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# Values and Development in Asia

## *A Historical Illustration of the Role of the State*

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**abstract:** Two city-states in Asia, Hong Kong and Singapore, are discussed as historical illustrations of different roles played by the state in the process of economic development and globalization. The analytical comparison is guided by a proposed set of five dimensions of the global city: the economic, political, administrative, socio-cultural and physical dimensions. The findings from the comparative analysis supported three assumptions: that the most realistic alternative for the economic development of the city-state is globalization; that state intervention is an important but not always a determining factor in the process of globalization of the city-state; and that the political dimension helps to explain the different paths toward globalization taken by Singapore and Hong Kong before the latter's transition into China's Special Administrative Region.

**keywords:** city-state ♦ globalization ♦ Hong Kong ♦ Singapore  
♦ state intervention

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Numerous studies on the impressive record of East and Southeast Asian countries over the past decade confirm that, while modernization challenges traditional social values, cultural traditions may not only coexist with modernization but also be strengthened as a community advances in socio-economic development.<sup>1</sup> The active nurturing of social values is, however, a crucial proviso. Who or what does the nurturing of social values and how is that accomplished? To explore the answers to these questions I will focus on Hong Kong and Singapore as two unique historical cases of societies that have been transformed into global cities and have numerous common features but also significant differences in their approach to socio-economic development. The historical significance of

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the comparison with Hong Kong is evident given the singular event of its transition from Britain's to China's sovereignty in July 1997. The discussion will focus on the period before this transition and will be presented in three parts. The first section will introduce briefly the most relevant historical features of the two cities. The second section will identify and apply the main dimensions of a global city to the comparison of Hong Kong and Singapore. The role of the state will be discussed and illustrated in the third section.

### **Introducing the Two City-States**

Before the 1997 transition, Hong Kong and Singapore could be described as 'twins raised apart'. These two city-states have a great deal in common but have taken different paths towards globalization. Both cities were established by the British Crown as colonies in the first half of the 19th century. With the signing of a formal treaty with the Sultan of Johore on 6 February 1819, the island of Singapore was formally established by the British Crown as one of three trading posts it needed 'to refit, victualize and protect its merchant fleet' in the East Indies, and 'to forestall any advance by the Dutch' in that region (Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1992: 9). The acquisition of the Hong Kong island by Britain took place 22 years later within the same context of international trade and foreign relations, although the circumstances were not peaceful. The Sino-British War or 'Opium War' between Britain and China over balanced and free trade began in 1839 and ended in 1842 with the Treaty of Nanking which 'represented a complete triumph for the free traders' as it abolished the Chinese monopoly system, opened five ports for trade and 'the island of Hong Kong was permanently ceded to Britain' (Chan, 1991: 8–9).

Their strategic location and configuration as natural ports made the otherwise ordinary islands of Singapore and Hong Kong, particularly attractive to the British empire in its effort to expand trade and political influence. Thus, both cities began their history as part of the globalization enterprise defined by the economic and political parameters within which the British empire operated in the 19th century. Given the previous record of British trade with China, and the fact that Hong Kong was set up as a free port for all international trade, the British Crown had originally very high expectations of the profitability of Hong Kong (Kuan, 1979: 145) while Singapore was to serve a more limited regional trade.

The Japanese occupation interrupted the British control of Singapore and Hong Kong from 1942 to 1945, marking the end of the similarities in the history of these two cities. At the end of the war, the British Crown resumed its rule of Hong Kong as a colony (that continued until July 1997 when Hong Kong returned to China) and began repairs and improvement

plans. In contrast, Singapore's multi-ethnic population perceived the defeat of the British by the Japanese as a sign of weakness of the colonial power and, more significantly, as an alarming indication of the island's own vulnerability to attack. The following 12 years from 1946 to 1958, witnessed public turmoil. Torn between the restrained leadership of local entrepreneurs and the promotion of violence by members of the Communist Party of Malaya, the collective mood pressed for more local participation in the governing of the colony. The Constitution Agreement granting independence to Singapore was finally signed in London in May 1958. Self-government began in 1959, with the British Crown controlling foreign affairs and defence. Singapore became part of Malaysia from 1963 to 1965 and an independent nation-state in 1965. Some observers were convinced that Singapore would not survive as a sovereign city-state (Toynbee, 1970: 54–6). The republic of Singapore retained important aspects of its British inheritance: the legal system, the judiciary, parliamentary democracy, the educational system, the civil service structure and principles, and English as one of the four official languages (with Mandarin, Malay and Tamil).

The brief overview of the socio-economic development of Hong Kong and Singapore in Table 1 illustrates how far these two city-states have advanced. Both cities have a very small surface area, are densely populated, and have a high standard of living. Still, compared to Singapore, the average resident in Hong Kong would have a lower probability of being a home owner and of having a car, a lower level of public safety, and a lower level of road safety. The communications infrastructure in both cities is modern.

Both city-states have good medical and public health standards, although Hong Kong has fewer medical doctors per person and 'a very serious loss of nursing manpower' mostly due to emigration of professionals (Huang, 1991: 311, 324) in anticipation of the takeover by China in 1997. These differences between the two cities in the provision of modern or Western health care, are balanced by their similarity in the ample supply of traditional Chinese medicine (Huang, 1991: 315, 322; Quah, 1989). The two cities differ in health care expenditure: while in 1991 Singapore invested 3.1 percent of its gross domestic product on health (Cost Review Committee, 1993: 199), Hong Kong's expenditure on health the same year was 1.2 percent of its GDP (Huang, 1991: 311). Both cities enjoy a high quality educational system but Singapore spent proportionally more than Hong Kong on education during the past decade (3.7 percent and 2.2 percent of gross development product respectively).

In addition to socio-economic indicators, the ethnic composition of the population has substantial implications for the development plans and for the everyday life of the people in Hong Kong and Singapore. Ethnicity

**Table 1** Selected socio-economic indicators in Hong Kong and Singapore

Indicators	Hong Kong	Singapore
Population (in thousands), 1991 <sup>a</sup>	5,755	2,763
Surface area (sq. km), 1991 <sup>b</sup>	1,045	639
Density (persons per sq. km), 1990 <sup>c</sup>	5,657	4,323
GNP per capita, 1991 <sup>d</sup>	US\$13,430	US\$14,210
Home ownership as % of population, 1991 <sup>e</sup>	42%	82%
Percent of total household expenditure on rent, fuel and power, 1990 <sup>f</sup>	15%	11%
Food cost as % of household income, 1993 <sup>g</sup>	12%	19%
Consumer price index (1980 = 100), 1992 <sup>h</sup>	265.8	132.2
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births), 1990 <sup>i</sup>	7.0	6.7
Persons per doctor, 1990 <sup>j</sup>	917	757
Public safety (murders per 100,000 pop.), 1990 <sup>k</sup>	2.4	1.6
Private cars per 1,000 population, 1990 <sup>l</sup>	72.0	100.2
Taxis per 1,000 population, 1990 <sup>l</sup>	6.0	4.5
Deaths in traffic accidents per 100,000 pop., 1990 <sup>l</sup>	349.2	8.7
Total telephone lines per 1,000 pop., 1990 <sup>m</sup>	59.0	384.5
Average inflation rate, 1980–1992 <sup>n</sup>	8.7%	2.4%
Education expenditure as % of GDP, 1980–91 <sup>o</sup>	2.2%	3.7%
Average bus fare for a 4.9 km trip, 1992 <sup>p</sup>	US\$0.18	US\$0.31
Average taxi fare for a 6.9 km trip, 1992 <sup>p</sup>	US\$3.63	US\$3.03

Sources: <sup>a</sup>World Bank (1993a: 147, 299); <sup>b</sup>United Nations (1992: 108); Dept of Statistics (1993: 24); <sup>c</sup>Same as (b) and Dept of Statistics (1993: 14); <sup>d</sup>World Bank (1993b: 239); <sup>e</sup>Sung and Lee (1991: 345); Dept of Statistics (1993: 18); <sup>f</sup>World Bank (1993b: 257); <sup>g</sup>World Bank (1993b: 257); <sup>h</sup>Johnson (1994: 136); <sup>i</sup>World Bank (1993b: 293); Dept of Statistics (1993: 14); <sup>j</sup>Roberts (1992: 429); Dept of Statistics (1993: 16); <sup>k</sup>Roberts (1992: 445); *Straits Times* (1994); <sup>l</sup>Roberts (1992: 442); Dept of Statistics (1993: 207); <sup>m</sup>Roberts (1992: 449); Dept of Statistics (1993: 211); <sup>n</sup>Cost Review Committee (1993: 26); <sup>o</sup>Cost Review Committee (1993: 76); <sup>p</sup>Cost Review Committee (1993: 86–7).

represents one of the major differences between the two cities. In general, the degree of ethnic homogeneity is significantly higher in Hong Kong than in Singapore. About nine of every ten 'Hongkongese' (a self-assigned label reported by Wan, 1991: 437) are Chinese and most probably Cantonese, the predominant dialect group in Hong Kong. Consequently, if you are Hongkongese, there is a very high likelihood that your neighbours, friends, colleagues, classmates and the people you interact with, speak the same language at home and in informal settings (Cantonese most of the time, and Mandarin); that they share the same basic traditional values; that they celebrate Chinese festivals; and that they are well-acquainted with or practise Chinese syncretic religion, even if some of them are Christians or have other religions. In contrast, Singapore has been a multi-ethnic society from the time of its foundation by the British in 1819. In 1992, 77.6 percent

of the population were ethnic Chinese, 14.2 percent Malays, 7.1 percent Indians and 1.1 percent belonged to other ethnic groups, including Eurasians, Arabs, Caucasians and others (Department of Statistics, 1993: 32). This ethnic mosaic brings with it an array of religions.<sup>2</sup>

More importantly, within the socio-political milieu of Singapore, the numerical size of the three major ethnic groups does not convey their actual significance. The Chinese constitute the largest ethnic group, but the nation is committed to the ideology of equality and meritocracy as decisive elements of the system that maintains political stability. The turbulent years of ethnic riots preceding the independence of Singapore in 1965 demonstrated the fragility of ethnic harmony when one group tries to dominate all others. Singaporeans learned the painful lesson. Equality of treatment is guaranteed to all ethnic groups by the country's constitution.

One of many visible manifestations of equality is the issue of language.<sup>3</sup> Singapore's principle of bilingual education signals another relevant difference with Hong Kong. The Singaporean workforce is being trained to be bilingual in two important international languages, English and Mandarin. In the colony of Hong Kong, English was perceived by the Hongkongese as a political issue (Cheng, 1991: 286) to be opposed in favour of one's own language which is Cantonese, not Mandarin. As the official language in the People's Republic of China, Mandarin embodied another 'foreign' power.<sup>4</sup>

### **Towards Globalization**

The pre-transition Hong Kong and Singapore may be examined against an ideal type<sup>5</sup> of the global city in terms of their respective 'deviations' from and 'commonalities' with the ideal type, thus revealing their unique features as well as facilitating their comparison with each other. Thus, the task at hand is to identify the most important dimensions of the global city and to discuss the significance of each dimension in explaining the process of globalization of Singapore and Hong Kong.

Framing a preliminary ideal type of the global city is eased by the number of empirical studies of world cities conducted in the past two decades. Whereas there is no consensus on the best conceptual and methodological approaches to follow, nearly every relevant study provides empirical information on the features that its authors assert are the main characteristics of global cities (Knight and Gappert, 1989; Castells, 1989). One of the most comprehensive and critical reviews of these studies is found in the first two chapters of Anthony King's *Global Cities* (1990). Several other informative studies on the 'globalization' phenomenon and on the widely acknowledged global cities – New York, London, Paris,

**Table 2** *Globalization in Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan*

Aspects of globalization <sup>a</sup>	Hong Kong	Singapore	Japan
1992 GNP (US\$ billions) <sup>b</sup>	68	40	3,362
GDP per capita (US\$), 1992 <sup>b</sup>	13,430	14,210	26,930
Gross domestic savings as % of GDP <sup>b</sup>			
1965	29.0%	10.0%	30.0%
1992	34.0%	47.0%	34.0%
Gross domestic investment as % of GDP <sup>b</sup>			
1965	36.0%	22.0%	28.0%
1992	31.0%	40.0%	33.0%
GNP average annual growth rate			
1980–1991 (in %)	5.6%	5.3%	3.6%
GDP annual growth rate (in %)			
1970–80	9.2%	8.3%	4.3%
1980–91	6.9%	6.6%	4.2%
Percent GDP in industry			
1970	36.0%	30.0%	47.0%
1991	25.0%	38.0%	42.0%
Percent GDP in manufacturing			
1970	29.0%	20.0%	36.0%
1991	17.0%	29.0%	25.0%
Percent GDP in services and other sectors			
1970	62.0%	68.0%	47.0%
1991	75.0%	62.0%	56.0%
Energy consumption per capita (kilograms of oil equivalent)			
1970	973	3,863	2,654
1991	1,438	6,178	3,552
Average annual growth rate in exports (%)			
1970–80	9.7%	4.2%	9.0%
1980–91	4.4%	8.9%	3.9%
Average annual growth in imports (%)			
1970–80	7.8%	5.0%	0.4%
1980–91	11.3%	7.2%	5.6%
Percent distribution of 1992 exports to: <sup>c</sup>			
Industrial countries	49.7%	45.9%	53.9%
Developing countries	49.9%	53.2%	45.6%
Asia	43.5%	44.9%	34.6%
Export growth rates 1985–90 (%) <sup>b</sup> (World rate = 5.2%)	18.2%	16.8%	2.7%
Ranking in highest growth of GDP per capita and lowest income inequality (Gini coeff.) among 40 countries, 1965–89 <sup>d</sup>	4th	3rd	5th
Rank as most creditworthy nation in 1993 (out of 133 countries, with Switzerland in 1st position) <sup>c</sup>	24th	11th	2nd

Table 2 *Continued*

Aspects of globalization <sup>a</sup>	Hong Kong	Singapore	Japan
Total number of international organizations' secretariats (main and secondary), 1993–4 <sup>f</sup>	77	90	224
Presence of multinational corporations by category, 1993 <sup>g</sup>			
Headquarters	6	4	na
Regional Offices	3	1	na
Subsidiaries	456	499	na
Number of the world's 25 largest commercial banks in the city, 1993 <sup>h</sup>	24	25	na
Number of the world's top 25 information science companies in the city, 1993 <sup>i</sup>	12	14	na
Number of the world's top 50 industrial corporations in the city, 1990/91 <sup>j</sup>	26	31	na
Average annual rent for prime office space (US\$ per sq. foot), 1993 <sup>k</sup>	\$122.80	\$28.27	\$176.70

Sources: <sup>a</sup>Data from World Bank (1993b: 239–65) unless otherwise indicated; <sup>b</sup>Abegglen (1994: 4, 9, 138); <sup>c</sup>International Monetary Fund (1993: 216, 242, 352); <sup>d</sup>Estimated from World Bank (1993c: 31); <sup>e</sup>*Straits Times Weekly* (1993: 20); <sup>f</sup>Union of International Associations (1993: 648–1282); <sup>g</sup>Based on data in Hooper (1994: 387–404 and 650–69); <sup>h</sup>Chia et al. (1993: 68–9); Thomson Financial Publishing (1993: 833–66, 1527–39); <sup>i</sup>Chia et al. (1993: 62); Hooper (1994: 387–404, 650–69); <sup>j</sup>Allen (1991: 9); Chia et al. (1993: 38–9); Hooper (1994: 387–404, 650–69); <sup>k</sup>*Straits Times Weekly* (1994b: 19). The figure for Japan refers to Tokyo. na = not applicable because data cover several Japanese cities.

Tokyo, Los Angeles – and other metropolitan centres aspiring to that title have been published since 1990.<sup>6</sup>

Although there are some disagreements among the experts on empirical details as well as on conceptual focus, the studies published before and after 1990 tend to concur on the essential features and problems of the global city. What constitutes the global city? The global city is a model of human settlement characterized by the world-orientation of its five dimensions: the economic, the administrative, the political, the socio-cultural and the physical.

The *economic dimension* of the global city differs from that of a non-global city in the stronger role of international capital including investments by multinational corporations and foreign banks, and a move from low-technology manufacturing to high-technology production and high-skill professional services. The capital, the banks and the change in production are commonly attracted by the entrepreneurs', investors' and industrialists' rational calculation that the global city offers them more sophisticated

and technologically advanced financial services than they could earn elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>

The *administrative dimension* of the global city represents its role as an administration hub for major world-class economic players. In contrast to the non-global city, the global city houses the head offices and headquarters – principal or regional – of many of the world's top multinational corporations, financial institutions, banks, governmental and non-governmental international organizations. The presence of these institutions in the global city supports the concentration of 'international' minds from different lands, creeds and cultures, who understand and speak the same language of capital formation, knowledge and information technology, and who steer their institutions based on a world-market vision and long-term development plans.<sup>8</sup>

The *political dimension* of the global city comprises its system of government and its political leaders as well as the political, administrative and judicial rules that guide policy formulation and policy implementation. The global city's government may be either local (municipal), regional, national or a combination of these. In its most general form, the political dimension of the global city is represented by the state. What distinguishes the political dimension of the global city from that of non-global cities is the international or world-orientation of the state and its bureaucracy, which is usually staffed by effective technocrats (in contrast to a parochial or domestic orientation of the government in non-global cities). Very low government intervention is expected in a capitalist economy. Yet, if the state takes upon itself the role of promoter and supporter of the global city, the political dimension becomes the partner or the leading force that hauls the other dimensions to a high rate of growth. But the state may also act as a stumbling block, delaying or opposing the growth efforts of the other dimensions. The actual role of the state varies depending on a host of factors including the country's political system and dominant ideology as well as the ideology, training, political goals and private agenda of government leaders.<sup>9</sup>

The *socio-cultural dimension* refers to the social fabric of the global city and comprises the population's occupational and social class structures, standard of living, employment and educational opportunities, ethnic composition, cultural and religious values. In contrast to non-global cities, the global city offers a higher proportion of jobs in high-skill occupations, attracting a wide range of experts and professionals who are typically high income earners, have university education, and demand an above-average standard of living, including culture and recreation. Thus, the influx of this professional, executive and administrative elite reshapes the global city's social class structure by sharpening the contrast between the two extreme rungs of the social ladder. The actual and imagined job opportunities in

the global city encourage the coexistence of two opposite groups: the high income professional elite (including top executives from international companies and institutions) and a growing number of unskilled residents including guest workers, permanent city residents earning minimum wages, and the destitute. The interaction of these extreme segments of the city's population becomes a combination of social distance demarcated by differential status, close proximity at the working place, and residential and recreational separation.<sup>10</sup> In terms of cultural values, the population of the global city is more likely than that of non-global cities to be exposed to the concurrent and abundant presence of icons of modernity and tradition (groups, practices, buildings, and symbols from traditional and modern worlds of art, music, religion and other forms of human expression), as well as to the openness (be it tolerance, acceptance or active encouragement) to a multiplicity of cultural values. It follows, then, that to the extent that a city becomes a global city, its cultural heterogeneity is expected to increase. Understandably, the socio-cultural dimension of the global city is linked not only to its economic, administrative and political dimensions, but also to its physical dimension.

The fifth dimension of the global city is its *physical dimension* which comprises the city's infrastructure, physical environment and geographical features, and the changes in these three aspects brought about by collective action or omission of leaders and residents, such as urban redevelopment, urban restructuring and urban decay. The infrastructure and physical environment of the global city tend to show extreme contrasts and intense transformation. The interplay of free market forces, land as a commodity, the coexistence of extreme forms of wealth and poverty, political goals and other factors, tend to distort the projected positive effects of urban renewal, usually by enhancing the benefits to the affluent and minimizing or cancelling the intended benefits to the needy segments of the city's population.<sup>11</sup>

From the perspective of the global city as a social system, the preceding five dimensions may be seen as its constituting elements allowing the analysis of the city at both the macro- and micro-levels. I agree that these dimensions are nurtured by the overall environment (or suprastructure) of a free market capitalist economy and a democratic political system. These are the modes of political and economic systems that experts such as Mollenkopf and Castells (1991), Sassen (1990), and King (1990) see as most conducive to the growth of the global city in the latter part of the 20th century. I suggest that each of the five dimensions comprises formal and informal structures as well as modes of thinking and patterns of interaction. The five dimensions are interrelated and overlapping. They tend to change more or less at the same pace but, from a historical perspective, one of the five dimensions takes the lead at some point in the process of

development of the city. In the early stages of the city's development, either the administrative, the political or the economic dimension may precede, propelling change in the other four dimensions.

Irrespective of which dimension leads the process of change at any given time, all five dimensions are important in sustaining the prosperity of a city or in inducing its eventual decline. In this specific aspect, the global city is no different from any other urban settlement. What sets the global city apart from other metropolitan and urban settlements is the international orientation characterizing each of the five dimensions, particularly the economic, political and administrative dimensions. That is, a regular or non-global city tends to be parochial in its outlook by considering only local or at the most, regional development goals in all the five dimensions. In contrast, the world is the main sphere of action of the global city particularly in its economic development goals, the rules of the game – policies – it sets for itself, and the kind of brain power it wants to attract and retain. Following an international orientation or approach is, therefore, a decision taken by leading groups (either the economic elite or the political leaders, or both) who are capable and have the resources to implement it and to sustain its growth. The discussion of the manifestation of the five dimensions in Hong Kong and Singapore will illustrate this process.

### ***Hong Kong and Singapore becoming Global Cities***

The figures in Table 2 provide some approximate indicators of the economic, administrative, socio-cultural and physical dimensions of globalization in Hong Kong and Singapore. These cities' GNP per capita is much lower than that of Japan but it helps to explain why they are classified internationally as upper middle income economies, well ahead of other Third World countries. Both cities attained a high level of domestic investment and domestic savings from 1965 (the year of Singapore's birth as a republic) to 1992, but the improvement has been most dramatic in Singapore. The GNP average annual growth rate for the two cities during the past decade was higher than that of Japan, as was their GDP annual growth rate. But the latter was slower compared to the decade of the 1970s. Singapore has shown an increase in the proportion of GDP in industry and manufacturing, and in the average annual growth rate of exports during the past two decades, while Hong Kong shows the reverse process. The opposite applies to the service sector. Singapore has had consistently higher energy consumption per capita. But the distribution of Hong Kong's and Singapore's exports by world area is similar. Their export growth rates from 1985 to 1990 are significantly higher than the world's and Japan's rates.

One of Hong Kong's and Singapore's features that perplexes

international analysts is that the rapid pace of economic development has been attained without the heavy cost of sharp income inequality witnessed in other economically advanced countries. From their study of Gini coefficients – a common indicator of income inequality – of 40 countries from 1965 to 1989, World Bank experts found South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, the four most successful countries where ‘rapid growth and declining inequality have been shared virtues’ in spite of the fact that 8 of the 40 countries in their study were developed countries, all with low income inequality (World Bank, 1993c: 29–32).

On the road towards globalization, one of the factors attracting foreign investors is a country’s creditworthiness. In its 1993 survey of international banks in 133 countries, the *Institutional Investor* of New York reported Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong in the 2nd, 11th and 24th places respectively in their scale of creditworthiness defined as a score of ‘possibility of default’. The country in first place, with the least possibility of default, was Switzerland (*Straits Times Weekly*, 1993: 20). A more comprehensive assessment by the Business Environment Risk Intelligence (BERI) classified Singapore and Japan in 3rd place behind Switzerland (1st place) and Taiwan, as ‘the world’s third best investment location’. BERI’s president indicated that Singapore’s ‘greatest assets’ are its ‘excellent technocratic bureaucrats doing a good job’ and ‘its political stability’ (*Straits Times Weekly*, 1993: 20). Singapore has improved its rating in the past two years. Singapore is continuously striving to upgrade its position in international ranks of creditworthiness and investment attractiveness. In contrast, Hong Kong may be spared the challenge of competing for top scores. As one analyst commented, Hong Kong ‘is probably unique in that it has to do little to attract investor dollars; the allure of dynamic south China simply keeps them pouring in – despite the long shadow cast by Beijing’ (Seow, 1993).

Using Tokyo as a point of reference, we can see that Singapore and Hong Kong have begun to display some of the main features of global cities (Table 2). The two city-states serve as venues for principal and secondary secretariats of a large number of international organizations. The presence of subsidiaries of multinational corporations is significant, particularly in Singapore, although Hong Kong has a larger number of multinationals’ headquarters. All of the world’s 25 largest commercial banks have offices in Singapore and 24 of the 25 have offices in Hong Kong. Fourteen of the world’s 25 most important information science companies have subsidiaries in Singapore; 12 of the 25 are represented in Hong Kong. Of the world’s top 50 industrial corporations, 31 have subsidiaries in Singapore and 26 in Hong Kong. One of Singapore’s advantages among others, is its lower cost of office space compared to Hong Kong and Tokyo.

## **Social Values and the Role of the State**

The study of globalization requires analysis at both the macro- and micro-levels. As indicated earlier, this dual approach is necessary to capture the capacity of the city-state as a social system to change and to adapt dynamically to its environment while maintaining and increasing its autonomy. Three assumptions derived from these premises will guide the analysis of the interrelation among the five dimensions of the city-state. First, compared to other cities, the city-state's territorial constraint – its physical dimension – makes globalization its most realistic alternative for economic growth. Second, the process of globalization may be first induced by either the economic dimension or the political dimension. Thus, active state intervention is an important but not a determining factor in the process of globalization of a city-state. Third, whether by its action or inaction, the political dimension influences the direction taken by the other four dimensions in the globalization enterprise, the economic, administrative, socio-cultural and physical dimensions. Consequently, the political dimension explains most effectively the different paths towards globalization taken by Hong Kong and Singapore.

The first assumption is derived from the lessons of history and corroborated by the historical background of Hong Kong and Singapore. From the original *polis* of Athens and Sparta, Teotihuacan in ancient America and Kish, the city-state of the early Mesopotamia, to the Renaissance city-states of Florence, Milan, Venice and Genoa, the key to the economic development and indeed, the economic survival, of these city-states was their effort to become important players in the 'international' market of their time.<sup>12</sup> As I indicated earlier, from the perspective of their British founders, the *raison d'être* of Hong Kong and Singapore was their role in international trade.<sup>13</sup> More importantly, without the support of a larger nation-state and hinterland providing natural and human resources, city-states must look *out* and aim to attract external economic opportunities. Additional relevant aspects of this principle need to be discussed in connection with the second and third assumptions on the role of the government.

The role of the state in the socio-economic globalization process has been very important for Singapore and it is becoming obviously crucial for Hong Kong as well. Some analysts feel that the role of the British government in Hong Kong until very recently 'exemplifies the success of laissez-faire economic policy.' This feat was accomplished not by a complete absence of government intervention, but through the British government's 'peculiar form of colonial laissez-faire – showing extreme resistance to economic pressure groups but considerable sensitivity on social issues' (Findlay and Wellisz, 1993: 6–7). Inadvertently, perhaps,

Findlay and Wellisz suggest a kind of government non-intervention by design, a policy decision not to intervene. Similarly, the openness of south China's economy that attracts investors to Hong Kong, is a policy decision of the Chinese government in Beijing. Moreover, as indicated earlier, whether Hong Kong and south China will remain open to capitalist investment and for how long, is a matter that will depend entirely on the central Chinese government in Beijing after 1997.

Singapore and Hong Kong are members of the group of four nations with South Korea and Taiwan, that were the first 'new industrializing economies' (NIEs) embodying the East Asian phenomenon: the region that 'encompasses the fastest industrializing countries in the world' (Fujita and Hill, 1995: 17). In contrast to Hong Kong, the other three NIEs – Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan – are characterized by government-led economies where a mixture of flexibility and pragmatism has been a key principle in economic success that other, non-interventionist governments have not been able to match (Quah, 1983; Lim, 1991: 197–215; World Bank, 1993c: 87). Clearly, then, it is safe to assume that Hong Kong and Singapore differ considerably from each other in the political dimension. Yet both cities display today many of the features of global cities as shown by some selected indicators of economic development and globalization for Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan (Table 2). The inclusion of Japan provides a point of reference and serves as a note of caution. As city-states, Singapore and Hong Kong differ significantly from the classic global cities such as London, New York, Paris and Tokyo, in terms of the political dimension. These typical global cities operate within the political structure of a larger nation-state to which they are subordinated and by which they are protected. In contrast, Singapore is a city enjoying the advantage of political autonomy proper of a sovereign state. The price of sovereignty is having sole responsibility for your destiny, with no other greater entity ready to bail you out in case of failure. For Singapore, without hinterland or natural resources other than its geographical location, this situation points to only one option: to compete for higher economic growth in the global market.

Hong Kong has a very similar geographical advantage, but it has the added new territories from mainland China and its political dimension is radically different from that of Singapore. Hong Kong's political status as a British colony curtailed internal policy formulation and policy implementation. Traditionally, Britain tried to maintain a very low level of intervention in Hong Kong's economy under the old principle of 'leaving the Chinese to rule the Chinese' (Kuan, 1979; Leung, 1990; Tsang, 1994). But the position of Britain changed considerably during the late 1980s. With Hong Kong's uncertainty about its political and economic future as one of the original NIEs, Britain increased Hong Kong's level of self-government in preparation for 1997 (Leung, 1990; Thatcher, 1993;

MacFarquhar, 1994) with the hope of a relatively smooth transition that would safeguard Hong Kong's economic achievements.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Government Role as Referee and Coach***

The economic accomplishments of Singapore and Hong Kong, described in Table 2, have been attained through different approaches taken by their respective governments. The British colonial government played the role of *referee* in Hong Kong's socio-economic development. In contrast, the Singapore government plays the role of *coach* in the task of creating the global city and, more importantly, in bringing the nation to a developed country status. As referee, the British colonial government sought to ensure that the rules of the game are played fairly while giving the population as much latitude as possible to build up the colony's wealth. This is a role expected of a detached colonial government. The role of coach is more complex and it implies active involvement not only in setting up the goals, but in helping the team to achieve them. One of the fundamental goals of a sovereign country is national identity. The Singapore government plays the role of coach as it sets up necessary infrastructure and fiscal incentives to attract foreign investment, strives to shape 'Singapore Incorporated', and prevails upon the citizens to join in the enterprise, as team members, for their own benefit. Indeed, the benefits of economic development, as indicated by the figures in Table 2 and the World Bank study (1993c: 30–1), have thus far been shared.

Fiscal policies – reflected in the national budget – are part of Singapore's economic plan designed to advance globalization and economic development. It is evident that one of the key features of that plan has been, since the early 1960s, to attract multinational corporations, and that a respectable measure of success has been achieved in this respect (see Table 2). However, analysts commonly criticize Third World countries for 'selling' their countries to foreign corporations in a frantic attempt to help their countries' economies. Interestingly, this criticism does not apply to Singapore, where the government plays the role of coach. In their study of Singapore's development, political scientists R.S. Milne and Diane Mauzy (1990: 151–3) commend the government's decisive approach in allowing entry to selected multinational corporations from a wide range of countries, and ensuring that Singapore's labour legislation predominates over the corporate policies of foreign companies. The government's decisiveness in safeguarding the country's sovereignty while attracting foreign investment had already been reported in the early 1970s (Geiger, 1973). Milne and Mauzy conclude: 'Indeed, Singapore's position vis-a-vis the MNCs [multinational corporations] is so strong that it has sometimes been referred to as an example of *dependency reversal*' (1990: 152).

Yet another expected adverse effect of the presence of multinationals is

that local entrepreneurs may not be able to compete effectively (Lim et al., 1993: 107). This problem was recognized by the government in its economic restructuring plans, although one of the factors explaining the emphasis on external markets remains constant: Singapore has a very small domestic market. Among the measures taken to support local entrepreneurship are: the Venture Capital Fund, set up in 1985 to assist in the technology upgrading of local companies; the creation in 1988 of a special unit of the Economic Development Board to give technical assistance to local companies to become international corporations; and a S\$150 million venture capital fund set up in 1994 to help 'budding entrepreneurs' planning to expand their companies overseas (Economic Planning Committee, 1991; Lim, 1991; Milne and Mauzy, 1990; *Straits Times Weekly*, 1994a).

Hong Kong's government-as-referee approach to economic planning was more complex. Economists and other analysts disagree on the definition of Hong Kong as a political entity and the role of the colonial government. Some observers see Hong Kong as 'a colony' that is nevertheless 'an independent political entity' (Findlay and Wellisz, 1993: 66). Others criticize the colonial government's non-interventionist policy as 'increasingly repugnant' to the local population facing 'massive social problems' brought about by urbanization and industrialization in the 1950s and 1960s; but by the end of the 1970s, the colonial government's 'traditional policy of laissez-faire has been skillfully changed to a policy of discrete guidance' prompted by riots and mass demonstrations (Kuan, 1979: 145–66). This interpretation is supported by Klein (1986: 105–6) who sees the 'social welfare programmes' introduced since 1970 as indication that the colonial government's role in 'the provision of social services . . . has been a large one'. Yet another view on the role of the government expressed by a Hong Kong scholar (Lee, 1993) is that before 1985 there was no political accountability because the colonial government was not 'answerable' to the population it governed. In the early 1990s Lee felt that the civil service responsible for policy implementation was confronting a serious problem of 'conflicting accountability'.<sup>15</sup>

Understandably, these special circumstances of the Hong Kong government shaped the nature of its economic policy for the colony. The guiding principle had been to maximize revenue, minimize expenditure and ensure that 'any possible fiscal demands on the home government' should be 'kept to a minimum' (Findlay and Wellisz, 1993: 73). The colonial government did not have to make a special effort to attract foreign capital because of the 'built-in' attractions of Hong Kong represented in its 'abundance of labor' and a perceived haven for 'enormous quantities of capital primarily from Shanghai' (1993: 78).

Changing focus from macro-level agendas for economic development to the perspective of the local community, other important manifestations

of the role of the state are policies on housing, manpower planning, education, labour relations and nation building, to mention but a few. Interesting differences in these areas illustrate the roles of referee and coach of the governments of pre-transition Hong Kong and Singapore, respectively.

In the provision of public housing, for example, Hong Kong and Singapore differ in the approaches taken and the problems faced by their respective governments. In contrast to Singapore, the colonial government in Hong Kong took a tentative and piecemeal approach to the provision of public housing, driven mostly by the need to react to emergencies rather than by a carefully designed long-term housing programme. Still, there are both sympathetic and critical assessments of Hong Kong's housing policy.

An illustration of sympathetic assessment is the study by Castells et al. (1990). These authors trace the beginning of the public housing programme in Hong Kong to the emergency created by a devastating fire that razed the Shek Kip Mei squatter settlement on 24 December 1953, making about 50,000 people homeless. The authors acknowledge the discrepancy between the high demand and the slow supply of public housing and 'the still overcrowded and often dilapidated conditions of many housing estates in Hong Kong'. The Shek Kip Mei Syndrome is a typical illustration of reactive action as opposed to long-term planning. Yet, oblivious to the radical differences in the role of the government in these two city-states, they use Hong Kong and Singapore as the bases for their 'Shek Kip Mei Syndrome model' of the state's integration of 'economic growth and social stability through its planned intervention in the urbanization process' (1990: 333).

On the side of critical assessment, a discerning analyst sums up the colonial government's building of 'mass resettlement estates' in Hong Kong as a response that was 'never intended as an exercise in housing provision so much as an aid to squatter clearance . . . in the interest of health and safety' (Jones, 1993: 211). Referring to the situation in the late 1970s, two Hong Kong social scientists estimated that the 'shabby squatter huts and congested tenement flats which many Hong Kong residents have to be contented with' led to the premature separation of unmarried young men and women from their parents' crowded homes, a trend that they saw as a negative influence on the sense of family in Hong Kong (Choi and Chan, 1979: 198). Their description of crowded housing conditions supports the findings from the study of Hong Kong neighbourhoods by Leeming (1977). The housing situation has improved during the past decade but the lack of strict legislation and serious implementation of quality control measures in the construction industry has reached a critical point (Lau, 1991: 349). Moreover, the improvement of the housing situation is relative.<sup>16</sup> Considering the dismal record up to 1990, Lau is pessimistic about the future of housing availability and the role of the state in Hong Kong.

He concludes that Hong Kong's Housing Authority has not met the demand for 'adequate' quality public housing because 'it is unable to clear the enormous outstanding demand carried forward from previous years' (Lau, 1991: 385-6).

Two aspects distinguish the Singapore government's approach to the provision of public housing from the Hong Kong approach. The first aspect is specific and long-term policy goals. The second aspect is a multi-pronged method to policy implementation whereby institution-building accompanies legislation, and different areas of the nation's legislation are mobilized to support goal attainment. The public housing programme in Singapore took off in 1960 with the establishment of the Housing and Development Board (HDB) as a statutory body within the purview of the Ministry of National Development, and the changes introduced in 1968 to the Central Provident Fund (a compulsory savings programme for all workers in the labour force) to allow Singaporeans to use their savings to pay for their public housing apartments (Quah, 1975).<sup>17</sup> A parallel programme of comprehensive urban renewal was set in motion in the 1970s and by 1994 it had attained the goals of converting Singapore into a garden city, cleaning the rivers, upgrading the physical facilities, and building an efficient road network and subway system. A detailed historic buildings conservation plan was added in the 1980s.

Inescapably, the success in improving the nation's physical environment and providing housing for the majority of the population has been achieved at the cost of antagonizing, over the years, a comparatively small number of people, most of them landowners affected by the legislation that gives the state priority in the acquisition of land required for public housing and public services. Others in this group are people who resented the relocation of their businesses required as part of urban redevelopment, for example pig farmers and boat builders whose barns and workshops had to be moved away from fresh water reservoirs and from the banks of the Singapore River as part of the environmental efforts to prevent water contamination and to restore aquatic life.

Notwithstanding this expected consequence of government intervention, Singapore has received international awards for its accomplishments in the shaping of the modern, clean and attractive urban environment in spite of the scarcity of land and the high population density. Even critics recognize that while at the beginning of the housing programme in the early 1960s, given 'the need for quick results . . . the quality of the flats was only adequate', there has been steady improvement and the public housing programme 'has been successful in achieving its physical targets and in contributing to social and political stability' (Milne and Mauzy, 1990: 36-7).

Moreover, the discontent of a minority of Singaporeans with their

government's resolute implementation of the public housing policy offers an interesting contrast with the feelings of the people of Hong Kong. It appears that Hongkongers do not relish the laissez-faire attitude of their colonial government in the provision of housing. Frustrated with the acute housing shortage in his city, one expert stresses that housing quality in Hong Kong should be 'ensured and promoted by the intervention of the government. It cannot be left entirely to the market' (Lau, 1991: 387). Other experts admit the positive aspects of government intervention asserting that 'unless it can exercise effective control' policies 'are doomed to remain ineffectual aspirations', and yet, citizens' support for their government 'depends on its effectiveness'. Therefore, irrespective of some discontent, they add, 'electors, as well as politicians . . . will back the government as long as it delivers the goods' (Milne and Mauzy, 1990: 175-81).

Housing is one of the most important aspects of life in a global city and a substantial part of the physical dimension of globalization. Owning their dwellings is not only a basic aspiration of most people anywhere, but it is also the concrete manifestation for citizens of having a stake in their country. The contrasting situation of Hong Kong and Singapore confirms that a colonial government may have a much weaker interest in facilitating that wish for their subjects than the elected government of an independent nation-state. Other significant aspects of the socio-cultural dimension include education and manpower planning, labour relations, defence and nation-building. Hong Kong and Singapore differ greatly in these aspects and their analysis provides further evidence of the Hong Kong government role as referee and of the role of coach of the Singapore government.

The task of building up Singapore Incorporated has been realized in incremental stages, transforming Singapore from a mosquito-infested backward island in the 1950s to a rapidly advancing nation in the 1990s. The next target is to become 'a developed country in the first league' by the year 2030 (Economic Planning Committee, 1991). Bilingualism, education, skills-upgrading and manpower planning go hand in hand as part of the government's policy to make Singapore's labour force competitive in the global market. To generate highly skilled manpower, English is the medium of instruction throughout the educational system but students must also be proficient in their mother tongue (Mandarin, Malay or Tamil). Manpower planning, expansion of research facilities, and increases in the national research and development budget are components of the same effort.

There is a general similarity in the school systems of Singapore and Hong Kong given their background as British colonies. The tertiary education institutions in both cities also share a historical similarity: two universities were set up during the first half of this century, one supported by the British colonial government and the other created by the Chinese

community.<sup>18</sup> In addition to this formal educational structure, Hong Kong also offers an informal sector comprising 'all kinds of part-time and evening studies at all levels' and offered by government and private sector bodies (Cheng, 1991: 275–6). Another relevant difference to Singapore is that in Hong Kong, instead of long-term manpower planning and its links with the educational system, immigration and market forces appear to be the main players tailoring job opportunities and the composition of the labour force.<sup>19</sup>

Another aspect of the socio-cultural dimension of globalization is labour relations. During the past two decades numerous studies have demonstrated that a labour force that is satisfied with working conditions and work remuneration is usually productive. Singaporeans and Hong-kongese know this. They are also aware that the more productive and the less expensive its labour force, the more attractive is a global city to investors. Typically, the combination of these disparate objectives shapes labour relations by making wages and productivity the main bones of contention in labour disputes. Hong Kong and Singapore have this problem like practically all other countries. But each of these two city-states deals with labour relations in a rather different fashion.

Singapore suffered serious labour unrest during its colonial era and during the period of transition from a colony to a republic in the 1950s and 1960s. The first years of independence after 1965 were marked by riots, worker strikes and, essentially, adversarial relations between employers and unions. In 1972, the Singapore government set up the National Wages Council (NWC) embodying the idea of team work or 'partnership in development' between workers, employers and the government. The NWC is a 'tripartite body' composed of 'representatives of unions, employers and the government' and 'an advisory body' whose recommendations must be based on 'tripartite consensus'. Stressing its character of vehicle to partnership, the 'tripartite NWC's recommendations are not mandatory'; they are, instead, 'bilateral guidelines for negotiation between unions and employers' (Lim, 1991: 212).<sup>20</sup>

The record of labour relations in Hong Kong is very different. Between July 1990 and August 1991, there were eight large workers' strikes and demonstrations demanding higher wages and better working conditions in Hong Kong (Sung and Lee, 1991: ix–xvi). An analyst of the labour situation describes the problem succinctly: 'Finding evidence to substantiate . . . work deprivations in Hong Kong is easy compared with the task of accounting for why these deprivations have not generated more frequent outbursts of protest' (Levin, 1990: 85). Levin suggests that Hong Kong workers are more concerned about job security and wages than work conditions, given the oversupply of labour caused by immigration from China (1990: 90–9). Still, labour unrest and 'outbursts' in Hong Kong are frequent

(Leung, 1990: 148–52) but workers are unable to exert significant pressure on their employers because they lack collective organization (Findlay and Wellisz, 1993: 76). Most Hong Kong observers concur that in labour relations as well as in other aspects of the colony's life, the government preferred to maintain a non-interventionist stance unless forced by circumstances (Levin, 1990; Leung, 1990; Chan, 1990).

In addition to education, manpower planning and labour relations, another important aspect of the socio-cultural dimension of global cities is national identity. National identity again illustrates the different roles taken by the state in Hong Kong and Singapore. From the political dimension, some global cities may be seen as urban 'communities' in the Weberian sense<sup>21</sup> although given the social setting of their everyday lives, global city dwellers would lack a sense of community or a sense of 'belonging', of being 'home' where their cultural 'roots' are. But it is difficult to ascertain with accuracy the presence or absence of *gemeinschaft* norms and, in general, of a sense of community in any given city. It is even more difficult to find comparative figures when more than one city is involved. In the comparison of the city-states of Singapore and Hong Kong, the problem may be skirted by focusing on the idea of *national identity*. This is one of a few but crucial concepts distinguishing the socio-cultural ethos of Singaporeans and Hongkongese.

The economic success of Hong Kong seems to suggest that national identity is not a prerequisite for economic development. But, as indicated earlier, Hong Kong's population is highly homogeneous compared to Singapore's. The 'Chineseness' of Hong Kong is not just evident in the ethnic origins of its population but in its geographical nexus to China. In contrast, while citizenship unites all Singaporeans regardless of their ethnic origin, other things separate them, particularly their 'cultural roots' and, in many cases, their religion. The multi-ethnic character of Singapore's population coupled with the coexistence of different and strong religious beliefs heightens the probability of racial and religious conflicts. As racial and religious riots are part of the historical past of Singapore, national identity is seen as the essential bond that keeps the population focused on common goals and committed to work together to attain them.

Since its independence in 1965, several formal methods are used by the Singapore government to promote national identity. Among them are the inclusion of civics in the school curriculum, the singing of the national anthem and the flag-raising ceremony in schools; compulsory national service for male citizens aged 18; and the concept of national defence embodied in the armed forces. It has been suggested that the public housing programme, the bilingualism policy in schools, and national campaigns are also part of 'the Singapore government's approach to nation-building' (Quah, 1990: 45–65). Another crucial approach is the

advancement of two values representing a 'Singaporean' national identity: meritocracy and honesty.<sup>22</sup>

The combination of the values of meritocracy and honesty as important goals for Singapore has been internationally recognized. A World Bank expert team reported that Singapore 'is widely perceived to have the region's most competent and upright bureaucracy' (1993c: 176). When meritocracy and honesty in government are values internalized by the population, they have the added advantage of creating a conducive and reliable business environment. Referring to Singapore's competitive edge in the global economy, Milne and Mauzy stated that 'It is a tribute to Singapore's advantages that whereas in the Third World potential investors usually have to approach government through intermediaries, in Singapore they can get in touch with government directly and secure help without undue delay or without bribes' (1990: 149).

In addition to meritocracy and honesty, another important component of national identity in multi-ethnic Singapore is social cohesion or a sense of community.<sup>23</sup> A 1989 survey on national identity found evidence of high social cohesion. About eight of every ten Singaporeans declared that all Singaporeans depend on each other in the defence of Singapore from external threat, in the attainment of economic progress, and in improving the quality of life in their own neighbourhoods (Chiew, 1990: 74–7, 1993: 299–300).<sup>24</sup> The case of Singapore demonstrates that public policy and institution building may be used effectively to cultivate a sense of community. The case of Hong Kong supports this finding on the effectiveness of public policy by illustrating the opposite situation: the absence of government-led efforts to instil a sense of community.

I suggest that the sense of community manifested in national identity – and social cohesion – is vital for Singapore's performance in the world's economy but not for Hong Kong's, given the different ethnic and linguistic composition of their populations. Most available studies concur that a sense of national identity is 'still not quite clear' in Hong Kong (Lau, 1992: 152–3). Referring to the early history of the colony of Hong Kong, Hayes (1990: 9) reports that, up to the time preceding the Second World War, the British and Europeans on the one hand and the Chinese on the other, formed the two races that populated the island, living 'reasonably contentedly side by side largely because one did not intrude upon the other, save in business or public affairs'. Even in the realm of public affairs the 'intrusion' was minimal because the British colonial government believed that government interference 'runs counter to the Chinese concept of what any government should or should not require of its citizens' (Hayes, 1990: 16). Hayes wrongly attributes the protest of Hong Kong Chinese residents to something inherent in Chinese culture. On the contrary, Chinese culture leans towards respect for legitimate authority. The Hong Kong Chinese's

status as subjects of a colonial power with whom they did not identify, may explain better their reluctance to interact with non-Chinese and to follow foreign-imposed regulations.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, there is evidence of a feeling of community and a sense of neighbourhood in the streets of Hong Kong that is largely invisible to the casual observer. The sense of neighbourhood may be found in clusters of residents from the same village or region in China, or people earning a living in similar trades, for example. In the early decades of the colony, the sharing of hardship as immigrants made clans, regional associations, fund-raising, temples and hospitals set up by wealthy Chinese entrepreneurs, the dynamos of a sense of community in Hong Kong. As economic development advanced, the reliance on and the affective links with these traditional organizations and with what they represented tended to diminish for the native-born Chinese (Hayes, 1983; Smith, 1990; Sinn, 1990; Lui, 1990; Chan, 1991). The sense of community or 'we-ness' appeared to be confined to relatively small communities within the city (Leeming, 1977), and it did not seem to represent the population's allegiance to Hong Kong as a city-state. Two factors are said to explain the absence of a sense of belonging: the immigrant character of the population, and the non-interventionist stance of the colonial government, that is, 'the British government's indifference to cultivate a sense of identification with the Hong Kong community' (Cheung, 1979: 135–40).<sup>26</sup>

The approach of the 1997 historical transition into China's Special Administrative Region, however, awakened a sense of collective destiny among many sectors of the Hong Kong population. The first internationally visible demonstration of this sentiment was their public reaction to the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre. Since then, the people of Hong Kong have experienced numerous political events that clarify or agitate their sense of community such as the promulgation of the Basic Law by the Chinese government in 1990; the introduction of the Bill of Rights in 1991; and the first election ever of a legislative body, the Legislative Council, in 1995.

## **Conclusion**

The main objective of this discussion was to explore the role of the state in the nurturing of social values and economic development. To accomplish this task the two city-states of Hong Kong and Singapore have been used as two historical case studies. They were chosen because of their similarity in the level of development as global cities and their different paths towards development. The study's objective was approached with the help of a heuristic tool comprising five dimensions of the global city: the economic, political, administrative, socio-cultural and physical dimensions.

The comparative analysis of socio-economic globalization explored three main assumptions: first, that given its territorial constraints (its physical dimension), the most realistic alternative for the economic growth of the city-state is globalization; second, that state intervention (the political dimension) is an important but not a determining factor in the process of globalization of the city-state; and third, that a city's political dimension has a strong influence upon the direction (supporting globalization) taken by its other four dimensions and thus, the political dimension or, more specifically, the role of the state, helps to explain the different paths and social values towards globalization taken by Singapore and Hong Kong.

The comparative analysis of both cities has supported the three assumptions. The most realistic alternative for the economic growth of Hong Kong and Singapore as city-states is globalization. Moreover, given the different levels of involvement of the political dimension in each city, the active role of the government in Singapore may be characterized as that of a *coach* while Hong Kong's colonial government played primarily the role of *referee*. The republic of Singapore is attaining globalization by design, following its government's long-term planning and careful policy implementation. In contrast, the globalization of the British colony of Hong Kong has, until very recently, been mobilized and sustained primarily by the economic dimension. The shrewdness of its private sector entrepreneurs has reinforced Hong Kong's propitious economic milieu making it even more conducive to globalization.

This study suggests that the sociological examination of the formation and growth of global cities may be enhanced when the five dimensions are analysed and their interrelations identified. Most studies of global cities emphasize what I have labelled here the economic and administrative dimensions, and tend to neglect the political dimension. Perhaps this preferential focus on the economic over the political has been encouraged by the fact that, with the exception of Tokyo, the most studied global cities have been Western cities (i.e. London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles) within a liberal ideology of minimal government intervention, and are not city-states.<sup>27</sup> As the comparison of Hong Kong and Singapore demonstrates, the role of the political dimension of a global city is a promising angle of analysis in the investigation of the interrelations among institutions in other dimensions, the identification of processes and patterns of interaction that bring about collaboration and competition among different interest groups, and the significance of social values on matters such as entrepreneurship, national identity and government intervention. These research questions will expand the analysis of global cities from macro-economics to the sociological implications of a city's globalization for its local population at the macro- and micro-levels.

Concerning research questions about the future of Singapore and Hong Kong, both cities plan to continue their path towards globalization but they perceive their future as perilous for different reasons. Hong Kong has a factual reason: its transition from British Colony to China's Special Administrative Region in 1997. That change in political status and, particularly, the uncertainty about the fate of Hong Kong's prosperity as a global city after July 1997 have determined the course of policies by the colonial government and the decisions made by Hongkongese about their 'home' during the past decade. While the identification with a place as 'home' may be a factor assisting community formation in cities (Cuba and Hummon, 1993: 144; Jang and Alba, 1992), this process has been ambivalent (Lau, 1992) in Hong Kong until recently and is an important subject of sociological investigation.

In contrast to Hong Kong, Singapore's trepidation for the future is self-inflicted. One of the pillars of Singapore's worldview, as expressed by its political leaders, is the recognition of the economic and socio-political vulnerability of the republic. Singapore's economic development depends on the world's economy, over which the city-state has no control. The socio-political stability of the country depends on the nature of the leaders elected through the democratic process and, thus, on the constantly changing values of new generations of voters. Milne and Mauzy (1990: 178) ponder 'can the city-state successfully combine the civilization of Athens with Spartan discipline?' This is a pivotal research question. The painful lessons from the history of Athens, Sparta and, in general, from human civilization, indicate that Singapore probably would not succeed. Yet, in the 1950s no one would have guessed that Singapore would become the nation that it is today. Current observation indicates that Singaporeans and their leaders are determined to take that question as a challenge for the 21st century.

## Notes

1. Some examples of this kind of study are: Abegglen (1994); Kim (1986); Leung (1990); Milne and Mauzy (1990); Quah (1989); Quah (1990); Sinn (1990).
2. The 1990 population census indicated that 68 percent of Singaporean Chinese were Buddhist or Taoist; 14 percent were Christians; and 17.6 percent did not have any religious affiliation. About 99 percent of the Singaporean Malays were Muslims. Among the Singaporean Indians, 53.2 percent were Hindus, 26.3 percent Muslims, and 12.8 percent Christians (Department of Statistics, 1993).
3. As mentioned earlier, there are four official languages in Singapore: Mandarin, Malay, Tamil and English. Bilingualism is one of the principal goals of the country's educational system. Since 1966, every high school graduate is expected to be effectively bilingual in English and his or her mother tongue

(Mandarin, Malay or Tamil). This multi-ethnic emphasis and the bilingualism approach are now part of the collective mentality in Singapore. The average Singaporean speaks at least one language in addition to English, but often three or four languages including dialects.

4. Most elementary schools in Hong Kong use Cantonese as the medium of instruction, English and Cantonese are used in secondary schools, and the entire education system followed the English system. Yet, although English textbooks are used for most subjects and the final examinations are usually in English, 'the classroom language' was 'a "mixed code"' of Cantonese and English terms (Cheng, 1991: 286-7). To solve the 'mixed code' problem a government commission recommended in 1990 that each school decide what language to use (English or Cantonese) and to implement it fully. Still, this recommendation was not well received, and Cheng laments that the transition of power from Britain to China in 1997 created a situation whereby this issue of language became 'highly politicized' (Cheng, 1991: 287).
5. Max Weber used the ideal type as an analytical tool. He defined ideal types as 'constructed utopias' and conceptualizations of 'patterned orientations of meaningful action'. The formulation of an ideal type is attained 'through a conscious exaggeration of essential features of the significant action-orientations' and 'through a synthesis of these diffuse characteristic action-orientations into an internally unified and logically rigorous concept'. For further details and an insightful discussion of the Weberian approach see Kalberg (1994: 86).
6. See for example, Sassen (1991); Gordon and Harloe (1991); Mollenkopf and Castells (1991); Goldsmith and Blakely (1992); and Hutchinson (1992). In addition to these experts' work, there are other publications following similar premises but addressed to the general public. Three of the latter books are: Barnett and Cavanagh (1994); Marquardt and Reynolds (1994); and Naisbitt (1994).
7. The anticipation of profit is usually the major motivation for foreign investment in any city or country and it is thus present in the global city. Yet, a stronger economic attraction of the global city is the high level of technology it makes available to corporations for their financial management and growth. See King (1990: 1-32); Sassen (1991: 90-125).
8. The concentration of 'upper professionals' in New York is a good example of this phenomenon (Brint, 1991) as is the case of London (Gordon and Harloe, 1991).
9. While the economic, administrative and physical dimensions of the global city are well recognized in the expert literature, the political dimension tends to be neglected. Sassen (1991: 323-38) for example, gives more credit to the role of market forces in the capitalist economy than to the role of the state in the formation of global cities.
10. King (1990: 139-45) presents a succinct discussion of this dimension as it is found in London. See also Sassen (1991: 245-319) and Mollenkopf and Castells (1991) for additional examples.
11. On the one hand, urban redevelopment and restructuring are typically geared to enhance economic growth, to attract and to accommodate investors and businesses and to serve their needs. Consequently, there is rapid increase in

the number, size and quality of office buildings, industrial areas, residential zones, recreational and cultural amenities, specialized modes of transportation and sophisticated communications infrastructure. On the other hand, urban redevelopment increases the cost of land and housing thus inducing an internal 'migration' of city residents. High income earners move to high quality residential areas in the suburbs or to newly renovated and expensive central city areas. The low income earners move to the least costly housing areas. Urban renewal is commonly believed to improve the quality of life of all city residents, yet in the global city the tendency is towards the upgrading of upper- and middle-class neighbourhoods. Studies focusing on specific global cities from different conceptual and methodological perspectives, such as those conducted by Sassen (1991), Mollenkopf and Castells (1991), Castells (1989), and King (1990: 3–32), tend to coincide on their pessimistic outlook of what I labelled the socio-cultural dimension and in their prediction of increased social polarization while they range from enthusiastic to non-committal about the successes of the economic, administrative, political and the physical dimensions. In general, they welcome the advance in technology and the wealth-generating activities of the global cities they studied. However, these analysts fear a disintegration of community and family life in low-income neighbourhoods, a proliferation of destitute and homeless people, an increase in violent crime and the 'social polarization' of global cities' residents.

12. See Braudel (1966); Mumford (1961), (1966); Abrams (1965); Weber (1958); Toynbee (1970). The historical analyses provided by these authors corroborate the interpretation of the role of these cities as 'global' cities in their respective time and space.
13. This point is also suggested by an American economist, Sidney Klein (1986: 96) although we differ in our method of analysis and in our interpretation of the role of the state.
14. As a culmination of this process, on 24 February 1994, the 60-member Hong Kong Legislative Council approved 'a fully democratic parliamentary body in charge of Hong Kong's affairs for the first time under British rule' and elections took place in 1994 and for Legco in 1995. This move antagonized China, and its Foreign Ministry declared that when China takes over Hong Kong in 1997 'it will dismantle any democratically elected legislature formed' by the Legislative Council of Hong Kong (*New York Times*, 1994).
15. As Lee describes the problem, the political changes in Hong Kong put the top civil service in the absurd position of being accountable to four different sectors: to the 'British-appointed governor'; to 'the Beijing-appointed authorities'; to the 'representatives of the Hong Kong people' in the Legislative Council; and to 'the Hong Kong people directly'. Lee stresses that 'accountability should be to citizens, not to a group of powerful non-elected political elites' (Lee, 1993: 117). Unless something drastic occurs, that remains a highly remote probability, judging from the current intentions of the Chinese government in Beijing to crush any leaning towards democracy as indicated earlier (*New York Times*, 1994).
16. Based on the Hong Kong figures provided by Lau (1991: 347), Hong Kong

had 14 housing units, both public and private, per 1000 population in 1990. Singapore had 230.6 public housing units per 1000 population in 1990 (Department of Statistics, 1993: 149–50).

17. A measure of success of the HDB's public housing programme are the figures on housing units built and level of occupant ownership. During the period from 1960 to 1992, the HDB built 641,061 public housing apartments of which 570,504 or 89 percent, were owner-occupied. By 1992, 87 percent of the Singapore population lived in HDB apartments and 82 percent were owners of their public housing apartments (Department of Statistics, 1993: 18).
18. In Singapore, the two universities went through two phases of development: a conflictive early phase of separate identities and the subsequent merger of the two into the National University of Singapore since 1980. The histories of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (founded and supported by leaders of the Hong Kong Chinese community) and the University of Hong Kong, the state university, have not been devoid of conflict. The people of Hong Kong traditionally perceived the University of Hong Kong as a colonial symbol and gave more support to the 'Chinese-inspired, Chinese-run institution', the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Sweeting, 1990: 32).
19. A government's commitment to education is reflected in the proportion of the gross development product (GDP) invested in education. During the period 1980 to 1991/92, the proportion of GDP expended on education was 3.7 percent in Singapore and 2.2 percent in Hong Kong. Both countries spent a lower proportion of their GDP on education than Japan (5.2 percent), Taiwan (4.5 percent) and most European countries during the same period (Cost Review Committee, 1993: 76, 208). Local experts have criticized their respective governments for not investing more resources in the education of the population (Cost Review Committee, 1993: 207; Cheng, 1991: 308).
20. In 1991 the NWC recommended 'a flexible wages system based on variable bonuses' whereby annual 'wage increases become a function of national economic performance, company performance, and individual performance' (Lim, 1991: 213). This recommendation is currently active. Singapore workers have benefited but the down side is that employers, particularly from small and medium size enterprises, complain of the increase in labour costs. Indeed, the Cost Review Committee reported in 1993 that 'wage increases have outstripped productivity growth in recent years' thus increasing sharply 'the cost of doing business in Singapore' and consequently Singapore's competitiveness in the global market (1993: 107).
21. At the macro-level, Weber identified five requirements that an urban settlement or city must meet to be an 'urban community': a 'fortification', 'a market', 'a court of its own and at least partially autonomous law', 'a related form of association', and 'at least partial autonomy and autocephaly' (Weber, 1958: 80–1). The first two requirements refer to a system of defence of the urban settlement and to its economic organization. The other three requirements address the formal social structure of the community with its own regulations and elected government. These ideas are pertinent to the analysis of global cities today as they address the socio-cultural and the political dimensions of

global cities. On the one hand, from the micro-level perspective, one would expect in the global city the absence of close, responsive, and affective relationships that are said to be typical in rural communities or *gemeinschaft* settings. On the other hand, the five features that make up Weber's definition of 'urban community' involve mostly the political dimension. Considering Weber's emphasis on self-regulation, the global city is a closer representation of his concept of 'urban community' than regular cities; city-states would fit better this concept; and of the two cities in this study, Singapore as a sovereign state approximates more Weber's idea of urban community than the British colony of Hong Kong.

22. The principle of meritocracy is applied in the selection and appointment of employees, and in performance evaluation in the education system and in the civil service. Concerning honesty in the management of government affairs, the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) was set up in 1952 and the legislation that gave it teeth, the Prevention of Corruption Act, was enacted in 1960 (Quah, 1995). It is pertinent to add that Hong Kong has a similar institution for the same purpose, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, set up 14 years later, in 1974.
23. In his recent volume stressing the urgency in America to 'move from *me* to *we*', Amitai Etzioni stresses that 'this *we*-ness' is part of the essence of community. More explicitly, he adds that a society cannot function well 'unless most of its members "behave" most of the time because they voluntarily heed their moral commitments and social responsibilities' (1993: 30–1). How does a society get its members to do that, is the crucial question. Mansbridge (1994: 147, 165) refers to the idea of *we*-ness as the 'public spirit' defined as 'the political form of altruism'. She suggests that a combination of empathy and duty may be the strategies to create 'public spirit'. But she acknowledges that 'we urgently need to understand more than we do now about the institutions, norms, principles . . . and sanctions that promote public spirited behavior'. Aaron et al. propose that the channels for changing social values – from 'me' to 'we' – are family, friends, community and public policy (1994). These experts are troubled by the absence of a sense of community, 'we-ness' or 'public spirit'. They call for more research on how to promote a sense of community in the United States and suggest that it may be nurtured not only through the family and friends but also through public policy. All these are notions relevant to this discussion.
24. Besides the national identity phenomenon, the promotion of a sense of community has also been undertaken via two seemingly divergent paths, one emphasizing the cultural differences among the various ethnic groups, and the other path stressing their similarities and common rights and obligations as citizens and as neighbours. On the first path, several organizations have been established to support ethnic Chinese, Malay and Indian communities in their efforts to preserve their cultural heritage or 'cultural roots' and to assist their 'less successful' members 'to upgrade themselves in education and skills' (CDAC, 1993: 29). The second path taken to reinforce neighbourliness comprises a network of multi-ethnic organizations based primarily on place of residence namely, Community Centres, Residents' Committees and Town

Councils. Community Centres offer recreational facilities, meeting halls, sports, educational and cultural activities. Resident Committees deal with the upkeep and security of their zones or neighbourhoods, and organize recreational, educational and civic activities. Town Councils perform estate management functions and focus the attention of the residents on the security, the upkeep and upgrading of their own neighbourhoods.

25. Hayes identified two 'races' before the war. But in the 1980s, Findlay and Wellisz (1993: 76) distinguished three main groups of Hongkongese: the 'native-born' Chinese-educated Chinese; the native-born English-educated Chinese; and the Chinese immigrants. The three groups seem to differ in their sense of belonging to Hong Kong. The authors suggest that the native-born Chinese-educated Chinese 'view government at worst as a nuisance and at best as something of little concern to the average individual'; and the most apathetic are the Chinese immigrants 'who are not likely to have a clear sense of belonging' to Hong Kong.
26. Cheung lamented that 'the cultivation of a sense of belonging among the people, which is of fundamental importance from a long-term perspective, is not [the government's] primary concern'. With no national symbols such as the flag and national anthem, the lack of national identity made the people of Hong Kong 'socially malnourished' (1979: 140). Cheung's criticism was also expressed by Kuan (1979: 152–65), and a decade later by Leung (1990). At the same time, social problems such as crime and housing shortage, brought about by illegal immigration, continued (Vagg, 1993).
27. The application of the five dimensions is important for the analysis of global cities but it is crucial in the case of city-states which differ significantly from other global and non-global cities particularly in the political and economic dimensions. Sassen (1991) suggests that a city's globalization leads to growing tensions with the national government because the city's economic growth 'rests on a weakening of the national state' (1991: 329). This situation does not apply to city-states. In fact, the opposite is more likely to occur as the cases of Singapore and Hong Kong illustrate.

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