setting for leisure and entertainment, and as an appropriate location for design and creative services.

While manufacturing resulted in a set of decentralized industrial estates, the new urban services economy of Singapore has re-centred the Singapore economy just like the *entrepôt* economy in the first 150 years of Singapore's modern history. But while this recentering is similar in terms of importance, it is very different in terms of substance. While the *entrepôt* economy was a mixed use jumble of activities with a highly congested city core, Singapore's urban planning has created a careful order in its city centre.

One worry is that with the new services economy, which comes with increased flows of foreigners and an internationalised property market, the Singapore central core will become increasingly higher-priced and foreign-owned. Residential properties in the central core are already the most expensive neighbourhoods because of their centrality and the availability of lifestyle attractions and amenities. This area is also increasingly attractive to foreign buyers. Citing a Jones Lang LaSalle study comparing profiles of buyers of non-landed private homes between 2000 and 2007, a *Business Times* article⁵ reported that in the Central Core Area, the caveats lodged from Singaporeans declined from 54% in 2000 to 47% in 2007, and those from permanent residents increased from 10% in 2000 to 15% in 2007. The largest change was registered for foreigners (non-residents), increasing from 11% in 2000 to 26% in 2007. Left unchecked, a continuation of this trend will result in a spatial division with the city centre being for the rich and for foreigners, and with the heartlands for locals. Is this an inevitable outcome for successful global cities? An alternative scenario is raised by journalist Melissa Tan.⁶ When contemplating the 2013 draft Master Plan to build new housing in two central districts of Marina South and Kampong Bugis, Ms Tan wondered if such residential units could be public housing. Rather appropriately, Ms Tan cited a comment URA general manager Alan Choe⁷ made in 1975: "the residential usage proposed in the central area must cater to all social groups". If this progressive inclusive principle is to prevail, planning will have to intervene over the market, placing social value over the economic value of the development.

⁵ *Business Times*, 2008, "Rising tide of foreigners snapping up S'pore property", 27 March.

⁶ *Straits Times*, 2013 "Eye on Singapore: HDB flats in Marina South?", 12 December.

⁷ See Mr Choe's contribution in Chapter 1 of this volume.

The Role of Planning in the Transformation of Singapore's Built Environment

This chapter represents an attempt at showing how the economic emphasis has shifted from the port to the factory and finally to the central business district. Three observations can be made about the relationship between planning and economic activity. Firstly, the shifts in the last 50 years are marked by efficient economic planning working in tandem with urban planning, as new economic activities replace non-viable ones and the built environment is reshaped to house these activities. Thus, within this period, we saw the shift of economic activities from the central city to a decentralised focus on industrial estates and then to the central city again as the financial, business services and tourism centre. Secondly, the planning which is done is informed by a network of Singapore offices overseas charged with economic (including tourism) promotion. The Economic Development Board for example has developed an economic intelligence network in key cities which is capable of discerning new trends and working with overseas clients with the intention of attracting investments to Singapore (Ho, 2009: 129). In the mid-1990s, the EDB had more than twice the number of investment promotion personnel overseas as compared to Australia and almost three times the overseas personnel as Hong Kong (Ho, 2000: 2344). Such an economic intelligence network provides critical inputs to planning, and more so to Singapore's capacity as a world city. Thirdly, being a small city state that is a world city and without a large domestic market, Singapore is prone to the volatility of the regional and international economic environment. It is important to understand that the institutions needed to manage the downturn—institutions are just as important as those that plot the economic path forward. Such institutions include the National Trades Union Congress, which plays a role in job coaching and retraining workers being retrenched. Lastly, I had suggested at the start of the chapter that planning is about proceeding on a path with anticipated gains and this is the portion which receives much publicity and celebration when consequences unfold according to the plan. What is less discussed and celebrated is the point that planning is as much about managing the costs of planned action. Some of these costs are anticipated as trade-offs such as the population debate while others are unanticipated consequences such as foreign workers or the Little India riot incident in December 2013. Planning and city building also then require managing the costs of being simultaneously a world city and a city state.

At an Institute of Policy Studies conference on 30 July 2013, I jotted down a comment Janadas Devan made: "We exist as a city, we survive as a country". Singapore's new urban economy has built on our legacy as a port city. Looking ahead at the next 10 years, as a country without a hinterland, the key strategy of emphasizing services looks to be unchanged as our economic means of existence. Our planning

instruments and institutions, developed as they already are, need the type of flexibility necessary to make the necessary directional changes to our sails in order to catch the shifting winds. To survive as a country, our interventions must necessarily be diplomatic in regional and international arenas. Katzenstein (1985) argues in *Small States in the World Market* that participation in regional groupings has allowed small European states to pool their interests, exert a larger voice on a range of collective interests and gain a stronger bargaining position with larger countries. Similarly, Nuemann and Gstöhl (2004: 17) suggest that with more limited material resources, small countries tend to choose diplomatic strategies that “institutionalize rules and norms, such as international law, international regimes, and international institutions”.

City building also requires that we mend the cracks and flaws which emerge. As we cross our 50th year of being an independent city-state, it is as apparent in 1965 as it is in 2015 that we have to survive as a country. This will require that we go beyond the necessary but insufficient condition of delivering a good quality of life, to emphasising our identity and bond as Singaporeans.

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