



# MANAGING CHINESENESS

Identity and Ethnic Management  
in Singapore

DAPHNEE LEE



# Frontiers of Globalization

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Daphnee Lee

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Identity and Ethnic Management in Singapore

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANCOVA	Analysis of Covariance
ASME	Association of Small and Medium Enterprises
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMIO	Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Others
DBS	Development Bank of Singapore
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
ECI	Eurotech Consortium International
EDB	Economic Development Board
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GLC	Government-Linked Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KMT	Kuomintang
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NIE	Newly Industrialized Economy
NTU	Nanyang Technological University
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAP	People's Action Party
PEB	Professional Engineers Board
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PLE	Private Local Enterprises
PMET	Professionals, Managers, Executives, and Technicians
SAP	Special Assisted Plan
SBF	Singapore Business Federation
SEM	Structural equation modeling
SES	Socioeconomic Status

SIET	Singapore Institute of Engineering Technologists
SME	Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TNC	Transnational Corporation
UMNO	United Malays National Organization

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## Managing Chineseness as Identity Grafting

Among my childhood memories from the early 1980s, certain images during the evening news left a deep impression on me. They were of a fashion show held in China. I was amazed to see Chinese models on the catwalk. At that time, Caucasian models held a virtual monopoly for defining beauty standards, as to a large extent they still do. But what enraptured me was the news commentary. The commentator talked about China opening its doors to the world. It was reported that China was expected to become the next global power. The womenfolk in my family did not buy into the aesthetic appeal of the Chinese models. Instead, aunts went in for plastic surgery to acquire the Caucasian look. One of them went to the extreme of a full-face overhaul. She was initially an abomination to behold. As the invasive scars faded and the features settled into her face, she looked curiously unauthentic with the deep set eyes, strong bridged nose, narrowed face, and thick, luscious lips. But she also became very attractive and her position was elevated when she found extreme wealth through marriage. Jealous aunts decried the cheating from grafting another's identity, and the betrayal of one's Chinese roots. Other aunts worried about the sustainability of grafted foreign features onto an Asian face. Today, plastic surgery is common practice among celebrities, regardless of whether they belong to the East or West. But the standards for identity grafting are no longer exclusively Western. When asked why Asian actresses are increasingly acquiring 'V'-shaped facial contours of unhuman proportions, a

friend replied, ‘It’s all the China actresses’ fault.’ The flashback of the China models on a glitzy stage is now reality, even though the features of Chineseness have changed dramatically. The new Chinese beauty standard is a recombination of East and West: big eyes are framed by the crease on the eyelids but no longer deep set; a high, but delicately bridged nose; ‘heart-shaped’ facial contours—broad cheeks that close in on the extreme ‘V’-shaped chin; and topped off with a plump, but narrow and pouty pair of lips.

## IDENTITY GRAFTING: ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT AND DUAL HEGEMONY

Early forms of capitalist political economies can be said to be ideologically monolithic. Capitalist industrialization is believed to be the outcome of the embodiment of Western sociopolitical evolution. Those that did not belong to this legacy, as Max Weber attests in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, lack the requisite cultural capital for a smooth transition into the capitalist network.<sup>1</sup> Drawing heavily on Weber, Lucian Pye concludes *The Spirit of Chinese Politics* is irreconcilable with Western sociopolitical thought.<sup>2</sup> Given the significance of Western sociopolitical thought in the first wave of capitalist-industrial movements, the mandatory acquisition of these traditions have been expounded as conditional for successful integration into the capitalist-industrial core. Despite starting out later in the race, the United States not only embodied Western enterprise, but even surpassed and unseated its British and French predecessors in global hegemonic influence today. Germany was accepted as a part of this legacy with some misgivings, but made it over the bar.<sup>3</sup> It was believed converts embracing the path of capitalist industrialization would eventually converge in the participation of this sociopolitical evolution.<sup>4</sup> But the experiences of some may be much less linear. One distinctive feature of ‘third wave’ capitalist industrialization is the concentration of postcolonial nation-states that form the non-Western hemisphere. In this wave, developmental states played a critical role. Developmentalist models were spawned from the classic prototype, but grafted upon other regions with significant digressions in terms of underlying philosophies. This digression was disturbing, but allowances were made in compensation for the lack of organic embodiment of the Western sociopolitical evolution. The pressure exerted upon capitalist-industrial networks for sociopolitical democratization, thus, was less stringently exercised in the postcolonial

and late-industrializing subaltern. As economic strategies were believed to be exogenous in origin, accelerated development had taken place through rapid alignment with capitalist norms, but distinguished by the practice of centralized planning.<sup>5</sup> While all initiatives in capitalist industrialization are characterized by the rapid transformation of the economic landscape, late-industrializing economies had to do so within an accelerated time frame.<sup>6</sup> For some, the support of deviations from the classic capitalist models was given with the expectation that these allowances would be interim measures. Observers who undertake this view had once generated much optimism for the potential for transcending divides between cultures. Notable scholars include Francis Fukuyama, who assumes the attraction of democracy will transcend civilizational differences and the world will converge into one unified polity.<sup>7</sup> Economic affluence harvested from capitalist industrialization was believed to be the centrifugal force for the eventual alignment with the classic Western model. Even if only a segment of Asian political economies acquires some of the requisite cultural capital, the desire for sustained economic affluence will motivate this more promising segment towards continued efforts at aligning with the ‘standard.’ As expected, most developmental states that had achieved successful economic development were self-starters in the devolution of state intervention. But tensions exist within the core–periphery divide that had given rise to the emergence of alternative frameworks.

Even as traditional cultures were displaced by norms believed to enable economic growth, distinguishable differences remain between first-movers and some of the most effective developmental states. Indeed, in terms of the chronology of which nations have joined as participants of capitalist industrialization, it does appear intuitive that boundaries between early and late adopters are drawn along the lines of East and West. As capitalist industrialization emerged from the Euro-American region, the region’s economies are often associated with the first-movers of this movement. First-mover nations bore the ‘pioneering costs’ of developing capitalist-industrial consciousness organically. This means capitalist industrialization was a gradual process of fine-tuning through the exploration of previously uncharted grounds. First-mover industrializers had, over centuries, found their way to economic success by conquering global markets. In contrast, successful late-industrializers had achieved positive investment yields in two to three decades by being responsive to global market imperatives. But the investment yields of being first-movers are not restricted to the purely economic. Euro-America became the tastemaker of the world,

and its norms the cultural capital to be accumulated if capitalist industrialization is desired. With the rest of the world's economies joining the movement only one or two centuries later, hegemonic influence over the global political economy remains in the hands of those with first-mover advantage. By being centuries in the lead, the West continues to define how race, region, and culture are to be perceived. Therefore, even as businesses and professions have embraced transnationalism for some decades, cleavages continue to exist between ethnocultures. A close scrutiny reveals the enduring nature of 'late industrialization' as more than just gaps in development. A re-examination of the growth trajectory of the United States as the leading economy is telling. Straddling between the earliest adopters (Britain and France) and later adopters (Germany and Sweden) of Euro-America, the United States had its fair share of past exclusions from the core legions of 'early adopters.' Its current influence in the world order, however, is a far cry from its humble beginnings. Likewise, Germany currently holds a strong position in the European Union, shorn of its earlier associations as a 'late entrant.' Yet it is Japan, previously the number-two economy (before its displacement by China) that is frequently employed as a case study for 'late industrialization.'<sup>8</sup> Even where developmental states were able to attain material affluence at an accelerated pace, the influence of these players over the global political economy could only be semi-peripheral. It goes to show, that focusing solely on the structural conditions that had inspired developmentalism is an incomplete depiction of the 'third wave.'<sup>9</sup> The 'third wave' is as much a normative reality as it is an economic condition. 'Third wave' societies differentiate from 'first wave' early adopters and 'second wave' late industrializers in that they stand for the 'colored and colonized.'<sup>10</sup> That is, 'third wave' nations are not just subjects of colonization, but also targets of orientalism. Socialized by orientalist ideologies on the primacy of culture, small post-colonial nation-states struggled with the belief that the effective embracement of first-world development is encumbered by native cultures. At the onslaught of the 'third wave,' divergent trajectories of development were perceived as the result of poor imitations.<sup>11</sup> References were often made to the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis as an indication that alternative paths to economic success are unsustainable. Beliefs about the feasibility of these adapted versions gained traction only in the recent past. While Japan had spearheaded the dispersal of hegemonic monopoly from the Western hemisphere, China magnified this process with its ascendancy. The rise of China's giant economy put to question the inevitability of a unilineal path

to effective development. It remains premature to assert with confidence if there is indeed more than the one viable path to capitalist industrialization as previously assumed. Nonetheless, the tensions that had arisen from this anticipation have generated normative demands for making explicit where one's loyalties are pledged.

Prior to the successful industrialization of large nations in Asia, the concentration of global influence had been clear-cut. Hegemony was concentrated in the West. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the potential for a dual hegemonic political economy was merely hypothetical. As China's 'state-led' development has not loosened its reins despite having become the number-two economy, the hypothesis of alternative pathways to development has become increasingly plausible. Before the emergence of the dual hegemonic framework, the interest in Chineseness was focused on diasporic communities. As the regional forerunners of capitalist industrialization, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan captured the attention of Asian economic observers, along with their East Asian contemporaries, Japan and South Korea. Discursive constructions of 'Greater China' gained momentum only with the participation of the regional hegemon in the capitalist-industrial network.<sup>12</sup>

In the global value chain, Chineseness then became the expression of hegemonic dialectics that transpire between two distinctive paths of development. In common terms of political expression, the more recent interest in Chineseness is inspired by discourse on China's 'stunning rise.'<sup>13</sup> Increasingly, the smaller economic forerunners came to be seen as 'satellite states' in the discursive construction of the Chinese political economy. Indeed, if one may find a common cultural connection of China with Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan, it would be the intertwined history of late industrialization and postcoloniality. Chineseness then came to connote the rise of developmentalist trajectories, popularized by the rhetoric of 'capitalist development with Chinese characteristics.' From the perspective of the globally hegemonic West, this connotation is frequently perceived as symbolic of the rising challenge to Western dominance. Samuel Huntington's thesis of an impending *Clash of the Civilizations* echoes the encirclement tactics of the United States in the containment of Chinese attempts at engaging the world with its 'peaceful rise.'<sup>14</sup> Supporters and detractors of the belief that a shift in the locus of power will happen were equally passionate. Indeed, detractors are likely accurate that 'hegemonic shift has not happened, is not happening, and will not happen for many years to come.'<sup>15</sup> However, it is realistic to expect an aspiring hegemonic

contender will not be satisfied with just the growth of its economy. Hegemonic centers from both the East and the West now compete for the recruitment of ‘friends or foes.’<sup>16</sup> Insight into the situation can be derived from Yingchi Chu, with the ‘politics of reception’ between China and the West. China’s dissemination of soft power is perceived as ‘propaganda’ by Western critics, while the circulation of Western influences is interpreted by China as ‘spiritual pollution.’<sup>17</sup> As powerhouses are expected to lock horns more often within a dual hegemonic landscape, the expression of (dis)associations with Chineseness, therefore, became the positioning of where one stands. The articulation of national,<sup>18</sup> and professional,<sup>19</sup> positions, thus, can be said to be the result of framing and counter-framing within this dual hegemonic political economy. I refer to this process as *identity grafting*.

Identity grafting is the process of reconciling normative disjuncture via the grafting of symbolic power. Symbolic power, according to Pierre Bourdieu,<sup>20</sup> refers to the degree of autonomy vested upon a collective that occupy elite positions within a social hierarchy. Wielders of symbolic power are consecrated with the authority to construct normative realities.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, wielders of identity grafting seek to approximate this leverage by means of imitation, subversion, hybridization, and/or recombination. Pressures for change create strain on established identities, and as these pressures increase in frequency, the time for adapting to change becomes compressed. Exigencies of accelerated development thus necessitate mediated measures that engages in grafting techniques as efficient responses to frequently arising normative disjuncture. Although actors of identity grafting may not fully grasp the nuances of these normative forms in-depth, grafting measures ensure sufficient identity coherence for enacting the requisite behavior that will facilitate accelerated development. Seeing the global political economy with the lens of dual hegemony represents one of the outcomes of identity grafting. Although normative disjuncture is typically complex, identity-grafting measures pare down the complexity, so as to engineer for accelerated adaptations. An efficient means to doing so is to identify the key dialectical influences that steer change. Identity grafting thus focuses only on the hegemonic entities that had inspired the need for change. In the current dual hegemonic framework, the entities are represented by China and the West. This asymmetrical representation of a country and a region prevails in the construction of dual hegemony from the view of the subaltern. Although the West has never been a monolithic entity, references to an occidental West allow the subaltern to be

focused on the critical elements represented by this construct. In thinking about ‘democracy,’ for instance, Western polities stand for organic manifestations of a unified sociopolitical attitude. Conversely, China remains the only large polity in the subaltern that, despite having benefited from the embarkation of the ‘third wave,’ seems to have dug its heels in with regard to preserving normative ideals that diverge from the first-movers. The lopsided framework, thus, is an accurate representation of the process that had given rise to dual hegemony.

In reality, hegemonic contenders share a symbiotic relationship. China presents bountiful market opportunities for Western multinational corporations. Correspondingly, the Chinese economy is dependent upon both direct investments from the Western hemisphere and proxy investments via Asian economies. This symbiosis has resulted in mutual adaptations in the commitment to uphold a new balance of power to maintain the stability of the global political economy. Intermediary ‘swing states,’ play a critical role in this balance of power. In the choice of a ‘swing state’ to examine the impact of identity grafting, I seek a case of examination that bears strong resemblance with China in terms of political, economic, and social organization, but unadulterated by the macropolitics when relating to Western political economies. Singapore’s developmentalism, which cuts at the core of its social engineering reforms, makes a good empirical site for the theorization of identity grafting. Underlying the developmentalist philosophies of the two locales are active identity-grafting efforts targeted at effective integration with the global political economy, but not always in terms that abide by the rules of the game.

### THE MANAGEMENT OF CHINESENESS

Outlined in the works of Alexander Gerschenkron,<sup>22</sup> Alice Amsden,<sup>23</sup> Chalmers Johnson,<sup>24</sup> Manuel Castells,<sup>25</sup> and Peter Evans,<sup>26</sup> developmentalism refers to the corporatism of late- industrializing states toward the strategic management of the national economy to accelerate economic growth. As one of the critical ‘swing states’ entrenched within this discursive construction of late industrialization, Singapore is a case example of a strong developmental state. The term belies the many other functions performed by the state. As a postcolonial polity, Singapore adapted the practice of democratic elections from its independence chaperon, Britain. In place of civil checks and balances, however, is the socialist sanctity of collective good, and disdain for conspicuous consumption by social elites.

This cohesion between vertical social relationships came to be known as paternalism. Alongside the engineering of its economy into a West-friendly business environment is a paternalistic network of government-linked and local business enterprises that resemble traditional Chinese business networks. In Singapore society, most households of today speak English, albeit peppered with favorite local patois, and recombined with phrases deemed precious for the preservation of one's heritage. The nation has developed the confidence to refer to this 'idiosyncratic' version as Singapore English, and its colloquial incarnation as Singlish. Since its independence in 1965, the Singapore polity became a one-party strong state, its economy one of the most stellar performers in the world, and its malleability won it the accolade of being a 'social laboratory.' Undeniably, however, economic development is one of its proudest achievements.

Successful capitalist industrialization is indicated by economic credentials. Yet its articulation becomes increasingly primordialist with the rise of dual hegemony. Accelerated development was ensured by the Singapore state through the strategic identification of economic targets and engineering for a 'total business environment' with the swift alteration of its social contours through identity grafting.<sup>27</sup> When Western models of capitalist industrialization monopolized the global political economy, the desired capitalist DNA is grafted into a society that was thought to be irreconcilably Eastern. Ideological pragmatism ensured no delay was incurred over the deliberation of whether one has betrayed the roots of one's primordial attachments. Through ethnic management, economic development priorities are couched within the Singapore state prescription of heritage discourse. Ethnic management is the statist attempt to organize a population into administrative units based on the principle of race.<sup>28</sup> In regions where the legitimacy of developmentalism prevails, overt incursions by the state into the individual's private identity domain is tolerated as economic growth is vital. One of the unintended consequences of ethnic management is the employment of orientalist discourse by the state. For instance, the 'anglicized' state may employ racist discourse prevalent in first-mover societies to denounce competing local business leaders as 'Chinese chauvinists.' Yet, by using first-mover cultural symbols to subjugate local contestations for influence, the state is in turn subjugated by these symbols within the wider capitalist-industrial network. If 'anglicized' state elites are supposedly superior to 'Chinese chauvinist' business leaders, then 'true blue Westerners' must surely be infinitely superior. The auto-orientalism embedded in this move imposes the subordinate habitus

within the patron–client relationship even as it enables prosperity. At the geopolitical level, this relationship of dependency renewed the inequality between the occident and the orient in the postcolonial landscape. Ex-US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates makes this explicit,<sup>29</sup> ‘The United States is a resident nation in Asia. We have all the rights and obligations of every other resident nation in Asia.’ With the recent developments in the late-industrializing political economy, however, dominance has become two-pronged. As much as Gates’ assertion of US dominance in Asia is uncontroversial, the need for reasserting US hegemonic presence is a reflection of the discomfort towards China’s rising political influence. As a speech targeted at an audience of smaller Asian nations, Gates alludes to Asia as an inseparable entity of a global political economy that the USA continues to dominate. Thus, nations need to choose sides carefully, as they will become the proxies and targets of hegemonic contestations. Convinced of the need to choose sides, Asian nations took a strong stand on the presence of dual hegemony. As indeed seemed to be the case in the 1980s, the auto-orientalist mind-set was that China lacked the potential to keep pace with the United States. Singapore took the contrary stand of echoing China’s occidentalist rhetoric.

Just as it seemed developmental states have met their demise at the turn of the century, Singapore forged on with the reinvention of the developmental state. The oracle-like prediction of Castells, that Singapore is likely ‘the only true Leninist project that has survived, outlasting its original matrix,’<sup>30</sup> renders it an outstanding, but also an exceptional case. Although the model is much sought after by China, Castells surmised the Singapore experience could only be realized within the contained settings of a small island nation. Attempts to replicate a ‘social laboratory’ would likely be a challenge in massive China. However, if Benedict Anderson’s concept of nations as imagined communities may be applied,<sup>31</sup> a view of the geopolitical landscape as bounded by national territories overshadows the similarity between the two polities. In comparison to the rural provinces, for instance, state elites in the Chinese central government may cooperate more frequently with those in Singapore than they would with Chinese provincial governments. In the usual fashion of dismissing the comments of skeptics, the Beijing central government was determined to prove its critics wrong. The emergence of social projects in China that sounded too coincidentally alike with those in Singapore attest to this political exchange and convergence. Initial stumbles experienced by the Suzhou Industrial Project drew mixed reactions as to whether problems were transitional or

proof of the lack of transferability. But as similar institutional bodies continue to sprout and take root, the plausibility of knowledge transfers, even if territorial bodies are not to scale, has become reality. As decades have passed, it has become increasingly apparent that China's statecraft, in terms of its aggressiveness in depoliticizing the civil sphere, statist capitalism, and corporatist approach, shares more than just coincidental resemblance to Singapore's. In the view of China as a bounded national body, the empire psyche of its ancient history represents one plausible explanation for the strong centralization tendencies of the Chinese central government.<sup>32</sup> Departing from this view, I argue that the new Chinese political economy has more contemporary roots that can be traced to the diplomatic connections established decades ago between two likeminded developmental states. Singapore is the Chinese Communist Party's model of choice in seeking alternatives to Western development. In making this statement, I would like to highlight the distinction between the 'Singapore business model' as characterized by its traditional Chinese business networks and its contemporary government-linked corporations. The former comprises kinship-based organizations linked to loosely linked transnational Chinese business networks.<sup>33</sup> These networks are exemplified by business enterprises in the southern regions of China (for example, Guangzhou, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and Shanghai), Taiwan, and the Chinese diasporic communities in Southeast Asia (Singapore inclusive). Traditional Chinese business networks maintain a business strategy of, in international relations terms, limited alignment with the central government in Beijing. In contrast, government-linked corporations in Singapore embraced a soft-balancing approach in its relations with the central government. Supported by Singapore government consultancies, Singaporean industrial, housing, and social security models have taken shape in China, exemplified by the Suzhou industrial estate, Tianjin residential estates, and the National Social Security Fund. It is the latter realities that instantiate Castell's prescience of China's fascination with the Singapore 'social laboratory.'<sup>34</sup> China's central planning approach to political, economic, and social organization thus bears close resemblance to the meticulous state-led configurations of Singapore's Jurong industrial estate, public housing estates, and the Central Provident Fund. Above all, perhaps the greatest impact in the China-Singapore exchange is the 'hidden curriculum' of their ethnic management policies, of which the imperatives communicated by the two locales are coincidentally intertwined. The insistence on Mandarin as the 'original' Chinese language, and relegation

of other sinic language forms into ‘Dialects,’ for instance, is firmly established in the two locales. Guangwei Hu notes Chinese reformers’ partialities towards the Singapore bilingual education model.<sup>35</sup> As Singapore works towards the recombination of ‘East’ and ‘West,’ such as through the establishment of English–Mandarin bilingualism, similar practices may be expected in China’s Mandarin–English bilingual education reforms. The study of Singapore as a case example offers focused insights as to how China is likely to forge ahead. While surveying China for explanations as to its strategic moves may be much more bewildering, Singapore offers prototypical insights into emergent moves in the Chinese political economy. Therefore, although discrepant forms of developmentalism exist, I focus upon Singapore’s strategic trajectory towards developmentalism in the postulation of how political economy shapes one’s identity of being Chinese.

*Managing Chineseness* examines the political economy of state-led ethnic and identity management for developmentalist intents. The lens of this inquiry, however, is cast upon individual actors that form the microfoundation of society. I consider Joel Migdal’s view of how international power relationships are embedded within individual actors,<sup>36</sup> whose enactments of these relationships would result in unintended consequences of domination and change. At the international frontier, state allegiances affirm the visions shared by polities for realizing the social blueprints they have envisaged. As much as individuals may wish to partake in the realization of this vision, the interpretation of policy is mediated by the diverse values actors assign to these social blueprints. This in turn affects how they are disposed to enact the imperatives embedded in state policy. While the state remains a critical aspect of this discourse, how developmental states achieve embedded autonomy would be given a lower priority, in comparison to Peter Evans’ conceptualization of the construct.<sup>37</sup> In *Embedded Autonomy*, the state was the unit of analysis, and newly industrialized economies (NIE) were the exemplars of how successful developmental states have achieved autonomy in the transformation of their economy, albeit embedded within the context of late industrialization. States, according to this approach, are constructed as institutional bodies that function autonomously from society. My inquiry extends on embedded autonomy, with a shift in the empirical focus of how state objectives are enacted and transformed by professional actors through identity grafting. A key question is how Chinese Singaporeans made sense of their positions within the global value chain. My analytical focus aligns with Linda Low’s,

in terms of how the developmental state shapes, and is in turn shaped by, its response towards specialist interest groups:

A developmental state is defined as one which promotes long-term entrepreneurial perspectives among the industrial elites comprising key business groups and resists growth-compromising demands from specialist interest groups.<sup>38</sup>

With the shift in the analytical focus away from the examination of industrial policies, there arises the need to identify actors that may comprise appropriate specialist interest groups. Professions may constitute specialist interest groups that, due to normative views of professionalism, seek to align with or assert their autonomy against developmentalist policies. Through the management of normative values in the non-economic realms, ethnic management policies perform socializing functions that guide individuals to evaluate their professional contribution in ways that respond to these normative influences. Unlike policies targeted at the development of the requisite professional skills for economic growth, ethnic management targets the tacit realm of dispositions. A good example is the embedding of the dual hegemonic subtext in language teaching at schools. With the state institution of English as the medium of teaching instruction nationwide, teachers were not told to prevent students from using other languages in class. Many teachers of core curriculum subjects in Singapore however, have done so of their own accord. State efforts to convert the ‘mother tongue’ of a Chinese dialect-speaking population to Mandarin, likewise, inspired Chinese-language teachers to equate Mandarin proficiency with being Chinese. Correspondingly, students grew up knowing English is to be used in the office as they enter professional life. Prestige associations of English even resulted in its adoption as a home language when they eventually set up their own family units. Depending on how much impact Chinese-language teachers had, some individuals may pepper their home language with Mandarin phrases when they speak to their children in English. But many Chinese Singaporeans would reject notions of themselves as being ‘westernized.’ The biggest impact of Chinese-language teachers in the lives of Chinese Singaporeans, English-speaking or otherwise, is the values inculcated on the awareness of one being Chinese. For those who found themselves engaged in frontline business with the Chinese market, the hidden curriculum transmitted by

Chinese-language teachers is as important as the Mandarin proficiency they have acquired.

The high success rates of ethnic management in Singapore in eliminating competing linguistic systems encourage the exercise of this capacity with an overly exacting hand. The problem is that unintended consequences accompany even the most efficacious of ethnic management initiatives. In this book, I will examine how overly exacting change initiatives resulted in the endurance of orientalist worldviews. In a bid to be responsive to global market demands, postcolonial ethnic management at times unwittingly replicates orientalism. Theories of orientalism will provide the resources for understanding how the postcolonial subaltern comes to be perceived with enduring negative stereotypes of distinction from the occidental west.<sup>39</sup> As actors juggle the necessity of identity grafting, they seek to recover the integrity of the self while seeking affirmation from external influences by engagement in identity work. Some unwittingly rely on orientalist discourses in the sense-making of the realities they experience, characterized by acts to resist (occidentalism, or orientalism-in-reverse),<sup>40</sup> and/or internalize (auto-orientalism),<sup>41</sup> these normative influences. The analytical intention, however, is not to engage in literary criticism of orientalist discourses. Rather, alongside the examination of the ramifications of this ideological discourse, I seek to locate counterexamples and plausible factors that underlie the (non)occurrence of orientalist ramifications. In particular, I will focus on the social(ized) actor's construction of professional identity, and how identity grafting manifests from the vantage point of the postcolonial and subaltern in the global political economy. As actors who seek to achieve embedded autonomy via the internalization, selective alignment, transcendence, or recombination strategies, the postcolonial subaltern engages in professional activities with the economic (un)consciousness of identity grafting. As opposed to the management of Chineseness, which maintains a state-centric focus, the inquiry recasts the attention upon the process of managing Chineseness by the individual. This is to say, the 'management of Chineseness' and its collocated 'managing Chineseness,' mutually influence the engagement in identity work, informed by the habitus that predisposes an entity to act according to what is deemed most appropriate.

Although the analytical focus is built upon individual meaning-making and enactment of identity work, the aim of my investigation is to gain

insight into the effectiveness of state identity grafting. In this, I refer to the soft balancing of the macropolitics of capitalist industrialization through ethnic and identity management for the purpose of the sustained growth of the economy. State ‘effectiveness’ thus refers to the sustained state impact in deploying its agencies to implement the new economic visions state leaders had committed to. This leverage extends into the sociopolitical realm, even if change imperatives are economic in nature. By ‘effectiveness,’ state impact need not manifest among individuals in ways that perfectly replicate its prescription. Rather, ‘effectiveness’ is the demonstration of the actor’s capacity to exercise autonomy in reconstructing identities that nonetheless bring about the fulfillment of state-intended outcomes. In other words, identity grafting has taken on a proactive slant of actualizing the shared vision between state and society, and this effort is rendered effective by the actor’s innovative adaptation of policies, so as to achieve holism and authenticity in one’s identity work. Finally, sustained state effectiveness is demonstrated by the capacity of both state and society to flexibly enact change practices when new economic visions emerge. I will pay specific attention to how managing Chineseness offers insight into identity work that has taken shape with the management of Chineseness. That is, the objective of this inquiry is to ascertain the domains where change has taken effect and is sustained (would it be in the realm of dispositions, actions, or both?). Insights are derived from the nuances through which change manifests (what does change look like?). To this end, it may be highly unsatisfying for readers who are looking for how states and societies can use their influence to create happier societies. While the success of a nation cannot be reduced to its economic achievements alone, affluence is a key precondition for its continuity in capitalist systems. Indeed, sustained economic growth alone is an insufficient condition for sociopolitical progress. Material affluence cannot guarantee the actualization of higher aspirations, such as press freedom and happiness. In fact, these aspired ends are often held hostage as necessary trade-offs for economic progress. Admittedly, relative to its top achievements in international benchmarks on economy-related domains,<sup>42</sup> Singapore fares poorly or inconsistently in the realms of press freedom and happiness according to international benchmarks.<sup>43</sup> As Singapore may not be the appropriate case for the study of non-economy-related ‘achievement,’ the focus of my inquiry will be restricted to the impact on professionalism (values and dispositions) and professional practice (action).

## MANAGING CHINESENESS

By Chineseeness, I refer to the self and/or other-imposed identification of an entity (an individual, social group, territory, or region) with being ‘Chinese,’ along with its associated rights, obligations, membership affiliations, and exclusions. Chineseeness may refer to cultural, ethnic, hierarchical, linguistic, national, and/or territorial memberships, which, due to contested normative influence, result in dispositions and responses to events that may or may not be direct associates with this identity. The decision for adopting this highly open-ended conceptualization of Chineseeness is informed by the frequent use and abuse of the construct for the justification of highly diverse ends. *Managing Chineseeness* commences with the purpose of neither reification nor deconstruction, but the demystification of cultural primordialism. As a discursive construct, Chineseeness is the manifestation of contextually adaptive, syncretic, and pragmatic responses to the necessity for identity work. The motivation for the investigation of Chineseeness is rooted in the objective of unraveling the layers of distinction within the global political economy. The inquiry, thus, aims neither at the discovery of universal explanations to cultural primordialism, nor for its transcendence. Rather, a middle-range theory is sought through the inductive theorization of identity work, derived through the empirical study of the socially situated actor.

In *Managing Chineseeness*, I seek to examine how professions, professionalism, and professional practice, unfold with the individual’s multilayered experience of identity grafting. The multitudinous ways Chineseeness resonated with the respondents of this case study is dependent on how they had experienced ethnic management in their life journey. Chineseeness is a truth claim that may be assigned or self-identified, resulting in the voluntary embracement,<sup>44</sup> involuntary acceptance,<sup>45</sup> adaptive reinterpretation,<sup>46</sup> and/or rejection of these associations.<sup>47</sup> As a participant of the global political economy, Singapore’s accelerated development within a rising dual hegemonic framework is the immediate reality that its everyday professionals need to manage and reconcile. These responses are nested within the web of power relations that underpin the global political economy. Chineseeness is, therefore, dynamic, multifaceted, and hierarchically experienced, but crystallized in forms of innate, immutable, and inevitable representations for the sake of parsimony. Indeed, specific delimitations of Chineseeness are required, for without which the longevity of this identity will be significantly reduced due to the lack of meaningful articulation.

The leverage to reinvent Chineseness, however, exists alongside. Access to this leverage, nonetheless, is not granted to all. One can neither claim to be Chinese simply by using chopsticks to eat Chinese food, nor renounce his associations by swearing it away.<sup>48</sup>

Yet the truth claim would have lost its significance if reconstellations of this construct had not been staged. Without dwelling too much on the constellations that characterized other time periods, I focus on reconstellation efforts that have occurred as a result of a specific turning point in time. Firstly, late industrialization can be said to be the era within which Chinese consciousness re-emerged. Chineseness was forged first as an entity of humble beginnings, but managed to cheat time into allowing for accelerated development and to bear the fruits of capitalist enterprise. Second, as would a subaltern entity, Chineseness had to struggle with the historical baggage of orientalism, such as that revealed in a poignant account shared by A.C. Grayling of a childhood bedtime story his servant had shared with him in South Africa:<sup>49</sup>

Three animals are told to summon all humankind to whiten themselves in a cleansing lake. The cheetah swiftly brings the people of the north, who emerge snow-pale; the more tardy hare gathers the people of the east to the now churned-up waters; and the chameleon tells the people of the south but so late that when they arrive they can only press the palms of their hands and soles of their feet into the faint dampness of sand left behind by the others.

As an ethnic African, the black servant told the story of one's 'inferiority' in the face of the 'superior' white child, treating the orientalist underpinnings in the bedtime story as historical fact. Likewise, in the region where the 'tardy hare' was in charge (that is, postcolonial and late-industrializing East) some shared the same auto-orientalist worldviews as Grayling's servant. Others took it into their own hands to retaliate against neocolonialism, deploying occidentalism as the clarion call. Yet there were also actors who seek the resolution of this enmity through the transcendence of cultures, and those who prefer to recombine and maximize the representation of diverse interests. As actors make sense of how Chineseness has been negotiated in professional environments, they offer instantiations of the primacy attached to arguments about how cultural distinctions are to be reconciled in intercultural encounters.

For the Chinese Singaporean professional, the awareness of one's Chineseness is usually taken for granted, and everyday engagements in

managing one's own Chineseness may have become a habit that one enacts as a unique and unproblematic expression of self-identity. A transnational professional may encounter the consciousness of one's problematic Chineseness more frequently, as they interact with persons from Chinese and Western enterprises. For professionals of state agencies, the necessity of managing Chineseness may not be as explicit. Inevitably, however, one may be confronted with the need to reform current practices with 'innovative ideas from the West,' but keep in mind to translate 'irrelevant Western cultural practices' to 'local contexts.'<sup>50</sup> Such experiences may be said to characterize the professional practice of teachers, who in turn transmit the underlying assumptions of the tacit discourse to their students, the future vanguard. This embodiment is an iterative engagement in the process of identity grafting, albeit in permutations that reflect the negotiations between state and society.

In the survey of events in which I have been a situated participant, I wonder how my personal experiences compare with actors who have experienced permutations of identity grafting from their own situated contexts. Our experiences are likely to be far from identical, but some accounts may be somewhat similar to mine in cases where we happen to share the same socioeconomic backgrounds, friendship networks, and childhood home languages. As much as Chineseness is a reflection of dual hegemonic struggles, a postcolonial construct, and a taken-for-granted identity that has infused into the professional's everyday professionalism, there remains the issue of the absence of sociological explanations on the differentiated embodiment of Chineseness. Why, for instance, might rediscovering 'Chinese roots' in the business context be a celebratory affair to some but abhorrent to others? These value-mediated interpretations of Chineseness reconstruct Joel Migdal's 'state in society,'<sup>51</sup> whereby normative dislocations brought forth by accelerated development resulted in the embracement of state philosophies to fill the normative void. State-embodied actors emerge, but not always in the ways intended by the 'performance standards' of developmental states.

## THE INQUIRY JOURNEY

*Managing Chineseness* works upon a retrospective time line. As identity grafting is inspired by economic intents, multinational corporations (MNCs) form the initial target for inquiry. The belief that MNCs weaken state influence resulted in the defensive import substitution strategies

that characterized most late-industrializing economies. Singapore worked against the grain by welcoming MNCs, a move which served to augment state legitimacy. When business wins were advertised as yet another state achievement, the developmental state has a strong mandate in signaling to its population the professional development strategies needed to fulfill the deliverables expected by MNCs. For postcolonial nations accustomed to ethnic management before the securement of independence, 'professional development' may extend into the domain of the private and personal. It thus seemed unproblematic to the population that they were told to adjust identities for the sake of attracting investments for the country. In order to understand how global hegemonic contestations manifest in the professional lives of the everyday Chinese Singaporean, I have undertaken fieldwork at an MNC situated at the heart of this action. In the adoption of a transnational view, I hope to contribute to literatures on Chineseness as the negotiated identity of the situated participant within the global political economy. One of the notable works that has inspired this approach is Aihwa Ong's *Flexible Citizenship*.<sup>52</sup> In the place of influential opinion leaders represented by ethnic Chinese business tycoons, my focus is on the everyday professional. As a case of comparison, Ong's tycoons negotiate transnationalism as owners of business capital. The everyday professional represents the majority as owners of their own labor.

Through the typologization of meaning-making by transnational professionals of Chineseness, insight can be derived into how past ethnic management policies had instilled enduring orientalist dispositions within their professional capital. A better understanding of the implications of these dispositions can also be extracted based on typological comparisons between individual and national strategies. The replication of orientalism in identity grafting, in international relations terms, can be compared with the less effective strategies of bandwagoning and selective alignment, where one has chosen to align with exogenous or indigenous elements within the dual hegemonic framework. However, these strategies were not the only manifest views of transnational professionalism that had emerged in this study. Some professionals had chosen transcendentalist strategies of seeing the business landscape as a 'third space,' while others have taken to soft balancing and recombining identity-grafting strategies within the dual hegemonic framework. The site of study of transnational professionalism thus can be said to be a microcosm of the global political economy. Actors conduct professional relations in the same way states conduct international relations within a transnational network.

Typological mapping provides the prelude to the sociological identification of how individuals are collocated with a range of demographical factors. An inductive approach was undertaken in this study, and two factors have emerged as possible correlates: language and socioeconomic status. The typologies were then re-examined for personal accounts of past schooling experiences to construct a plausible interrelationship among demography, state influence, and current disposition and practice. The in-depth qualitative case study represents professionals who had sought employment within MNCs that are predominantly Western in origin. Cross-validation of the theory was then conducted with a larger sample of actors in another professional context. The quantitative data set consists of teachers, the makers of future professionals. Statistical analysis contributed significantly to the theoretical testing and further development of identity grafting.

In search of sociological explanations, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital serves as a good commencement point for the theorization of identity grafting. Within the stratified fields of social structures, the concept of cultural capital offers a sophisticated framework for the exploration of the interplay between state identity policies and individuals as embedded agents. At the state level, the symbolic power of capitalist industrialization functions as would cultural capital that is reproduced among those with the means to harness it effectively through identity grafting. At the society level, collectives that are structurally advantaged to embody the effective deployment of identity grafting are thus better disposed with the habitus to manage Chineseeness and consolidate the position of advantage. At the individual level, cultural capital functions as symbolic resources endowed by family socialization that shape enduring dispositions.<sup>53</sup> The behavior-shaping potential of cultural capital, which Bourdieu refers to as *habitus*,<sup>54</sup> is the predisposed partiality towards values ingrained through recurring childhood experiences. Individual habitus vary according to the 'sense of one's place' within a stratified field of play.<sup>55</sup> As state imposition of ethnic management is communicated in symbolic forms, its reproduction is partial to the symbolic identification the habitus is predisposed. Some partialities disadvantage the individual, serving as negative cultural capital that results in the misalignment of the habitus against dominant symbolic paradigms.<sup>56</sup> The reproduction of orientalism, as this inquiry will show, represents misaligned partialities in identity grafting. Orientalism served its purpose in the past, but reality shifts rapidly in late-industrializing societies due to accelerated development. What was valued became worthless

in decades to come. The highly enduring nature of the habitus, however, poses barriers to continuous identity grafting, even though avenues for social change exist for the disenfranchised.<sup>57</sup> With the understanding of how social reproduction is enacted, everyday experiences of actors need to be understood in terms of broader structural processes. This understanding of the actor's variable and unconscious experience of identity grafting is essential for a number of reasons. Firstly, it allows for the exploration of the extent to which successive state-led maneuverings at normative realignments has been enacted by the population. Given the mediation of family socialization and social reproduction, how would policy overcome, firstly, the enduring inscription of early childhood experiences on the habitus? Secondly, the focus on language and symbolic power aligns well with this inquiry into the institution of state identity grafting through language policy and schooling. In other words, what is the symbolic influence of language and schooling, and how does it manifest in the dispositions of individuals? Thirdly, the lively debates on the scope for change among Bourdieusian theorists allow for further deliberations over the theorization of social change. Did identity grafting-related policy initiatives remain in the realm of rhetoric, or did change indeed occur in the realm of individual dispositions and actions? Bourdieusian discussants remain divided between those who consider the habitus to be irreversible,<sup>58</sup> and those who credit the awareness of the habitus as a prelude to its change.<sup>59</sup> In *Managing Chineseness*, I attempt to address the debates over the potential and source of social change, given the constraints of the habitus.

Correspondingly, constraints imposed in the use of Bourdieusian theories also presents the opportunities for the theoretical development of identity grafting. Firstly, with the presence of a state that seeks to re-engineer habitus constraints rather than work around them, does the habitus formed by family socialization endure in the face of state intervention? How do situated actors make sense of identity grafting, and conversely, how does identity grafting manifest among individuals? Secondly, does language still function with as much primacy within a dual hegemonic landscape as it would in locales where the vitality of a language as symbolic power is much more stable? Thirdly, Singapore's accelerated development presents a focused empirical case to examine how massive change impacts upon the individual within a matter of decades. As Loic Wacquant enquires, there remains the ambiguity in the relationship between Bourdieu's 'theory of social reproduction' and 'theory of transformation.'<sup>60</sup> Bourdieu's concepts possess explanatory strength to the individual experience of

social reproduction. However, his insights were derived from the study of French society. This brings into question whether Bourdieusian concepts can be transferable to a context such as that of Singapore. In contrast to the stability of class structures and weak state presence in French society, conditions differ in postcolonial and late-industrializing Singapore. I seek to find an adapted fit of Bourdieusian theories for the explanation of identity grafting, with the following analytical adjustments. A state-centric focus replaces that of a class elite in the theorization of reproduction and change. In addition, the concept of linguistic primacy will be introduced to examine a landscape where the volatility of identity grafting is reflected in language and its symbolic power.

### ECI: MICROCOSM OF GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

The site of the empirical narrative commences at a French MNC and sister company of a very renowned global conglomerate. Business interest spans the continents of Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific. Annual revenue of the conglomerate is in the range of double-digit billions (US dollars), with the bulk of its revenue originating from the United Kingdom and China. Employees hired under the conglomerate totals about 60,000 in 50 countries worldwide. Eurotech Consortium International (ECI—pseudonym) is the Asia-Pacific subsidiary, and Singapore hosts its regional headquarters. Globally, ECI's stiffest competitor is a US conglomerate engaged in a business of comparable nature and scale. Fighting over the China market, ECI appears to have a leading edge over its competitor. Due to strategic reasons, the industry appears to favor businesses coming from countries where political interests do not compete with China's at the national level. In this geopolitical equation, Singapore's business standing is that of a frontrunner with stellar results. Although commanding none of the clout of French and US producers, Singapore is in the leading global position in terms of the standards of its value-added engineering expertise and customer services. Singapore thus became the location of choice in the region for setting up shop in sales and marketing, maintenance, and the global supply-chain of a series of high-tech product suites. China is a key market and relatively new entry into the competition. But global business observers in the industry watch with much anticipation for its potential to eventually take a leading position as a stiff business competitor to the Western business conglomerates. Within Asia-Pacific, ECI is one of the three regional subdivisions performing

commercial functions for the respective industries. The industry serviced by ECI is one of Singapore's key breadwinning sectors. State agencies in Singapore, such as the Economic Development Board (EDB), are working hard to sustain Singapore's role as business arbitrator of the industry.

The field-site is a Scandinavian-inspired white standalone building. Furnished with an abundance of tinted glass, the facade of this office building is softened by the lush tropical greenery that frames its compounds. ECI's offices are lavished with abundant sunlight, while the tinted glass minimizes the scorch. The tint allows expatriate top managers to gaze out of the floor-to-ceiling windows, admiring the tropical paradise as they speak with a tinge of pride over the speakerphone to their colleagues in France, 'Greetings from sunny Singapore! How's the weather in France?' The building has a rooftop garden, open to the leisurely enjoyment of all. It also doubles as a business function venue. Parasols and tropical landscaping adorns this outdoor escapade. Without the parasols, people would have been exposed to the tropics at their own risk. When a minister was invited for a function that would take place at the rooftop, Singapore employees suggested covering the entire rooftop with a huge tent as a wet-weather contingency. The Singaporean engineering psyche was rejected by expatriate top managers. *C'est la vie*—people will know to let the minister and key hosts have the parasols. They will also know to adjourn to the offices for shelter. These remarks angered some local employees, who felt the expatriates were disrespecting their regard for the well-being of their esteemed minister. They were also offended by the remarks about them not being able to figure out what to do in sudden changes of events (that is, do not stand in the rain; go back to your offices). Whatever the tensions between locals and expatriates, they share the common belief that the rooftop garden is no place for serious work. The physical confines of the office echo the nature of the relationship between Asia and the West. Even with the current dual hegemony, modern Western infrastructure is enhanced by Asian accents, but economic life cannot take place in this lush environment without the air-conditioned compounds.

The enactment of equal relationships between East and West is best expressed through tokens of appreciation: Baccarat Crystal for the minister; ingots of goldfishes for the French VIP. Comparable value can be achieved by ensuring both were procured at similar prices. A tangible price tag possesses the strongest leverage to determine the value of a gift exchange. Exchange value in remuneration thus provides a concrete

indication of the value of human resources, and the global pecking order within the dual hegemonic framework. European and North American top managers command the highest salaries, followed by top managers from China, and then Singapore. The same order applies to leave entitlement. These discriminatory arrangements brought forth unhappiness among the Singaporean top managers, but remained uncontested. The silence bodes of resignation to the awareness of one's function within this global political economy.

Sales and marketing employees stood out among ECI's human resources. Being the core members of this study, I refer to them as corporate representatives. Corporate representatives are the 'faces' representing an organization in executing business negotiations for the achievement of the entity's strategic interest. They function as the medium through which ECI expertise is transferred to the clientele. General guidelines exist to guide corporate representatives on the codes of professional conduct. However, professionalism is interpretive and dynamic. Corporate representatives interpret guidelines as they engage the clientele and manage their queries. The establishment of a firm foundation in customer relations relies upon the sociocultural intelligence of the corporate representatives. It is the earnestness that corporate representatives infuse into expertise that shapes client views about the products being offered by ECI. The corporate representative stands for this personalized contact that customers relate to, without which a product is yet another alternative in the market.

The corporate representatives' transnational nature of work constantly places them at the confluence of the East–West dichotomy. High exposure of working with Western expatriate managers and peers, customers, and colleagues in China, and intensive business travel is considerably higher among corporate representatives than would be the case with their colleagues in support positions. Within this cohort, half were employed as local-hire, and the other half were dispatched from the corporate headquarters under expatriate contracts. At the ECI, corporate representatives were predominantly male (93.3 %) and have at least a bachelor's degree (80 %). Support staff were evenly distributed in terms of gender (53.3 % female; 46.7 % male), and were predominantly non-university graduates (60 %).

Within this regional headquarters, the more junior management ranks prevalently comprised ethnic Chinese Singaporeans. As a Western-owned MNC, the organization was helmed by a Western expatriate-dominant

management. But ECI was undergoing rapid expansion at the time of this study. The Chinese boom in this sector of the industry gave a dramatic boost to ECI's Asia-Pacific coffers. From up north in Beijing, moving south to Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Hainan, commercial interest in China translated into the requisition for ethnic Chinese corporate representatives, believed to possess better rapport with the clientele. The Vice-President, the number-one person at the ECI, attested to the contribution of the Chinese Singaporean employees for their strong localization value, which has 'opened doors' to 'local networks' otherwise 'very difficult for the Westerner to enter.' When business interest in China first took root at ECI, Chinese Singaporeans were hired to use their Chineseness to lubricate business relationships with the clients. Some of these employees were eventually promoted to become top managers, and lent their hand in the setting up of the China subsidiary, including the recruitment of employees and the selection of the top management that currently helms the office in Beijing. As Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives played a strategic role as mediators with the customers in China, the old precedence of the top management being exclusively helmed by French expatriates from the corporate headquarters became a thing of the past. Chinese Singaporean top managers were promoted from the rank and file, and US managers from other regional headquarters have also tipped the balance. The final say, nonetheless, remains predominantly under French influence. Local employees hailed the Vice-President and his two most trusted aides as 'the three musketeers.' The friendship of these key persons at ECI dated back to the days when they were stationed at the corporate headquarters. This friendship is further affirmed as the three journeyed to this part of the world to further their careers.

China's expanding market demands have brought exciting opportunities but also impending threats. While Singapore is currently leading, the expectation that China will eventually overtake the small city-state was anticipated:

The level of intellectual maturity, if I may qualify that, is much higher in Singapore than in China. China is just liberalizing and is exploring what they can and cannot do... Those who wish to take the opportunity to change and have the drive to lead can do it in China. Here, growth has hit a plateau. China has been flat for very long, very stable. Now, you have people going in all directions.

Shortly after the interview, the Vice-President made a symbolic move to relocate to China and helm the subsidiary there personally, despite having appointed the office in Singapore as the regional headquarters. Increasingly, the mainland Chinese corporate representatives at the Beijing subsidiary are playing significant roles as the faces of ECI in the Chinese market. Alongside which, the regional headquarters continue to be located in Singapore, with its Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives playing complementary roles to that of their mainland counterparts.

The continued location of ECI's regional headquarters in Singapore, it seems, was the outcome of the country's ability to ride the first wave of opportunity that rolled into the shores of the late-industrializing economy. Having run the industrialization race faster than its regional peers, MNCs have been attracted to set up regional offices in Singapore 'by chance.' According to the Vice-President: 'We couldn't go to China, and there wasn't a market in China then. Japan was very unique, and it's still unique.' Along the way, 'later considerations' also emerged as ECI consolidated its business position, although these bonus factors were 'not the original ones':

Firstly, Singapore is located at the center of the Asia Pacific. Logistically, distribution of goods and travel is much more convenient. Secondly, the political stability: the way they control the society and attract the many companies here.

The attractiveness of an engineered society appears to contradict the strong value Western societies accord to democracy, but does not seem a cause for concern when it happens in Asia:

Business has got little to do with democracy. It has got to do with how the government implements their decisions quickly and you need to have the authority to do it. If you have a democracy, it takes a longer time to make decisions. India is the perfect democracy; nothing is moving. Democracy is necessary for other purposes: people have more ability to express their views and they are encouraged to think (critically). In Singapore, you can rely on a small group of people, maybe five percent of them who are decision-makers, who will need to be creative, while the rest follows.

The above excerpt on the appeal of Singapore as the site of ECI's regional headquarters also communicates its cultural allure. Singapore remained

the location of choice as the regional hub for ECI in view of the emergent market in India. But for ECI, this project has taken much longer than expected to take off in comparison to China. The last ethnic Indian Singaporean hired to liaise with Indian clientele resigned, and Malay employees played support roles in the commercial schema of the ECI. Nevertheless, the enduring attraction of the Singapore brand lies in its willingness to accommodate diversity, and the ability to do so at accelerated pace.

As geopolitics cascade to the individual level, ethnic Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives of ECI showed prescience of the strategic shifts in the business industry. Drawing upon the experiences of these professionals, I will focus on ethnic and identity management as an endeavor by the state for economic development. Empirical investigation commences with an in-depth qualitative approach in making sense of how ECI corporate representatives reconciled the business interests of their employer with those of the clientele in China. As they share with me, over lunch and in each other's offices, the everyday dilemmas they encounter, views about cultures emerged. Ethnographic observations inspired me to probe further, through interviews, about how they made sense of their own Chineseness in return. Although the inquiry commenced with ethnographic observations, insights to be presented will privilege the voice of the participant. The views of ECI corporate representatives will be presented verbatim as much as possible, albeit with some editing performed to facilitate their comprehensibility to readers. Participant voice then recedes in the discussion of the theoretical insights, where my voice takes over in offering integrative insights into the empirical accounts.

In the rush for rapid development, some outcomes must be engineered for. Social engineering has infused into the everyday realities of work life in Singapore, and this emerged in how colleagues take the reference point of ethnic management leitmotifs in the way they describe office relationships. A participant of this study, Alvin, shared his view of his promotion to top management when I extended my well-wishes: 'I have been moved here for *racial harmony*, a statistic of local against the expatriates.' The choice of familiar ethnic management buzzwords illuminates how social engineering has become an essential part of life. Harmonizing with recent state justifications for the liberal immigration rules, Chinese Singaporean employees at ECI echoed these justifications as they spoke of their newly employed colleagues:

The modern Indians coming out of Mumbai, oh my god, they run circles around us. They are fast; they are hungry; very impressive. Hunger cuts through everything.—Carlos

Economic justifications take strong precedence over substantive rationalities in which these views were articulated. Engineering for rapid outcomes, it seems, has pervaded the way people relate to each other in the office. Perhaps social engineering could ease in order for democracy to thrive, insofar as it does not negatively impact upon the economy. However, for Singapore to offer the requisite human capital to perform the roles they have been assigned, regulation has to begin in the social realm. This forms the justification for the engineering of Chineseness to create the safe midway between East and West. When personal identity becomes business resource, justifications for the cessation of social engineering are nullified as they overlap into the economic realm. The resultant entrenchment of Chineseness in the dual hegemonic framework is the outcome of overlaps among state, civil, and private realms as lines blur between country and corporation.

Effective identity grafting of one's expression of Chineseness, thus, will not be as simple as readjusting one's language and cultural proficiencies. According to the Vice-President, 'it's totally natural' for top managers of the MNC corporate headquarters in France to be periodically expatriated to a variety of regional offices. The lack of cultural fit is subordinate to the importance of international mobility. However, the reverse flow may not be as accessible for Chinese Singaporean top managers. Chinese Singaporeans would be 'naturally' assumed to lack the cultural requisites for a good fit in France. Even within Asia-Pacific, of which Chinese Singaporeans are supposedly residents, regional mobility was already questionable as their Chineseness became subjected to scrutiny, such as that described by the Vice-President:

You need to retain your *cultural roots* and ensure that there is not too big a gap between China and Singapore. It's not only one knowing how to speak *Mandarin*, but also *other Chinese languages*. You need to be perceived as part of the Chinese diaspora: *not totally Chinese, but still close cousins*. In some cases, it may be better to employ a *true Chinese from China*, rather than a Chinese from Singapore in the business. There may be things that they like in China that you here in Singapore think are *old-fashioned, middle-aged, kangaroos or whatever*.

'Cultural roots' are, in this dual hegemonic framework, defined by the West, taking China, or rather Western notions of China, as a reference point. The role of ethnic management is to express-deliver according to these definitions. As China grows in economic clout, Western business can no longer rely on naïve stereotypes of this market. Capable Western managers become keen observers of the Asian business and gain a sophistication that may surpass Singapore's social engineering master plans. While Singapore remains steadfast in the economic utility of promoting Mandarin at the expense of Chinese dialects, the regular Western business observer have noted the utility of multiple competencies in Chinese languages in the Chinese Singaporean. As 'close cousins,' a Chinese Singaporean may be 'not totally Chinese,' but offers human resources that complement the 'true Chinese.' But for the belief and rejection of Chinese Dialects and affiliated heritage elements as crude and loutish, the sanitized versions promoted in Singapore about a 'true Chinese' may have closed doors as it opened new ones. For the over-enthusiasm in meeting the demands of the dual hegemonic framework, Singapore finds itself in a difficult position to rise above it. What were yesterday's 'old-fashioned, middle-aged, kangaroos or whatever' may be the economic assets of tomorrow.

As corporate representatives travel intensively, the office has never seen the entire cohort in its full strength. Once back in the office, however, multicultural teams can be seen working in each other's offices. One cluster may be having a conference call with the US subsidiary, and another busy mapping out each member's role in the strategic planning session. Before the start of the call, some of them made mild complaints about being expected to accommodate to US time zone. This accommodation was never reciprocated by the US office to Asian time zones. All meetings are convened in English, the international business language. On some occasions, however, multicultural teams may break into chatter in their preferred 'native languages.' Bernard, a corporate representative, explained:

Especially in times of conflict, the expatriates will tend to cut off communication by speaking amongst themselves in French to the meeting chair, who is usually French. The locals will then do the same and speak amongst themselves in Dialects or Mandarin, expressing displeasure or scheme of works that are not meant to be understood by the expatriates.

Speaking in the language of the corporate headquarters, specific members of the ‘three musketeers’ reminded their ring leader of their shared cultural connection whenever his views inclined towards those of his local managers. Local managers were reminded of their exclusion through this wielding of symbolic power and to back off from the disagreement. But retaliating in local tongues did not wield similar symbolic effects. As with the French Muslim general manager who sat in his office with his back to his colleagues, he eventually found himself not having to face them when he was moved from the ‘penthouse’ corridor for top managers to the ‘workshop,’ where he was tasked to manage daily operations there.

Other than the occasional spates of disagreement that resulted in the emergence of cultural cleavages, work relationships among colleagues were usually collaborative. But good working relationships do not always result in friendship. Lunch hour offered the most accurate depiction of cross-cultural relationships in who one has chosen as lunch buddies. When I first joined ECI, I made the mistake of inviting a French colleague to join his local underlings for lunch. Lunch was polite, but also terse. After lunch, the team pulled me aside, and one of them asked angrily, ‘Why did you invite the French guy?!’ This team never asked me along for lunch again, and subsequently turned down my invitations to be a part of the study.

During lunch hour, tacit rules of English as the lingua franca would melt into the hot tropics. As Bernard described, the multicultural teams dispersed into their comfort zones, ‘each disappearing into their respective cars of locals and expatriates.’ Lunch cliques chatter in the preferred lingua, be it Cantonese (the predominant language of the Dialect-speakers<sup>61</sup> at ECI), English, French, or Mandarin. These chatters persisted in their preferred lingua even if a non-cultural insider were present at lunch—such as a silent and perturbed-looking local that had joined the French expatriates, or a Malay who had joined a Mandarin-speaking group. As I listened in on the conversations, in English, Mandarin, and Cantonese, I came to notice the varied dispositions among the lunch cliques based on the preferred medium of informal communication. Cultural differences do not disappear once individuals don their corporate smarts, and this includes a varied Chineseness among this company of Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives. After the lunch hour, I frequently wondered why varied views of cross-cultural relationships at work seemed to be sorted according to lunch cliques. The musings

became my research interest when I decided to conduct a systematic re-examination of the situation.

Bourdieu's concept of social reproduction helps conceptualize the relationships within which Singapore and Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives are situated. Elite values and dispositions are socialized, consciously or otherwise, since childhood, such that tacit knowledge appears natural inclinations. Bourdieu refers to this embodiment of dispositions as the *habitus*.<sup>62</sup> Dispositions, Bourdieu establishes, are not just individually unique inclinations.<sup>63</sup> Rather, distinctive sets of habitus mark the difference between collective segments who possess cultural capital and those who do not. An individual acts as a 'socially informed body' shaped by the symbolic power of the collective s/he represents.<sup>64</sup> S/he shares a similar habitus with collectives of common economic, social, and cultural capital.<sup>65</sup> It enables the social capital one is capable of establishing, or the networks one attracts and is attracted to as a result of occupying similar positions within the field of power. By referring to each other as a 'mutual appreciation society,' for instance, two persons unconsciously express 'intimacy and fellow-feeling, congeniality... lacking in elites united solely by links of professional interest,'<sup>66</sup> without the need to be explicit about the whole series of permutations afforded by sharing similar positions in the order of relational networks.

As the organic development of the habitus starts from a young age, later attempts to mimic its expression will appear trying. Although material possession is a significant constituent, cultural capital distinguishes from economic capital.<sup>67</sup> An illustrative example of this distinction can be found in the dispositions of the *nouveau riche*, where endowments of economic capital are mismatched with embodiments of cultural capital. In most cases, economic and cultural capital work hand in glove to reproduce power. However, exceptions do arise where the lack of cultural capital persists despite the acquisition of economic capital (such as promotion into top management positions). One's childhood socioeconomic background and linguistic primacy (cultural capital), in these instances, may differ from current material achievements (economic capital). Therefore, individuals who were not prepared in their childhood to embody the cultural capital of the dominant may be less predisposed towards the successful acquisition of the requisite social capital.

## DEMOGRAPHICAL CONSTRUCTS

Globalization can be said to be most effective in the economic realm. Business networks penetrate national borders, resulting in the acceleration of international mobility, and the proliferation of transnational human capital. Yet transnational professionals remain distinguished by regions and nationalities. Beginning with a rudimentary idea of seeking to understand how transnational professionals who represent Western MNCs make sense of Chineseness and Chinese business networks, the limits of globalization became apparent. In contrast to Aihwa Ong's sample of Chinese business tycoons, the heterogeneity of professionals in my study poses a challenge. In Bourdieusian terms, tycoon networks can be said to share greater 'likemindedness' as a smaller community of individuals who possess highly exclusive access to social capital. In contrast, views expressed by everyday professionals coming from diverse demographical backgrounds are expected to be highly disparate. From my initially naïve views, I had sought a unified account of the use of Chineseness as social capital in business networks. I was horrified to discover how 'incoherent' each account was to another among just a small grouping of corporate representatives. In a last-ditch attempt to locate explanatory insights for the study, data collected from demographical measures were fielded in a follow-up survey questionnaire to the in-depth interviews.<sup>68</sup> The demographical items in the survey provided the scope for comparing otherwise indistinguishable views about Chineseness. Two constructs were used to identify typological attributes emerging from interview data, which became the key constructs I employ to make sense of the data.

A 'grounded theory' coding scheme was adopted.<sup>69</sup> The accounts of the occasions when ECI corporate representatives felt the mediation of their Chineseness in business relationships were first typologized according to professional dispositions. The process included the analysis of the positions taken in social relationships for the underlying power structures represented by these positions.<sup>70</sup> Axial codes were attributed to the typologies of professional dispositions emergent from the respondents' accounts.<sup>71</sup> Next, demographics provided reference points for the fine-grain distinctions between identity grouping. The application of constant comparison with the addition of demographical information contributed to the theoretical formation of identity grafting.<sup>72</sup> However, some methodological departures were undertaken from 'grounded theory' approaches with regard to theory-building without preconceived theoretical considerations. Bourdieu's theories of social reproduction offered useful constructs

for thinking about professional dispositions. Educational distinction is explained in terms of habitus, or the embodied dispositions by actors of different class origins. Actors relate to schooling experiences in ways unique from some, yet common with others, and these experiences coalesce with the capital endowed by one's family to navigate an educational system defined by elite interest.<sup>73</sup> Bourdieu differentiates manifestations of power in recognizable and misrecognized forms, with class (economic capital) and language (symbolic power) being the most frequently employed analytical constructs.<sup>74</sup> In this study, key analytical insights were derived from how the habitus takes shape with the mutual reinforcement of economic and cultural capital. Out of the range demographical queries (such as age, gender, education qualifications), the domains of socioeconomic status and language best explained the typological variations. As intergenerational transmission takes place over an extended time duration, demographical information was distinguished between those that characterized one's childhood and adulthood. Intergenerational transmission of the habitus takes shape most intensely during childhood, acquiring stable and enduring permutations. The enduring nature of the habitus is attributed to the misrecognized forms in which transmission of cultural capital had taken place.<sup>75</sup> Childhood experiences of intergenerational transmissions endure to become professional habits. In the scrutiny of accounts of childhood schooling experiences by ECI corporate representatives, it appears schooling had taught actors more than just content knowledge. Furthermore, the accounts instantiated the mediation of professional dispositions by demographical characteristics. In addition, as the demographics will show, in-country class and language factors create differentiated access to transnationality, even within a small nation renowned for a strong state influence in identity grafting. A set of questions was circulated to ask respondents for the predominant language used in a variety of settings (with colleagues, friends, spouse, children, and parents). One's childhood home language, or the language one had spoken with parents at home in childhood (up to the age of 12), was found to be the definitive language associated with social constructions of Chineseness. ECI corporate representatives were found to share similar worldviews, dispositions, and behavior with their colleagues, which can be distinguished according to whether they are English-primacy, Mandarin-primacy or Dialect-primacy. In addition, while corporate representatives currently experience comparable financial affluence due to the holding of similar job positions, childhood socioeconomic status varied significantly.

## LINGUISTIC PRIMACY

Language serves to connect individuals who share similar linguistic identifications. The primacy of this connection, Basil Bernstein emphasizes, is optimized when linguistic attachments were formed in childhood.<sup>76</sup> From a Bourdieusian standpoint, the power of language is derived from social structures, but surpasses the structure in its capacity to influence the symbolic realm.<sup>77</sup> In the use of language to examine the demographical distinctions of Chineseness, I focus on dispositional outcomes that appear seemingly independent, but share inextricable relationship with the symbolic power of language. Identity grafting is central in the explanation of enduring dispositions that were shaped by the unintended consequences of language policies. Although language planning is purportedly culture-inspired, the developmentalist goals of these policies are evident in Singapore.

In order to orchestrate for accelerated development, schooling serves to restructure and integrate the population into the global workforce. Faced with the inflexibility of family socialization, the developmental state needs to inculcate in the workforce habitus the flexibility for economic globalization. The softening of family influence is sought through its integration into strong state education. Therefore, instead of state education responding to the needs of the family unit, the family is exposed to cultural signs disseminated by state discourse. Convinced of the severe implications on the future well-being of their descendants, families were pressured to entrust the school with the cultural socialization of their children, in the event that they lacked the requisite cultural capital to do so. Fearful of their children's future employment prospects, non-English speaking families sent their children to English-medium schools. With the subsequent rise of the dual hegemonic paradigm, non-Mandarin speaking families drummed into their children the importance of knowing their 'mother tongue,' as parents struggled to keep up with the education of their children, and with their own language proficiency in Mandarin.

The alignment of state-family socialization appears to be the ideal solution. However, the symbolic power of language cannot be fully understood unless one takes into consideration other competing language systems.<sup>78</sup> While the choice of language medium was a matter of pragmatics in the extended social circle, the home language is informed by the primacy of family ties. It represents the medium through which

tacit knowledge is circulated within the core and extended social circles. With the politicization of language, cultural identifications became decisions about one's position within the dual hegemonic framework. Some families were serendipitously aligned with the dominant framework in terms of home language. Some struggled to realign the home language for the sake of the children's future. Others resisted, or did not possess the means for realignment, and thus chose the home language based on linguistic ability. Childhood linguistic ability at school, therefore, is not just a simple matter of technical proficiency, but expressing oneself in a style compatible with the logical and aesthetic expectations of the teacher. As the medium of teaching instruction, the logical and aesthetic breadth of English-medium classes is broadened by diverse demands in the linguistic expression of analogical deduction (Mathematics, problem sums), inquiry–explanation (Science), and poetic expression (English Language and Literature). Chinese-language lessons are delimited by the restricted learning objectives, thus acquiring characteristics of moral–aesthetic didacticism. Perceptions of the English language as the linguistic form with superior symbolic capabilities are thus formed at school. As children grow up to form their own family units, some have chosen to convert to another home language. But as with their parents, the impact of home language may only transfer to the young. As adults who have grown up with the language spoken with their parents during their childhood, this remains the *linguistic primacy* that enshrines one's dispositions as the symbolic manifestation of family socialization. The curious medley of families attempting to infuse the desired linguistic primacy into their lineage is on full display on Sundays, when three generations spend time together. Mothers speak to their children in English, but to their spouses in Mandarin. The grandparents sit quietly, until one of the adults turns to them and speaks in Dialect.

There is the need for conceptual distinction between home language and linguistic primacy due to the highly effective language policies that have been instituted by state agencies. Linguistic primacy refers to the language one had acquired during childhood as the home language. It is the language that predominates in the framing of an actor's identity. Within multilingual settings, a family may speak a variety of languages. Identification, however, may vary according to the primacy one attaches to a medium. Linguistic primacy would be the medium through which

an actor expresses emotions, formulates thoughts, and dreams with as s/he engages with the everyday environment as a child. Although home language may change overtime, the immediacy of the socioemotional attachments embodied within a linguistic primacy is far more enduring. For instance, Martin currently uses English to communicate with his children, which makes English Martin's home language. But English was not the language that he had used at home all his life. When he was a child, Martin's parents had spoken Cantonese to him at home. It was then found that Martin was similarly disposed to those who shared the same linguistic primacy, regardless of the home language they have currently adopted. Linguistic primacy, therefore, transcends usage, in contrast to the home language. Furthermore, linguistic primacy performs the symbolic function of language, which can only be partially, but not fully, attributable to socioeconomic status. Rather than just a 'home language' that reflects one's socioeconomic standing, its capacity to shape enduring dispositions was found to be independent of both ascribed and achieved socioeconomic statuses.

As the electoral majority, the ethnic Chinese in Singapore are the most targeted in language planning. At the same time, the diversity of linguistic subgroups within this entity defies the rationale of administrative reductionism. Prevalent discussions draw distinction between the English-primacy and Mandarin-primacy subgroups. The assumption is that English and Mandarin subgroups bear the biggest distinction from each other. As the statistical segment of this study will show, there exists greater dispositional distinction between Mandarin- and Dialect-primacy than is the case between Mandarin- and English-primacy. In the view of the findings, I would like to highlight the existence of Dialect-primacy subgroups, comprising individuals who have demonstrated linguistic attachments to a range of Chinese clan languages known as Dialects in Singapore (for example, Cantonese, Hainanese, Hakka, Hokkien, and Teochew, to name a few examples). The term 'Dialect,' which suggests these clan languages are diluted variations of an original core language (Mandarin), is a source of controversy that warrants an independent and extended discussion. For the lack of a better word, I will continue to adopt this term to frame my construct until a more appropriate term emerges in the English language. While the Singapore population had predominantly spoken southern clan languages, language planning had resulted in the abandonment of provincial lingua in favor of English and Mandarin. However, as Chinese prov-

inces continue to assert economic significance,<sup>79</sup> this linguistic subgroup forms an important construct in the understanding of linguistic primacy. As the findings in this inquiry will demonstrate, although rarely spoken among Chinese Singaporeans today, Dialect-primacy remains significant as an analytical construct of Chineseness.

### CHILDHOOD SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Bourdieu illustrates class stratification through the semantic differences of the term ‘peasant’ when used by the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, and as a term to refer to one’s own identity.<sup>80</sup> Socioeconomic status (SES) impacts upon life-chances with the postures one has been accustomed to adopt as a result of common experiences among actors with shared backgrounds.<sup>81</sup> The relationship between the habitus (potential action disposed by an actor’s disposition) and action (actual enacted behavior), as Bourdieu conceptualizes, is indirect and an intermediary in the linkage between class hierarchy and action. Acquired SES, in particular, takes on indirect disposition-shaping functions. Instilled during childhood, the covert effects of acquired SES are often taken for granted as arbitrary, unconscious, and incongruent habits. This renders the habitus all the more inscrutable to detection, as its manifestations may not be congruent with their original sources of influence at a cursory glance. In order to capture this conceptualization empirically, I have differentiated between ascribed and achieved statuses with regard to their influence on present dispositional characteristics. This has been crucial due to the centrality of accelerated development in late-industrializing societies. With the active intervention of developmental states, upward mobility is more accessible as individuals ride upon the creative destruction introduced by interventionist policies. Families, for example, could exercise greater choices in the enrollment of their children into English or non-English medium schools. As a result, children who have grown up in marginal socioeconomic circumstances may, through education, enjoy significant improvements in economic achievement within an environment of uncertainty. Although the accessibility of socioeconomic cross-overs has narrowed as Singapore reaches full development, the findings in this inquiry suggest the continued relevance of education in facilitating individual ambition for upward mobility. This stands in contrast to first-mover societies where socioeconomic boundaries are much less porous. The analytical construct

of SES is therefore distinguished between childhood SES (acquired) and current SES (achieved). *Childhood SES* refers to the financial situation of an individual up to the age of 12. Decision on the cut-off age is based on the consideration that national education in Singapore is most intense during primary (elementary) education. Covering up to four core content subjects, students are much less distracted by the greater variety of content subjects and discipline specializations that characterize secondary (middle) education. Childhood SES represents the economic endowments one has acquired from parents. *Current SES* refers to an individual's current financial achievement accrued from economic engagement in adulthood. Socioeconomic differentials between childhood and current SES were organized into high, middle and low categories to create a basis for empirical comparison in terms of economic capital. Household income is the most objective indicator of SES, but also regarded as sensitive information. These figures are also a challenge to recall in retrospect in the case of childhood SES. Home ownership offered a good alternative. Given the strong centralized leverage of the state in governing the Singapore population through housing policies, housing type was and remains the most representative indicator of SES in Singapore. Published works on housing type and their corresponding class associations from the 1960s to the 1980s provided the gauges for the comparison of socioeconomic backgrounds for this study.<sup>82</sup> Private home-ownership is a consistent indication of socioeconomic prestige, as it comprises only about 20 % of the homes owned in Singapore. Ownership of private homes is thus categorized as high SES. Information is also available on the socioeconomic significance of living in five-, four-, three-, two- and one-room apartments. This information is crucial for differentiating between the middle (three-room and above) and low (two-room and below, and renters) SES. Information on how non-conventional housing types (for example shop-houses and attap/zinc-roofed housing) are to be ranked was useful, as a number of respondents reported having lived in these residences. Shop-houses are considered intermediary between private and government housing. Based on supplementary information collected from the respondents, such as lifestyle indicators (for example, primary mode of transport, destination and duration of vacations) and household income (if available), this intermediary was assigned to either high or middle SES groups. Attap/zinc-roofed residents were classified under low childhood SES.<sup>83</sup> Although the employer-employee ratio of attap/zinc-roofed housing dwellers is higher

than government apartment dwellers, employer–employee stratification does not preclude the existence of high-salaried employees and small capital business-owners. Likewise, due to the inconsistent remuneration of professional classifications, parental occupation was excluded from the analysis.

### WORKING BACKWARDS ON THE EDUCATION TIMELINE

As I ran through my queries with the ECI corporate representatives, the ways in which they made sense of their own Chineseness, in relation to their Western expatriate and Chinese mainlander colleagues, evoked the familiar echoes that filled my own social memory as a Chinese Singaporean. The accounts reconstructed state ethnic management rhetoric, with each corporate representative converging with colleagues of similar socioeconomic and linguistic profiles. It is amazing how ‘we,’ as Chinese Singaporeans, have been schooled under the same social engineering efforts, but emerged as subgroups who manifest varied permutations of these initiatives. It made me wonder how current schooling initiatives may unfold in the decades to come, when our students become professionals. It was at this juncture that I saw the need to connect the case study to some broader research outcomes. By looking at ECI corporate representatives, in retrospect, as products of schooling, I hope to share insights into the educational implications from the view of ethnic and identity management.

Education timelines are often set with a vision to the future. Characteristic of late-industrializing societies, education visions are crafted from foresight of the requisite human capital in demand by future economies. Due to this future orientation, there is a dearth of research that examines the sustained impact of education visions from a retrospective perspective. In taking this retrospective approach, qualitative investigations are needed for a fine-grained probe beneath the veneers of transnational professional networks. Starting with 30 high-tech engineers who have long graduated from school, I had sought to peel off the layers of cross-cultural business training they had acquired through MBA programs. By comparing current professional dispositions and practices with retrospective accounts of demography and schooling experiences, my aim was to identify the core axes of their identity-grafting strategies. I examined how they enacted transnational professionalism (social capital) through their sense-making of Chineseness (identity grafting of cultural capital). The use of multiple

qualitative methods characterized this earlier phase of the research inquiry. Fieldwork commenced with ethnography, which comprised immersive observations and informal conversations. Rapport with interviewees was facilitated by the insights I have gained during ethnographic observations. Apart from the relational rapport formed during my engagement in fieldwork, observations could also be extracted as concrete examples to help interviewees have a better understanding of the context within which interview questions had arisen. In-depth interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview schedule. The leitmotifs of ethnic management were identified to set the premises for the interview schedule. Leitmotifs were identified via textual analysis of archived public speeches. As Lee Kuan Yew and his successors are the primary movers of Singapore's identity grafting, the annual Prime Minister's National Day Rally, which have been conducted since the nation's independence, formed the bulk of the discourses that were analyzed. Along with the solicited responses, participants volunteered accounts of their childhood schooling experiences to illustrate how their current perceptions were shaped while young and at school. The relationship between childhood socialization and professional dispositions was validated with these unsolicited accounts of childhood schooling experiences. Through the back-and-forth comparison of these accounts, distinct typologies emerged with regard to the interaction between family and education as socializing institutions. The professionals' formal schooling had more or less been completed for a number of decades. Yet dispositional influence shaped by school memories have endured, with selective manifestations that appear mediated by linguistic primacy and, to some extent, childhood SES.

Indeed, as transnational professionals of the high-tech engineering sector, ECI corporate representatives represented the breadwinning human capital of the Singapore economy. But tracking their schooling experiences only offered retrospective lessons about the disposition-shaping endurance and effects of education. For teachers, formal schooling may occupy the entire span of their career. As the core profession from which other professions are made,<sup>84</sup> it is important to examine if enduring dispositions mediate teacher effectiveness in carrying out education reform. Extending the study to teachers allows not only for theoretical testing of the insights derived from ECI, but also for the exploration of the potential for continuous professional development in changing established practices. The study of teachers allows for the tracking of educational effects at two time points: firstly, the enduring effects of old industrial education

paradigms on teacher dispositions as a result of their own schooling experience; secondly, the change potential of postindustrial education paradigms on teaching practice as a result of continuous professional development. Tracking of educational effects at these two time points allows for the exploration of whether teachers can carry out new agenda for the education of the future vanguard. As with ECI corporate representatives, the current cohort of Singapore teachers had been students socialized by teach-to-the-test approaches, which focus on content mastery. Industrial education paradigms had sought to ascertain if appropriate standards of a bureaucratic-industrial workforce have been achieved. Predisposed by previous paradigms that have served their course, tensions exist when professionals are expected to enact a different set of practices. In the postindustrial political economy, the demand for flexibility in negotiating transnational professionalism brings forth the necessity for holistic knowledge paradigms. In other words, holistic education requires the breakdown of traditional knowledge boundaries. As today's students graduate from school, they will be expected to have acquired the capacity to appraise, analyze, and identify the appropriate response to unpredictable scenarios. In the sense that they would have found their own solutions for filling knowledge gaps, based on the formative feedback given by their teachers, students schooled under holistic education initiatives are expected to be better predisposed in the postindustrial economy. Through continuous professional development, teachers have been exposed to postindustrial education paradigms so as to equip them with the requisite teaching practices to prepare students for the postindustrial economy. In contrast, ECI corporate representatives were schooled only under the industrial paradigm. Trained to be knowledgeable engineers, flexibility in transnational professionalism is dependent upon their own ingenuity in developing relevant professional dispositions and practices. Correspondingly, teachers of today need to devolve from the predisposition of teaching as knowledge experts. The challenge to teaching hinges upon the capacity to offer formative feedback based on knowledge co-constructed with students, so as to prepare students for the uncertainty of the flexible economy. This may pose some difficulties for teachers who were schooled in the previous industrial paradigm to excel in benchmark examinations to become competent content experts. As old schooling paradigms have coalesced with earlier life experiences to shape an actor's habitus, teachers may remain disposed towards hierarchy-conscious and standards-based approaches. Intentions to embody and enact holistic education philosophies may thus manifest

in unintended consequences. A more optimistic view exists, however, that continuous professional development provides the levers of change. As incumbents within an institution entrusted with the task of schooling future vanguards of society, teachers are given tremendous opportunities for the continuous learning of new professional paradigms. If such change is indeed plausible, from which dimension is change effected (through subsequent achievement, in the habitus, or in behavior)?

The empirical narrative thus continues with ethnic Chinese Singaporean teacher professionals for theoretical testing in the form of a statistical study. The study on change potential engaged a larger sample of 3388 ethnic Chinese Singaporean teachers. All Singapore schools were invited to be a part of this study, from which 96 schools accepted this invitation. Follow-up ethnographic observations of 11 teams of teachers engaged in professional learning communities (each team comprising three to eleven teachers) were also conducted in eight schools, selected based on a stratified sample measured for their effectiveness in professional learning communities in the survey. Although the second phase of the study was conducted on a larger sample from a different profession, the validation of the enduring influence of the habitus is once again affirmed. Results show significant dispositional differences between ethnic Chinese teachers who spoke different home languages when they were children (linguistic primacy). Schooled during the same era as the corporate representatives when ethnic management was an explicit policy, social distinctions emerged in similar ways in this larger sample drawn from another professional segment. Both instances illustrate how being schooled by social engineering manifested in dispositions that may be unintended by ethnic management, but nonetheless enduring in their consequences. Apart from the validation of qualitative data with a larger sample, statistical modeling also allows for the explanatory mapping of demographics, dispositions, and actual behavior. Differences in professional structures also created the opportunity for the investigation of current SES influences. In a highly stratified professional hierarchy, remuneration between teachers is, expectedly, differentiated by seniority and appointment. In contrast, the flatter, less pronounced, professional hierarchy among the senior management at ECI had limited scope for comparison in terms of current SES. Survey data were collected on teacher engagement in professional development. Extended statistical analysis also suggests the potential for changing professional practices, tracking the relationship between linguistic primacy and SES (background), power distance (disposition), and teaching practice

(behavior). The large-scale findings affirmed and extended the theoretical insights derived from the qualitative study that identity grafting as having the potential not only to enable accelerated development, but also to bridge the cultural capital gap of late capitalist industrialization with the attainment of economic affluence. Specific to this segment of the inquiry, teachers were asked about how, and to what extent, they had focused on the formative aspects of student learning when engaging in their own learning. Differentiation was made on the basis of the type of approach in teaching and learning, in which the first set of items measure outcomes-directed approaches, where teacher feedback is intended to enable students to excel in educational achievement (*'summative' teaching*, for example, 'I regularly monitor the learning and progress of individual students').<sup>85</sup> The second set of items measure formative approaches, where teacher feedback is intended to enable students to take charge of their own learning (*'formative' teaching*, 'I create conditions for students to feel the confidence to learn').<sup>86</sup> In addition, dispositional measures and demographical data were also collected to examine the mediation of these factors on teaching practice. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was first implemented, controlling for the effects of age, gender, and years of teaching experience. Linguistic primacy emerged as significantly correlated to dispositions that corresponded with those among the corporate representatives. ECI corporate representatives had taken positions about their personal competitive advantage within dual hegemony in ways that corresponded with peers that shares similar linguistic primacies. These worldviews articulated how individuals are inclined to see and respond to the imposition of power, according to how acutely disposed one was to recognizing power, hierarchy, and inequality within the professional ecology. This disposition was put into operation in the statistical study through the measurement of power distance. *Power distance*,<sup>87</sup> or the inclination towards accepting unequal social relationships, is the construct employed to measure dispositions shaped as a result of the dual-hegemony-informed habitus (for example, 'People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions').<sup>88</sup> It was initially assumed that non-English-primacy respondents will be defined by high power distance, and the reverse will be the case for the English-primacy. However, the findings only partially confirmed this expectation. Indeed, the Mandarin-primacy was distinguished by high power distance, but it was the Dialect-primacy who offered the contrast cases for low power distance. Explanations of the findings will be presented in the concluding chapters. Follow-up structural equation

modeling (SEM) was conducted to locate the causal relationships among the identified constructs, which provided the bases for the explanations as to the impact of identity grafting, and developments in self-identity management with the shifting of education paradigms. Both samples affirmed aspects of identity grafting in these ways. Ascribed identities are enduring in their influence upon dispositions, although individuals have demonstrated the propensity to be change-enabled to meet new professional challenges. This capacity, however, is nuanced between social groups, with some appearing more change-enabled than others. By typologizing Chineseness, I seek to, firstly, locate the unintended consequences that have arisen from ethnic and identity management. Secondly, discussions of the unintended consequences will be situated in the schooling experiences of transnational professionals, and how these experiences interact with personal circumstances to produce enduring dispositions. Thirdly, the investigation of this interaction continues upon a larger sample of teachers who share comparable personal circumstances, so as to examine if similar dispositions are replicated. Finally, I will examine the prospects for social change in the face of enduring dispositions, and in which aspects change has occurred effectively.

*Managing Chineseness* is thus about how one's socialization into being Chinese, by the family, by ethnic management, and by schooling, has taken shape decades later, not just in one's social self, but also in one's professional disposition. State structures, of which schooling is one of its functionalities, serve as development programs that are deeply entrenched in the everyday realities of ethnic Chinese Singaporeans. Through the examination of state-society relations via individuals, social groups, and national discourse, I seek to locate these layered efforts at identity grafting within the context of the global political economy. Situated within the constraints of postcoloniality and late industrialization, past identity-grafting efforts may have successfully taken shape, but with unintended social ramifications. I aim to explore the potential for centralized state initiatives to change the enduring dispositions that have outlived their relevance.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

During the time I spent at the ECI performing my ethnographic fieldwork, I was known as an employee of ECI. The decision to undertake this research had not arisen until it became clear to me that ECI was an appropriate site for a research inquiry into the question of Chineseness. In order

to reassure participants that the research was independent of the organizational function I used to perform, I tendered my resignation at ECI prior to inviting ex-colleagues to become a part of this study. Permission was granted by the Vice-President to contact my ex-colleagues, including himself, for research purposes. Informed consent was also sought from participants in the participant consent form. Participants were briefed on the nature of their involvement in this research, and the researcher's right to publish, before her/his signature was obtained.

Obtaining participant consent and blessings encountered minimal obstacles, but other ethical decisions also had to be made. Becker cautions that a 'hierarchy of credibility' exists within organizations.<sup>89</sup> That is, the opinions of some members are considered more representative than others. Most often than not, top management personnel gets to define information credibility. A conscious decision was thus made on my part to focus on the underrepresented voices in the ranks of corporate representatives at the ECI. The study was mindful not to include too many expatriate managers in this inquiry. The only expatriate that was invited into the study was the top person in the office, ECI's Vice-President.

As a fellow Chinese Singaporean and ex-colleague, I was also concerned that this shared identity might color my views toward the accounts shared by my respondents. However, being an insider also served to enrich ethnographic fieldwork. I became attuned as to when respondents were giving politically correct answers, and thus knew when to probe tongue-in-cheek for honest disclosure of genuine sentiments. A memorable instance was the disclosure of 'suppressed feelings' through the gestures made by a respondent as he said, 'There's absolutely no difference between races.' I noticed the repeated scratching of the skin on his arm when these statements were made, and pointed out to him my observation in a jovial, teasing manner. He eventually admitted to anxiety over revealing his real sentiments. The ability to draw out suppressed subtexts also had to be sensitively managed to avoid unnecessary abuse of the trust and support my respondents had generously placed in me to complete the study.

Queries were posed in a way that minimized leading respondents into the desired answers. For instance, both good and bad racial stereotypes were solicited from the respondents. Open-ended questions were also used when querying promotion prospects (for example, 'Do you think ECI has good promotion prospects?'), although observations gave the impression that many respondents felt promotion to top management positions failed to transcend the divide between expatriate and local-hires.

Attempts were also made to question the local employees' responses (for example, 'But recently, there were more local employees promoted to top management?').

A perennial ethical issue I find most challenging to confront is whether negative findings ought to be reported. Although research was conducted with the best intentions, participants may find certain caricatures and terminologies offensive. This worry tempts me with thoughts of only reporting positive findings, or at least of euphemizing criticisms in ways that render them barely recognizable as criticisms. To date, I remain steadfast in the belief that there remains room for improvement in every excellent system, and factors that had given rise to excellence have proportionate potential for limiting its sustainability. Notwithstanding, care is taken to ensure the confidentiality of identities, of both the organization and the employees through the use of pseudonyms. Especially for the qualitative case study, the nature of the industry, and other information that could lead to the compromise of participant identities are kept in the strictest confidence. Masculine pseudonyms were given to all corporate representatives regardless of actual gender. As an overwhelming majority of the corporate representatives were male, allotting gender-appropriate pseudonyms risked exposing the identity of female participants. Broad references were used, wherever possible (for example, childhood linguistic and socioeconomic background), rather than specific characteristics traceable to individuals. In some cases, respondent identity may still be decipherable—the ECI Vice-President for one. The inquiry refrained from involving the Vice-President in interviews that may reveal too much private information (for example, childhood socioeconomic background).

### OUTLINE OF *MANAGING CHINESENESS*

Even as developmental states seek to start a new chapter in the historical development of political economies, their legitimacy is at the same time informed by historical incidences leading to late industrialization. Chapter 2 sets the backdrop to the management of Chineseness. A historical critique outlines the relationship between identity management and political economy. Tracing Singapore from its pre-independence days, history informs the rationale of proactive identity management in state efforts to establish Singapore's strategic position within the global political economy. The historical impact of ethnic management and language schooling is examined in tandem with measures to develop a capitalist-industrial

economy. The conclusions drawn from the historical management of Chineseness grounds the framework of identity grafting, which underpins empirical examination of the concept at the individual level.

Chapter 3 outlines typologies of managing Chineseness. Drawn from qualitative data at ECI, typologies provide ideal types from which theorization of identity grafting is built upon. As endeavors to manage Chinese are transnational, an examination of the construct unbounded by national and pre-established territorial imaginations is necessary. A transnational view is undertaken to locate key mediating structures of identity constructions. Typological identifications emerged characterized by attributes of linguistic primacy and SES, elucidated in this chapter as Situational Chineseness, Born-Again Chineseness, Integrated Chineseness, and Repressed Chineseness. Ensuing chapters will detail the empirical instances of these typological attributes.

Chapters 4 and 5 delve into the details of how social groups in each typological construct notions of their own Chineseness, and the political, economic and social subtexts that undergird these constructions. The title of Chap. 4, 'The Complex,' was derived in vivo from interview accounts. It captures the echoes of auto-orientalism that had emerged among the Repressed Chinese. The Repressed Chinese shared the profile of having grown up in non-English-speaking families with marginal childhood SES. Situational Chinese corporate representatives were employed as the case for comparison, coming from English-primacy and affluent or middle-class childhood SES. The Situational Chinese sought to transcend orientalist stereotypes of Chineseness. In Chap. 5, occidentalist state discourse will be compared with the subtexts that undergird the Born-Again Chinese worldview. 'The boys wear high heels with platforms', derived in vivo from state discourse, echoes Born-Again Chinese occidentalism. In contrast, the Integrated Chinese have chosen to reconcile the interests and conflicts that had resulted from cultural differences. Coming from slightly less affluent middle-class childhood socioeconomic backgrounds than the Born-Again Chinese, the Integrated Chinese grew up in Chinese Dialect-speaking families, which differentiated from the Mandarin-primacy linguistic profile of the Born-Again Chinese.

Chapter 6 highlights the use of peer orientalism among ECI corporate representatives, where state discourse of ethnic Malay Singaporeans as 'lazy native' and 'willful native' were replicated as a point of comparison with themselves as ethnic Chinese. Although childhood socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds continue to influence, the positions taken in

the construction of Malayness differed from those taken in the construction of Chineseness.

While ECI corporate representatives offer insight into dispositional outcomes on the economic forefront, teachers form a good sample as the core professionals that socialize other professions. In the extension of the concept to a larger segment of Chinese Singaporean professionals, teachers thus formed the sample for statistical testing. Policy and theoretical implications were drawn from the integration of qualitative ECI data and statistical data collected of teaching professionals. For this purpose, typologies of teacher dispositions and practice will be presented in Chap. 7 in the investigation of whether the potential for change exists for dispositions (Change Embodied, Change Capable, Change Aspiring, and Change Disinclined).

Chapter 8 builds upon the policy and theoretical implications derived from Chap. 7 to draw the conclusions for this book. A review of the discussions in the previous chapters supports this endeavor. Insights were presented on the impact of social reproduction in the management of Chineseness, and the transformative potential in managing Chineseness. As an extension to these insights, afterthoughts on the future research agendas that will sustain discussion of the issues raised in this book will be proposed.

## NOTES

1. Weber, 2002.
2. Pye, 1992.
3. Grew, 2015.
4. Huntington, 2006.
5. Gerschenkron, 1962.
6. Stepan, 2015.
7. Fukuyama, 2006.
8. See, for example, Gerschenkron, 1962; Amsden, 1991.
9. Bellandi, 2007.
10. Fanon, 2008; Gilroy, 1993.
11. Gerschenkron, 1962.
12. See, for example, Thunø, 2001.
13. Shiraishi, 2012, 121.
14. Huntington, 1996.
15. Cited in Shiraishi, 2012, 121.

16. Khoo, 2013, 238.
17. Chu, 2014.
18. Lee, 2012.
19. Lee, 2013.
20. Bourdieu, 1977a.
21. Bourdieu, 1991.
22. Gerschenkron, 1962.
23. Amsden, 2001.
24. Johnson, 1995.
25. Castells, 2010.
26. Evans, 1995.
27. Rodan, 1985, 46.
28. Brown, 1994.
29. Gates, 2009.
30. Castells, 2010, 306.
31. Anderson, 2006.
32. Zhu, 2012.
33. Hamilton, 2006.
34. Castells, 2010.
35. Hu, 2010.
36. Migdal, 2001.
37. Evans, 1995.
38. Cited in Low, 2001, 413–414.
39. Said, 1978.
40. Alatas, 2006.
41. Lie, 1996.
42. Singapore ranks first out of 189 locales in ‘ease of doing business’ (World Bank, 2015), first out of 76 locales in ‘problem solving ability’ (OECD, 2012a); second out of 76 locales in ‘15-year old student average scores in mathematics and science’ (OECD, 2012b), third out of 28 cities in ‘competitiveness, sustainability, and index’ (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2015).
43. Singapore ranks as ‘least emotional’ in more than 150 locales (Gallup, 2011) but 24th of 158 locales and first in Asia in the *World Happiness Report* (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2015), and 153 out of 180 locales in ‘world press freedom index’ (Reporters Without Borders, 2015).
44. Lee, 2011.
45. Ang, 1998.
46. Menkhoff, Chay, Hans-Dieter, & Hoon, 2013.

47. Chun, 1996a.
48. Souchou, 2009.
49. Cited in McHugh, 2015.
50. Sim, 1991.
51. Migdal, 2001.
52. Ong, 1999.
53. Bourdieu, 1977a, 1991; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990.
54. Bourdieu, 1977b, 1991.
55. Bourdieu, 1985, 728.
56. Kiilo & Kutsar, 2012.
57. Bourdieu, 1985.
58. Bourdieu, 1985.
59. Costa, 2006.
60. Wacquant, 1987.
61. Dialects' refer to a variety of Chinese languages traditionally spoken by ethnic Chinese living in the various Chinese provinces (e.g. Hokkien in Fujian; Cantonese in Guangzhou; Hainanese in Hainan; Teochew in Chaozhou), and ethnic Chinese diasporic communities who have relocated to locales out of China but retained the use of these Chinese languages (e.g. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is predominantly Cantonese-speaking; Taiwan has a significant segment of Hokkien Minan-speaking population; North American ethnic Chinese have traditionally spoken Cantonese; and Singapore ethnic Chinese had traditionally spoken Hokkien alongside other prevailing varieties such as Cantonese, Teochew, Hakka, and Hainanese). Although it can be observed that linguistic conversation to Mandarin has taken place, more rapidly in the Chinese provinces, Singapore and Taiwan, and less significantly in others, such as Hong Kong. There exists controversy over whether these languages should be referred to as independent linguistic systems in their own right, or Chinese dialects, which suggests they are diluted variations of the Mandarin prototype. The alternative reference of these Chinese languages as 'provincial languages' is as controversial, as a significant segment of its users are not Chinese subjects residing in China's provinces. Especially in Singapore where many Chinese languages are used alongside Mandarin, it may be most appropriate to continue referring to these linguistic systems as Dialects. As this book will show, it is important to distinguish between Dialects and Mandarin, as the two categories are conceptually distinctive not just in the manifest dispositions and behavior of the ethnic Chinese who

have formed emotional attachments (whether consciously or unconsciously) with Dialect languages. I will refer to further discussions of this subject through the concept of linguistic primacy (e.g. English-primacy, Mandarin-primacy, and Dialect-primacy).

62. Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b, 1991, 2000.
63. Bourdieu, 2000.
64. Bourdieu, 1977a, 124.
65. Bourdieu, 1977b.
66. Bourdieu, 1971, 171.
67. Bourdieu, 1991.
68. I would like to thank Seng Beng Ho for his suggestion to re-examine the data for its mediation by socioeconomic status.
69. Corbin & Strauss, 2014.
70. Charmaz, 2014.
71. Corbin & Strauss, 2014.
72. Glaser & Strauss, 2009.
73. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990.
74. Bourdieu, 1979.
75. Bourdieu, 2011.
76. Bernstein, 2003.
77. Bourdieu, 1977b.
78. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990.
79. Cheng, 2013.
80. Bourdieu, 1991.
81. Bourdieu, 1991.
82. Chen, 1973; Chiew & Ko, 1991; Mak, 1993.
83. Chen, 1973.
84. Noordegraaf, 2011.
85. Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, & Wallace, 2005.
86. Bolam et al., 2005.
87. Hofstede, 2001.
88. Sharma, 2010; Yoo, Donthu, & Lenartowicz, 2011.
89. Becker, 1967.

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## Sleepy Fishing Village Overrun by Immigrants?

It was a hot afternoon at the beach. The fisherman was done with the day's activities at sea. Back in his hut, he gulped down the lunch his wife had lovingly prepared to welcome his return. The children were eagerly crowding around him, clamoring for his affection. After lunch, the family relaxed on the white sands under the shade of the coconut trees. With the abundance of sunshine, they never had to endure a day of cold in this tropical paradise. The idyllic lull enchanted villagers, who would drift into lazy afternoon siestas while clad in their sarongs. With such blessed endowments from nature, this sleepy fishing village was the envy of many, and one of them was Lee Kuan Yew, founding father of modern Singapore:

(The Malays), more fortunately endowed by nature, with sunshine and bananas and coconuts, and therefore not with the need to strive so hard.<sup>1</sup>

But envy did not lead to his decision to return Singapore back to its good old days after the island had secured its independence from British colonization. By 1965, the island had been overrun by immigrants hungry for progress:

[The Chinese] is the product of a civilization that has gone through floods, pestilence, famine, breeding a people of very intense culture, with a belief in high performance in sustained effort, in thrift and industry.<sup>2</sup>

When a first-time visitor asked me about the history of Singapore, the official history of the 'sleepy fishing village' would have complemented our stroll along the beachfront at Sentosa. But alternative historical accounts persist to challenge the dominant version written by British colonial scribes and retold by Singapore state agencies. With these conflicting accounts in mind, I felt obliged to ask 'which version?' For the sake of historical completeness, the official and parallel histories had to be synthesized for an understanding of state zealotry in identity grafting.

The 'official' version echoes Lee's caricatures. The Chinese are descendants of a proud and mighty civilization. Their ancestors crossed the oceans in search of better economies, but have never forgotten the strong emotional attachments to the Chinese motherland. Some of these Chinese, referred to as 'Chinese-speaking,' were typecasts of 'racial chauvinists,' believed to comprise Mandarin-educated literati and uncouth tycoons who speak Chinese languages associated with their clan affiliations (the southern Chinese Hokkien and Teochew being the most prevalent in Singapore), commonly referred to as Chinese Dialects. There was another segment of the Chinese who were caricatured as Singapore's loyalists. 'Loyalists' were commonly believed to be English-speaking. According to the 'official' account, the 'loyalists' established friendships with their fellow Asian fraternity to overthrow colonial subjugation. They eventually won the support of the dialect working-class masses, the reliable labor force for growing the Singapore economy. Education had enabled the population to work in Western MNCs, which the 'loyalists' were credited with attracting. Yet alongside the ability to attract Western MNCs was an ambivalence toward Western hegemonic control. Insofar as business is concerned, local Singaporeans are encouraged to seek employment in the highly sought-after MNCs. Efforts to integrate 'Western foreigners' socially into the local landscape, however, were almost absent, if not discouraged. In fact, the 'westernization' of Singaporean society was perceived to be an issue to be corrected by the Mandarinization of the ethnic Chinese population. In contrast, state efforts to integrate new Asian immigrants, especially those from China and India, have been proactively phased in. Accompanying this storyline of Chineseness are parallel struggles against the threat of being ousted by ungracious indigenes, represented by the Malays. This account is also peppered with the many trusted personalities from the Indian fraternity, who served as examples of a model minority who have chosen to transcend racial divides for national interests. Singapore had to be a fishing village for a number of reasons. Aesthetically, it would have been less appealing to tourists if Singapore was a thriving maritime port in the fifteenth century and still the same today. The birth of

a postcolonial nation would also be less poignant to the subaltern audience if greedy colonial masters have not rampaged and permanently altered the tropical paradise with its conquest. Most importantly, this historical leitmotif offers to citizens a view of the English-speaking ‘loyalists’ as legitimate inheritors of British efforts in continuing the dramatic transformation of a third world fishing village to first world economy.

Ibn Khaldun’s analysis of how centralized power is sustained lends insight into the necessity of tribalizing key social segments.<sup>3</sup> Once power is established, sustained centralized rule is consolidated with the containment of the tribal groups that had brought it to power. Without this strategic move, tribal interest groups will eventually seek to keep centralized power in check, leading to weakened centralization. Without the sponsorship of the British, the Oxbridge-educated ‘loyalists’ would not have angled into the political scene dominated by Chinese literati and tycoons. The exit of the British was then ensured by the right to indigenous claims of Asian fraternities. Indigenous claims then became arguably out of sync with the modern political economy. With the rise of the dual hegemonic political economy, Chineseness became the discursive construct to be proactively managed by social engineering. These historical milestones mark the ethnicization of economic imperatives, resulting in the inextricable intertwining of economic robustness and social sentiments. Each milestone served to legitimize the influence of the centralized state, which had established its longevity through identity grafting. By adopting Khaldun’s approach to illuminating which ‘tribe’ had formed the identity support groups of the developmental state in various historical epochs, I seek to identify the impact on these social groups as state identity grafting shifted from one milestone to another to meet the imperatives of development.

### PRE-INDEPENDENCE SINGAPORE

Isoart remarks that, ‘In Southeast Asia, perhaps more than anywhere else, the geographical environment determines human history.’<sup>4</sup> Singapore is the midpoint between China and India, the upcoming economic giants of the century. Closer to home, Malaysia, whose federation once had Singapore as a proposed member, is now its northern neighbor. Further north of Malaysia is Thailand, whose neighbors comprise Burma in the northwest, Vietnam in the northeast, and Cambodia in between the two territories. The Philippines flank further east in the region, with Brunei to its southwest. Up north from the region lies China, the regional and global economic powerhouse. Extending from the northeast of Singapore,

right across the South and East China Seas, are Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. From all other directions, Singapore is surrounded by the Indonesian archipelago. Singapore was also said to be the pivot point of the British colonial empire, which included Australia and New Zealand. Inclusive of Australia and New Zealand, Singapore is located right at the heart of the Asia-Pacific region.

The small city-state is regionally significant for a number of reasons. Politically, it is the only independent nation with an ethnic Chinese majority whose sovereignty is recognized by China. Economically, its location at the heart of Asia-Pacific makes it the strategic gateway to regional markets. Socially, being located at this geographical confluence mandates that Singapore embraces multiculturalism right upon its independence.

Since the fourteenth century, Singapore had been a site of contention due to its natural geostrategic position in the region. Its presence was acknowledged in Chinese and Vietnamese records as Long Ya Men (Dragon Tooth Gate) in 1330.<sup>5</sup> According to Javanese records, Singapore was Temasek. It fortified the fortunes of the Sri Vijaya (seventh–thirteenth century), Majapahit (eighth–tenth century), and the Siamese (present-day Thailand) empires during their reigns.<sup>6</sup> From 1390, Paramesvara, Prince of Palembang, took over the island while escaping Majapahit persecution. During his reign, the island was Singapura. Intense commercial activity was reported in 1490. By the fifteenth century, Singapura had become renowned as the strategic trading post of the region. Its prosperity was boosted by Arab and Chinese traders, the latter of which were supported by China's naval fleet. The island served as the link to the regional trade routes of China, the East Indies, India, and the Arab regions. British colonial presence (1819–1963) amplified its presence in the world economy. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 sealed its strategic importance in world trade.

The officially acknowledged Singapore history started only from 1819, when Thomas Stamford Raffles established Singapore as a British colony. Prior to this, the Johor sultanate had control over the island. The British saw the opportunity of obtaining the control of Singapore amidst succession disputes in the Johor sultanate. Sultan Hussein, whom Raffles assisted to the throne in 1819, granted the British control of Singapore to reciprocate British intervention. In 1824, on behalf of the British Crown, the East India Company purchased the island from the Johor sultanate.<sup>7</sup> Singapore then formed a part of the Straits Settlements. In comparison to colonization expeditions in the region, the British takeover of Singapore was painless, if not welcomed.

In World War II, Singapore was surrendered to the Japanese by the British. The Japanese referred to the island as Syonan To (1941–1945).

Colonel Masanobu Tsuji,<sup>8</sup> who planned the invasion, shares the symbolism of this victory:

Singapore was Britain's pivotal point in the domination of Asia. It was the eastern gate of defence of India and the northern gate for the defence of Australia. It was the axis of the steamship route from Europe to the Orient, north to Hong Kong and through to Shanghai, and to the treasures of the Dutch East Indies to the south and the east. Through these two arteries alone, during a period of many years, Britain controlled the Pacific Ocean with Singapore at the very heart of the area.

The island's numerous name changes reflected its fortunes, which waxed and waned with opportunistic foreign patronage.<sup>9</sup> As Syonan To, however, the brutality of the Japanese occupation awakened nationalistic sentiments. After the Japanese defeat in 1945, the British were ready to resume control. But the masses could no longer trust British patronage. Communist militancy ensured nationalistic sentiments were taken seriously by the British.<sup>10</sup> The Communists' fierce defense against the Japanese invasion made them war heroes. In contrast, the British were quick to pull out at the first threat of defeat.<sup>11</sup>

Amidst the waves of nationalism against colonial subjugation, preparations for the eventual independence of British colonies were underway in 1954. The British supported the formation of the Malayan Federation, comprising the Malay states (inclusive of Sarawak and Sabah), Singapore, and North Borneo. But not all participants saw eye to eye over this arrangement. In Singapore, the People's Action Party (PAP), which emerged as the dominant party in 1959, comprised two factions of uneasy bedfellows. On the one hand, the Chinese-educated left-wing was led by Lim Chin Siong. On the other hand, the English-educated right-wing was led by Lee Kuan Yew. While the left-wing relied upon the English-educated for their negotiations with the British, the right-wing needed the mass appeal enjoyed by the Chinese-educated. According to the pro-merger right-wing, the left was 'Chinese chauvinist' for its staunch rejection of a merger where Malays dominate.<sup>12</sup> The coalition of convenience dissolved in 1961, with the left-wing forming the Barisan Sosialis. Lee then took the pretext of rising labor militancy to launch the 1963 Operation Cold Store. His former running mates and toughest opponents were rounded up and eliminated from the electoral arena, including Lim Chin Siong and his support base of Nanyang University students.<sup>13</sup> The swift move bore testament to the resolve of Lee in quashing 'Chinese chauvinism,' a signal to the Malay states of his earnest-

ness towards the merger. The elimination of Barisan Sosialis was executed without protest by the British, Singapore's independence chaperon. It was not in London's interest to uphold democratic ideals in defense of what they suspected to be a façade of Communist insurgency.<sup>14</sup> With the Barisan Sosialis considerably weakened, the PAP called for a snap election. Against the Barisan Sosialis and the United Malays National Organization (UMNO, Singapore), the PAP enjoyed a landslide victory in 1963. Lee eventually developed the oratory skills of the left—the ability to speak in multiple languages, including the variety of Chinese Dialects spoken by the masses in this newly founded republic. He then came to be embraced as the founding father of Singapore.

The second target was the Chinese tycoons. Holding the key to the Chinese networks, these prominent figures served as arbitrators between the British and the Chinese communities. The Chinese businessmen also mediated the fragmented inter-ethnic relationships between the Chinese-Dialect clan associations in Singapore. Unlike the Mandarin-speaking 'Communist dissidents,' Dialect-speaking businessmen possessed wealth and influence, and enjoyed good relationships with the British. This insulated them from direct state persecution, despite their sympathies for China's Communist cause. Moreover, PAP disgruntlement with the businessmen further characterized the 'Oxbridge disdain for the immigrant big-shots who spoke little English and less Mandarin.'<sup>15</sup>

In preparation for the merger, promises of special recognition of the Malays were doled out. However, Singapore did not see the wish for merger come into fruition. The 1963 victory boosted the confidence of the PAP, who then decided to run for elections in Kuala Lumpur. To the ire of the incumbent UMNO Alliance, the PAP campaigned for a 'Malaysian Malaysia.'<sup>16</sup> This was in direct opposition to UMNO's campaign for Malay privilege, that is, for a 'Malay Malaysia.' PAP presence in the 1964 Malayan Federation elections led to a series of political bickering.<sup>17</sup> That aside, the inclusion of Singapore provided the tipping point to the racial composition of the Malayan Federation. The Chinese in the Federation would equal the Malays, making it a tougher case for the defense of Malay privilege.<sup>18</sup> Episodes of racial riots from 1964 to 1969 justified Singapore's ouster from the Federation.

From this historical comparison of official and parallel accounts, the following conclusions can be drawn about the strategies for state identity management. Singapore is strategically poised to be integral to the global political economy. Its destiny, thus, cannot remain that of a fish-

ing village, with or without the presence of an interventionist state. The selective attention paid to British accounts of Singapore as the ‘sleepy fishing village,’ although accurate at the time they had landed on the island, white-washes Singapore’s past as a contested zone of strategic interest. Notwithstanding, it is only with the founding of the developmental state that some of the wealth generated from this strategic landmass can be retained for the growth of the nation-state. Development then becomes a national project. By the term development, I take a different approach from the prevalent focus on state role of accelerating economic development by late industrialization scholars. Development encompasses more than just tangible economic deliverables. From the uniqueness of the *nihonjinron* in Japan to the Greater China descendants of the dragon civilization, hegemony is expressed by the crafting of ethnic inclusion/exclusion. These identity management strategies express the position an entity intends to adopt in the global hegemonic framework as an integral part of development. It is the enterprise of the developmental state to proactively engineer post-independent Singapore, through identity grafting, into the ‘terrific moneymaking machine’ that it has come to be known as.<sup>19</sup>

#### POST-INDEPENDENCE: PROACTIVE ETHNIC MANAGEMENT

Ethnic management is an administrative legacy of Singapore’s colonial days. Residential quarters were mapped along racial lines under the colonial administration for the purposes of efficient tax collection through ethnic compradors. Administrative efficiency, however, gave rise to the formation of racial enclaves. Coupled with the negligence of social development, communal self-help led to the emergence of schools drawn along racial lines.<sup>20</sup> Apart from administrative infrastructures, the British left behind another vital legacy. Peppering the dutiful recording of the colonial administrations were asides about ‘Malay laziness, Indian docility, and Chinese enterprise.’<sup>21</sup> These commentaries became compelling administrative units of modern ethnic management.

Postcolonial Singapore continued to replicate the racial quadrant: Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Others (CMIO). More than simply uncritical echoes of old colonial mentalities, a Khaldunian analysis suggests that these specific entities are most significant in the augmentation of state power, and thus are given the proportionate attention in ethnic management. Nirmala Purushotum illustrates how race is depicted under CMIO.<sup>22</sup>

The Chinese are represented in yellow-ochre skin tones, with just a touch of pink that gives them a pleasant rosininess ... the woman will be clothed in a cheongsam ... The Malays are warmly browned, dressed up in baju kurong ... The Indians are given a richer, darker brown—closer to milk chocolate; the woman invariably in a sari and a bindhi between her eyebrows ... ‘Others’ are one or two shades pinker than the Chinese, and in what would be described, in everyday language, as common Western dress.

The CMIO is portrayed as a multicultural utopia of harmonious communal groups subsumed under one national identity. The administration of the CMIO, however, confines the power of determining ethnic identity to the state apparatus.<sup>23</sup> Administrative rationalities require parsimonious depictions instrumental to the legitimization of state intervention. This, however, has not prevented parallel accounts to the reduced caricatures of managed ethnicity.

As the majority of the Chinese were labor indentured by the British, it seemed appropriate to classify them as late migrant settlers to this ‘sleepy Malay fishing village.’ Although British caricatures of Temasek in 1819 were accurate, pre-British historical accounts recorded Chinese resident communities existing as early as the fourteenth century.<sup>24</sup> By 1827, the Chinese had formed 65 % of the total population of Singapore.<sup>25</sup> Chinese business elites dominated commerce alongside European traders.

For the want of an education not provided by the British, wealthy Chinese families engaged private tutors, who schooled their young on a curriculum that was modeled after China’s imperial examinations.<sup>26</sup> Other Chinese immigrants entered the country as craftsmen or coolies. Chinese schools, known earlier as ‘independent schools,’ were then set up for the benefit of the immigrant poor. These schools were built and funded by contributions from the generous community—both the poor and wealthy alike. Independent schools set the precedent for the formation of a formidable political force, which the British eventually sought to control. But the conversion of independent schools into government-funded ‘middle schools’ appears to be merely a change of names. Interventions came too late, resulting in the social movements Chinese Middle Schools were infamously renowned for. Middle-school and similarly community-funded Nanyang University students populated the social movements that eventually secured Singapore’s independence from colonial rule.

Upon Singapore’s independence, the developmental state learnt the British lesson, and sought to stem this political force through the nation-

alization of education, which resulted in the stringent management of Chineseness. Education thus formed the second highest budget allocation under the developmental state. This time, schools became the institutional force that united an originally motley crew of linguistic affiliations. Chineseness then became an economic instrument to support the state's developmental imperatives.

Language planning first white-washed ethnic differences with the anglicization of the nation, followed by the manufacture of the dominant Chinese majority through Mandarinization. The Chinese were originally a hotchpotch of linguistic groups, differing in terms of their political orientations and socioeconomic statuses in the past.<sup>27</sup> With Mandarinization, fragmented Dialect communities were consolidated into one Chinese identity. As one 'race,' the Chinese became the 70 % majority. This majority possesses the electoral power to determine who remains at the helm of the state. If consensus can be secured from this majority due to their insecurity as migrant descendants, the centralized power of the state can be sustained through unwavering electoral support.

Although the earliest records of Chinese and Malay presence were both in the fourteenth century,<sup>28</sup> the Malays are accorded indigenous status as peoples whose ancestries are more proximately traced to Southeast Asian descent. Comprising a composite of ethnic Malays and Orang Laut, the majority of this community migrated from the neighboring locales post Japanese occupation (from 1945).<sup>29</sup> Historical accounts contradicting Malay indigenous status have somehow escaped the normally astute state scrutiny. Mary Turnbull's account of the first British 'statistics' for Singapore differentiated between the Orang Laut and the Malays. According to her, there were about 1000 residents on the island when the British Crown vessel landed on the shores of Singapura. The majority, 'some 500 Orang Kallang, 200 Orang Seletar, 150 Orang Gelam, 100 Orang Laut' were indigenous to the island, and distinguished from the 'twenty to thirty Malays in the Temenggong's entourage and a similar number of Chinese.'<sup>30</sup> Then, Singapura was subsumed under the Malay kingdom, and the Temenggong Abdul Rahman resided as the resident nobility of the Johor sultanate. The claim to indigenous status was thus determined by who had control over the island, rather than who the original inhabitants were. Although the right of indigeneity has been expanded to a larger population segment in modern Singapore, the Malay community maintains at only about 15 % of the total population. In fact, the conflation of various regional ethnic communities into one Malay identity has

certain negative ramifications. Although it may be prevalently the Orang Lauts who were the fishermen in Singapura, the conflation of the term resulted in the Malays in Singapore being associated as descendants of the fishermen on the island. This impression becomes the diametrical opposite of Chinese stereotypes of discipline and industry. It is also not uncommon to hear of security threats from ‘Malay dominant’ neighboring countries, although the term may not resonate with how these countries may see themselves. Indonesians, for example, may see themselves as predominantly Javanese, with Malays as a minority ethnic community. ‘Malay’ becomes the associated ‘native threat,’ suspected of sharing similar sentiments as hostile regional polities. Former Indonesia president Habibie, for instance, had referred to Singapore as the ‘little red dot.’ to dismiss its strategic significance in the region.<sup>31</sup>

Indians form less than 10 % of the total population, but play a strategic role in Singapore’s ethnic management. They serve as the buffer between an otherwise antithetical struggle between the Chinese and Malays. Incidentally, Indian stereotypes are thus more favorable than the Malays. Indians first arrived under the British crown as skilled professionals, military men, or convict-labor. They are portrayed as eloquent, fiercely loyal, and industrious.<sup>32</sup>

The Others, as suggested by the term, are paid the least attention by the state. A person is labeled ‘Others’ when deemed inassimilable into the priority options of ‘Chinese,’ ‘Malay,’ or ‘Indian,’ alongside an expanding group of ‘foreign residents.’ For ‘foreign residents,’ as a group that has come to command a significant segment of the population, the administrative approach towards this influx is curiously characterized by neglect. Perhaps it is expected that these residents will eventually be assimilated, where possible, into the three major ethnic groupings.

### THE FUNCTION OF ETHNIC MANAGEMENT IN THE SINGAPORE POLITICAL ECONOMY

The legitimacy of a race-based developmental state is reinforced through its transformative capacity, backed by concrete economic deliverables.<sup>33</sup> The PAP displayed remarkable leadership in manufacturing a technocratic workforce out of the population. But this stellar performance relies upon the support of Western MNCs for its export-oriented economy. Phase 1 of Singapore’s economic strategy (1965–1979) was thus characterized by

the normative alignment with the English Language. The state had sought the aggressive anglicization of the nation to attract foreign investment from the Western hemisphere. Having embarked upon measures to align with the hegemonic, Singapore was further strapped to the necessity of identity grafting with the entry of China into the global political economy. In addition to fostering high-tech industry growth, Phase 2 signals the normative adjustments made in the Mandarinization of the population, in preparation for a future pecking order characterized by dual hegemony. Phases 3 and 4 outline refinements to the revival of heritage affiliations, which sought to establish Singapore as the regional hub connecting commercial interests of the Western MNCs to the regional markets. This is accompanied by the establishment of Government-Linked Corporations (GLC) and state efforts to groom Private Local Enterprises (PLEs).

*Phase 1: English-Speaking Labor—At a Fraction of the Price*

Singapore in its early independence was fraught with issues of survival and marked the zenith of support for state intervention. Education campaigns in 1959 had originally promised Malay privilege and the employment of Malay as the lingua franca:

People will no longer live in groups isolated from each other. There will be free communication through a common language—Malay.<sup>34</sup>

Ousted from the Malayan Federation, Singapore lost the Malayan common market,<sup>35</sup> and the status of the Malay language took a different turn. Malay remains the national language, but performs only symbolic functions. English, on the other hand, became Singapore's lingua franca.

In terms of the fabric of the nation, if the Malay language was decorative, the Chinese languages were the stains. Although a Chinese entrepreneurial class existed, it lacked the domestic capital commanded by the Hong Kong tycoons.<sup>36</sup> Anti-Chinese sentiments were also rife as the threat of Singapore becoming the 'Third China' loomed large amidst Cold War tensions.<sup>37</sup> The need to de-emphasize Chineseness in Singapore was expressed by Lee Kuan Yew: 'First, Singapore has about one million Chinese ... Second, Singapore has too many "leftists" who are supported by the one million Chinese in Singapore.'<sup>38</sup> Echoing this concern, English was 'accorded full ethnonational value,'<sup>39</sup> and some believed the 'English

educated ... possessed qualities associated with loyalty to Singapore.<sup>40</sup> This decision moved in tandem with the campaign for foreign direct investment (FDI) from Western MNCs.

Singapore's successful anglicization reflects its commitment to capitalist industrialization. A 'total business environment' offered the best simulation of a Western business environment that the region could offer,<sup>41</sup> at a fraction of the cost for retaining businesses in the West. Pro-West reforms had the most direct impact on the westernization of the Singapore population.<sup>42</sup> The anglicization success led to the eclipse of other ethnic languages and cultures. In 1957, about half the population in Singapore had been conversant in Malay,<sup>43</sup> but this was hardly the case by the 1980s.<sup>44</sup> As a replacement, the use of the English language as a neutral communication platform can thus be said to have enjoyed great success. As Lee Kuan Yew declares, 'once [the different communal groups] could not even laugh at the same jokes.'<sup>45</sup> In 1959, Singapore's English proficiency swelled to 99%.<sup>46</sup> Losses in heritage, however, were compensated by investment yields. In just five years, FDI in the manufacturing sector alone climbed from 157 million (Singapore dollars) in 1965 to 995 million in 1970. From 1970 to 1982, FDI increased almost tenfold.<sup>47</sup>

Unlike most newly independent postcolonial nations, nationalistic fervor did not interfere with the nation's receptivity to international capital. While regional peers embarked upon protectionist import substitution strategies, Singapore continued the outward-looking approach as the regional entrépot. Offering low-cost labor for the production line, 'Made-in-Singapore' exports were produced by Western MNCs for consumers back in their home regions.<sup>48</sup> Singapore eventually advanced into the high-tech industry in what was dubbed the 'second industrial revolution,' and became the regional center for banking and financial services.<sup>49</sup>

As a newly industrialized economy (NIE), Singapore was hailed as one of the Four Little Dragons (Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore), which, despite late industrialization, managed to attain high growth rates. The taming of political and labor militancy had proven worthwhile. It created a stable business environment, a key factor for the influx of foreign capital.<sup>50</sup> But as with previous colonial patronage, Singapore's reliance on MNCs subjected the country to high levels of instability. With the rising competition in the supply of low-waged labor in the region, Singapore needed to re-invent cost competitiveness to ensure sustained local employment.<sup>51</sup>

*Phase 2: Speak Mandarin—Singapore as the Gateway to Asia*

In 1978, economic liberalization in China presented market opportunities for Singapore. State leaders saw the establishment of English–Mandarin bilingualism as crucial for securing sustained economic growth. As Singapore fine-tuned its economic strategies, business interests of MNCs were also adjusting. The commercial interests of Western MNCs expanded beyond home regions, creating the need for regional subsidiaries localized in the new markets. Regionalization required local human capital as facilitators of cross-cultural business negotiations. The typical MNC regional subsidiary used to comprise an expatriate top management, with the remaining bulk made up of local employees. With regionalization, local employees joined the ranks of the top management. This structural shift in business organizations ran in parallel to the normative re-alignments of Singapore’s Phase 2 ethnic management. Phase 2 can be said to be the normative preparations for economic strategies that adapt to an impending dual hegemonic political economy.

Although ‘re-Sinification’ was claimed to be inspired by the return to ‘Chinese roots,’ its motivation by the bountiful opportunities of China was clear, as Mandarin was not the mother tongue of most Chinese Singaporeans, hailing from the Southern provinces. Chinese Singaporeans were more familiar with the provincial languages, which were dismissed by state leaders as ‘Dialects.’ The popularization of Mandarin, a Beijing dialect variety, emerged only after China’s entry into the capitalist-industrial order. Short of the Chinese-educated literati, earlier branded as ‘Chinese chauvinists,’ Mandarin was as foreign a language as English was pre-anglicization.

The vision of ‘a common cultural base, Chinese in origin’ was then advertised to correct the fault-lines.<sup>52</sup> Schools, where state visions are made realities, followed the reformed language policies. The compulsory adoption of Mandarin as the ‘mother tongue’ in second-language classes at school was controversial but effective. The ‘mother-tongue,’ however, neither referred to the language spoken by one’s mother nor the home language. It is delimited as the language prescribed to one’s race, and one’s racial identification is limited to the race prescribed in the citizen’s identity card.

Special Assisted Plan (SAP) schools target students with good academic performance. There, students learn both English and Mandarin as first languages. French, German, or Japanese electives are offered as second

languages, coinciding with the ethnonational profiles of the MNCs who establish their offices in Singapore.<sup>53</sup> The bias for Mandarin proficiency was blatant. Racial minorities were allowed to opt out of studying their ‘mother tongue’ in favor of another language. For instance, an ‘Indian’ may opt out of studying Tamil in favor of Malay or Mandarin. No allowance was made for those racially categorized under ‘Chinese.’ A ‘Chinese’ could not opt out of Mandarin, including children of interracial marriages, who were to follow the father’s racial allotment.<sup>54</sup>

The re-Sinification education program comprised two components: bilingual language proficiency (English–Mandarin) and cultural proficiency. Where one’s future is secured through education credentials, getting a fail grade in one’s ‘mother tongue’ could result in obstacles to one’s career options. One of the entry requirements to the much sought-after state universities was a pass grade in one’s ‘mother tongue.’<sup>55</sup> Language proficiency alone, however, does not equip the population with the cultural tools to bridge the Chinese market. The ‘cultural ballast’ to Chinese solidarity was introduced through the compulsory Religious Knowledge curriculum, with a ‘Confucian Ethics’ elective as one of the components.<sup>56</sup>

However, in spite of efforts to introduce Mandarin to the predominantly Dialect-speaking population, the perception of the English language as superior to other native languages persisted. Although Chinese Singaporeans were not averse to language conversion, the preference remained predominantly for English. It was found that ‘amongst the younger generation (of Chinese), while less dialect was spoken, more in that group used English compared to Mandarin.’<sup>57</sup> As English remains the language of the globally hegemonic, it will remain the language of choice. However, the East–West dichotomy is not as irreconcilable as it has been made out to be. This is demonstrable in the eventual success of education in producing schools of transnational professionals with the inclination and ability to embrace Mandarin and take on the Chinese market.

As the ‘first-mover’ economy in the region, Singapore possessed the advantage as the regional commercial hub.<sup>58</sup> This would not have been possible were it not for the pool of Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives who had supported Singapore’s ambition as the ‘bridge between the East and West.’ ‘Perplexed by the confusing business networks, political and cultural environment in the region,’<sup>59</sup> many Western MNCs found in their Chinese Singaporean employees a reliable link to China. Chinese Singaporean employees were commissioned to ‘cut through red tape, to connect with the right people, to get deals done, and to take a small piece

of the action.<sup>60</sup> Singapore's ethnic Chinese population, previously downplayed, became one of the key resources being publicized as a draw for FDI.

Blatant measures to teach 'Confucian Ethics' to the Singapore population failed in its manifest intent.<sup>61</sup> This is not to say, however, that its commercial target has not been achieved. Much credit can perhaps be attributed to the work of Chinese-language teachers, who inculcated in Chinese Singaporean students the importance of cherishing their cultural heritage. Communicated in a simple language of emotions that students can better relate to, the hidden (and unintended) curriculum may have proven to be much more effective than the high-browed 'Confucian Ethics.' Singapore did become one of the strategic gateways to Western commercial interests in Asia, and this formula continues as the mainstay of the economic growth. In a matter of two decades (1974–1994), FDI in the manufacturing sector multiplied 26-fold from just over 150 million (Singapore dollars) to 4.3 billion.<sup>62</sup> Henry Yeung attributed the influx of FDI to Singapore's reputation as 'an ideal springboard to the Asia Pacific region for these TNCs (transnational corporations) wishing to venture into the region.'<sup>63</sup> Even as Phase 2 had launched the process of economic localization, the strategies adopted continue to be characterized by the approximation and replication of hegemonic characteristics, rather than the carving out of a distinctive normative and business consciousness. With the normative foundations of dual hegemony established through identity grafting, Phase 3 represents the strategic thrust for distinctive Singaporean norms of enterprise.

### *Phase 3: GLC—Hallmark of Reliability*

The allegiance of MNCs is tied to the corporate headquarters in their home countries and not to regional host nations. Hence, the lack of a substantial local entrepreneurial class subjected the Singapore economy to the 'vulnerability of sudden (foreign) investor pull-out.'<sup>64</sup> This is most obvious during economic downturns. Political economy observers had reported signs of economic slowdown in Singapore from the early 1980s.<sup>65</sup> Singapore experienced its first recession, in 1985, since its economic ascendancy over the previous two decades. In the first post-independence decade, Singapore alone had accounted for half of the FDI in Asia. By 1983, Singapore's share had shrunken to only 31.8%.<sup>66</sup> The 1985 recession was found to be a temporary downswing, as opposed to a permanent

demise in Singapore's regional economic standing. This economic slow-down, however, did signal the necessity to reformulate new directions for its economy. State initiatives were introduced to lessen the over-reliance on international capital.<sup>67</sup>

The return of emphasis to 'Asian roots' served as a timely prelude to the structural adjustments to the Singapore economy. Curricular reforms in the 1980s, such as mother-tongue language teaching, localizing the English Language curriculum, and National Education, brought forth a Singaporean national consciousness that had been undermined in the earlier era of anglicization. State reforms during this era, Allen Chun observes,<sup>68</sup> created the differences in attitudes towards Chineseness between Hong Kong and Singapore. The distinguished trajectories undertaken by the two political economies, however, extended beyond public culture consumption. Economic localization in Hong Kong was buttressed by vibrant private entrepreneurship. Singapore's took shape in the form of the privatization of public services.

Given the unwavering faith the population had bestowed on its state leaders, there exists an asymmetry in state beliefs about whether the nation can be entrusted with the wealth the country has accumulated:

The only reason the government moved in was that no entrepreneur had the guts and the gumption and the capital to go in on his own. So we went in and got it going, using government officials who had the drive and the flair. And we were prepared to go into more high-risk areas where Singaporean entrepreneurs are unable to carry that risk, either for lack of daring or for lack of capital.<sup>69</sup>

State-owned companies were privatized into GLCs, with key leadership positions helmed by affiliates of its political elites.<sup>70</sup> The successful establishment of GLCs lent testament to the population's confidence in its state leaders as public trustees of Singapore's economic investments.

Riding on its political reputation as a corruption-free government, the government was self-fashioned as a Confucian gentry of hard-faced technocrats with zero tolerance for deviance.<sup>71</sup> Asian Values stood for the rejection of 'Western permissiveness, the rejuvenation of traditional moral values in Asia, and the cultivation of the communitarian spirit of society above self.'<sup>72</sup> Moral intentions aside, such legislative controls possessed great influence in molding public confidence in the belief of an all-powerful and incorruptible state. This branding strategy first took shape

with normative moves to distinguish from ‘airy-fairy’ artistic expressions of the West,<sup>73</sup> which resulted in the banning of men from keeping long hair for some decades.<sup>74</sup> Long hair was associated with the Western hippie culture that Lee Kuan Yew detested:<sup>75</sup>

I have not got the Western value system inside; it’s an Eastern value system. I have not come here to have long hair, wear dirty jeans, walk about bare-footed, wear T-shirts with strange slogans printed on them. That’s got nothing to do with what you have done in outer space.

While men have to safeguard their engineering machismo, women have to observe their feminine duties of reproducing the population. Female graduates were told to take on the responsibility of reproducing the nation, as intelligent mothers produce intelligent offspring. These statements were criticized for the strong undertones of encouraging Chinese birth rates, as the Chinese overrepresented the graduate population.<sup>76</sup> The encouragement of birth control, addressed to the Malays, occurred at the same time. When female graduates failed to produce babies at the desired rate, immigration rules were relaxed to ‘import’ ethnic Chinese from neighboring regions.<sup>77</sup>

The capacity to engineer a nation in both physical and normative realms won the approbation of China, Singapore’s key investment target. The ‘Singapore’ brand stands for the hallmark of reliability, its state leaders the mascots, and naming conventions all GLC companies bore the mandatory ‘Singapore’ prefix for brand consistency (for example, Singapore Airlines).<sup>78</sup> In 2006, Singapore FDI in manufacturing alone amounted to 51 billion (Singapore dollars).<sup>79</sup> The bulk of the investments was channeled to China, Malaysia, and Indonesia (in descending order). While GLCs do not account for the biggest share of Singapore FDI, they trail in a close second to the economy’s foreign investment abroad.<sup>80</sup> With the business focus rapidly expanding for the GLCs, the next phase of economic development targets private local enterprises.

#### *Phase 4: Economic Diversification—Obsolescence of CMIO Social Compact*

On the economic frontier, Singapore displayed robustness in riding out two of the most challenging economic crises. The 1997 Asian Financial

Crisis was well managed, attested by the fast recovery of the national economy. Good crisis management had ensured continued social cohesion in the face of economic stress. As a result, Singapore had largely benefited from its globalization projects. The United States–Singapore Free Trade Agreement in 2001 marked one of the first victories, paving the way for Singapore’s current status as one of the most globalized business environments. According to the World Bank,<sup>81</sup> Singapore’s FDI remains in the pink, and its economy continues to top ‘business-friendly’ rankings worldwide in terms of ‘Ease of Doing Business’ and ‘Trading Across Borders.’ Yet the narrow worldviews of ethnicity and national identity that had forged social cohesion also contributed to the eventual strain in Singapore’s social compact. The sense-making of the problems with ethnic management strategies in Phase 4, thus, need to be considered in tandem with the challenges confronting the Singapore political economy.

Packed into four neat compartments of Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Others, the CMIO was sidetracked when English supposedly dispelled racial divisions. It also faded into the background during the Confucian fever. But its presence remains a national preoccupation. This is perceptible from the public complaints raised along racial lines. In public forums, the customary sightings of commentators that questioned the absence of CMIO were periodically featured:

I just realized that DBS ATM machines have instructions in English, Malay and Chinese but not Tamil.<sup>82</sup>

On second thought, besides catering to the hearing-impaired, I think that it is really a win-win scenario if all non-English programs could be subtitled in English and all English programmes subtitled into the other three official languages based on the population ratio, for example, 70 % Chinese, 20 % Malay and 10 % Indian.<sup>83</sup>

I refer to the letter, ‘Why MRT sign not in Malay?’ (ST, Dec 29), by Mr S. Kulaveerasingham ... These signs provide Chinese and Tamil translations only as the Malay alphabet is based on the Latin or Roman alphabet, which is the same as the English language. As the station names are actual location names common to both English and Malay applications, they are not translated into Malay.<sup>84</sup>

Recognizing the tinderbox residing within the CMIO, state commitment was pledged to create a ‘common space’ that devolves from these confinements.<sup>85</sup> Although society continues to grapple with the limitations

entrenched within the CMIO, efforts to devolve beyond these confines have proven timely, in view of the economic developments to come.

The realization that local enterprise cannot solely rely upon the stable of GLCs precipitated the move to groom local private sector entrepreneurs. Domestic alignments were recalibrated while retaining the pecking order:

Foreign MNCs will continue to play a dominant part in our development. But to break through the next level of development, we have to increasingly develop our home-grown talent and our own MNCs.<sup>86</sup>

As the majority of the new entrepreneurial upstarts are small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), GLCs function as patrons to the new local upstarts.<sup>87</sup> Formal business support networks, Spring (business consultancy unit under the Economic Development Board for SMEs), Singapore Business Federation (SBF), and the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME), were established as a part of this state-sponsored endeavor. Tight mentoring relationships exist between GLCs and private local enterprises, as both bear the corporate image of the ‘Singapore brand.’ As for the MNCs that Singapore play host to, the local-hire corporate representatives uphold the professionalism as associates of the ‘Singapore brand.’ Together, the professional image of the ‘staid and reliable engineering technocrat’ consistently manifests alongside economic diversification.

Characteristic of the developmental state, rejuvenation of the economy took priority over social sentiments. Singapore’s increased integration with the global economy obliges the expansion of its workforce through liberal immigration rules. As a result, ‘foreign talent’ is no longer restricted to the ‘expatriate communities’ that are lavishly supported by the corporate headquarters. Following closely after the collapse of the US Lehmann Brothers, the European Financial Crisis created a supply of European labor ready to accept remuneration terms that may have previously been unimaginable. Sightings of ‘Westerners’ in residential estates that were exclusively local heartlands in the past were initially a curious phenomenon. With the rising number of ‘Westerners’ working in Singapore without expatriate remuneration packages, the need for more affordable residential options made them neighbors in the local heartlands. Singaporeans who had bought into the concept of ‘Western permissiveness’ have to reconcile with these beliefs, now that they are brought next to one’s doorstep. As

a mature economy, Singapore's regional competitiveness lies in its human capital of skilled professionals. But SMEs compete for this pool of professionals while running on much more modest budgets than those of the MNCs and GLCs. The solution was found in the recruitment of foreign professionals from Asia, who are able to offer professional skills and accept the modest remuneration that SMEs can afford. Singaporeans who had bought into the concept of Asian Values now have to reconcile with the reality that Asian fraternities are competing with them for the desired Professionals, Managers, Executives, and Technician (PMET) jobs.

The rapid expansion of the 'foreign talent' population in Singapore created some initial local ambivalence.<sup>88</sup> By 2014, the full-blown impact of 'social ethos' became a national issue, where the state was pressured to acknowledge the 'valid reasons' for concern over 'overcrowding in the buses or in their housing estates.'<sup>89</sup> Foregrounding this articulation is the caution on 'slower (economic) growth as trade-off for social stability.' Signaling to state leaders that social sentiments have been placated, the 2015 elections gave the PAP a landslide victory, a surprising phenomenon as the party has been losing significant electoral support over the years. It remains to be seen if the PAP will be able to reciprocate this strong electoral mandate by finding the desired balance between economic growth and social coherence.

Rising complexity of the social landscape made ethnic management a challenge on the education front. With the entrenchment of the CMIO, Singaporeans are accustomed to voice up against racist misdemeanors when disparaging comments were directed at 'established' ethnic minorities (for example, Malays and Indians), but appeared unfamiliar otherwise. A Filipino colleague complained about the proliferation of prejudiced remarks made by Singaporean netizens about Filipinos in Singapore. Surprised by this statement, I had gone into the said discussion platform to explore the extent and prevalence of such behavior. While Singaporeans may be rather candid about voicing racist sentiments in the private sphere, self-imposed social responsibility is usually exercised in public domains. An observation of the said forums affirmed both sets of beliefs. Indeed, netizens in the forums took offense at racist remarks directed at Malay Singaporeans, but the same responses were not elicited when these remarks targeted Filipinos. Similar nonchalance was demonstrated towards sexist and homophobic comments. It seems the failure to recognize prejudice outside of the domain of CMIO may be one of the consequences of being overly well-schooled in looking to state leaders for moral and economic direction.

## ECONOMIC EXCELLENCE: THE BASIS FOR ETHNIC MANAGEMENT

Khaldunian concepts are useful in explaining how centralization is augmented by disciplining support groups that had previously bolstered state power. Historically, centralization is achieved by disciplining the tribal elements that had originally propelled authorities into power. Unfortunately, in the case of despotic rule, coercion was the only instrument deployed for centralization, due to the lack of strong bureaucratic structures to manage dissent by other means. In contrast, developmental states possess strong bureaucratic leverage. The emergence of developmental states is dependent on clientelism, but its longevity is ensured by its bureaucratic leverage to coerce and co-opt. This history of Singapore, is thus an account of the series of political coercions and co-optations exercised by the developmental state to realize its economic ambitions. Native privileges had to be accorded to the Malays for their co-optation into the independence cause. With the failure of the merger, distribution of privileges need to be meritocratic for the co-optation of the Chinese majority. Apart from hauling a bunch of punitive examples through the Internal Security Act, the majority of labor militants were rewarded when pickets were exchanged for tools. In the symbolic realm, access to English and Mandarin conversion was open to all, in principle, to allow upward mobility for those who desire the acquisition of cultural currency.

Late industrialization created historical precedence for the developmental state. Stability, Takashi Shiraishi observes,<sup>90</sup> is the precondition for economic growth in late industrialization. Economic deliverables ensure the longevity of developmental states, giving them more currency to shape social sentiments in favor of centralization. The decline of developmental states, thus, rests upon the failure to generate economic legitimacy, as opposed to the inevitable awakening of democratic consciousness that is believed to accompany capitalist participation. It is the delayed state responses to economic crises that had triggered social dissatisfaction, resulting in the unravelling of the social compact. Legitimacy for centralized authority will continue insofar as economic deliverables are brought home. By combining coercive suppressions to civil disobedience and swift economic responses, developmental states invoke memories of successful economic deliverables to legitimize social control. However, overly successful co-optations have also given rise to unintended ramifications. The teaching of neither Mandarin nor Confucianism could stem

the manifestations of auto-orientalism. Beliefs about the uncontentious superiority of Western values persisted among some, unfolding in the rise of monolingual English households. Others welcomed the conversion to Mandarin and the embracement of Confucian values as a better alternative. At times, this resulted in occidentalism, or the rejection of Western values believed to have been responsible for the erosion of one's heritage.

## CONCLUSION

If historical precedence is to be read as a projection of future destiny, Singapore's pre-independence history would have pointed to a lack of sustainability for the island-nation. By choosing to forget a major portion of historical memories of the locale's glorious past, the developmental state chose to reinvent a historical trajectory that defies ephemeral existence. By choosing to remember only those memories that justify its current political economy, the developmental state is sustained by recollections of the crucial role it has played in transforming a sleepy fishing village into a modern capitalist political economy that produces sustained economic deliverables. It is through this historical memory that justifications for proactive management of Chineseness acquire strong currency. The developmental state becomes the sole authority, through language planning and schooling, in defining the normative realities of Singapore's political economy. As much as it seems plausible that strong states are the result of master plans for domination, Singapore's extended history is telling of how vulnerability to hostility has contributed to the development of strong states. Pre-independent historical experiences point to the vulnerability of passive responses to foreign incursions. The Singapore state's preoccupation with identity grafting expresses the refusal to be 'color-blind' in a culturally indexed world. For the case of the Singapore state, it has chosen to look outwards in the grafting of dual hegemonic identities. The choice of remembering the sleepy fishing village is perhaps a reminder that Singapore will no longer be content to remain on the peripheries of globally networked states. It is with this shared historical memory that ECI corporate representatives had engaged transnational professionalism. However, as I will show in the next chapter on 'Typologizing Chineseness,' the articulation of this shared vision takes on various permutations.

## NOTES

1. Cited in Barr, 1999, 153.
2. Cited in Barr, 1999, 153.
3. Alatas, 2013.
4. Isoart, 1978, 1.
5. Reid, 2006.
6. Regnier, 1987.
7. Turnbull, 1977.
8. Tsuji & Howe, 1988, 216.
9. Regnier, 1987.
10. Turnbull, 1977, 53.
11. Tsuji & Howe, 1988.
12. Trocki, 2006.
13. Wong, 2005. The Nanyang University (Nantah) was founded by Chinese businessman and philanthropist Tan Lark Sye (1897–1975) in 1953. The Mandarin instruction university soon found itself embroiled in the tussle of the PAP split. Along with the 1963 ouster of the Barisan Sosialis, ten university alumni were persecuted. This led to the disenfranchisement of the university's standing, leading to its eventual closure in 1980. The institution resurfaced as the English instruction Nanyang Technological Institute in 1982, and eventually attained university status as Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in 1992. Other organizations targeted for being misled by the communists in defense of Chinese education were the Singapore Chinese Middle School Students Union and Chinese School Old Boys' Association.
14. Hamilton, 1983.
15. Cited in Kuhn, 1997.
16. Wade, 2009, 19.
17. Ratnam & Milne, 1967.
18. Khoo, 2013.
19. Kluver & Low, 2006, 2.
20. Turnbull, 1977.
21. Brown, 1993, 217.
22. Purushotum, 1998, 1.
23. Wang, 2009.
24. Reid, 2006.
25. Turnbull, 1977.

26. Neo, 2007.
27. Clammer, 1998, 37. The Hokkiens, Teochews and Straits Chinese dominated the commercial arena, maintained sociable relations with the European business community, and cooperated closely with the British in managing the Chinese community. The Cantonese and Hakkas entered Singapore mainly as indentured labor, or skilled craftsmen. Majority of the Hainanese worked here as servants or civil servants to the British administration.
28. Wade, 2009.
29. Clammer, 1998, 52. While the Malays may be a more homogeneous entity compared to the other categories, a variety of ethnic identities that were not identified with Malay (e.g. Javanese, Minangkabau, Bugis, Boyanese) were subsumed under this category. The Orang Laut (e.g. Orang Kallang, Orang Seletar, Orang Gelam), the original inhabitants, were also merged in the same racial category as the Malays.
30. Cited in Turnbull, 1977, 5.
31. Chua, 2003.
32. Turnbull, 1977.
33. Low, 2001.
34. Goh Keng Swee, cited in Gopinathan et al., 1998, 208.
35. Tremewan, 1994, 31.
36. Hamilton, 1983, 41–63.
37. Fitzgerald, 1969.
38. Cited in Van der Kroef, 1967, 43.
39. Fishman et al., 1968, 45.
40. Llamzon, 1977, 37.
41. Rodan, 1985, 46.
42. Tremewan, 1994, 77.
43. Kuo, 1980, 39–62.
44. Chiew, 1980, 238.
45. Cited in Tikoo, 1996, 444.
46. Tremewan, 1994, 112.
47. Economic Development Board, 1982/1983.
48. Rodan, 1989.
49. Rodan, 1985.
50. Rodan, 1985. The following factors were cited as the key considerations for Singapore as the choice location of MNC subsidiaries in Asia. These were compiled from the interviews with representatives

of the top management in the regional subsidiaries: political stability, excellent infrastructure, skilled and disciplined labor, established and cost-efficient supplier network, low operating costs, state-of-the-art infrastructure, and greater proximity to the regional markets.

51. Goransson, 2009.
52. Vasil, 1995, 83.
53. Wee, 2000.
54. Clammer, 1998.
55. Chua, 2009, 242. This mandatory requirement was eventually abolished.
56. Tu, 2010. The Religious Knowledge module was eventually phased out from the education curriculum in 1989 due to strong resistance against the imposition of religious elements in secular education.
57. Cited in Gopinathan et al., 1998, 73.
58. Kluver & Low, 2006.
59. Cited in Tan, 2000, 50.
60. Cited in Haley, 2000, 280.
61. Suryadinata, 2004.
62. Yeung, 1998, 402.
63. Yeung, 1998, 404.
64. Rhodes & Higgott, 2000, 13.
65. Rodan, 1985, 33.
66. Mirza, 1986.
67. Yeung, 1998, 403–404.
68. Chun, 1996b.
69. Lee Kuan Yew, cited in Alten, 1995, 200.
70. Kluver & Low, 2006.
71. Mauzy & Milne, 2002.
72. Jayasuriya, 1998.
73. Wee, 2007, 37.
74. Clammer, 1998.
75. Lee, 1978.
76. Tremewan, 1994.
77. Chua, 2009.
78. Zutshi & Gibbons, 1998.
79. Singapore Department of Statistics, 2008.
80. Singapore Department of Statistics, 2001.

81. World Bank, 2015.
82. Cited in Manickam, 2006.
83. Cited in Lim, 2007.
84. Cited in Kharudin, 2008.
85. Lee, 2006; Yu-Foo, 2006.
86. Goh Chok Tong, cited in Peebles & Wilson, 2002, 174.
87. Kluver & Low, 2006, 403.
88. Yeoh & Huang, 2004.
89. Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Finance Minister, cited in AsiaOne, 2014.
90. Shiraishi, 2012.

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## Typologizing Chineseness

Daddy has gotten tickets for the National Day Parade! The weather was sweltering at the parade, but we were all entertained by the colorful performances that told us the ‘Singapore Story,’ and who we are as a people. Back home, still thrilled by the excitement of having been a part of Singapore’s birthday party, I picked up the Chinese folding fan and started mimicking the dance moves of the ‘Chinese dancers’ at the parade. My parents laughed in delight. As would any proud father, Daddy pointed out to Mom how skillfully I had executed the moves while humming along with the appropriate ‘Chinese tunes.’ I was disappointed that he had failed to notice how I have lowered my eyelids to make my already small almond eyes into the ‘slits’ that prototypically represented Chineseness. My inspiration was drawn from the placards depicting multicultural Singapore united in racial harmony at the venue. Relative to her Malay, Indian, and Eurasian friends, the Chinese girl in the placard looked like me, except in cartoon form; she had eyes that were just two slanted lines. While I might not have been aware of the implications of this identity choice as a child, as a rebellious teenager, the decision to wear an Indian saree (complete with a genuine nose-piercing) to the college prom was a conscious one intended to transcend ethnic boundaries. Whether in compliance or rebellion, the awareness of my own Chineseness formed an integral commencement point from which decisions about identity work have been inspired.

Stereotypes offer simplistic, consistent, and unified messages through which state identity messages were conveyed. The lack of complexity in

their persuasion facilitates the ease in internalizing stereotypical messages. When broad brushstrokes are applied to salient characteristics, instantiations of stereotypes are easily found in one's everyday encounters. In contrast, where efforts to demystify stereotypes adopt diametrically opposing positions, internalization of these counter-messages is more challenging. From the relativist position, reality defies the potential for generalizable explanations, as individual encounters are unique in their historical development. Indeed, individual experiences are historically unique, and social trajectories unfold in distinctive contexts. The focus on experientially unique identities offers countervailing, authentic, and complex descriptors of identity, but also renders structural drivers of inequality invisible. Such a view justifies structural inertia, as individuals are believed to be autonomous agents capable of reinventing identities as desired. While continuous efforts in striving to actualize transcendentalist ideals ought to continue, recognition of the existence of structural inhibitors to these efforts need to be given precedence. When structural adjustments accommodate to the facilitation of identity work, a more inclusive segment of individuals will possess stronger leverage to access change capacity.

Typologies offer insight into the patterned behavior of managing Chineseness for the purpose of identifying processes that underlie decisions about identity grafting. They provide the scope for comparison out of the range of possible dispositions that influence behavior. Admittedly, as would any attempt at theoretical abstraction, typologies may be regarded as artificially imposed 'still-captures' upon the dynamic actions and adjustments of real activity.<sup>1</sup> However, by capturing a 'still,' typologies are important theoretical abstractions for the identification of expected composites of behaviors enacted by groups of individuals. They lend points of reference for a layered explanation of the implications of the way societies are structured. Typological classifications facilitate the comparison of patterned behavior with policy leitmotifs, which may not be apparent if dispositional and behavioral elements are not isolated from specific contextual descriptions. My interest in this understanding is shaped by the belief that knowing the appropriate levers to change is the source from which social rejuvenation can continue to support the process of effective identity grafting. It is perhaps with the same motivation that the typologization of Chineseness forms a significant segment of discourse on the topic. Exemplars include Charles Coppel's typologization of Chinese political orientations,<sup>2</sup> Boo Teck Khoo's introspective account on the varied burdens of Chineseness among diasporic ethnic Chinese minorities in

Southeast Asia,<sup>3</sup> and Gungwu Wang's and Peter Katzenstein's normative identity affiliations among ethnic Chinese with regard to China.<sup>4,5</sup> In the extension of these theoretical efforts, I examine the mediating effects of social stratification upon the interpretation of state identity management, in the light of how these initiatives have produced identity-mediated occupational structures.

As a highly negotiated and contested construct in the field of international relations, it is inevitable that national boundaries come to mind in thinking about how Chineseeness is to be typologized. One of the notable discussions that has arisen about Chineseeness is the response of territorial bodies as China establishes its dominance in the dual hegemonic political economy. China's efforts at consolidating its territorial influence could be said to be characterized by onerous political resistance. The source of this resistance may be attributable to the asymmetrical authority in the manufacturing of symbolic power within the dual hegemonic framework. In the introductory chapter, I have mentioned that the wielders of symbolic power are consecrated with the authority to construct normative realities. This capacity is crucial in determining the degree of autonomy vested upon the Chinese central government in the legitimation of its influence. It may be crucial to recognize that China's justification of the right to territorial claims is derived from Western orientalist imaginations of a vast territorial body in the Far East governed by a political center.<sup>6</sup> From the discourses of Middle Kingdom Mentality to the humiliating defeat in the Opium Wars,<sup>7</sup> Western imperialist experiences continue to be reified, resisted, and subverted for the purposes of legitimizing 'One China' justifications for recovering its lost territories. Therefore, while the subversion of orientalist accounts serves to justify the territorial suzerainty of 'One China,' the maneuver entrenches China's imprisonment in occidentalism ideology. Occidentalism entraps actors in beliefs that 'peer orientals' undertake similar views of the West as oppressive neo-imperialists. Conversely, the prevalence of auto-orientalism in the subaltern aggravates its resistance to accommodating a dual hegemonic framework where a peer oriental is to lead. The journey for Beijing to establish its symbolic power in locales closer to home has thus been much more onerous than China establishing its soft power outside of Asia. Expectedly, as Chinese soft power gains currency in Europe, the grounds of resistance closer to home have correspondingly softened. As Canton becomes Guangzhou, it is no longer acceptable from the central-government perspective for the province to retain its linguistic vitality of Cantonese at the expense of

Mandarin. In tracing language developments in Guangzhou, Sihua Liang demonstrates how the initial calls for the defense of Cantonese has given way to Mandarinization.<sup>8</sup> She argues that a plausible replication may occur out of the current resistance efforts in Hong Kong.<sup>9</sup> As resistance yields in Guangzhou, the campaign advances from the periphery of the mainland to its Special Administrative Region. While Hong Kong puts up an isolated but spirited fight against 普教 (Cantonese: 'Mandarin as instruction medium'), the impending question is when Guangzhou's destiny will become Hong Kong's. It remains to be seen if the Special Administration Region that has managed to retain its original moniker will yield to the same destiny as Guangzhou. As it stands, the symbolic contestations within a national entity is indicative of how national borders may not be an appropriate unit of analysis in the survey of Chineseness. Likewise, Jieh-min Wu observes a transcendence of national boundaries as he draws similarities in the shared experiences of Hong Kong and Taiwan in response to the 'China factor.'<sup>10</sup> Correspondingly, divisions are also immanent within Taiwan as interests collide between transnational business communities and social movements for Taiwanese independence.<sup>11</sup> At this juncture, it is important to note that endeavors to manage Chineseness are transnational in nature. The cumulative voices illustrate the necessity of an examination of Chineseness unbounded by national and pre-established territorial imaginations.<sup>12</sup> As much as the historical trajectory of each locale is unique, there exist sufficient common denominators of structured experiences among individuals that transcend national divisions. With regard to my efforts at typologizing Chineseness, I will focus on the diverse professional positions undertaken in response to hegemonic conceptions of East and West. In this, I seek to shift the focus of the discourse from the state-centric management of Chineseness to the transnational linkages actors construct when managing Chineseness.

Focusing on the interactions between professional structure and professionals, a transnational view is undertaken to locate key mediating structures of identity work. By comparing business and teaching practices with demographics, patterns of behavior can be made salient as to the types of habitus that undergirds action. Although typologies are far from exhaustive in their delineation of the plausible structures that mediate professional attributes, they offer identifiable common denominators that can be located within the symbolic network of transnational Chineseness. Demographically, linguistic attachments continue to feature in each locale, characterized by somewhat similar historical struggles for

linguistic dominance. Symbolic attachments to English-primacy in Hong Kong and Singapore, for instance, can be traced to their shared historical experience as British colonies. Mandarinization drives in the two locales, however, were not pitted against English-primacy. Rather, the institution of Mandarin-primacy was perceived to be an exercise of symbolic violence that threatens ‘indigenous’ Chinese identities. As ‘Greater China’ seeks out satellite states to incorporate into its hierarchy of influence, professionals in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan vary in their responses to prevalent state and society opinions about the ‘China factor’ within a dual hegemonic political economy. This variation, I would like to emphasize, is as distinguishable within locales as it is between them.

The second demographic characteristic features less saliently than the contest between linguistic vitalities, but nonetheless prevails as one of the most essential markers of identity. Socioeconomic differentials represent the second set of demographical attributes whereby typological distinctions will be indicated. Once capitalist industrialization was embarked upon, the wealth generated from capital investment and accumulation enabled upward social mobility. Accompanying this, inevitably, is the rise in income inequality and class stratification. Expectedly, different class segments respond to the dual hegemonic framework mediated by how they have experienced its symbolic imposition.

By typologizing empirical constructions of Chineseness by ECI corporate representatives, insights can be derived as to how structures have interacted with ethnic management. While individual demographical characteristics offer empirical representations of the actor’s social position, schooling experiences represent the situated experience of ethnic management by the actor. For instance, the orientalist-informed business approaches of some ECI corporate representatives were found to be related to the immediacy of Confucian-inspired values they had acquired during their school days. Likewise, change-inhibited teachers were also found to be disposed to pro-stratification (power distance) values. Given the disparate professional attributes desired of transnational corporate representatives and teachers, the incommensurability of a comparison between the two professions may be of concern. One of the most obvious disparities is the nature of their relationship with the highly state-led education system. Unlike their contemporaries in the teaching profession, schooling was a distant memory to ECI corporate representatives. State access to ‘reschooling’ this group of professionals is significantly weakened once they enter professional life. State-led continuous professional

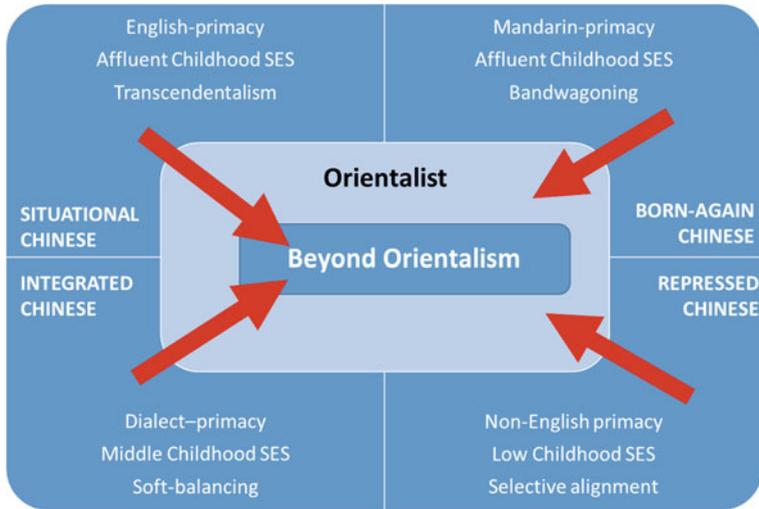
development for teachers, in contrast, seeks to ensure the close alignment of teacher professionalism and state-endorsed education reforms. Yet, in spite of the differences in professional sectors, the typology of Chineseness by linguistic primacy shows similar and enduring dispositions shared by professionals in the two samples. This observation resonates with Mirko Noordegraaf's that due to professional hierarchies, individuals belonging to different occupational groups (e.g. teachers and ECI corporate representatives) may share more similar professional dispositions than would individuals belonging to the same occupational groups (e.g. junior-rank and senior-rank teachers)<sup>13</sup>. Although teachers and ECI corporate representatives have chosen two distinctive professional trajectories, the dispositions instilled through childhood socialization endure in spite of one's later experiences. Furthermore, in spite of the generous resources made available by the state to teachers for continuous professional development, differentiated access to these resources exist among teachers. Unlike the more egalitarian relationships among local-hire ECI corporate representatives, teacher access to 'reschooling' is stratified, even though their proximity to state-provided change resources is significantly closer than that of the distal commercial sectors in which ECI is situated. For now, I shall hold in suspense the outcome of efforts in 'reschooling' teachers into new education paradigms. This chapter will focus on typologizing the Chineseness of ECI corporate representatives according to their approach towards cross-cultural business relationships.

Prior to the detailed elaborations of identity grafting among ECI corporate representatives in the ensuing chapters, I outline in this chapter the typological forms extracted from qualitative data analysis to provide a framework of the discussions that will unfold. Although actors may switch between typological frames according to fluid contextual demands, a predominant mode of framing reality can nonetheless be discerned. Lunch hours offer the best insights as to the informal relational networks of colleagues in the office. It so happens, possibly without the knowledge of the corporate representatives themselves, that those with whom they took their lunch breaks with shared very proximate demographical characteristics to themselves in terms of linguistic primacy and childhood SES. Further, those who shared common demographical profiles also shared resembling attitudes toward their schooling experiences and adopted similar approaches toward negotiating cross-cultural business relationships. The Situational Chinese personifies the English-primacy and affluent child-

hood SES, who adopted transcendentalist strategies in the sense-making of transnational professionalism. Transcendentalism, in international relations terms, is the attempt to rise above imposed hierarchies and divisions that stand between actors, their authentic selves, and other actors. Born-Again Chinese represent bandwagoning views of transnational professionalism from the perspective of the Mandarin-primacy and affluent childhood SES. Bandwagoning is the strategic identification of ascendant hegemonic influences and aligning oneself as a part of this ascendant force. Integrated Chinese prevailed among the Dialect-primacy and reasonably affluent who adopt recombination or soft-balancing strategies. Recombination is the use of own reference point to adapt desired attributes from multiple sources, so as to ensure adapted strategies suitably represent and includes a diversity of interests. When combined with soft-balancing, recombination strategies work towards representing dual hegemonic interests through alternative recommendations (for example, the original intention of both parties may be the use of provocation and retaliation to maximize own interest). The Repressed Chinese illustrates marginal childhood SES and Non-English primacy characteristics of selective alignment. Selective alignment refers to the participation in economic cooperation, while withdrawing from the partaking of any non-economic side-taking that may have arisen out of cross-cultural interactions. In the survey of international relations strategies, Katzenstein identified recombination and soft-balancing as some of the more effective strategies undertaken by nations within the current dual hegemonic landscape.<sup>14</sup> Here, in terms of the actor's capacity to rise above the captivity of orientalist paradigms, it seems recombination, soft-balancing, and transcendentalist strategies appear to be more effectively exercised among the Integrated and Situational Chinese (Fig. 3.1).

### SITUATIONAL CHINESE

As corporate representatives, the Situational Chinese adopted transcendentalist approaches to cross-cultural differences. Cultural differences, they believed, are entrenched within power differentials and stratified social relationships. Although this reality did not appeal to them, they are sensitized to its mediation of business relationships. Corporate representatives who identified with Situational Chinese were prevalently *English-primacy*, and tended to come from *affluent middle to high childhood SES*.



**Fig. 3.1** Typologizing interpretations of Chineseness among ECI corporate representatives

Insight into the transcendentalist preference can be derived from Situational views of broad-encompassing cultures. Carlos’s view of culture extended beyond the state-defined associations of Chineseness:

I was born Teochew [Chinese dialect group] Chinese, Christian, and now, I am as agnostic as one can be. I embrace democratic values of the West and having said that I also embrace filial piety, or what has been set down by my grandparents.

*Although transcendentalist views characterized Situational Chineseness, Yogi was sensitized to the presence of power differentials, even if he personally did not subscribe to these discriminatory values:*

Only some get to say what is and is not culture. Depending on the situation, the ‘some people’ may be your bosses, when it comes to work; in a country, it can be the government; in the whole world, it will mean whichever country that is the most powerful.

*In order to get to the authentic sense of the self, distracters placed in the way by dominant influences ought to be seen according to their intents. It is*

only through this endeavor that one can truly relate to relational ties in ways that are meaningful to the self.

*Professionalism is thus expressed in terms of how boundaries can be transcended, so as to allow for enhanced business collaboration.* When queried about possible differences between cultures, Henry's focus maintained how he could transcend cultural misalignments:

When major international players are not in line, our task is to align them. France and America the major players in the industry, and the two entities are not really in line. We try to meet both of these cultures. Now for China, there is a saying that most of the local managers have three bank account statements. The first is for the company, another for the auditors, and the last is their own. Our China agents, vendors and competitors are the same as ... err ... the other places like India, Vietnam or even in Korea, where they do practice a little of bit 'gift-giving' as a show of appreciation. After being regional for a while, you realize that in Singapore, it's pretty straightforward in terms of business. Some 'gift-giving' is handled by our agent, but we will never cross our line when we talk about the heavy cases, like handing out money for bribes just because it's the country's 'cultural practice.'

At the same time, Carlos was *not blind to the importance placed by the customer in sharing a common cultural base:*

Key advantage will be that I'm Chinese, so it's PERCEIVED that I am more in tune with the culture. It is PERCEIVED that the Chinese are kind of racist and can get along better with me. They didn't like Serge that much. Because of his color, the Chinese were kind of racist towards him. He was born in a part of India that was French. He thinks of himself as French and don't get mistaken, he's got a French passport.

The dilemma of an 'ethnic Indian with a French passport' in the Chinese business world perhaps resonated with one of the deep-seated issues a Situational Chinese has to grapple with: *the dilemma of an English-primacy ethnic Chinese with a Singaporean passport.* The Situational Chinese actively sought the transcendence of bounded cultures, yet is faced with the constant reminder of the reality of bounded cultures.

Prevalent among the Situational Chinese was not just an English-primacy profile. All six of those interviewed had received at least tertiary

education in the West. Perhaps due to this exposure, frequent comparisons were made between local and overseas education. Emanating from these comparisons were hints of nostalgia towards this past overseas exposure, and significant *ambivalence towards local education*. Using the ‘we’ pronoun when expressing concern over the dearth of creativity in Singapore education, Carlos lamented:

We lack creativity, partly because of how we were taught in school. As in, the entire program of, ‘Do what I say and know what I do,’ as instructed by the teachers and our parents. Creativity is stifled and beaten out of view since I was a kid.

From his personal experience with UK education, Singapore education was deemed ‘stifling.’ The lack of freedom to articulate and act, due to the draconian (‘beaten out’) teaching approaches that pervaded the education system (‘teachers’) and society (‘parents’), crowded out the enablers of learning that could allow for creativity.

Situational Chinese ambivalence towards local education can be explicated as follows. An education that teaches in a language that one is familiar with has brought veritable advantage to these English-primacy corporate representatives. Yet the mandatory pass in Mandarin to qualify for local universities may have done greater damage to their chances of success within this system if it were not for the ability of their families to facilitate their overseas education. Nevertheless, accompanying this experience is the exposure to diverse value systems, experienced from where they stand as ethnic Chinese within the pecking order. Having grown attached to diverse ideological tenets, yet fully aware of themselves as the ‘English-primacy ethnic Chinese with a Singaporean passport,’ this identity dilemma predisposed the Situational Chinese to seek the transcendence of ‘irrelevant’ divisions. Notwithstanding, English-primacy children needed less effort in adapting to a ‘linguistically alien’ teaching curriculum. The 1980s Mandarin revivalism also had not discounted the importance of being English-proficient. This further reinforced the confidence of Situational Chinese corporate representatives towards the embracement of ambiguity. When situations were not in favor (freedom of self-expression is ‘beaten out’ by local education), the Situational Chinese response was to invent pathways to maximize favorable conditions (get a Western education).

## BORN-AGAIN CHINESE

The term, ‘Born-Again Chinese’ is derived from Singapore’s 1980s ethnic management initiatives at reviving Chinese Singaporean connection with China-centric heritage identities. Accompanying these initiatives were the attempts to rein in the perceived negative Western influences, believed to be responsible for the loss of heritage among Chinese Singaporeans. This social construction of Chineseness involves the embracement of Pan-Chinese solidarity. Born-Again Chinese corporate representatives shared a profile of being *Mandarin-primacy and affluent middle to high childhood SES*. Born-Again Chineseness embodies the worldview that Western businesses ought to pander to their Asian counterparts, rather than the other way around. The assertion of this professional identity is articulated through *definitive ‘I am’ statements of their rootedness in Asia*:

I am the eldest son. To me, the simple act of putting the money in the hands of my parents is my cultural belief because I am Chinese. My own friends, they see the Westerners move out of the house before they get married and they think it’s ‘normal’ and how life should be.—William

Embedded within Born-Again Chineseness is a dual hegemonic consciousness that mandates clear declaration of primordial solidarity. *Occidentalist references were made of the ‘Western’ other*, as Joseph shared:

The mentality ten years ago in China is still there about the 老外 [Mandarin: ‘foreigner’; commonly referred to as ‘Westerner’]. You [Westerner] only know how to drink beer, and you don’t like our food, but *we* don’t like your sausages either. You [Westerner] came here to make money and after 2–3 years, you go. The Western world is bound by contracts and penalizations. But Eastern culture, in China, it’s the trust that ‘you won’t mess me up.’

Pan-Chineseness functioned to transcend national boundaries and hold Sinic-associated nations based on common cultural roots. Conversely, antagonistic relationships were constructed against westernization, replicating the occidentalist boundary of mutually opposed civilizations.

Born-Again Chinese perceptions of commercial interests overlap with cultural interests. If primordial sentiments and professionalism are inseparable, then these sentiments ought to be used to enhance professionalism towards one’s clients. This Born-Again Chinese psyche is embodied

by Joseph. He distinguishes himself from Western expatriate peers as a corporate representative who is *culturally invested in regional business commitments*:

This is my home-base. I don't think like the way they [Westerners] think: '[stereotypical Western worldview] I sign a contract, I collect my bonus, after that, thank you and bye. I am moving to US or Europe, I don't care.' It's not in my nature to do that. The reason behind this integrity is because I know I am here to stay.

Transnational professionalism, according to the Born-Again Chinese, ought to uphold ethical practices toward their clientele. William empathized with his Chinese clientele, as he saw the compromises to ethical practices among his Western peers:

They [Chinese clientele] believe that the *ang mo* [Hokkien: colloquial slang for Caucasian] are out to trick them, which we do see is the case. The US side [ECI American representatives], they really think they are the world. They are US-centric and oblivious to what is going on in the rest of the world. So it's quite... yeah.

Seeing the world in terms of hegemonic centers, the devolvement from eurocentrism was not inspired by the purpose of transcending power differentials. Rather, ethnocentrism persisted in the professed preference for an alternative power structure, albeit communicated from an occidentalist worldview. Characteristic of reignited sentiments, the Born-Again Chinese invested greater effort in reconnecting with primordial networks than would those whose membership to the core is taken for granted. Alvin referred to his Chinese counterparts with pronouns that connote extensions of his self, but he also felt he needed to invest more effort in building social capital within the Chinese business networks:

*Our* China representatives graduated from the industry university in Beijing and all the big bosses within the industry in *our* Chinese customer base are somewhat alumni of this university too. Even though *you* are perfect strangers, *you* will know the same professors, *you* know common people or *your* wife knows his wife.

If business is indeed reliant upon cultural affinities, then the ones who could beat the Born-Again Chinese corporate representatives at their game must surely be the Mainland Chinese themselves. This game strat-

egy necessitated a hierarchical worldview whereby comparative advantage is maintained through the stratification of the field of play:

I dealt with the Chinese market; they are fragmented. North China [Beijing, Shanghai] don't really care about South China [Fujian, Guangzhou], and West China is another totally different story. You may be a Beijing or Shanghai guy, you can't deal with Guangzhou.

*In the face of a stratified dual hegemonic field, the Situational Chinese has sought to transcend power differentials; the Born-Again Chinese has sought the solidification and inversion of these differentials.* Therefore, Situational Chinese corporate representatives sought to engage clients by moving away from primordial determinisms, while Born-Again Chinese corporate representatives upheld these determinisms through explicit declarations of their commitment to the interest of the 'homeground.'

In contrast to the English-primacy, the view of local education by Joseph was one of gratitude. He had received his tertiary education in Japan, which he spoke fondly of. Joseph recounted how *Singapore education had ignited the primordial attachments that solidified the sentiments he felt towards the Chinese fraternity:*

We did 三国演义, 文言文, 白华文 [Mandarin: 'Romance of the Three Kingdoms' (vernacular stories on the Warring States period infused with strong Confucian undertones); 'literary Chinese'; 'vernacular Chinese'] at school. People from India, Middle East, China, even Malaysia ask me about the education system in Singapore, as they would like to send their children here.

Joseph offered instantiations of the continued relevance of Confucianism in binding individuals to the 'soft power' of Chineseness. The Confucius Institutes established worldwide bind converts into the recognition of a social order of patron–client relations between those who represent the owners of this cultural capital and those who aspire to its acquisition and affiliation. For Joseph, his love of the Chinese language and cultural philosophy in his school days lent support to his current business commitment to Chinese relational networks and good character.

Although similarly affluent in childhood SES to the Situational Chinese, the Born-Again Chinese's confidence differs from the demeanors of their English-primacy counterparts. With the buoyancy of the Chinese market and the predominantly Mandarin-primacy affiliation, Born-Again Chinese corporate representatives were vocal about their intention to be the voice

of their Asian counterparts. The edgy dispositions of the Born-Again Chinese may have been spurred by the passion to scale *a hotly contested hierarchy of Chineseness* they were *'born-again'* to embrace.

## INTEGRATED CHINESE

The *Dialect-primacy* corporate representatives, unlike English- and Mandarin-primacy respondents, are not linguistically aligned to the dual hegemonic framework. *Childhood SES of these respondents were also average, being neither significantly more nor less affluent than the other groups.* As facilitators of cross-cultural business relationships, an Integrated Chinese disposition resonated with the Dialect-primacy. In contrast to the Situational Chinese, who may proudly describe themselves as 'global citizens' who appropriate and adapt cultures to align with their personal identities (Carlos), the Integrated Chinese approach can be described as *wanting a piece of every cultural affinity, even if none of these identities is recognized as their own.* The power of culture is borrowed during opportune moments, but never owned, according to Kelvin:

The word 'Westernized' should not be applicable to Singaporeans. We are in-between. Singaporeans choose to be 'Westernized' at some time and 'Oriental' at others.

Phillip believed his lack of cultural pride as a Singaporean made him much less concerned about adapting to others' cultural pride:

China, Japan and Korea have strong views about their own culture from the Asian context. Moving on European, the French are like this as well. In Singapore, we are not like this.

Integrated Chineseness is a cultural construct that results from recombining varied cultural scenarios and finding one's own adaptive solutions to address cultural gaps. This adaptiveness comes through in Kelvin's decision on how cross-cultural tensions would be best resolved:

I think China corporate representatives are more afraid to speak their mind and go with the flow. For example, if there is a big customer complaint, they will ask the Number One [Vice-President, ECI] to go and see the customer when the issue is boiling HOT. If you send Number One there, the customer will make a very BIG demand. The customers will bang the tables and

say, ‘You are the boss, you have the right to make this decision, I am making these demands, yes, or no?’ Someone has to go down to attend to the problem instead of putting the Number One in the line of fire. For me, although I am Asian, I will take it differently. As the person who is responsible for the account, I have to go and talk, take the customer’s feedback and go back to the management to see what can be done.

Harmonizing prevailing and countervailing demands, Phillip recognized how *cultural proximity facilitates empathy, but also constrains one’s leverage in negotiating commercial relationships*: ‘It is good to be aware that the advantage can also turn into a disadvantage.’ Within a schema where a variety of power structures are represented, Kelvin positioned himself as ‘a part, yet apart’ of the tensions that arise in cross-cultural business (mis)communication. He took the position of an *empathic regional player who knows when to take an independent stand*:

It’s not that the China corporate representatives have no confidence to face the customer. It’s their relationship with the customer that makes them choose sides based on culture. As a Singaporean Chinese, I could [take an independent stand]. After that, I am still good with the customers, who have gained respect for me.

*The sense of being constantly on the peripheries of the core appears to be the driving force for the Integrated Chinese desire to play a part in every action.* Flowing along the peripheries of language policies as the Dialect-primacy, the Integrated Chinese had to constantly adapt to new language imperatives. This disposition permeated not just their current business approaches among the Integrated Chinese, but also their childhood memories of schooling.

The Dialect-speaking are often conflated with the Mandarin-speaking under the common denominator of ‘Chinese-speaking.’ Based on the perceptions that emerged among the Dialect-primacy in this study, there would appear to be differences that are more than just variations by subtle shades. The view of local education among the Integrated Chinese is characterized by *mixed feelings and a strong commitment to inclusiveness*. Bernard offered a rich critique of his educational journey, which resonated with the importance of embracing diversity:

There used to be racially segregated schools and housing that were common in the British colonial past. Our current government has put an end to this and introduced English as the common platform of communication.

At the same time, he was also critical of race-based policies toward ‘mother tongue’ language teaching, which had resulted in the demise of Dialect linguistic usage. Currently, the state position on the teaching of Mandarin is to exclude the influence of Dialects. Bernard objected to a zero-sum take of Mandarin proficiency. He believed the suppression unwittingly worked against the vitality of a Mandarin linguistic environment. While zero-sum approaches did discourage Dialect usage, attitudes had also arisen of a preference for English over Mandarin usage:

The question we must ask ourselves is what are we teaching our children if we tell them we should do away with Dialects because Dialects are less classy than Mandarin. People start thinking ‘since Mandarin is less classy than English, why do I need to learn Mandarin?’

Bernard displayed concern that some of the negative ramifications of zero-sum approaches may be irreversible:

I know an old primary school Chinese [Mandarin] language teacher who was stuck as a primary school teacher because he has never passed his English test. He was very disillusioned about it and he started conversing with his children in English, telling them that they should stop speaking Chinese because it is hopeless. Can you imagine a Chinese language teacher saying that? If you are good in English but don’t know a word of Chinese, you are still OK. If you are good in Chinese and don’t know a word of English, you’re finished.

The Dialect-primacy group had gone through two decades of language planning. In the first decade, they were convinced of the use of English language as means to unify a multilingual nation. In the second, they were pressured to acquire Mandarin proficiency as their mother tongue, as Chinese provincial languages were considered crude variants. As the group that was lobbying for the changes in language teaching at schools, the desire for inclusiveness manifested in the disapproval towards xenophobia:

The Japanese situation today is not a good situation. They have been rich for years, but they are downhill because they are caught in a situation where they can’t accept foreign culture.

As described by Philip, dispositions of Integrated Chineseness is the outcome of the recombination of diverse knowledge elements, embraced

regardless of their origins from Asian or Western schools of thought. *The Situational Chinese have adapted to diverse knowledge elements. For the Integrated Chinese, diverse identity environments were recombined using their personal identities as reference points.*

### REPPRESSED CHINESE

Repressed Chinese corporate representatives adopted performance-based approaches to demonstrate professionalism. This aim appears to resemble Situational Chinese sentiments that ‘culture does not matter.’ However, *Situational Chinese is characterized by the transcendence of culture to enable the authentic expression of the self. Repressed Chinese, in contrast, is characterized by the exclusion of culture that represses the authentic expression of the self.* Unlike the Situational Chinese, Shane related to *culture as an inherited identity, where Confucian ethics binds the Chinese together with a common value system:*

I think China can do honest business guided by Confucian ethics [as with Singapore]. It is strange because this should be deeply rooted in the Chinese value system. But why are they not doing that? Because they are all overcome by [capitalist] greed.

As with the Born-Again Chinese, China was perceived to share common cultural roots as Chinese Singaporeans. Within Shane’s expression of common cultural heritage, however, was the disappointment over the corrosion of Confucian heritage in China.

Seeing the corrosion of one’s highly valued Confucian heritage at the root source of this civilization must have had a significant impact upon the Repressed Chinese. The importance, to this group of corporate representatives, of repressing one’s deep identification with Chineseeness relates to beliefs about one’s persistent cultural disadvantage. Having internalized a cultural consciousness that privileges Western cultures, auto-orientalist worldviews that sort culture into a hierarchy of (dis)advantage is entrenched within Repressed Chineseeness. The belief expressed in the follow-up survey questionnaire that one is ‘not favored/disfavored prior to the Speak Mandarin Campaigns’ (that is, Anglicization language planning) was exclusive to the Repressed Chinese.

Coming from marginal childhood SES backgrounds, the Repressed Chinese illustrated how marginal socioeconomic circumstances may have

enduring implications. Entrenched beliefs about disadvantage persisted in spite of their current achievements. Hard work and dedication to balance out socioeconomic differentials through educational achievement had nonetheless paid off for Repressed Chinese corporate representatives. As a result of the upward mobility that the Repressed Chinese had achieved due to educational access, their views about local education were largely positive. Shane expressed high regard for how *schooling had taught him discipline and integrity*.

I think in Singapore, due to our education system and government policy, we recognize the importance of being ‘clean’ [corruption-free]. In fact government policy has very strong 儒家思想 [Mandarin: ‘Confucianism’].

An education that inculcated discipline and integrity likely resonated with the honest and methodical approaches with which this group of corporate representatives had employed to worked their way out of low childhood SES. Although Singaporean education had not made explicit the associations of discipline and integrity with Asian cultures, the strong identification with Chineseness among Repressed Chinese forged interpretations of their schooling in terms of the values they are intimately familiar with.

The Repressed Chinese can be said to ‘repress’ the overt expression of deep heritage attachments at the workplace. Shane typified the belief that cultural affinities matter, and thus should be prevented from interfering with work affairs:

Personally I feel that at work, I tend to follow more of the corporate guidelines rather than my personal beliefs. For example, if the corporate guideline is about customer satisfaction, or profitability, or commercial success, I am sure I will put that ahead of my personal values. The personal belief and value system doesn’t come with me during work.

*Cultural affiliations are perceived as innate to the Repressed Chinese, but seen as disruptive to professional efficacy.* Seeing cultural diversity as the result of irreconcilable divisions and conflict, primordialist assumptions inhibited the emergence of transcendentalist and integrative views about cultural reconciliation. *The Born-Again Chinese shared similar views about a stratified cultural order guided by Confucian ethics, but appeared much less concerned about disharmonious relationships resul-*

*tant from displays of Chineseness at work.* A closer examination of both accounts of exposures to Confucian values at school lent insight to this distinction. Confucian high culture, which inspires Asian leadership theories of today, characterized the accounts of the Born-Again Chinese. Grassroots culture of Confucian honesty and discipline characterized the Repressed Chinese accounts. The first account lends support to leadership assertiveness through superior moral mandate. In contrast, the second account encouraged productivity and obedience that characterizes subordinate orders. While these dispositions are non-indicative of the current managerial positions occupied by these corporate representatives, they do reflect that of Non-English (primarily Mandarin) primacy and childhood SES.

### A TYPOLOGY OF CHINESENESS

At the global level, Singapore functions as the conduit through which power, not just FDI, flows between the dual hegemonic framework. Arising out of these restructures and external network states, the state conduit is influenced by, adapts to, and in turn influences this network of states and society. As the population surveys the interactions among the network states from situated vantage points, they formulate strategies that seek to influence the professional ecology, while being influenced in return. The emergence of typological patterns of demographics, dispositions, and behaviors suggests that some of these identity-grafting outcomes may be enduring. From students of engineering expertise to sales and marketing transnational professionals, how did ECI corporate representatives adapt to these professional demands? Before the policy questions can be answered, a comparison of these typologies is needed.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I summarize the essential characteristics of each typology before drawing comparisons between them. Intersections between educational and professional experiences of the corporate representatives were enhanced with the introduction of fictive elements to provide a coherent account of ideal-type abstractions. This provides the concept map from which the typologies will be elaborated in the ensuing chapters. Prior to this elaboration, I will wrap up this chapter by relating the concept of identity grafting to the study of teachers, and how this later study provides the answers that had arisen from the conclusion of the ECI inquiry.

## TRANSNATIONAL PROFESSIONALISM

The lessons on Confucian hard work and discipline may have a strong resonance with the life experiences of the Repressed Chinese. Coming home from school overwhelmed by lessons taught entirely in English, the child confided to parents about the difficulties in coping with school demands. Although tired from struggling to make ends meet, their parents had encouraged them to forge on. Sharing their personal struggles to make ends meet due to the lack of education credentials, they urged their child to be resolute in his studies. Encouraged by his parents, the Repressed Chinese found solace in the good values of hard work and diligence taught by their Chinese-language teachers. Characteristic of Chinese-language teaching in an education system that emphasizes the emotional connection with one's 'mother tongue,' the teachers took upon themselves the moral responsibility of imparting 'Chinese values' to their students as they taught technical proficiency in the language. Hard work and discipline buttressed the educational achievements of the Repressed Chinese. Through the positive experiences of educational success, the Repressed Chinese also learnt to recognize the symbolic power of the English language, of which Chinese languages are subordinated. Yet, being sensitized to the integrity of their parents and Chinese-language teachers, the Repressed Chinese cannot be convinced of the inferiority of values cherished as essential to being Chinese.

For the Repressed Chinese, beliefs about one's marginality were far-reaching. These corporate representatives saw it as important to prevent culture from coloring professional relationships. Yet, in the private domains, they honored the Confucian education of discipline and integrity that had facilitated their upward social mobility. The same paradox re-emerged as the Repressed Chinese saw one's definitive self in the broader Pan-Confucian network, which resulted in self-exclusion from Western associational networks. As Confucian and Western values were seen as dichotomous, the Repressed Chinese believed strategies that had allowed them to progress and excel in local education were incompatible with the values of the Western MNC. The business approach was thus believed to be best kept free of cultural interference, with one's Chineseness being repressed in the work environment. The auto-orientalist worldviews characterized within the professional dispositions of the Repressed Chinese will provide the first set of insights into the embodiment of state identity-grafting initiatives.

During the schooling days of the *Situational Chinese*, the Chinese-language class may have been the most tormenting lesson of the day. Not only did the Situational Chinese have to struggle with unfamiliar pictographic writing, but they also had to be chided by their teachers for being ‘bananas’ (yellow on the outside, white in the inside). Carrying the burden of Chineseness was a source of ambivalence, as they imagined their teacher in the manner of Confucius amid the sarcasm that continued about how failing their Chinese-language examinations is equivalent to failing in their moral obligations toward the Chinese culture. Their parents were angered when they heard their children complaining that the teachers had warned them that they would not be able to enter university if they failed to obtain a pass in Chinese language. Encouraging him to continue doing his best at school, parents reassured the Situational Chinese that he would be sent overseas for university education in the event that he stumbled in the Chinese-language examinations. The tertiary education experience in the West enabled the Situational Chinese to express Chineseness in his own terms without being judged on the value of its authenticity.

The transcendence of ethnic boundaries is essential to the positive self-image of one’s Chineseness for the Situational Chinese. Rather than living up to others’ beliefs about being Chinese, Situational Chinese corporate representatives prioritized the establishment of business rapport by illuminating upon the universality of humanity, inclusive of its warts, such as power, class, gender, and racial divisions. As divisions are inherent in any network of social relationships, transcendentalism was achieved through adapting to the unique contexts of everyday business encounters, so as to allow for the authentic self to emerge once divisive gaps had been successfully bridged. The Situational Chinese will be employed as a case for comparison with the Repressed Chinese.

Parents of the *Born-Again Chinese* beamed with pride as their child recited high-culture Confucian ethics with such élan in front of their relatives. They envisioned a future where their child would address a business audience full of admiration for his lucidity in Mandarin, as he articulates the relevance of Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* to the business world. Teachers were equally proud of the Born-Again Chinese student’s achievements, and his conviction in living as the modern exemplar of a proud Chinese lineage. Disillusioned with what they perceived to be mindless aping of Western cultures among the other students, Born-Again Chinese students illuminated the hopes of teachers that Chinese heritage would not be entirely submerged by the Western cultural invasion. When the

Born-Again Chinese announced his decision to venture overseas for tertiary education, alarm bells sounded for the parents. Will he return with a Caucasian wife, and will our grandchildren speak to us with that funny English accent? Thankfully, to the parents' relief, the Chinese-language teachers had taught him well. He had chosen Japan.

The Born-Again Chinese colleague would return tired from his business trips overseas, but would be beaming as he shared how intellectually stimulating the conversations were with his clients in China. He sighed as he realized how I paled in comparison, as he explained to me the analogical significance behind my Chinese name. While good-humored chiding was gently meted out to colleagues who appeared to be struggling to reconnect with their Chineseness, the same tolerance did not characterize responses toward Western colleagues. Occidental worldviews that characterize the professional dispositions of the Born-Again Chinese will provide the second set of insights to the embodiment of state identity-grafting initiatives.

When every other policy that promised to put things right ended up with decisions that worked against your favor, humor appears to be the only way out. The *Integrated Chinese* laughed along with their classmates who poked fun at their Dialect-accented English and Mandarin. The teachers tried to hold back their laughter. At parent-teacher meetings, Integrated Chinese students burst out laughing as their parents tried to speak English to their teachers, and Mandarin when they failed to find the English word. Father chided son for breaking out in laughter as he spoke to the teacher, 'Aiyah [Singlish lamentation], why you make me [why did you embarrass me] 漏气? ! [literally translated: 'leak gas,' a misuse of the Hokkien term for 'embarrassment' pronounced in Mandarin].' The son ended up in stitches seeing how his father was ambivalently infuriated and amused. Father and son struggled along, but managed to be understood in a linguistic landscape where few understood Chinese Dialects anymore. But, strangely, the way father and son spoke became embraced by Singaporeans as the colloquial patois that bonds the nation, Singlish.

The Integrated Chinese saw the business landscape as comprising a variety of complex and discrete cultures, but sought to work with these differences to facilitate positive business outcomes. Working with business entities where none of the cultures could be said to relate to the Integrated Chinese core identity, this group of corporate representatives took a view of cross-cultural negotiations from a third-party vantage point. Yet, having invested decades in grafting and synthesizing identities into an integrated

self, the Integrated Chinese also attached an empathetic familiarity to intercultural mismatches. The Integrated Chinese will be employed as a case for comparison with the Born-Again Chinese.

Through this typology of Chineseeness, the ensuing chapters will examine how social constructions of Chineseeness may at times invoke vicious cycles of identity grafting. The scenarios are explicated via a postcolonial theoretical framework. When identity grafting is articulated through orientalist leitmotifs, individuals are constrained by the orientalist stereotypes they have constructed of themselves. The case will be illustrated by the Repressed Chinese and Born-Again Chinese. Counterexamples will be illustrated by the Situational Chinese and Integrated Chinese. Social constructions of Chineseeness can bring about virtuous cycles of identity grafting when they result in the facilitation of cross-cultural business networks. The ensuing chapters will detail the empirical examples and counterexamples of auto-orientalist and occidentalist developmental grafting.

### SINGAPORE TEACHERS

For ECI corporate representatives, schooling was a once-in-a-lifetime journey. Regardless of whether schooling was a positive or negative experience, these corporate representatives could only relive the journey vicariously through their children at best. For teachers, schooling could become a lifelong experience where they would need to learn new professionalism with every education reform. In Singapore where schools are incubators of the developmental state's social experiments, reforms are introduced at the turn of every economic imperative as education keeps pace with accelerated development.

Teachers in this study were schooled in the same dual hegemonic format as ECI corporate representatives. Some of them may currently still be struggling with the English language, although they may be mathematics whizzes. Some spoke in crisp English, and helped support the linguistic aspects of tackling problem sums in mathematics. Others spoke in Dialect-accented English and Mandarin, and the youngest among them would usually have mastered both English and Mandarin proficiently. These teachers are a part of a nationwide professional development initiative called professional learning communities, spearheaded by the state agency, Academy of Singapore Teachers. As with the ECI corporate representatives, the teachers came from diverse backgrounds and were differently disposed. Having them work collaboratively to enhance each other's professional growth

was an excellent opportunity for the development of a teacher-led professionalism. Interest in the development of teacher leadership may vary from individual to individual and system to system. From the systemic perspective, the importance of teacher leadership to Singapore is rooted in the current global significance of holistic education. The economy has been absorbing the responsibility of training fresh graduates to perform within an environment without examinations. As state agencies take its education agencies to task over the gap between educational and economic dispositions, teachers need to develop capacities beyond examinations-driven teaching. With the realization that professional capacities for holistic education cannot be instituted through top-down prescription, teachers were encouraged to take charge in the development of teaching and learning through collaboration with peers. Under the 'traditional' format, students learnt little beyond acing examinations. As schooling commands a major part of an actor's life journey, the learning environment ought to be as authentic to real environments as possible. Professional learning communities seek to empower teachers to bridge the gap between examinations-driven learning and holistic learning.

With relevance to my study, I will focus on teachers' efforts to reform past practices through the engagement with reflective dialogue. In these sessions, teachers counterchecked with each other whether existing assumptions held about teaching and learning remain relevant to current holistic learning paradigms. A team of mathematics teachers, for example, sought to reform past practices where students were taught 'cognitive shortcuts' to problem-solving (for example, 'John took five candies from Jane' = subtract). In the past, students were trained to derive at the correct answer, but understood little about the rationale behind performing mathematical operations. To reform this situation, the teachers collaborated with each other to enact a holistic environment where mathematics learning would be co-constructed between teachers and students. When students were taught to relate mathematical concepts to daily purchases they encountered, the teachers had also not forgotten to emphasize the value that the good life need not necessarily be synonymous with material acquisition. Another team of Chinese-language teachers sought a more teacher-centered approach to devolve the focus of Chinese-language learning from the current content focus. By using beyond-curriculum materials (newspapers, for example) to enthuse student discussions on current affairs, these teachers hoped to support students in developing an authentic proficiency in the Chinese language. One teacher proudly

described how a student told her on graduation day, ‘我不再做香蕉人了!’ [Mandarin: ‘I do not want to be a banana—yellow skinned and white within—any more!’]. A science team described their hopes to inspire students’ intrinsic motivation to learn with holistic education initiatives. ‘The “exam paper tomorrow” is just that,’ one of them explained.

From the observation of teachers in action in their professional learning communities, the three examples above have emerged to demonstrate that teachers are change-enabled. However, these examples represent only the tip of the iceberg. It may be overly presumptuous to assume teachers will be change-inhibited in enacting transformative teaching and learning due to being schooled in a different paradigm. Conversely, it is likewise overly optimistic to assume the absence of challenges to the effective implementation of holistic pedagogies. ECI corporate representatives offered examples where schooling experiences have had different effects when actors were identified by typological behaviors. Here, segments of teachers were also found to be Change-Enabled, Change-Capable, Change-Aspiring, and Change-Inhibited. Their significance to the concept of identity grafting will be explicated as the inquiry unfolds further. Similar approaches will be adopted in deconstructing and reconstructing the responses furnished in the survey. Teachers were first sorted demographically by linguistic primacy, and childhood and current SES. Correlations were then established between demographics and power distance dispositions. Their responses with regard to student learning were then differentiated between ‘formative’ and ‘summative’ practices. Statistical analyses of demographic dispositions and practices will serve to explain in which domains change capacities were effected. Not wanting to offer too much distraction from the core study of ECI corporate representatives, I shall return to the discussion of the findings on this teacher sample again only in the concluding chapters.

## CONCLUSION

In order for the efficient supplanting of ‘exogenous’ normative realities into an ‘indigenous’ context, identity-grafting efforts are often communicated in the form of stereotypes. These efforts may eventually gain increasing sophistication as they unfold in the context within which they were supplanted. Originally deemed an incursion, continuous adaptations are crucial for the sustained relevance of supplanted realities. But it is important to recognize the limits with regard to identity grafting,

for without such recognition an overly optimistic view will reduce the effectiveness of its strategies. For instance, the wholesale importation of exogenous normative realities without critical consideration of their relevance may be less efficacious and sustainable than adaptive measures. By typologizing how Chineseness is managed by individual actors, I had sought to capture a reconciliation between structure and agency. In this, professional dispositions are understood in terms of state influence via the management of Chineseness, and, however limited, in the interpretations enacted by assertion of the individual will in managing Chineseness. Through the examination of professional dispositions, I have mapped out how actors are variably inclined to view the professional landscape either in the selective but unaltered internationalization of specific state discourse (for instance, that suppression of indigenous identities is needed for effective engagement in a Western-dominant economy) or in adaptive strategies (for example, recognition of hegemonic tensions is essential for its transcendence). With the identification of demographic traits (linguistic primacy, childhood SES) associated with adaptive and non-adaptive strategies, an understanding was sought for the educational processes that had given rise to orientalist worldviews (auto-orientalism, occidentalism). In surveying the function of education in socializing professional engineers, it is important to keep in mind the role of the teaching profession in shaping education. While going through the in-depth examination of the sense-making of Chineseness in the ensuing chapters, it is crucial to keep in mind how these accounts also represent educational implications in retrospect, and the possible educational implications of current teaching practices for the future.

## NOTES

1. Lazarsfeld & Merton, 2011.
2. Coppel, 1976, cited in Khoo, 2013.
3. Khoo, 2013.
4. Wang, 1970.
5. Katzenstein, 2013b.
6. Wang, 2009.
7. Hsu, 2000.
8. Liang, 2014.
9. Liang, 2016.
10. Wu, 2016.

11. Wu, 2016.
12. Wang, 2009.
13. Noordegraaf, 2011.
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## The Complex

‘She looks like Mrs. “Hairy Armpits”!’, my sister exclaimed when she saw the Asian Barbie on the shelves of the toy department. It seems really odd for the Asian Barbie to be prototyped after an ugly middle-aged madam, which my sister has nicknamed ‘Hairy Armpits.’ Barbie, the Caucasian version, is after all regarded as the epitome of beauty, the prototype of punishing standards of Caucasian beauty: blond hair, blue eyes, and an hour-glass figure of inhuman proportions. The unrealistic caricature has drawn many criticisms for creating distortions about how little girls are expected to look when they grow up. It seems, for the Asian Barbie, beauty standards do not matter insofar as it satisfies the need for racial representation. ‘I’ll take the blond instead,’ my sister insisted. Barbie has brought a distortion of reality of another form for many little Asian girls. They grow up to believe women who resemble the blond prototype (them) are more beautiful than the Asian ones (us), and Asians are prototypically ugly.

Dolls are one of the many artifacts through which orientalism has been transmitted. Orientalism, according to Edward Said,<sup>1</sup> is the belief that out of the Western occident is the exotic orient populated by inferior subjects of despotic rule. With identity grafting, the rush for expedience in capitalist industrialization resulted in tough choices with unintended consequences. One of these choices, as mentioned in Chap. 2, is the decision to acquire Western worldviews. When this endeavor is undertaken with the suppression of local worldviews, conciliatory reception of domination may result in the internalization of derision. Syed Farid Alatas refers to this phenomenon as auto-orientalism.<sup>2</sup> Through the compilation of statements

made about ‘the Complex,’ I seek to examine auto-orientalist constructions of Chineseness as a negative ramification of identity grafting. Cases supportive of this observation will be compared with counterexamples for a holistic assessment of ‘The Complex.’

### I HAVE VERY FEW MANAGERS WHO BELIEVE THEY COMPARE EQUALLY TO WESTERNERS

By ‘The Complex,’ the Vice-President of ECI was referring to a specific set of attributes he believed were shared by his local hires. As the person helming the Asia-Pacific business, he expressed his regret in failing to identify local employees with the capacity to perform effectively in top management leadership. Having promoted an unprecedented number of local corporate representatives to top management positions since he had helmed ECI as Vice-President, he was disappointed at the lack of leadership assertiveness among his local managers, which he referred to as ‘the Complex.’ He explained ‘the Complex’ as feelings of inferiority that prevailed among Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives toward the ‘Westerner’:

It’s not very nice, but I have very few managers who believe they compare equally to Westerners. They seem to believe that at the end of the day, the Americans and the French know best. This is precisely what I don’t want. When the Western directors use this complex to push their position, the Singaporean director *backs off* and will view that the Westerners have the right to do so.

The statement outlined the belief that confrontation avoidance amongst Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives arose from an inferiority complex when comparing oneself to Western counterparts. Instead of taking pride in Chinese culture and optimizing the cultural connection to lubricate relationships with the customer, Chineseness was deemed an inferior attribute. Therefore, although one may be deeply attached to Chinese culture after work, this attachment was intentionally circumvented at work.

Further elaboration of ‘the Complex’ extended to orientalist caricatures of guileless and child-like characteristics, which legitimized the right to domination by means of paternalism. The rationale went that feelings of inadequacy brewed as local corporate representatives backed down in the face of confrontational postures by Western colleagues. This oblit-

eration of cultural pride, the Vice-President believed, resulted in their reliance upon ‘higher authorities’ for instruction. In the face of uncertainty and confrontation, the child awaits parental intervention to correct the injustice:

Because they trust you and *they need to be guided*. They will not find their own way, but will wait for you to instruct them how to do it.

By framing difference in terms of voluntary engagement in patron–client relationships, the Vice-President believed paternalism is necessary for benevolent leadership. Like a child in need of strict parenting, the child looks to the authoritative figure for instruction and protection at times, willfully asserts one’s independence at others, and backs off in the face of punitive measures meted out in response to one’s willfulness.

The Vice-President believed the best way to honor the trust of his local hires is to be culturally sensitive to the need of his subjects for a strong leader. However, he also lamented on the incompatibility of French management styles with those embodied by ‘Lee Kuan Yew’:

They are not risk-takers by nature, and the flip-side is that they don’t like uncertainty, and like to remain in the comfort zone. They like to remain here in this island where they are well-protected and organized, where *Lee Kuan Yew will be here to take care of them*. In school, it’s really learning by heart how to do it; very little of self-discovery. If they are instructed to do it, they will.

‘The Complex’ resonates strongly with orientalist descriptors. Caricatures of avoidant, child-like, and passive subjects justify discriminatory treatment. The line of logic follows that individuals equipped with the smarter, less mechanistic approaches are better suited for leadership positions. Conversely, those whose insecurity leads them to work like automatons are better suited for support positions.

At face value, differentiated treatment appears to be justified due to ‘the Complex.’ However, the replication of ‘the Complex’ in French employees was also found in other studies:<sup>3</sup>

Somebody who comes from North America gets a cultural shock in France. For example, if you do not understand or do not agree with a decision taken by your boss, you question it. In France, you follow...

When orientalism colors observations of its subject, there tends to be an oversight in that subordinates between cultures may share more similarities with each other than would be seen with superiors and subordinates within cultures. However, when oriental oversights also appear to be echoed by its subjects, the prevalence of ‘the Complex’ becomes even more convincing.

### REPPRESSED CHINESENESS—WE ALWAYS REGARD THE WESTERNERS AS MORE SUPERIOR

Although ‘the Complex’ may be orientalist in nature, it was far from purely a figment of the Vice-President’s imagination. Concurrences to the existence of ‘the Complex’ have also surfaced among local-hire corporate representatives. However, in terms of its prevalence, ‘the Complex’ appears to be limited to *some* respondents rather than the majority of the local managers. Specific to auto-orientalism, or the concurrence with orientalist notions on the ‘superiority, uniqueness, and desirability’ of ‘Westerners,’<sup>4</sup> these characteristics were manifest only among a segment of the corporate representatives. Following up on the Vice-President’s observations of the passive, mechanistic, and risk-averse behavior of his subordinates, the investigation into auto-orientalist inclinations will be examined along these premises.

Manifestations of auto-orientalist behavior appeared to predominate among Repressed Chinese. Shane explicated how beliefs about Western superiority, for instance, are very much innate in Asian culture:

Honestly, for Asians, we always regard Westerners as more superior. In ECI, we sometimes use that to our advantage. For example, if we are going to say no to a customer, I would prefer the answer comes from an *ang mo* [Hokkien: ‘Caucasian’] than coming from me. The customer, let’s say a Chinese or Japanese, they tend to be more receptive if the ‘no’ answer is coming from a Westerner. I admit that we do use that kind of strategy on the customer. If it’s an easy yes, then it will come from me. But sometimes during negotiations, they may request for something out of the ordinary. We will have to seek the ‘yes’ answer from the French guy. We want the customer to recognize that this is a very difficult request and acceding to this request will be the final line and please do not ask for anymore. In a negotiation, usually we play ‘good guy, bad guy’ and it’s all rehearsed. We analyze the situation and predict what the customer is going to request for, and someone’s going to say ‘no’ and someone’s going to say ‘yes.’

As an individual, Shane saw himself as a part of the Asian community, using the collective 'we' in his perception of 'Asian beliefs.' In this description, he implied the 'Asian' belief of 'Western superiority' also applies to himself. Furthermore, Shane also saw himself as affiliated with the Western-owned ECI, whose interest he is professionally committed to represent. As with peers from the Repressed Chinese cohort, Shane reconciled this potential for conflict within his role through the strict separation of his personal and professional identities. Within the commercial sphere, the professional identity became sole priority, which obliged Shane to 'take sides' with 'Western' corporate interests. In a demonstration of undivided commitment to professionalism, Shane aligned his interests with that of ECI to exploit auto-orientalist beliefs about Western superiority among his Asian clientele. In the rehearsals of 'good guy, bad guy,' he reserved the power of approval and veto to his Western peers, and limited himself from exercising professional autonomy.

The possession of auto-orientalist worldviews may be strategically beneficial to an organization on several counts. Seeing 'Westerners' as 'preferred' by Asian clients over themselves, Norman resolved to work doubly hard to improve product knowledge and experience, so as to gain credibility with their clients. Shane was held in high esteem by his clients, as he applied the rehearsed 'good guy, bad guy' diplomacy with finesse. The Repressed Chinese were flawless to a fault with regard to the exacting standards of professionalism they had imposed upon themselves. The counter-intuitive measures of self-deflation and repression of cultural identifications had enabled these corporate representatives to climb up the corporate ladder as the trusted aides of their expatriate counterparts. This undertaking, however, appears deleterious to the long-term career advancement and self-esteem of the Repressed Chinese. As the power of decision-making was often entrusted to 'higher authorities,' the Repressed Chinese may be seen as lacking in confidence to lead as independent agents.

Trust manifests in ways that may be desirable for the organization, and possibly for the personal growth of the Repressed Chinese. Unfortunately, it was also the source of the Vice-President's belief that his Singaporean subordinates avoided self-discovery. Norman, in the ensuing, appeared to be acknowledging the inferiority of Asian education vis-à-vis American education:

Americans are more creative because they are taught this during school days and they are brought up in this kind of society. I guess in Asia, we don't.

During the old days, we all learn by heart, study by heart and we are not as creative as these people.

However, a deeper probe revealed Norman's openness in embracing positive aspects of alternative education systems (that is, creativity), rather than simply a disapproval of disciplined learning. Although he had brought up issues concerning Asian education in the process of expressing his desire to send his daughter abroad for American education, this far from suggests the rejection of Asian education or any belief in its inferiority compared with American education. Rather, Norman was coming from the standpoint of dialogical reasoning, where a holistic understanding of education was sought. In the process, he came to acknowledge the pitfalls of an overemphasis on disciplined learning (that is, stifled creativity), yet also maintained the awareness of the importance of a firmly established foundational knowledge through disciplined learning. In the criticisms expressed over the shortcomings of Asian education, it is easy to overlook Norman's insistence on having his daughter first establish her foundational education in Asia:

She has to be brought up in Asia. The way we educate compared to the Americans is different. American style is that you cannot push your kids. Here as parents, we can push them or guide them for a better future.

Taking a balanced view, Norman sees the benefits of guidance in the formative years of his daughter's life, but also the importance of proactive self-discovery when she grows older:

She will then adapt to American mentality and their education system, where they value creativity more than book-learning and memorizing by heart.

Regrettably, the reflexivity of Norman's dialogical reasoning (that is, A and B are different, but complementary to each other) can be easily misinterpreted as the expression of inferiority to onlookers socialized in Western linear-classificatory thought (that is, A and B are distinguished for the study of competing outcomes).

Finally, mismatched leadership expectations informed beliefs about the Repressed Chinese being risk-averse. Seen from the vantage point of the Vice-President, the unwillingness to take risks was a sign of the lack of leadership potential. To the Repressed Chinese, however, Confucian values underpinned beliefs of exemplary leadership. A greenhorn is reck-

less in behavior, but a seasoned veteran demonstrates prudence, according to Leon:

I don't sell things that I am not sure of, I don't go with programs that I am not sure of, I don't do things that I am not sure of, I still want to check, double-check and make sure. Unlike some of the other people here, 'Just sell, never mind (the rest).' At the back-end, can the structure support? Can the people deliver? Most importantly, can we meet the margins? Do we have profit to secure? If you lose money, who is going to be responsible? Maybe because of that, I am being penalized because they feel I am not very creative. I am more careful because I tend to look at the overall profitability at the same time. I am not a creative salesperson. I have to make sure that we can deliver and not just sell.

Good leadership manifests in unyielding quality checks, which minimizes the potential time wasted on crisis recovery. This leadership philosophy resonated with the disciplined education experience of 'learn by heart, study by heart' among the Repressed Chinese but contradicted the Vice-President's leadership philosophy that prizes fast-moving and flexible ground-breakers. Although the stoic's prudence is essential to sustained organizational credibility, it appears to work against the Repressed Chinese in the assessment of leadership potential.

The disposition of the Repressed Chinese can be said to be conciliatory towards orientalist beliefs. 'The Complex,' according to the Vice-President, included first, the avoidance of confrontation with 'Western superiority,' and second, the reliance on 'Western superiors' to resolve matters beyond their routine job scopes. Third, aversion towards uncertainty resulted in ambiguity-minimizing commercial strategies. In response, Repressed Chinese appeared to agree with the existence of 'the Complex,' and manifested such behaviors. However, this conciliatory disposition more appropriately represented a complex predicament among the Repressed Chinese, rather than an inferiority complex that characterized all ECI corporate representatives.

### TRANSCENDING ORIENTALISM—I AM IN FOR THE KILL TO CLOSE THE DEAL

Corporate representatives who preferred to be disengaged with cultural identifications at work came from the Situational and Repressed Chinese groups. Although both Repressed and Situational Chinese desired a cul-

turally neutral approach in the way they conduct themselves in business, this perception was informed by distinct worldviews. The Repressed Chinese saw the intervention of culture as full of tensions. Due to the belief that Westerners (real or perceived) are preferred by their clientele in China, a culturally disengaged position was taken at work by the Repressed Chinese. Nonetheless, this position was maintained due to beliefs about the debilitating influence of one's cultural affiliations. The home ground is dear to the Repressed Chinese, but unfortunately disappoints in its dependency upon Western patronage. In contrast, Situational Chinese disengaged with concerns about their own cultural identity due to their belief that culture is in reality fluid and that cultural boundaries are artificial constructs. Like a hunter that knows no boundaries, Carlos was 'in for the kill' for commercial wins:

Race and everything else will go out through the window when I am with the customer. For me, when I go through the door, and I am in for the kill to close the deal, all my senses are heightened. It's how I connect with the customer that matters, and I will do all I can to connect with the customer.

If racial issues got in the way, Carlos would go all out to transcend them. In place of the Repressed Chinese's civil turn-waiting, action-packed metaphors peppered the business strategy of the Situational Chinese. The use of 'kill' to describe one's enthusiasm to 'close the deal' may draw a measure of discomfort to the listener. However, given the ensuing elaboration, the intention of Carlos may not be inspired by entrapment:

The main advantage I have is not being Singaporean or Chinese, but my personal values, my integrity. When I go to see a customer, they are not stupid. They want to suss me out on what kind of a person I am before they are interested in the products I am selling. They will soon realize in short order, and I will share widely as well, what are my values, what I stand for, just so that they can see me as a person, my motivations as a person. And so, my advantage is my personal values.

Carlos was determined to lay his cards on the table and to 'do all I can to connect with the customer.' No card, in his view, was too taboo to be demystified and transcended, including the racial card.

The coolness towards culture among the Situational Chinese was motivated by the belief that cultural explanations could cloud rational judg-

ment. Henry believed focusing on cultural tensions distracts from the real issues that have to be addressed in office politics:

It's not really culture. For example the China office would want to control, and of course the local office here also wants to have a certain management role. And sometimes, there is a clash with the US office and our (European) bosses here. You are sandwiched between two entities within the same company, and it's an issue between bosses and bosses.

By focusing on company entities and his role as the arbiter, Henry refused to be steered into serving undeserved agendas of entities who attempted to persuade by playing the culture card. Peter's call for the demystification of cultural illusions was inspired by the hope for corporate unity:

You're working for the company, and the company is paying you to push their agenda correct? I think people are getting caught up in between local directors and overseas directors.

It would be far-fetched to impose the stereotype of 'the Complex' upon the Situational Chinese. Caricatures of the passive, child-like, and avoidant oriental did not fit well with these corporate representatives. English-primacy Situational Chinese remained unencumbered by reservations over whether Mainland Chinese clients, or other clients for the matter, would take to them less positively due to weak ties in terms of cultural connections. While they do not resist assumptions held by customers about shared cultural bases, Situational Chinese relationship-building strategies were pitched at a person-to-person level, rather than organizational expectations of themselves as 'Chinese' corporate representatives. Skepticism toward prevalent beliefs that tensions between corporate offices had arisen out of cultural misunderstandings were illustrative of the Situational Chinese cautiousness against 'tried and tested' strategies enacted by bosses and colleagues. Surveying the tensions from a culturally demystified vantage point, Situational Chinese corporate representatives made the decision to observe prevalent culturally mediated expectations, but also to take some risks in transcending entrenched practices when situations afford. Notwithstanding, it may likewise be hasty to assume these manifestations among the Repressed Chinese are necessarily motivated by 'the (inferiority) Complex.' Although dispositions of Repressed Chinese did stand in contrast to

those of the Situational Chinese, cultural repression appears to be the response to structural inequality, rather than a lack of faith in one's own inability to measure up to Western peers.

The best validation of typological professional dispositions, it seems, is to elicit responses on a topic that may be of crucial significance to local-hire corporate representatives. The query of whether one has equal opportunities for promotion to those of expatriate managers appears to be the tinderbox. The first response would either be the laughter of resignation or a hard stare that hinted at the gravity of the ensuing verbalization. Yogi, in characteristic fashion of Situational Chineseness, saw unequal access to tacit knowledge as the barrier. Still, he would stop at nothing to transcend those barriers, even if the top management remained nonchalant over the issue:

The locals are not fighting for themselves to be recognized because they tend to see the restrictions of their status as locals. But you cannot blame just one side of the game. The expatriates are often seen to talk down on the local directors, even though they are supposed to be equals. When there is a position open, the locals don't know about it until someone is already promoted. But like everything else, there will be those who will still try to break the system and get into the inner circle. They do well there because they see opportunity and not stop lights ... Still, the terms are not equal between the local and expatriate employees. You cannot promote a local to become a director, then don't give him the same benefits, power, and pay the expatriates enjoy, and expect him to behave the same as the expatriates. It already shows who has the right to shout.

According to the Situational Chinese, while culture does not determine ability, it does influence the probability of whether two professionals would share a like-mindedness that would facilitate the sharing of tacit knowledge. Given the precedent that French expatriates predominated the top management, French colleagues would be expected to possess advantaged social capital. Relational networks were thus perceived to be a resource afforded to individuals based on the manner in which social groups were positioned, thereby influencing the types of relational networks they would be disposed to form, and consequently, their professional practice.

The Born-Again Chinese, like the Situational Chinese, focused upon relational networks. Relational complicity, however, was perceived as innate cultural expressions influenced by conscious choice. Seeing their exclusion from tacit knowledge as the outcome of conspiracy, the expres-

sion of frustration took on occidentalist undertones. If nepotism is a common accusation that Westerners have used to stereotype the Chinese, the Born-Again Chinese would throw the accusation back at his Western counterparts. Joseph fashioned his account of the conspiracy of the expatriate top management with their own kind in the marginalization of local managers:

It is still the emotional factor rather than objectively defined merit: whether this person will play ball with me, whether he is in my camp. Then you got to ask the leader this question, 'Are you growing the organization with the focus of getting the best people or are you just putting somebody there because he is French?'

Norman shared views similar to those of the Born-Again Chinese, but avoided an airing of these views unless given a second probe:

I don't want this to be taped down! It's who you know and not what you do! [circumvents in his criticism with compensatory remarks:] I guess some of the local employees may not be able to see the difference. We always think that we are better off, that's how a human being will behave. We may think we know everything, we are the greatest, but on the other side of the management role, they might see it differently. [returns to deliver his view:] So a lot of things I feel they are not upfront and honest. I heard some rumors that there are certain things that the locals did not achieve, but the management was never upfront about telling us. I'm not sure if it's because of all these that you always feel that, 'Hey, it's always who you know and not what you do.' I guess that's what a lot of locals feel.

While the Born-Again Chinese were unapologetically frustrated by culturally mediated favoritism, Repressed Chinese corporate representatives tended to offer compensatory self-criticism if an issue cannot be avoided. The habitus of dialogism created some initial confusion, where it appeared as though Norman was contradicting his initial statement that 'It's who you know and not what you do!' The lengthy compensatory remarks appeared to suggest an agreement that local-hire corporate representatives have run short in the race against French expatriates due to gaps in professional performance. In the process, his actual opinion could have been easily lost among the compensatory remarks.

Phillip upheld the Integrated Chinese mission of ensuring all voices are heard, and not just the dominant ones. Although an issue may not directly

involve Phillip, he was direct and terse in the expression of displeasure with the unfair corporate practices that had taken place at ECI:

Unless people are telling me lies, if they are telling me the truth, I will tend to stick to my view. I was told that the promotion did not come with a substantial change in monetary reward. That is already an answer. If you are giving me a promotion, it means that I am taking on an additional responsibility or a more complex responsibility. And in every corporate world in any established country, you will find that the action of promotion will be translated into a monetary reward. I don't see the influence that comes along with the promotion. This is just for fun, so to speak.

In contrast to the jovial dispositions that characterized the Integrated Chinese, shifts in dispositions were observable among this group of corporate representatives when they spoke of 'injustices' that had befallen others.

While there may be a variety of reasons why provocation would fall flat upon an audience, it does not appear that apathy had arisen out of the consensus over the legitimacy of French expatriates to assert their dominance over local-hire peers. The reticence towards 'Western directors (who) use this complex to push their position,' it seems, reflected the refusal to engage in conflict within an unlevel playing field. Therefore, despite encouragements by the Vice-President to "'Go do it and fight with those French and Americans!"; they don't do it, or very few would.' The Vice-President believed the reticence among (some?) corporate representatives was due to an inferiority complex. The respondents saw their reticence as pragmatic responses toward structural inequalities within the ECI. Short of the 'very few,' reticence is the silent refusal to engage in occidentalist, 'gladiator-like acts of courage in front of appreciative Caesars.'<sup>5</sup>

Probing for responses from corporate representatives about real/perceived inequalities has served to reveal structural insights into the emergence of auto-orientalism. Born-Again Chinese corporate representatives appeared to be the most prepared to 'fight back' in the face of discriminatory practices. When this issue was broached in the follow-up survey, Integrated and Situational Chinese corporate representatives likewise subscribed to the importance of proactive engagement in overcoming structural inequalities, albeit through less confrontational means. In contrast, Repressed Chinese corporate representatives prevailed in the belief that decisions ought to be entrusted to the top management. In finding

plausible explanations as to the dispositional distinctions, I seek to re-examine identity-grafting processes in the light of how structural positioning mediates these processes.

### IDENTITY GRAFTING OF CHINESENESS UPON AN ECONOMIC BASE OF ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT

Two accounts of ‘the Complex’ were outlined. In the first account, the Vice-President replicated descriptions of the passive, child-like, and avoidant oriental. The lack of assertiveness, the partiality towards paternalism, and the conciliatory approach adopted in confrontations negated the qualities of a ‘good manager.’ The Vice-President’s beliefs appeared to be affirmed in the second account voiced by the Repressed Chinese, who had used dialogical reasoning to make sense of the orientalist propositions they had internalized. Although the Repressed Chinese might not agree with the dominant view that deviated from their own, the engagement in dialogism was exercised with the intention to align with dominant values by repressing their own deviating values. The dissonance that had arisen from the act of repressing one’s private beliefs was diffused through honest deal-closing, observing corporate guidelines, establishing credibility with customers, and seeking solace in contentment. Distinguished from the two accounts, the Situational Chinese sought to transcend entrenched orientalist boundaries. By scrutinizing cultural boundaries with cool-headed skepticism, these corporate representatives aimed to engage others into a change of mind-set by persuading others to focus on shared interests. When cultural references were made about specific corporate practices, Situational Chinese corporate representatives were quick to demystify cultural (mis)assumptions, seeing them as barriers to be transcended for efficacious transnational professionalism. In the first two accounts, misconceptions were informed by orientalist assumptions. Auto-orientalism, however, appears to have debilitated not just the professional optimism of the Repressed Chinese, but also their long-term leadership interests in the ECI. While the professional contributions of these corporate representatives were recognized through promotion to top management positions, it has also become the Vice-President’s worry that the valued skill-sets he has come to appreciate in this cohort were not complemented by change capacities. The worry persisted over the professional isolation of this cohort as paradigms shift in the conceptualization of leadership.

The identification and description of auto-orientalism in postcolonial societies is well established. The gap remains in the need to understand the structural drivers of this phenomenon, especially within contemporary settings. A Bourdieusian reading of the unconscious replication of auto-orientalism is a good starting point. Through the concept of habitus, an understanding can be sought on the persistence of auto-orientalist dispositions. Without being convinced of the inferiority of Chineseness, the Repressed Chinese nevertheless adopted conciliatory practices toward the unequal structural arrangements. While respondents from other groups blamed the system, the Repressed Chinese engaged in rather admirable acts of critical self-appraisal. This self-depreciating response, however, did little for their self-confidence and career appraisals. Auto-orientalist postures won patronage, but attenuated justifications for standing on equal terms. Due to this, corporate representatives who manifested Repressed Chineseness may have experienced higher levels of pessimism with regard to growth opportunities. Promotion opportunities were in principle available to Singapore corporate representatives within the Singapore regional headquarters (Western expatriate dominated) and the China subsidiary (Chinese nationals dominated). When queried, the Situational Chinese were most optimistic about opportunities for career growth in both offices. Conversely, the Repressed Chinese expressed the strongest pessimism overall, believing they possessed no advantage over their Western counterparts in either of the offices. In their assessment of the prospects for personal promotion, the Repressed Chinese were their own harshest critics.

The key drivers of auto-orientalism among Repressed Chinese corporate representatives may be traceable to two factors that distinguished them from their colleagues of the other cohorts. Firstly, the Repressed Chinese was the only group of corporate representatives who believed the anglicization language planning discriminated against their childhood home language, having grown up in non-English-speaking (predominantly Mandarin-speaking) households. Although the Situational Chinese was the only group possessing an English-primacy profile, the English-medium schooling experience appeared to have adverse consequences on the Repressed Chinese only. The second distinction provides additional insight. The Repressed Chinese was the only group that had grown up in marginal socioeconomic circumstances.

The traditional study of language and linguistics assumes that mastery in language usage facilitates access to the instruments of power that a

language represents.<sup>6</sup> Much of the focus on Singapore education history was thus on Chinese school graduates who suffered the worst impact in terms of employment opportunities.<sup>7</sup> However, the empirical accounts presented in this chapter have shown an analytical focus on language usage has limited leverage in accounting for the varied dispositions that have manifested among just a small group of Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives. Indeed, mastery in the English language is a prerequisite to employment in a Western MNC such as the ECI. But the assumption oversimplifies the reproduction of symbolic power. All corporate representatives were proficient in English, but beliefs about what is appropriate for managing global business environments varied. An inquiry into the dispositional domains of linguistic primacy is needed for the examination of language as symbolic power.

Taking the assumption that symbolic power of language extends beyond its usage, I commence the analysis of linguistic primacy with Tamara Wagner's conceptualization of the antithetical value positions represented by 'Chinese-educated and English-educated Singaporeans':<sup>8</sup>

The local Chinese in early post-independence Singapore were understood to be of two basic types: those who spoke English and those who did not. This distinction, however, *did not simply go away with a smoothing out of language differences*. ... This culture clash anticipates the confrontation of Chinese-educated and English-educated Singaporeans in the present-day plot.

Serving as the precursor in the explanation of the rivalry between irreconcilable symbolic systems, I refer to this construction of symbolic power as Proposition 1 (Fig. 4.1):

Proposition 1 refined the understanding of language beyond its literal usage. Applying this assumption, although all corporate representatives are English-proficient, only those who possess English-primacy (Situational Chinese) would be free of auto-orientalist internalizations.

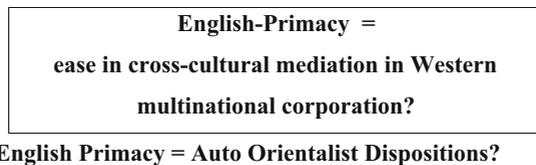


Fig. 4.1 Proposition 1

An in-depth probe into the corporate representatives' social constructions of Chineseness, however, shows auto-orientalist dispositions manifested only among the Repressed Chinese.

Given the lack of fit in dichotomous views of linguistic primacy, I modified Wagner's conceptualization with Proposition 2, employing one of the respondents, Bernard, as an illustrative example. Bernard had graduated from a Mandarin-medium university in Singapore. He worked hard in gaining English proficiency, which secured his employment at ECI. But this was only the beginning. Although he knew only a smattering of French greetings and spoke English with a strong Chinese-Dialect lilt, he was proactive in socializing with French colleagues. He remained unfazed in corporate functions held in France, keen on engaging his peers in exchanging corporate information through cultural small talk. He did not give up even as they eventually rattled on in French, somewhat forgetting his presence. Before Bernard flew back to Singapore, he would visit his counterparts' offices to say hello when he attended meetings at the France corporate headquarters. Back in Singapore, his love for Chinese calligraphy was on proud display in his office. As with his dialect-accented lilt, these displays were seen by his colleagues as 'tacky Chinese-educated hangovers.' He was aware of the sniggers behind his back, but maintained his right to be different. Bernard represented Integrated Chinese dispositions. Coming from a non-English and Dialect-primacy background, anglicization policies had not made him feel marginalized, even as they worked against his favor. In Proposition 2, Mandarin-primacy could be the source of auto-orientalism among Repressed Chinese. Extending from this line of logic, it may be argued that the auto-orientalist habitus may be socialized by Mandarin-primacy (Fig. 4.2):

This explanation, however, cannot account for why the Born-Again Chinese, despite being predominantly Mandarin-primacy, did not mani-

<p><b>Non-Mandarin Primacy = ease in cross-cultural mediation in Western multinational corporation?</b></p>
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**Mandarin-Primacy = Auto Orientalist Dispositions?**

Fig. 4.2 Proposition 2

fest auto-orientalist postures. It also fails to account for the many Dialect-primacy corporate representatives that formed the Repressed Chinese group.

Bernard's upper-middle-class background is indicative of my proposed analysis, which I refer to as Proposition 3. As a child, Bernard grew up in an upper-middle-class family environment. This differentiated him, as with the Born-Again Chinese, from the predominantly low childhood SES profile of the Repressed Chinese. Bourdieu's rendition of symbolic power,<sup>9</sup> or the function of cultural capital in social reproduction, offers an explanation to 'the Complex.' Dispositions translate into deeds when cultural capital is articulated in action. Actions that take on predictable forms are socialized responses to repeatedly structured events. Repeated actions become dispositional and relegated to the realm of the unconscious as past actions become historically embedded (*habitus*):

All human action, unlike its reconstruction in science, takes place irreversibly in time ... unbeknownst in principle to the actors (for if they knew, they would alter their strategy to take account of this knowledge)[*sic.*]<sup>10</sup>

Extending this discussion, 'the Complex' comprises enduring dispositions in one's adulthood shaped by personal experiences in childhood. These experiences are mediated, in the case of the Repressed Chinese, by one's childhood SES.

Anecdotal accounts by Singaporeans lend insight into the poignancy of language-planning among adults with non-English-primacy backgrounds. These accounts are few and far between, despite their significance in offering alternative views to the technocratic rationality of language-planning in Singapore. Some rare examples exist, however, to offer brief insights into how language planning had shaped schooling experiences. Kian Beng Kor,<sup>11</sup> a journalist, recounts his experience:

Born into a Chinese-speaking family, I encountered culture shock of sorts when I went to a mission school where most of my classmates spoke English. I managed only C and D grades for English in the first two years. An argument with some classmates in Secondary Two drove me to work hard at my English. I was sworn at in English by one classmate, but all I could muster were some profanities in Hokkien, which elicited sniggers from him.

Peng Fu Neo,<sup>12</sup> Director of the Confucius Institute, Nanyang Technological University, recalls the struggle of his classmates with the effects of non-English-primacy, subtly delivered in academic grading:

Three months into his first year at Nanyang Junior College in 1979, Dr Neo Peng Fu recalls, his class was suddenly told that their Chinese General Paper class had been scrapped. Taking its place were AO-level and O-level English, two papers they had to pass to graduate—no easy feat, given that they had all been schooled in Chinese until then. ‘Some of my classmates had to stay back for an extra year. Others didn’t do well enough to go on to university,’ the 48-year-old recounts.

Toh,<sup>13</sup> journalist, enjoins:

For many of the earlier scholars, who had lived through the turbulent times, writing about Chinese schools was, perhaps, too painful, because they had very vivid memories. So, many shunned the topic altogether.

The accounts were rich in offering insight into how individuals were spurred into overcoming the initial ‘culture shock.’ They described the relief some had experienced in overcoming the hurdle of an anglicized curriculum after failing the first round, and the tears of others who failed after repeated attempts. The accounts lend insight into the silence among the scholarly community who had to suffer the ‘too painful’ ramifications of prestige planning. As individualized accounts, the poignancy invoked by these testimonies, nonetheless, are limited in explaining why some experiences are peppered with hilarious moments of noisy quarrels among children, while others are overwhelmingly silent. Proposition 3 seeks structural explanations to these distinctions. When the devaluation of one’s linguistic primacy occurs, some individuals are more vulnerable to its impact than others. Groups who were in possession of more socioeconomic resources were better able to cushion feelings of marginalization.

In the case of the Repressed Chinese, memories of marginalization as a result of language planning persisted due to the struggles posed by their much less affluent family backgrounds. These corporate representatives had nonetheless overcome the structural barriers of SES and language usage, advancing the corporate ladder through education and hard work. As peripheral participants attempting to enter the inner circle, the Repressed Chinese had to work doubly hard. First, convinced that the values they had grown up with were undesirable to the inner circle, they

actively sought to repress them whenever they entered the inner circle. These values were permitted to resurface only when they stepped out of the inner circle. Second, they had to rapidly acquire the values of the inner circle that their peers had been endowed with from a young age. This resulted in the acquisition of auto-orientalist dispositions, where the Repressed Chinese had to be constantly dialogical about the values professed by the inner circle (for example, interests of the Western expatriate top management), and those of their own. Although relatively less affluent in terms of childhood socioeconomic status, the Repressed Chinese were far from culturally impoverished. Rather, the cultural capital they possessed was mismatched with the Vice-President's. Shane, for instance, shared his exasperation on being frequently rebutted by the Vice-President on the right commercial strategy to adopt. Despite contributing in earnestness with recommendations backed by concrete facts and figures, he felt he was not taken seriously. Shane was bewildered by the playful retorts of the Vice-President, but continued to approach him with the same style of persuasion. He seemed unaware that the dogged observation of the authority and propriety discounted his persuasion. The conscientiousness in delivering 'as planned,' which Shane prided himself in, did not elicit the same response from the Vice-President. It was perceived to lack 'the value attached to naturalness and lightness, conceived as the antithesis of pedantry, didacticism, or effort.'<sup>14</sup> The lack of a complementary cultural capital for effective persuasion in the 'elite language' bewildered Shane as much as it discouraged him.<sup>15</sup> Convinced that he would not be taken seriously, Shane internalized the anticipation of rejection. This anticipation resonated with his schooling experience dominated by English-medium instruction. The expectation that one is likely to be 'wrong' forms an 'unconscious anticipation of the sanctions of the school.'<sup>16</sup> A typology of Repressed Chineseness can be characterized by the constant struggle to rise above the complexities created by the upward mobility from economic marginality to affluence. The journey of upward mobility is enabled by the internalization of auto-orientalism. This internalization results in the repression of Chineseness at work, even if it continues to be cherished at home. When repression becomes characteristic of the Repressed Chinese habitus, the misrecognition of the source of anxiety renders it all the more challenging to resolve.

The findings illustrate the function of structure in shaping the habitus of Repressed Chineseness. In terms of economic capital, marginal childhood socioeconomic circumstances appear to be the definitive factor that

distinguished this group of corporate representatives from their colleagues. All local-hire colleagues reported having experienced systematic exclusion from the inner circle of the top management. English-primacy Situational Chinese however, relative to their non-English-primacy peers, appeared to possess stronger cultural capital to cushion the impact of this exclusion. In fact, cultural differences were not perceived to be as insurmountable. Although Repressed Chinese shared the sentiments with Situational Chinese that cultural differences should not get in the way of business, the subjective experience of enacting this belief differed. The need to leave an integral part of the self behind every time one dons the corporate suit, it seems, re-enacts the auto-orientalist habitus. Auto-orientalism foregrounds the Repressed Chinese pessimism over one's career prospects at ECI. Even as one acquires seniority in experience, one maintains the same belief that, as local managers, they are hard wont in overcoming the structural barriers prohibiting them. Although personal experiences of structural inequality may be subjective, they were nonetheless predicated by structure:

The power of words is nothing other than the *delegated* [*sic.*] power of the spokesperson, and his speech ... the use of language, the manner as much as the substance of discourse, depends on the social position of the speaker, which governs the access he can have to the language of the institution, that is, to the official, orthodox and legitimate speech.<sup>17</sup>

As children aged 5–13 are already conscious of their socioeconomic status,<sup>18</sup> this knowledge, for better or for worse, shapes individual life chances.

Where childhood SES was not an issue, beliefs did not emerge about one's marginality within an education system in which the medium of teaching instruction is monopolized by English. Yet there exist nuanced distinctions in how this resilience unfolds in terms of professional dispositions. In the case of Bernard, the Dialect-primacy habitus of Integrated Chineseness differentiated him from Mandarin-primacy Joseph (Born-Again Chineseness) and English-primacy Carlos (Situational Chineseness). Although SES is a useful construct in the examination of the structural mediation of auto-orientalism, language remains essential in the theorization of symbolic power. Linguistic primacy, as a form of cultural capital, performs a complementary, yet distinctive, function to that of economic capital.<sup>19</sup> Childhood linguistic ability at school is not just a matter of technical proficiency. It involves expressing oneself in a lingua compatible with

the language teacher's expectations.<sup>20</sup> Linguistic expression is influenced by childhood linguistic primacy, which is derived from the language most often used at home. It appears linguistic primacy is related to how one would experience schooling, how one would be disposed towards professional hierarchies, and, subsequently, how one enacts professional practice. As documented in scholarly research, young bilingual learners are often 'marked down' and viewed as 'recalcitrant' by teachers due to the language barrier.<sup>21</sup> If good academic performance is contingent upon cultural capital, children may need to perform dispositional adjustments with outcomes that impact more than just language proficiency.

Sociological implications can be derived from this situated comparison between biography and history. Auto-orientalism may be traced to elevation from less favorable socioeconomic circumstances due to the participation in the capitalist economy. The conciliatory posture of Repressed Chineseness towards the Western expatriate management is illustrative of auto-orientalism prevailing among late-industrializing nations. Within a commercial organization, the dominant group is represented by the 'first-movers' in the top management. Within the global political economy, this group is represented by first-mover economies. As with 'local' corporate representatives reliant upon the Western-dominated management for recruitment and promotion, Singapore requires the investments from Western MNCs. Through auto-orientalist lenses, Chineseness was viewed as incompatible with 'Western-style' imperatives and repressed at work. This mirrored the history of anglicization, with the relegation of non-English languages to the 'mother tongue' realm. As with the Repressed Chinese, although a strong economic performer, Singapore's enviable economy is the result of accelerated upward mobility from former economic backwaters. Auto-orientalist anxiety, it appears, may be traced to uncertainties over whether one is able to *maintain* advantage. In *The Economics of Linguistic Exchange*, Bourdieu outlines the habitus derived from social reproduction,<sup>22</sup> from which similarities can be drawn with the dispositions of the corporate representatives. Self-assurance characterized the social reproduction of the dominant social group, represented by the Situational Chinese. Insurgency characterized the social reproduction of the aspirational, represented by the Born-Again Chinese. Anxious striving characterized the reproduction of the sandwiched-middle, represented by the Integrated Chinese. Silence characterized the social reproduction of the 'negatively sanctioned,' represented by the Repressed Chinese.

The findings in this chapter also lent insight into the gap that exists in applying Bourdieu's analytical framework on late-industrializing societies. Bourdieu's social-reproduction analysis does not account for the manifestation of 'marginal SES' dispositions among economically affluent corporate representatives. His analysis focuses on explaining the continuity of existing class stratifications, addressing how dominance is reproduced through inter-generational renewals of class memberships. Individuals are equipped with the habitus that allows one to function effectively in one's inherited socio-economic position. The findings suggest that the incidence of economically successful individuals manifesting 'marginal SES' habitus is higher in late-industrializing regions. Unlike the first-movers in capitalist-industrialization, social reproduction is less predictable in late-industrializing economies. In first-mover economies, the chances of dramatic changes in economic circumstances are more constrained. In accelerated growth economies, dramatic changes in economic circumstances within a lifetime are considerably higher. The probability of inheriting childhood dispositions that mismatch with current economic circumstances is thus also considerably higher in late-industrializing societies. Bourdieu addresses the function of habitus in social reproduction, but does not address the persistence of dispositions despite upward socioeconomic mobility. A theoretical scrutiny of 'the Complex' explains the glass ceiling experienced by successful late-industrializing nations, despite rapid economic progress. Empirical gaps in the application of a Bourdieusian framework in late-industrializing societies will be examined for theoretical implications in Chap. 7.

## CONCLUSION

Prevailing contemplations over the developmental state focuses on the monolithic force unleashed by the agencies in the management of Chineseness. As broad visions unfold in everyday life, realities are interpretations of broad visions. The habitus remains an elusive domain inaccessible to state engineering. As a result, individuals may conduct themselves in ways they believe are an enactment of a state vision, but not necessarily from the vantage point of the state. The habitus appears to endure, even when one is complicit in managing Chineseness to comply with state visions. This, however, far from implies that state visions will be frustrated by poor fidelity of implementation. Rather, I am opined to view the success of state visions as the outcome of the capacity to transform prescribed visions through a diversity of adapted practices. As it stands, however,

there remains the enduringly disenfranchised, whose alignment with earlier developmental imperatives has resulted in the entrenchment within auto-orientalism. Repressed and Situational Chinese articulated similar beliefs on the importance of cultural disengagement at work. However, due to disparate habitus that underpins actions, manifest behavior differed significantly between the two groups. Habitus impacts upon how individuals are disposed to interpret and enact state discourse. When self-inhibition characterized by educational experiences, it forms the habitus of vigilance in the inhibition of values believed to be incompatible with the professional domain (for example, ‘working-class values’ associated with marginal childhood SES). ‘Cultural disengagement’ among the Repressed Chinese was inspired by interpretive beliefs about what prevails in the dominant culture. Response to this motivation is thus characterized by repression of the ‘cultural.’ This vigilance develops into change inhibition when paradigms shift. As much as one is highly sensitized to external demands, the habitus derived from the repression of the self has taken shape in the disposition towards inhibition. Although keen to change practices, the Repressed Chinese thus appeared to reinforce auto-orientalism rather than actualizing its transcendence. The culturally transcendentalist educational experiences that characterized anglicization initiatives appealed to English-primacy Situational Chinese (for example, ‘English was regarded as “foreign,” but my identity has transcended these beliefs’). ‘Cultural disengagement’ among the Situational Chinese was thus inspired by the interpretive value of self-authenticity. As much as self-authenticity is highly prized, the habitus derived from facilitative education experiences also developed optimism towards one’s ability to transcend the disjuncture between shifting paradigms and self-identity. Although disagreement may be expressed with prevailing practices, the Situational Chinese remained open to playing by the rules of others, while hoping mutual reciprocity will eventually transcend differences. In ‘the Complex,’ the reproductive relationships between the management of Chineseness and managing Chineseness have been shown to be mediated by childhood SES. In the next chapter, another set of permutations will be raised with regard to the mediation of this social reproduction in terms of linguistic primacy.

## NOTES

1. Said, 1978.
2. Alatas, 2006.

3. Muratbekova-Touron, 2008. Data was compiled from Lemma, a French multinational corporation, of French employees' self-comparisons with Anglo-Saxon peers. Lemma employees were based in France, as opposed to the expatriated personnel in the ECI.
4. Alatas, 2000, 114.
5. Nandy, 1989, 14.
6. Bourdieu, 1977b, 645.
7. Hill and Lian, 1995, 71; Tremewan, 1994, 77.
8. Wagner, 2005, 176, 301.
9. Bourdieu, 1991, 62.
10. Pierre Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 1–30, cited in Garnham & Williams, 1980, 212.
11. Kor, 2009.
12. Cited in Toh, 2010.
13. Toh, 2010.
14. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, 130.
15. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, 210.
16. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, 205.
17. Bourdieu, 1976, 107–109.
18. Mello, 2009; Taylor, 2006.
19. Bourdieu, 1977b, 654.
20. Bourdieu, 1998.
21. Drury, 2007, 35.
22. Bourdieu, 1977b, 658.

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## The Boys Wear High Heels with Platforms

C.K. Tangs was the go-to mall at the heart of Singapore's shopping district, Orchard Road. As my mom carried her bags of exploits with delight, her jolly demeanor changed as her attention shifted to a passerby. 'Hippies...', she hissed. I looked up at her and noticed the stiffened posture, her gaze directing me to the target of her disdain. This man, with his big afro hair reaching past his shoulders, struts tall towards us with his grandiose platform shoes. The belt with the big shiny buckle adds to his swagger. Bell-bottom pants accentuated the walk with a nuanced sway. The vibrantly printed shirt, unbuttoned to expose his chest, made a bold statement about his colorful personality. It was only later, much later, that I understood the disapproval in its context.

Men who had chosen to keep their hair long would experience the public shaming meted out by state agencies. The essence of disapproval crystallized in Lee Kuan Yew's Prime Minister National Day Rally:

The West sets the style ... They make the boys wear high-heels with platforms ... the permissive societies of the West ...<sup>1</sup>

I have not got the Western value system inside; it's an Eastern value system. I have not come here to have long hair, wear dirty jeans, walk about bare-footed, wear T-shirts with strange slogans printed on them. That's got nothing to do with what you have done in outer space.<sup>2</sup>

Occidentalism, or a view of the West as diametrically opposed to the East, prevails in the moral imperative of cultural fidelity. It justified state control

of the body through the objections directed against ‘Western permissiveness.’ In this discourse, ‘hippy’ long hair stood for the debauchery of the West, where boundaries of gender propriety are transcended in defiance of the established moral order. Through illustrated announcements that men sporting long hair would be served last by government agencies,<sup>3</sup> the state sent a tough message that the ‘hippy’ movement that had unseated establishments in the West would not be tolerated in Singapore. Measures of bodily control against ‘hippies’ then evolved into more diffused manifestations, such as the initial denial of the existence of homosexuality in non-Western societies to its continued criminalization today.<sup>4</sup> Insofar as regional security and foreign investment are concerned, however, relationships between Singapore and the West remained positive. In addition, ties with China have since strengthened. In the occidentalist framing, state elites sought to position Singapore as ‘middle path between the superpower (the United States) [*sic.*] and the rising power (China) [*sic.*].’<sup>5</sup> Brand campaigns marketed Singapore as a small but spirited nation unafraid of voicing its views in the face of hegemonic presence. In his first visit to China in 1976, Lee Kuan Yew may have riled Premier Zhou En Lai with his insistence on speaking in English. Although being branded ‘a banana—yellow of skin, white underneath’ by Zhou as a result,<sup>6</sup> the year 1976 proved a symbolic gesture that Singapore remained ‘friends of the West.’ Friendliness aside, Singapore adopts no craven posture as an Asian sidekick. Observers note that ‘Singapore punches way above its weight’ in the global balance of power.<sup>7</sup> Occidentalist rhetoric, then, became symbolic of Asian nations standing up to ‘bullying Westerners,’ a position also increasingly taken by China.

### ECHOING CHINA’S NO

In mere decades, China achieved remarkable economic growth. Characteristic of late-industrializing economic models, statist development propels rapid attainment of economic affluence. China managed to unseat Japan from its placement as the number-two world economy, hot on the heels of the top-ranking United States. Unlike Europe, it was the small economies in Asia that took the lead in capitalist industrialization. These nation-states were conventionally supportive of Western dominance. China, it was anticipated, would not abide by these conventions. As expected, China’s rise creates tensions with the United States, and Asia became the hotbed for dual hegemonic contestations.

Singapore could join Western efforts to contain China. Alternatively, state elites in Singapore could convince Western political leaders of its strategic role as mediator of dual hegemony in Asia. How would occidentalist caricatures of ‘Western permissiveness’ convince within the dual hegemonic framework? The target audience for occidentalist discourse is obviously not the West. In Singapore’s expression of Chinese primordialism, it is the strain from the previous containment and rejection of ‘Chinese chauvinism’ that had to be placated. The westernization of Singaporeans then became a problem to be tackled.<sup>8</sup>

First, the need to acknowledge China as the ascendant regional hegemon is crucial. For ‘Chinese nations,’ the acknowledgement of Chinese ascendancy equals the obligation to be symbolically explicit about its affiliations. Influential writers about Chineseness perform crucial roles in articulating national positions toward mounting discursive constructions of Greater China. The clarion call in *China Can Say No*,<sup>9</sup> for instance, is an occidentalist charm offensive for the unification of Chinese communities worldwide against the contemptuous, rampaging West. The invitation may be politely declined, such as Ien Ang’s *Can One Say No to Chineseness?*,<sup>10</sup> or stridently rejected, as with Allen Chun’s *Fuck Chineseness*.<sup>11</sup> Singapore, in contrast, studied the symbolic undertones of Chinese rhetoric and decided to heed them. State elites kick-started ethnic identity management with declarations of shared origins:

The Chinese Singaporean should always know that he too is a son of the Yellow Emperor and an inheritor of an ancient civilization which is becoming ascendant again.<sup>12</sup>

Guaning Su,<sup>13</sup> in his insight on *Being Chinese and Singaporean*, reaffirms the importance of engaging China as would-be ‘friends and kinsfolk,’ and to avoid ‘cold and calculating’ behaviors that may characterize the dispositions of ethnic outsiders.

Homophily between ‘friends and kinsfolk’ can be developed by taking a united and explicit stand against outsiders who have behaved indiscriminately. In the ‘Michael Fay’ incident where an American teenager was caned for vandalism in Singapore, state elites had not forgotten to make references to occidentalist views expressed by Chinese elites:

Deng Xiaoping said, ‘When you open the windows, the flies will fly in’ ... When Michael Fay was sentenced to caning for vandalism, Bill Clinton as

President wrote to our President on his behalf. But we couldn't remit his sentence of caning ... And people in Asia noted our stand.<sup>14</sup>

The references to 'windows' point to an occidentalist view of Western presence as an invasion of exogenous origins. This presence brings not just opportunities, but also accompanying 'flies.' One of such 'pests' would be the errant Michael Fay, whose actions had to be disciplined 'Asian-style.' In the choice of caning, the symbolic violence of neutralizing 'Western permissiveness' with 'Asian discipline' is exercised, alluding to the containment of this negative influence from polluting the home ground. Only 'people in Asia' were mentioned as onlookers, suggesting the audience(s) of this performance is the 'neighbor(s)' in this home ground.

If the courting of China required creating the impression that the two nations are similarly objects of revulsion by the West, Singapore did just that:

The little red dot [epithet of Singapore] and (Red) China are both countries the West loves to hate ... The real sin: Singapore and China are examples of countries which are taking a different route to development, and look to be succeeding.<sup>15</sup>

Affiliation is double-sealed by blood ties and developmental trajectories. Kinship is symbolically represented by the national colors. Red epitomizes not just the passion of comradeship, but also virility. It connotes the bullish growth that two blood brothers are enjoying as young economies, which cannot be reined in by the scornful eye of the aging West.

From the occidentalist constructions, I envisage a dual hegemonic landscape that mandates a pledge of loyalty to *either one* of the influences. In reality, the economic sustainability of the two spheres of influence may be essentially symbiotic. However, with one entity seeking to expand its hegemonic influence and the other consolidating its hegemony, zero-sum contestations take precedence in the discursive representation of the other. The 'home ground' becomes the contested space, where China calls for support from its regional neighbors on the grounds of kinship, while Western powers, do so on the claim as the resident power of Asia.<sup>16</sup> As occidentalist discourse derives from the logic of primordialism, it becomes an innate, immutable and inevitable mandate for incumbents of Asia to align with China within the dual hegemonic framework. This persuasion is given a further boost, where persuasions of shared affinity are sealed by the common experience of accelerated development.

Being wedged between two quarreling hegemonic contenders, however, is no cushy position to be in. With China's upswing in nationalistic fervor, Singapore's role as the mediator is expected to be tough. For attempting to soften China's vituperative toward US interventions in 2010, for instance, Singapore was chided by China that 'a small country' should know its place.<sup>17</sup> Given the state of affairs, the adoption of an occidentalist posture appears to be the path of lesser resistance.

Western mismanagement of 'second world' aspirations also increased the occidentalist appeal. Despite decades of developmental aspirations within an anglicized order, Singapore remains semi-peripheral within the Western dominated global political economy. Here, Lee Kuan Yew's frustration with the cultural chasm between East and West lends insight to the marginality experienced in the exclusion from the dominant core.<sup>18</sup>

He [Lee's muse, Singapore Straits Chinese elite and war hero, Lim Boon Keng] realized during his stay in UK that whatever his accomplishments, the British would always treat him as a British subject of Chinese origin, not as their equal. He resolved to connect with his cultural roots.

In his musings over Straits Chinese elite Lim Boon Keng's overseas experience in the UK, Lee expresses his empathy as an Anglicized Straits Chinese. Whatever his achievements may be, he remains immutably Chinese and an inferior outsider from the Western core, albeit an outstanding one relative to the rest of the 'Orientals.' Introspection on the persistent exclusion of late-industrializing nations triggered reversals of a previous conciliatory stance. The auto-orientalist position in attempting to match first-world expectations had won the late-industrializing region Western investments, but not full membership to the first world. This predicament fueled the desire for the shift of the locus of power from the core to the periphery. In the face of this ambivalence, China is poised to fulfill the leadership role for altering the locus of global power. Chinese ascendancy spells the renegotiation of a global landscape where superpowers increasingly dispute each other's agendas. It also renders the need for unthreatening mediators indispensable. However, as with auto-orientalism, occidentalism remains yet another echo of dominant orientalist paradigms. Although occidentalism expresses the rejection of the West, its discursive leitmotif rests upon the reinforcement of the East–West dichotomy. Auto-Orientalist discourse expresses the recognition of Western hegemony from the Eastern vantage point, and concedes to Western hegemonic impositions. Occidentalist discourse is likewise based on the recognition of Western hegemony from

the Eastern vantage point, but seeks the support of ‘fellow Easterners’ in resisting Western hegemonic impositions. In the light of this statement, I enjoin with instances of occidentalism among ECI respondents.

### BORN-AGAIN CHINESE—YOU DON’T LIKE OUR FOOD BUT WE DON’T LIKE YOUR SAUSAGES EITHER

Within an organization where discriminatory treatment is accorded to same-rank managers from different host countries, Chinese Singaporean managers at ECI often found their hands tied as they attempt to resolve issues that had arisen between ECI and its clientele. Caught within the ‘dual hegemonic’ tensions between their customers in China and their French colleagues back at the ECI office, the Born-Again Chinese responded with a decision to resist the source believed to have caused the reduction in their professional autonomy. Subversion of Western expatriate dominance took the form of explicit support in the defense of the interests of the Chinese clientele:

This is our home ground; the Westerners lack the same commitment to the region as we do.

By referring to the market as ‘home ground,’ economic interest is softened by the touch of kinship sentiment. The Born-Again Chinese saw themselves as regionally committed, a trait deemed by them as lacking amongst Western corporate representatives. Joseph shared the sentiments of his Chinese clientele about the legalistic business approaches of his Western peers framed in historically entrenched occidentalism:

Most importantly, they don’t trust them. The feeling is you [Westerner] came here to make money and after two to three years, you go ... the Western world is bound by contracts and penalizations, but Eastern culture, in China, they want to have that feel of trust that ‘you won’t mess me up.’

Occidentalism imagery served to legitimize the superiority of Joseph’s business approach. As cultures are deemed mutually exclusive in the East–West dichotomy, the corresponding assumption is that a ‘home ground fellow’ lacks the exploitative intent that typifies ‘those Westerners’:

Would I think like the way they think, ‘I sign a contract, I collect my bonus, and, thank you and goodbye I am moving to US or Europe; I don’t care

what happens to you?’ It’s not in my nature to do that. The reason behind this integrity is because I know I am here to stay.

Seeing themselves as a part of a Pan-Chinese network, the Born-Again Chinese prioritize proximal cultural networks over distal ones. As such, past schooling experiences were drawn upon as cultural resources to pledge their loyalties as kinsmen. Joseph, for instance, recounted with fondness that he belonged to the exclusive batch of Chinese Singaporeans who studied the Confucian classics, and literary and vernacular Chinese. Alvin remembered Lee Kuan Yew’s role in championing the case for Chinese Singaporeans to reconnect with their roots. William recalled how the school had taught him that he is both Chinese and Singaporean, and his father’s loyalty to China was evident through his generous donations to build schools there. While these instances were raised by the Born-Again Chinese as counterexamples to the ‘Westernized Singaporean,’ they did not believe that being ethnic Chinese is a magic bullet that will make them kinsmen with China. Although these memories had shaped their identities, Alvin was aware business small talk ‘will be hovering at very superficial levels if we talk about Lee Kuan Yew.’ Rather, it is the common economic aspirations that bind the Chinese from the two locales. At the political level, Singapore state elites had undertaken to ‘explain China to the West.’<sup>19</sup> In business relationships, Born-Again Chinese engaged their clientele in the manner of Prometheus who stole fire from the gods to share with his compatriots. Joseph used the example of Singapore’s leading position in education against international benchmarks to explain how being a distant kin can be dearer than a proximate one:

Guangzhou doesn’t care if you are from Shanghai or Beijing. In fact, they dislike Shanghai and Beijing. Beijing is a totally different breed. It is very heavily regulated. Shanghai is more open and Guangzhou is the very Cantonese type. Even with local familiarity, you may be a Beijing or Shanghai guy, you can’t deal with Guangzhou. They’ll be treated as no different from a foreigner. But if you are Singaporean and you can speak Chinese languages, they are interested because they are trying to learn something from you on an international scale [Bernard, Integrated Chinese, has made similar comments, but referred to the importance of being English proficient instead]. For example, I got people from India, Middle East, China, even Malaysia asking me about the education system in Singapore, as they are also looking at education for their children here.

As the only Asian locale with a comprehensive array of English as the medium of instruction in schools alongside an Asian-centric focus, ‘weak

ties' became the unique selling point of the distant kin. Formally, Born-Again Chinese saw themselves as corporate representatives bound by professional ethics to represent the business interests of ECI. Informally, the emphatic solidarity they felt for their Chinese clients invoked ethical dilemmas:

I was with several companies in the industry. Some of these big [Western] companies in the industry are not the most ethical in the world. Yes, there are stringent codes of ethics, but if they stick to that, they will never close the deals in Indonesia and China. But, when it's the other way around, they will voice out very strongly about ethical infringements. Ultimately, they have to see what is happening within their own yards. If not [for the compromises to ethics themselves], they would not have won all these orders [Alvin named examples of specific orders]. —Alvin

I don't think the American CEOs are any better than the Chinamen over *here*.

—Joseph

Injustice was felt by the Born-Again Chinese when they witnessed how 'the Chinamen over *here*' were exploited by the commercial trickery that their colleagues (Americans, in William's case) had resorted to. Imageries of the rampaging Westerner were invoked in the accounts of ethical compromises and hypocrisy. The concordance between the Chinese in the two locales was affirmed through the disaffection towards Westerners:

The mentality that they have when I went into China about 10 over years ago is still there: the foreigner [Westerner] disadvantage is that you are 老外 [Mandarin: 'foreigner'; commonly used to refer to Westerners]. You [Westerner] only know how to drink beer, and you don't like our food but we don't like your sausages either.

The caricature of clumsy Westerners who only know how to 'drink beer and eat sausages' coalesces as a strategy to not just elucidate the close ties between the Born-Again Chinese and their Chinese clients, but also to demonstrate the inability of their Western peers to grasp the nuances of doing business with the Chinese:

Just recently, I went through so much trouble to get a deal closed and I was calling the China office to reassure them that I have already told the expatri-

ates not to mess up. I told them [Western expatriates], ‘You mess this one up, you will never make it in China; 100% guarantee.’

The primordial affinity with the Chinese market was fully utilized to contest the dominant hierarchy within the ECI.

As if responding to the gauntlet of the ECI Vice-President, as mentioned in the previous chapter, to stand up in the face of able adversaries, the Born-Again Chinese constructed representations that reverse the imageries of the cowering oriental. In the coup to subvert the established ECI hierarchy, occidentalist representations accompanied Joseph’s demonstrated intentions to rise up the corporate hierarchy with real influence:

The way these guys talk are like ‘smoking at mirrors’ because they promote you to the same level, but still practice their cronyism. It’s just slotting in another GM [General Manager], another MG [reverse of GM; mocking at the desolateness of local top management positions].

Like the Situational Chinese, the Born-Again Chinese were mindful of their entrenchment within hierarchically organized power relationships. In response, both were keen on scaling the professional hierarchy, and engaged in proactive measures to increase their professional visibility. As the two cohorts who were more favorably endowed in terms of childhood SES, both groups were, however, motivated by differing aspirations.

As top managers, the Situational Chinese aspired for the authoritative influence to transcend hierarchical divisions. In order for an organization to achieve its aspired targets, collaborative efforts among individuals need to look beyond the hierarchies that stand between cultural groups. Born-Again Chinese top managers aspire to authoritative influence to represent the interests of the culturally likeminded. Seeing hierarchies as necessary and appropriate for the organization of professional relationships, the desire to angle for positional power is inspired by its capacity to determine who would form the decision-making core of a hierarchy. Although born to similarly affluent childhood economic circumstances as with the Situational Chinese, the Born-Again Chinese are distinguished from their English-primacy peers by their Mandarin-primacy background. Being predominantly Mandarin-primacy, the group had to adapt to the anglicization of Singaporean society. Advantaged in terms of socioeconomic affluence but not linguistic resources, Born-Again Chinese did not have the same space for expres-

sions of dominance within an anglicized school curriculum. The overt expression of occidentalist sentiments can be said to be derived from Born-Again Chinese selective attention to state discourse that characterized the second wave of language planning, where Mandarinization coincided with China's ascendancy. Through linguistic affiliation, the Born-Again Chinese vicariously experienced the rise of the dual hegemonic framework through discursive constructions of China's rise. State efforts to manage Chineseness were, to the Born-Again Chinese, indicators for a paradigm shift that would see the decline of the West and the rise of the East. In this vicarious experience, they envisaged themselves playing crucial roles as affiliates in support of this endeavor. Although familiarity with the Chinese link may have been weakened, the group perceived cultural affinity as timeless and immutable. Tapping the tacit resources transmitted via schooling, this competitive intent emerged as occidentalism. Upward mobility within ECI was justified by Born-Again Chinese respondents through one's position as regionally home-grown representatives. Frustration emerged when Western expatriates were favored for management roles despite promises of greater local representation, or when tokenistic promotions occurred. In contrast to the Born-Again Chinese vicarious experience of the Chinese renaissance, the Repressed Chinese focused upon the suppression of Chineseness during anglicization. Perhaps the Dialect-primacy should feel the most marginalized by state identity management, given that Chinese dialects are still not permitted to resurface in the media or the school curriculum. The Integrated Chinese corporate representatives, however, did not see Dialect-primacy as the target of disfavor by the state.

### INTEGRATED CHINESE—BEING A PART, YET APART

The demonstration of cultural fidelity is ingrained in the Born-Again Chinese predisposition and verbalized with conviction whenever cross-cultural scenarios re-enact the East-West dichotomy. As with the Born-Again Chinese, Integrated Chinese corporate representatives believed that cross-cultural differences play a mediating role at work, but look to a different approach in negotiating for a balance of power within the dual hegemonic framework. When conflicts of interest arise, these corporate representatives performed the role of juggling multiple affiliations as independent arbitrators. The Integrated Chinese profile is reveal-

ing of their experience with ethnic management. The Dialect-speaking are often conflated with the Mandarin-speaking under the common denominator of ‘Chinese-speaking.’ At school, Dialect-primacy children adapted to English as a teaching medium, and took on Mandarin as a ‘Chinese language.’ Today, Chinese Dialects continue to be banned from the education curriculum, and Dialect usage has extremely limited exposure in the media. Given the strict prohibitions in Dialect-usage in the public sphere, Integrated Chinese respondents curiously did not express the sentiments of the Repressed Chinese, who believed that their linguistic primacy was disfavored by Singapore’s past language policies. A further examination of Integrated Chinese childhood socioeconomic background revealed a key difference between the two cohorts. While the Repressed Chinese comprised exclusively corporate representatives who had grown up in marginal socioeconomic backgrounds, the Integrated Chinese came from better childhood socioeconomic circumstances. Further, the distinctive dispositions of the Integrated Chinese suggest there are more than just subtle shades of difference from the Born-Again Chinese.

Schooling memories differed among the four groups of corporate representatives. The Situational Chinese were generally ambivalent towards Singapore education, while Born-Again and Repressed Chinese corporate representatives recalled fondly the wealth of Chinese culture they were being exposed to during their schooling days. The Integrated Chinese recalled schooling experiences where they learnt the importance of adapting to the differences encountered in a multicultural environment. Chineseness was thus perceived as a textured landscape, shaped by how particular communities take position in relation to the hegemonic core. While the Born-Again Chinese may celebrate state rhetoric on the Chinese being common descendents of the ‘Yellow Emperor,’ Phillip found greater resonance in their experience of Chineseness with Hong Kong:

This problem is very much in Singapore and also Hong Kong. When you are able to speak Cantonese with them, you will realize they are actually very much like us. It means to say that there are still Chinese who insist on speaking Hokkien, or wanting to speak Cantonese. You will realize that the Chinese in China don’t really accept you as a Chinese. Because they feel that you are an outsider, that’s why they call you 华侨 [Overseas Chinese]—foreigner Chinese. This is something which will never change because this

is how they view us. At the same time, we as a country, as a people, have reached a certain level of maturity to understand that we are different, and we want to emphasize that difference. Likewise in Singapore, there's very little to bridge all the races together. We live in an environment where there are always differences and we live together simply because we need to. So we formed this common understanding that we listen to each other.

Constant adaptations to Singapore's historical ethnic management made them highly committed to ensuring the interests of different commercial players are appropriately represented. This behavior characterizes Chua's description of Singapore as 'the 'mix' that counts, even if none of the components is uniquely Singaporean.'<sup>20</sup>

The Integrated Chinese corporate representatives adopted a balancing-act approach to reconciling cultural differences at work. Martin believed enculturation to differences shaped the Singapore psyche:

Our skill-set has been built from dealing with different communities. Most societies around the region like to find ways to be more homogeneous whereas Singapore emphasizes we are multicultural.

Characteristic of Integrated Chineseness, Kelvin's perspective of kinship affiliations in business relationships endorsed his view of the role of Chinese Singaporeans in the global market structure. The relationship with Chinese clientele was defined by his function as a neutral arbiter. Yet he also needed to offer some extent of cultural empathy:

First of all they want to assess you. They want to see if you can speak Chinese. They want to see if you will do the complete translation or if you will massage the communication, and that will have an impact on your relationship. The Chinese will not tell you in your face. The impact is after the negotiation, whether they choose to trust you, accept your proposal and push ahead with the negotiation.

The relationship between Chinese clientele and Kelvin differed from the way they related to Western representatives. However, the difference was not that of antagonism and disdain, as seen through Born-Again lens. Rather, Kelvin saw the awe and caution of the Chinese towards Westerners:

Historically in China, Westerners have very strong influence. They may think that the Westerners are 'upper-class.' I've known this Chinese CEO as

a very dignified person, but when he meets my Western boss, he suddenly become very humble. I find it very strange because hey, you are the CEO of a client company, you don't have to behave... [paused, rephrased] the behavior and the facial expression become very different. I don't know how to express it. It becomes a 'no questions asked.' Whatever the Westerner says, the answer is 'Yes' [in agreement].

The flipside of this caution towards the 'Westerner' creates barriers to the establishment of common understanding. Martin expressed sympathy towards the communication barriers experienced by his French colleagues, and undertook to arbitrate the communication gap:

I brought these Frenchmen to China. Certain ways of communication may draw blanks from the customer. So there'll be situations where you will need to know there are miscommunications and you will have to step in and explain it.

At times, miscommunication may blow out of proportion, resulting in conflict and disruption of workflows. Kelvin described the necessity of taking a soft-balancing approach at arbitrating cross-cultural business communication. On an occasion, a misunderstanding between the clients and European colleagues did not just 'draw a blank.' Kelvin needed to soften the conflict by adopting an empathetic view of the client's sentiments, yet push forward with the insistence on observing ECI's corporate guidelines:

A team from Europe, two Europeans and one China Chinese went to the customer site in China. They were onsite troubleshooting and suddenly, the client decided to lay the progress of the troubleshooting. He told the team, 'You can go back to the hotel and rest. There's a power failure, and we will invite you back.' The China Chinese [ECI representative] tried to negotiate, but they were still asked to go back. Then the team called me. I called my contact in China and I told him, 'We have a problem to deal with, and ECI will deal with it. We cannot agree to such a delay. Our agreement is that we are there for one week, and we have to work. If your people are not prepared to work to solve this problem, I will pull out the whole team immediately.' Then, the problem was solved. I understood later there were a lot of problems between the client and the Europeans. To solve the technical problem was not the issue. As a Singaporean Chinese, I am not caught within the network of *guanxi* relations, as was my China colleague, and yet I am Chinese enough to solve the 'face' issues in the client refusal to talk to the Europeans.

On another occasion when a French colleague met with client complaints, Kelvin had to soften the conflict by lending a sympathetic listening ear to a colleague before he insisted the clients' interests should still be represented:

If they hit a problem, the French way is to hit the roof and say something unpleasant first. It is important to get them to cool down and get to the root of the concern. The French guy thought the suggested response was unacceptable, but I'll have to convince him he needs to take into regard the customers are in Asia-Pacific.

As they found themselves caught between cultural cross-fires, they marveled at their ability to be a part, yet apart.

Aligning with what he saw as his unique selling point with Singapore's economic development, Bernard saw in the Singapore economy not a model of exception in taking an alternative development from the West. Rather, within this fast-paced economic environment where Singapore is somewhat culturally aligned and yet mis-aligned, he saw the success in Singapore's rapid development as rooted in state intervention and a diverse portfolio of identity grafting:

Singapore is small. We will never have cheap oil because we import oil. We will never have free water and we need to buy water. In terms of international relationships, we can never sleep in peace without our neighbors disturbing us because we are an easy punching bag being a small country. Our competitive edge is man-made, and man-made competitive edge can be destroyed overnight. We have nothing to boast of, but 'Singapore Incorporated', a strong government-investor that constantly reminds us that Singapore is a company and bottom-line profits are important. So Singaporeans cooperate and work together to ensure that whatever is required will be delivered on time and according to standards. Things will not get lost in the dark hole like in China, which happens frequently because the country is too big, and people have too much a mind of their own and their different agendas. In Singapore, the smallness of the country also means that obedience is more likely to be commanded and the priority of general survival will tend not to be forgotten. The only way out is to depend on the reputation of being obedient, efficient, reliable Singaporeans, employees of 'Singapore Incorporated.'

The different ways in which Chinese clients related to Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives and their Western counterparts outlined the structure of the global political economy. The market privileged one

group with autonomy and creative expression without the burden of proving cultural loyalty. Hence, the Western expatriates' international mobility was regarded as 'natural,' freeing them from the long-term commitment to one region. But the Chinese Singaporean's demonstration of fidelity was required. Integrated Chinese corporate representatives appeared to be aware of the different treatment accorded to ethnonationalities, and do their best to maximize the interests of all parties to secure their own interests in this corporate hierarchy.

The Integrated Chinese approach characterized the hard-nosed placidity against utopian primordialism and skeptical fatalism. The respondents possessed a clear sense of reality that promotions to top management positions for 'locals' were of a different nature in comparison to those of 'expatriate' top managers at the ECI. They surmised, as Chinese Singaporeans, a pragmatic undertaking of the dual hegemonic framework was to recognize the structural inequality that kept them at the semi-periphery. Wedged between the squeeze of dual hegemonic contestations, the Integrated Chinese believed the narrow space they occupy could only be broadened when hegemonic tensions were eased, albeit temporarily. To take one side over another in the dual hegemonic framework carries too much risk of finding oneself on the outskirts of the periphery when the squeeze escalates into a collision. By serving both Western corporate and Chinese commercial interests, Integrated Chinese respondents sought to increase their employability as cross-cultural mediators. They saw the constraints of their position within the economic equation and recognized them as such.

### IDENTITY GRAFTING OF CHINESENESS WITHIN A DUAL HEGEMONIC FRAMEWORK

In the identity grafting of Chineseness, the corporate representatives were disposed to pay selective attention to state ethnic management discourse. Drawing upon memories of what had been taught at school, each corporate representative established a position of Chineseness within the field of play, based on specific historical reference points that were poignant to them. Corresponding with one's habitus, choices coincided with family backgrounds, which shaped attitudes as to which aspects of schooling stood out as significant.<sup>21</sup> Born-Again Chinese corporate representatives had drawn upon school memories during a time when Singapore was at its peak of development, and the circulation of occidentalist state rhetoric was

at its height. The English-primacy Situational Chinese who shared similarly affluent childhood socioeconomic profiles as the Born-Again Chinese, however, had not chosen to tip the balance by adopting a Western position within the dual hegemonic framework. Rather, they worked upon a transcendentalist approach of reliance on individual values, differentiating from culture-dependent assertions. Although the Situational Chinese were highly ambivalent towards Singapore education, their worldviews were resonant with the constant that English remains the medium of choice in bringing together people of different ethnic origins on a common platform of communication. Dialect-primacy Integrated Chinese valued the lessons of multiculturalism that remained imperative to the schooling of Singaporean students. The desire to play an active role in balancing the dual hegemonic influence stood in contrast to the Repressed Chinese. Although state policy remains firm in the exclusion of Chinese Dialects, the Integrated Chinese had not acquired beliefs about cultural marginalization. It appears the Repressed Chinese belief that Western values can only be acquired with the obliteration of non-Western identities (at least in the workplace) may be more than issues of linguistic primacy. Auto-orientalism appears to persist among those who experienced the disciplining pressures of schooling while growing up in marginal childhood family environments. If schools are where symbolic power of the dominant is imposed through pedagogic work upon the class-imposed body,<sup>22</sup> it seems this disciplining force has its most enduring impact among the Repressed Chinese.

In the previous chapter, Bourdieu's concept of the habitus provides a sound basis for the explanation of Repressed Chinese reproduction of auto-orientalism. Some gaps with regard to the manifestation of Repressed Chineseness among currently affluent corporate representatives were addressed through an elaboration of accelerated development that characterizes the late-industrializing region. In this chapter, additional problems with the theoretical fit of the school as a reproductive authority of the dominant elite surfaced. In her ethnographic study of cultural capital accumulation among tycoon Chinese émigrés in California, Aihwa Ong highlighted several conceptual mismatches between a Bourdieusian analysis of an insular French society and the transnational realities her respondents were experiencing.<sup>23</sup> Among which, the issue of the assumed homogeneity and immutability of cultural capital also emerged as a critical mismatch with the empirical realities of ECI corporate representatives. In Bourdieu's analysis, dominance is enacted solely by elites local to the social frame-

work. That is, the contestation for dominance is between the local 'ruling class' class of the French society, which is unified based on a common interest to exclude the distribution of authority to other domestic class groups.<sup>24</sup> In the Singapore case, this 'ruling class' may refer to the English-primacy state elite. However, as elites to a late-industrializing nation-state, this 'ruling class' enjoys much less autonomy at the global scale in comparison to the expansive influence in the prestige planning of French societies, including its colonial outposts. The Singapore state's influence is limited by its entrenchment within a dual hegemonic framework, which curtails the exercise of one homogenizing force through which symbolic influence is sustained. Regional pressures challenged domestic state elite's sustenance of a monolingual landscape, through which earlier phases of language planning had sought to institute through the anglicization of the school curriculum. In the attempt to join in the chorus of 'saying no (to the West),' Singapore state elites who were initially unfamiliar with this new position-taking had previously gone through an awkward performance of occidentalism. Adjustments to symbolic capital in accommodation to dual hegemony resulted in the fragmentation of class interests. In its place, 'culture,' in the form of linguistic primacy, holds sway in late-industrializing societies.

At the frontiers of globalization, the existence of two distinguishable fields of power persists in the mindscapes of its players. However, the relationship between East and West is no longer characterized by an encroaching West and an imitative East. Civilizations can be described as now operating within a dual hegemonic framework of first-movers and late industrializers, both of which have proven their mettle in successful economic development. More importantly, within this dual hegemonic landscape, civilizations both big and small have also acquired the sophistication to work symbiotically, at times with greater or lesser success of matching capacities. The Huntington thesis,<sup>25</sup> fortunately, has been averted as civilizations realize unnecessary collateral damage may arise from a headlong clash between competitors. In the attempts to transcend and/or balance dual hegemonic tensions, Situational and Integrated Chinese corporate representatives performed the roles currently adopted by smaller nations who have also acquired the sophistication to gain a voice in the geopolitical landscape by rising above the narrower approaches of taking sides.

The ECI corporate representatives lent insight as to how state efforts at identity grafting manifests in the everyday lives of Chinese Singaporeans. In the sense-making of this exclusion, ECI corporate

representatives justified their indispensability in terms of their facilitation skills within transnational networks, drawing upon their cultural capital as resources in support of their deliberations. Within the stratified cultural logics of transnationality, state discourses offered resources for managing identity grafting. The corporate representatives turned to state identity and ethnic management as reference points to which interpretations of transnationality can be grafted. This replication of cultural leitmotifs in the national curriculum resonated with Peter Evans' rendition of the 'embedded autonomy' of strong developmental states.<sup>26</sup> At the global front, newly industrialized economies are embedded within the hierarchy of capitalist industrialization, from which developmental states sought to maximize their autonomy with varied success. At the individual level, corporate representatives are embedded in the web of power relations within the ECI commercial hierarchy, from which they sought to establish professional autonomy by looking to the state for national directions. As autonomy is derived from one being embedded in state intervention; identity grafting was reconstructed according to the corporate representative's memories of what they found meaningful during their schooling experiences. Yet, their memories reflected only partial re-enactments of an ever-changing grafting of identities by the state, resonant with Manuel Castell's observation of weakening state influence within the global information networks.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, as late entrants to industrialization, developmental states experienced less resistance to state interventionism by their population, which perhaps accounted for their continued legitimacy in instituting control on the domestic front.<sup>28</sup> Correspondingly, the absence of large land-owning classes, which Bourdieu referred to as the 'provincial bourgeoisie,'<sup>29</sup> exacerbated the monopolistic influence of capitalist industrialization by the state. In the place of the provincial bourgeoisie were entrepreneurial traders, whose interest with regard to human capital was aligned with the state, although competition with state influence may at times occur. Both interests are aligned in the need for skilled, pliant, and cost-efficient knowledge workers capable of growing their businesses as transnational professionals.

The 'Asian exceptionalism' is, thus, the outcome of the way identity grafting is instituted in late-industrializing nations. Accelerated development lent significant legitimacy to developmental states in the management of not just economies, but also in orchestrating the identity of the nation.

Stripped of organic ties as colonial and semi-colonial outposts, trading ports make ready capitalist-industrial centers. In contrast to first-mover societies that had to manage resistance against urbanization, labor exploitation, and population diversity, the social fabric of late-industrialization societies was already well primed for the prevention of social movements that could be stirred at the onslaught of oppression. Linguistic struggles became the symbolic contestations of control over the instruments of capitalist industrialization. Looking at 'Chinese locales' alone, linguistic tensions have raged between Beijing (Mandarin) and its coastal cities of Shanghai (Shanghainese), Fujian (Hokkien), Guangzhou, and Special Administration Region Hong Kong (Cantonese). The established entrepreneurial classes of regional provinces fought for the retention of capitalist industrial influence as industrial cities (Tianjin, for example) establish closer ties to Beijing. The Taiwanese have defended their right to retain the Hokkien Minan language, in spite of the twinned coercive-persuasive drives by the Kuomintang government that have pushed for the linguistic conversion of the locale to Mandarin (traditional), albeit in a manner that is tolerable to, but nonetheless distinguished from, Beijing Mandarin (simplified). Long stripped of the linguistic usage of 'Chinese-dialects' by the successful drive towards Anglicization and Mandarinization, Chinese Singaporeans conceded to this loss with mixed feelings. The Dialect-primacy entrepreneurial classes had lost the battle for symbolic power with the strong state's ability to control the forces of capitalist industrialization with the support of Western MNCs. Especially for the case of Singapore, the developmental state enjoys strong legitimacy in the containment of countercultures, which were perceived to be not just unpatriotic, but also inimical to economic development. Coupled with the emergence of dual hegemony, the further weakening of states on the global front reinforced the national imperative of cooperating with state orchestrations as to how identity grafting ought to be recalibrated. Individuals thus pay tight attention to the performances of identity and ethnicity by state leaders. They acquired the sophistication of internalizing identity grafting, not as passive recipients, but active agents appropriating, resisting, re-interpreting, and transcending these discourses. Repositioning themselves within this network of power relations, they seek to connect dual hegemonic power nodes with the situated positions of linguistic primacy. In this rendition of the habitus, class divides appeared much less influential than linguistic attachments. As state identity grafting cuts across class groupings,

schooling experiences overshadowed class consciousness. That said, perhaps schooling resources remained much less accessible to the socioeconomically disadvantaged, resulting in the distinction of the Repressed Chinese. With the chasms established between the tracking of students into higher prestige academic and lower prestige vocational streams, the socioeconomically disadvantaged tend to find themselves clustered in a parallel reality disconnected from the mainstream majority. While the Repressed Chinese can be said to be model exceptions who had excelled in mainstream education, growing up in working-class neighborhoods may restrict access to social capital accumulation in mainstream network circles. As a result, currently affluent Repressed Chinese corporate representatives constructed experiences of being schooled into the habitus of ‘hard work, discipline, and submission’ (Norman). In contrast, Situational Chinese may refer to ‘everyday culture as a function of your salary, who you go with on a holiday, and what friends you make as a result’ (Peter). Born-Again Chinese may reminisce about the friends they had made studying Higher Chinese in the elite Special Assisted Plan schools. Integrated Chinese may recount how they had sought to juggle and balance everyone’s interests, being the reasonably affluent who were wedged between everyone else. In developmental states, much attention is invested in manufacturing the middle-class majority into the transnational labor force desired by investors such as ECI.<sup>30</sup> This instrumental focus limits the access to those who had fallen out of the middle-class prototype. State efforts at manufacturing cosmopolitan middle-class human capital can thus be said to be successful, but its access to the socioeconomically marginal remains a challenge.

## CONCLUSION

Born-Again and Integrated Chinese corporate representatives were the colorful personalities among colleagues. They loved good conversations and as a result, writing about them is facilitated by the enthusiastic sharing of critical incidents that supported their views. Both groups of corporate representatives shared beliefs on the importance of cultural engagement at work. However, the habitus that informs actions differed significantly. Education experiences facilitated the optimism of the Born-Again Chinese, as with the Situational Chinese. This optimism, however, was partial to occidental education paradigms of fidelity to Chinese heritage (for example, ‘Although “foreign” English language still dominates,

my home language, Mandarin, is also becoming important'). 'Cultural engagement' among Born-Again Chinese was thus inspired by the interpretive value of selective alignment of one's affiliation when confronted with competing cultural paradigms. Being highly sensitized to how shifting paradigms align culturally with one's self-identity, the habitus is characterized by zero-sum alignment with proximate paradigms, believed to be irreconcilable with distal competitors. The Integrated Chinese, in comparison to the Born-Again Chinese, were much less confident about alignment with power struggles. Their inclination towards soft-balancing also differed from the transcendentalist strategies of the Situational Chinese. Educational experiences where Dialects were excluded from the curriculum, however, did not appear to generate inhibition influences as was the case with the Repressed Chinese. The findings appear to suggest that the Integrated Chinese had interpreted this exclusion as the result of symbolic struggles between English and Mandarin, rather than a move to marginalize non-English languages. 'Cultural engagement' among Integrated Chinese was thus inspired by seeing themselves as soft-balancing mediators when tensions arise between competing cultural paradigms. Although disposed towards offering culturally balanced views, the Integrated Chinese were also much less amenable towards playing according to the game rules of others, as compared with the Situational Chinese. However, in contrast to the Situational Chinese, lower sensitivity towards the preservation of authentic self-identity appears to enable the amenability towards recombining cultural paradigms to form one's identity. As top and middle management local-hire, corporate representatives were but one segment of the local-hire community at ECI. Yet, this dominant minority comprised entirely ethnic Chinese. Malay colleagues existed, but occupied support positions in the lower administrative ranks. The local-hire community can thus be said to be further subdivided through varying access to the dual hegemonic networks. The ensuing chapter examines this subdivision in the light of how ECI corporate representatives made sense of a 'cultural other' that they have much less contact with, the Malays.

## NOTES

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## Sunshine, Bananas, and Coconuts

Going to the market with my mother was a dreadful experience. She is a super linguist in Asian languages, and demonstrates her prowess in switching from Cantonese to Hokkien to Mandarin, engaging her housewives' social network that is cast far and wide. Her endless chatter accompanied me in the background as I struggled to stay afloat in the engulfment of tropical heat. '*Bergih kedai!* (going shopping),' that was my mom shouting out to *Makcik* (Malay: 'aunty') from across the street. No; shouting across the street did not satisfy her urge for another round of chatter, as she dragged me and her bag of groceries across the street towards *Makcik*. My linguistic diet of all the languages she could muster is now complete. Mother was popular on the *makciks'* invitation list for sharing the goodies they had made, and their children were some of the nicest friends I had. Due to this, I grew up feeling an inevitable tinge of disturbance towards the catchphrase, 'Is it a Malay (who have carried out the mischief)?' Such a question I overheard discussed among a group of perturbed-looking cashiers at a supermarket, 'There was a theft ... the police came ...' 'Is it Malay?' another enjoined. The catchphrase echoes accounts of petty theft, sabotage, ingratitude, drug use, and teenage pregnancies.

Associations of specific races with negative stereotypes, ranging from minor misdemeanors to criminality, are not unique to Singapore. In post-colonial societies, this transgression may take on an added dimension of peer orientalism. As postcolonial nation-states struggle to free themselves from the reins of imperialism, a competitive posture was also undertaken

against other postcolonial nation-states fighting for accelerated development. The symbolic fight for regional hegemony fragmented the postcolonial arena, whereby the need for economic cooperation is coupled with the struggle to distinguish ‘competitive economies’ from ‘non-competitive economies.’ As symbolic struggles take shape with the emergence of ‘high-performing East Asian societies,’ identity grafting within the dual hegemonic landscape reproduced discourses of exclusion. Peer orientalism refers to the internalization of orientalism whereby the containment of beliefs about oriental inferiority is performed through the separation and attribution of these traits as unique to members of another subcommunity. In this extension, this subcommunity may constitute the dominant majority of competing nation-states. Accompanying the exercise of peer orientalism is, thus, the establishment of an identity independent of the peer oriental, but nonetheless ‘oriental’ in its attributes.

Within the dual hegemonic landscape of Western first-movers and ascendant East Asian descendants (ethnic Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans), Singapore is caught in a bind. State elites aspired to the grafting of an ‘East Asian’ identity, but lamented upon the lack of ethnic homogeneity. Furthermore, Singapore’s location in Southeast Asia was deemed a disadvantage compared with its contemporaries, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding, mitigating factors exist. As mentioned in Chap. 5, the ideal transnational professional (Chinese Singaporean, middle class, and educated) was manufactured through a stringent sorting mechanisms of education. Already a late entrant to the race, late-industrializing nations could not afford to wait for those who had fallen behind according to predefined international and external benchmarks. The punishing pace at which Singapore education had scaled global education league tables reflected its economic performance. Education and economy were mutually reinforced in the persuasion of Singapore as ‘high performance.’ In this chapter, global external umpires declared some in this race to have performed outstandingly despite being late entrants, and they hail from East Asia. Curiously, Singapore is included as a part of this configuration, despite its location in Southeast Asia. The ethnic Chinese majority composition of its population, inevitably, counts as a salient and key attribute to its qualification as ‘East Asian,’ complete with the much-vaunted outstanding economic performance.<sup>2</sup> With the inclusion of Singapore, East Asia has become a geographically permeable construct. Notwithstanding, an overly inclusive definition of the locale, the example of the following, seems counterintuitive:

East Asia refers to the member of countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam), plus China, Hong Kong (China), Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia and Taiwan (China). Emerging East Asia refers to East Asia, minus Japan. Developing East Asia refers to emerging East Asia, minus Hong Kong (China), Korea and Singapore.<sup>3</sup>

To market investors, the East Asia brand is inextricably intertwined with stellar economic performance and cultural demographics. An intuitive campaign considers the political economy of the dual hegemonic framework, such as Beng Huat Chua's descriptor, <sup>4</sup> 'East Asia (China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan) plus one (Singapore).' Historically, orientalist impressions of the mysterious Middle Kingdom inspired awe and the desire for conquest.<sup>5</sup> In today's context, the intuitiveness of 'East-Asia' brand campaigns is entrenched within orientalist impressions of dual hegemony.

On its own, Singapore is noteworthy. But banded with the East Asian wagon, its global presence is significantly enhanced. With the successful ascension upon the East Asian bandwagon, Singapore had sought to tackle its insecurity over its uncertain status associations. While other members of the inner circle were firmly rooted in terms of geographical location, Singapore is not. Cultural affiliations, such as Singapore's Chineseness, nonetheless formed a convincing association with the East Asian 'brand.' Coupled with peer orientalism, dissociation with 'negative branding' from moderate development in Southeast Asia is performed through reinterpreting British colonial discourse of the 'lazy native'. I refer to this endeavor as a reinterpretation (differentiating from reproduction), because in addition to references of slothfulness, peer orientalism perceives 'natives' as somewhat threatening. References to 'laziness' or 'willfulness' could be applied, depending on the position one takes when engaged in peer orientalism. The Malays could be stereotyped as 'lazy,' along the lines of colonial British references to an indolent subject who is incapable of physical exertion for modern sustenance. The contemporary stereotype would be the 'willful' native, a more intimidating peer saboteur capable of depriving Singapore of its identity-grafting ambitions. Differentiating the ethnic Chinese majority population from the 'slothfulness' of the 'natives,' Singapore's attainment of 'East Asian' associations with accelerated economic affluence becomes attributable to success

*despite* Malay presence. But this achievement is portrayed as vulnerable and open to destruction if the willful peer is not kept in check. The rationale can be understood with a revisitation of which economies comprised the ‘emerging’ in the broader definition of ‘East Asia.’<sup>6</sup> Singapore’s next-door neighbor, Malaysia, offers a good target as a ‘peer oriental.’ The bitter struggle for political representation that had resulted in the separation of the two entities appears to be justifiable grounds for the two nations to continue their obsession over past enmities. At the national level, the exercise of peer orientalism can be personified by their iconic national leaders, former-prime ministers Mahathir Mohammad (Malaysia) and Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore). In stricter applications of racial classifications, both leaders enjoyed a rich heritage of mixed lineages. However, when addressing the peer oriental, Mahathir’s performance of Malayness ‘exoticizes’ Lee’s Chineseness as the arrogant and exploitative younger brother (the latecomer to Southeast Asia). Correspondingly, Lee’s performance of Chineseness ‘exoticizes’ Mahathir’s Malayness as the irrational and indolent elder brother. As national leaders of strong states, identity grafting has a trickle-down effect upon how subsections of the respective nations relate to each other. Racial divisions form the underlying logic of social stratification.<sup>7</sup>

In reality, ethnic Chinese Singaporeans can be found within all socio-economic strata. But through racial stratification, a middle majority of ‘upwardly mobile East Asians’ emerged.<sup>8</sup> To occupy the middle position is to be constantly vigilant over the maintenance of boundaries within the social stratum. The upper stratum, the object of envy, was drawn from ‘foreign Western cultures’ to provide the element of idealized exoticism. This ensures the ‘locals’ feel excluded from the dominant stratum and the blame is transferred upon ‘Westerners.’ ‘Westerners,’ perceived as ‘most foreign,’ will have limited capacity to assert viable opposition against the state elite in the domestic landscape. Who to place within the subordinate position is of crucial importance. Any group relegated to a subordinate position will be offended. But if group associations are already linked to the state’s opponents, then this offense is of much less concern to the ethnic managers. The historical antagonisms of separation from Malaysia on racial grounds provide the ready justifications. If Southeast Asian Malaysia, for instance, deems the Malays as privileged, then its reversal is to render them subordinate. Malayness, from the 1980s, is strategically deployed for the reinforcement of Chineseness in Singapore.<sup>9</sup>

At ECI, the proliferation of interest in sharing views about the Malays demonstrates that the construction of Chineseness in Singapore is inseparable from the construction of the ‘otherness’ of the Malays. Although the interview guide had only one question about the positive and negative stereotypes associated with CMIO multiculturalism (Chinese, Malay, Indian, Others), the respondents appeared highly interested in prolonging the discussion about negative Malay stereotypes. An analysis of state discourses addressing the Malay community shed light on the symbolism of peer orientalism in the identity grafting of Chineseness in Singapore.

### ‘LAZY NATIVE’: SUBJUGATION BY PEER ORIENTALISM

In *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, Syed Hussein Alatas posits that notions of ‘lazy native’ are postcolonial internalizations of British orientalism.<sup>10</sup> Historical records of the everyday management of the colony offer a window on the orientalist asides that populated the legislature. The Malays had been described by the British as culturally impoverished:

A question in the courts would be ‘asked in a language which is the language of an educated people, copious and fluent’—English, in other words—only to be ‘translated into a poor language like Malay, which is again rendered into a rich language like the Chinese.’<sup>11</sup>

English wields the symbolic power of the colonial masters. Under this legislature, the only recognized education is an English education. In contrast, although the Chinese may value education, being schooled in the Chinese medium is regarded as somewhat lesser. References to Chinese languages as ‘rich’ elevates their position vis-à-vis the Malays in its comparable ‘copiousness’ as the English language, but also alludes to the convolutions that stand in the way of ‘fluency.’ In the expression of the failure to appreciate the ‘rich’ cultural endowments of the Chinese, the British nonetheless admired the convoluted exoticism of this oriental, in comparison to the ‘poor,’ culturally impoverished Malay.

In a show of paternal benevolence, the colonial masters could not allow for the natives to languish in their own slothfulness:

The Malays are, by general consent, not at present capable of competing on equal terms economically and educationally with the ‘immigrant races’—Chinese and Indian... we have pursued in the Malay States the policy of taking positive measures to prevent the submergence of the Malays in the

public services and in the ownership of land by the more energetic, competent and resourceful Chinese.<sup>12</sup>

Feeling responsible for their introduction of alien cultures, the colonial administration engaged in active intervention to prevent the more resourceful ‘orientals’ from causing the extinction of ‘natives.’ This time-honored ‘tradition’ of differentiating orientals in how they are to be managed formed the habitus of postcolonial nation-states.

As with British orientalist discourse of nativism, the peer oriental in postcolonial Singapore is a ‘lazy native’ incapable of independent sustenance. Keen on partaking with the East Asian brand campaign and frustrated with cross-straits relationships with Malaysia, ethnic Chinese were portrayed in this new order as the legitimate custodians due to their superior ability to grow economies:

Three women were brought to the Singapore General Hospital, each in the same condition and each needing a blood transfusion. The first, a Southeast Asian, was given a blood transfusion but died a few hours later. The second, a South Asian, was given a transfusion but died a few days later. The third, an East Asian, was given a transfusion and survived. This is the X factor in development.<sup>13</sup>

The ‘Southeast Asian’ (Malays), being the descendants of the region, was given first priority by the developmental state. Yet it was the ‘East Asian’ (Chinese) that brought forth ‘the X factor in development,’ even if priority had to be given to other community sectors. Singapore’s ascendancy in Southeast Asia was attributed to roots exogenous to the peer oriental. The legacy of peer orientalism reminded Chinese Singaporeans of their custodian obligations:

We have always stressed that the majority Chinese community must make special efforts to give our Malay, Indian and Eurasian communities an equal place in Singapore.<sup>14</sup>

By orientalizing the peer, engagement in peer orientalism adopts Confucian undertones of familial obligations. The most able ‘child’ is to take on the custodianship on behalf of the state, the ‘patriarch,’ to care for less fortunate siblings.

Peer orientalism takes on disciplinary forms with its dissemination through media channels. The Malays came to be associated with a community besieged by socioeconomic woes. As would an Asian parent that shares intimate details of their children, discussions were candid about how the Malay community is over-represented in teen pregnancy statistics.<sup>15</sup> Malay 'self-help group,' Mendaki, had to be given a gentle reminder by state leaders during 25-year anniversary celebrations of the need to help themselves to 'nip this (problem) in the bud.'<sup>16</sup>

In the construction of the 'lazy native,' managing Malayness was dealt with along the lines of the 'benevolence' that British colonialism had propounded. Assistance is to be rendered, one ethnic Malay journalist remarks, as the problem is 'beyond the capability of the Malay community organizations to provide.'<sup>17</sup> The publicizing of aid initiatives makes explicit the relations of dependency. It tells of who occupies the upper hand in delivering aid, and who occupies the dependent position in receiving it. Notions of 'benevolence' communicate that, firstly, Malays are besieged by socioeconomic woes. Secondly, coming from a 'poor' culture, they cannot help being in this predicament. Thirdly, Malays are incapable of narrowing the economic gap when pitted against aggressive Chinese competition. 'Lazy native' discourse serves to reinforce Singapore's Chineseness and rootedness to East Asia.

### 'WILLFUL NATIVE': PEER ORIENTAL AS THREAT

In British colonial accounts, being the 'lazy native' was viewed as an unintentional affliction. The propagation of this impression was therefore accompanied by a measure of sympathy. Prior to its departure, the colonial administration had Singapore commit to Malay indigenous privilege, inscribed in Article 152 of the Malayan Federation:

The Government shall execute its function in such a manner as to recognize the special position of the Malays who are the indigenous people of Singapore, and accordingly, it shall be the responsibility of the Government to protect, safeguard, support, foster and promote their political, educational, social and cultural interests and the Malay language.

With Singapore's expulsion from the Malayan Federation on racial grounds, Article 152 is relegated to the symbolic.<sup>18</sup> The active promotion of Malay as the lingua franca ended in 1966.<sup>19</sup> Traditional colonial discourses on the 'lazy native,' however, continued, but were not the only

imagery employed. Peer orientalism constitutes an adaptation to different circumstances, rather than a wholesale internalization of orientalism. The British colonialization of Malaya was a ‘bloodless’ takeover, which allowed for a non-interventionist policy in the treatment of ‘natives.’ From the British vantage point, Singapore and Malaysia were one political entity, a colonial outpost to be granted eventual independence as one Malayan Federation in 1948. Its views of the Konfrontasi (1962–1966) were thus that of Indonesia, an ex-Dutch colony, contesting for control with the Malayan Federation (of which Singapore was still a part) over the Borneo territories. But to Singapore political strife was driven by racial splinters, which resulted in its political ouster from the Malayan Federation. Economically, Singapore could no longer function as a colonial outpost that relied on indentured and convict labor, and thus required the full participation of its population in the labor force. Having to take on the responsibilities of economic sustenance, the abrupt switch from Malayization to Anglicization marked the developmental state’s decision to take on the paternalistic role with a more stringent approach to disciplining the ‘willful native.’ Following Western colonial pull-outs, Singapore was very much left to its own devices. Booted out of the Malayan Federation in 1965, the city-state had to navigate the spats of racial conflict between the Chinese and Malays (1963, 1969). Having lived parallel lives in segregated enclaves under the colonial administration, racial differences became the tinderbox when politicians seek to win support by playing the racial card. Against this historical blueprint, the majority is convinced that focusing on pragmatic capital accumulation is more productive than wasting time on addressing the issues of disenfranchised and/or disgruntled neighbors.

According to Manuel Castells,<sup>20</sup> the birth of developmental states is built upon the suppression of opposing social movements. Although the exercise of violence by developmental states was brief and light-handed relative to the times when the early industrial estates were establishing,<sup>21</sup> developmental states are no exception in the use of force to suppress anti-development elements:

We were tough on the Chinese gangsters who were trying to start a riot here. And I specifically spoke in Malay just now, about the problems or supposed problem that have been raised in the Malay press about their freedom of religion and so on.<sup>22</sup>

While Chinese gangsters have faded into the past along with memories of Singapore's unruly past, insecurities as to whether 'willful natives' have been successfully contained grow hand-in-glove with global and regional tensions.

Political, economic, and social considerations weighed in to legitimize the reining in of 'willful natives.' One of the key political factors is the periodic outburst of antagonism between Singapore and neighboring countries:

My neighbors (Malaysia and Indonesia) both have problems with their Chinese. They are successful, they're hardworking and therefore they are systematically marginalized, even in education.<sup>23</sup>

In the above statement, Lee Kuan Yew attributes Singapore's lack of accord with its neighbors due to racial differences. Singapore was also likened to Israel by its state elites: a non-Islamic nation surrounded by Islamic ones.<sup>24</sup> Public statements were reinforced by symbolic actions of engaging the Israeli military to train the early batches of national servicemen. Enjoining to confirm the just grounds for Singapore's insecurity as a Chinese-majority nation, Indonesian President Habibie's (1998–1999) infamous comment, that Singapore is just a 'little red dot,' reveals the disgruntlement towards its neighbor.<sup>25</sup> The 'little red dot' alludes to the 'red' China in Southeast Asia, amidst the sea of Islamic 'green.'<sup>26</sup> Although Singapore could eventually diffuse the hostility with the humor of using this reference as a term of endearment, the political tensions likely explained Singapore's high expenditure on military assets. Humor aside, references to the 'little red dot' in political discourse symbolize Singapore's national integrity against all odds,<sup>27</sup> but also alluded to the fragility of social bonds in Singapore society:<sup>28</sup>

Do not think that racial riots would never break out again in Singapore. They could be caused by chauvinistic leaders. They could be triggered by insensitive handling of racial issues by an inept government. They could be instigated from outside.<sup>29</sup>

It became persuasive to treat 'willful natives' with caution as state leaders highlighted similarities between neighboring aggressors and the Malays. Vivid memories of 排华 ('purge Chinese') occurrences in Indonesia echo Singapore's past racial riots. I have chosen to use

the Chinese terminology to describe this historical black mark, as the English term cannot fully articulate the emotional references invoked. Literally translated, 排华 refers to ‘purge Chinese.’ To the ethnic Chinese of Southeast Asia, it is a reminder of their diasporic status in the region, which subjects them to being targets of aggression by ‘willful natives.’ Threats of violence directed toward Singapore by regional leaders, thus serve to reinforce insecurities toward one’s own ‘willful natives.’

Neighborly quarrels between peer orientals can be likened to martial arts performances, where aggressive postures in brandishing weaponry are flirtations with prowess. They serve to woo the electorate with state protection, underpinned by the tacit understanding that conventional warfare is not on the agenda. But unconventional warfare does not play by these rules. When the alarm bells sounded with the September 11 attacks in the United States, quarrels between states called for a ceasefire as countries turned their attention back to domestic affairs. Having experienced a close shave where a planned terrorist attack by Muslim Singaporeans had been thwarted, peer orientalism took on a guarded tone. The peer oriental is no longer restricted to hostile regional politicians, but ‘willful natives’ who have *chosen* to isolate themselves not just from mainstream Singapore, but also from the Malay community.<sup>30</sup> British indulgences were previously believed to merely breed a ‘crutch mentality’ amongst ‘lazy natives.’ However, with threats of violence brewing once again, peer orientalism took on a begrudging tone of stereotyping the ‘willful native.’

Those who do not seek livelihood and fear to search for wealth are those who are weak and scorned in Islam, because they will be a burden to others.<sup>31</sup>

The propagation of the ‘willful native’ imagery works on the assumption of the community’s disengagement from mainstream economic pragmatism. A willful act of self-isolation is more objectionable than a hapless affliction:

The Malay community will not feel the impact overnight because their children are not learning enough English, Mathematics and Science in the *madrasahs* (Islamic schools). But decades later, if things have gone wrong with the country, when our children analyze the causes, they will point an accusing finger at our generation for lack of political courage and vision.<sup>32</sup>

If disengagement is seen as willfulness, the economic and disciplinary ramifications will be perceived as ‘just desserts.’

Alienated from the confident assertion that one truly knows thy neighbor, ethnic Chinese Singaporeans relied upon the state for knowledge about the peer oriental:

We do not, however, take racial harmony for granted. On the contrary, we constantly worry about not offending one another and not threatening inter-racial peace.<sup>33</sup>

Being informed about the fragility of interracial relationships, ‘willful native’ constructions serve as a disciplinary force. The populace entrusts the management of social issues to the state, while they focus on pragmatic economic participation:

The success story must continue, because the success of the Malay community is inexorably linked with Singapore’s success, and it is our responsibility to make sure we do our utmost to contribute to Singapore’s growth, and its continued social cohesion.<sup>34</sup>

In the caricatures of the ‘lazy native,’ ethnic Chinese Singaporeans were reminded of their lineage as migrants of ‘East Asian’ origins. They had to shoulder the *noblesse oblige* of caring for those whom they had displaced. The ‘willful native’ view frames interracial relations with the Malays as volatile and threatening. Convinced that the Malays would not be content living under the dominant influence of ethnic Chinese, ‘willful native’ views of the peer oriental portrays a disengaged Malay community demonstrating signs of passive aggression.

### PEER ORIENTALISM AT ECI

With the proliferation of contesting discourses, what would be the influence of peer orientalism on ECI corporate representatives? Although both ‘lazy native’ and ‘willful native’ constructions possess negative connotations, they differ on their grounds for objection. As the discussion shifts from the past symbolic struggles of dual hegemony to the power struggles for influence in Southeast Asia, a change of position is observed to occur among the Chinese Singaporean corporate representatives. This change indicates racial views as essentially articulations about the global division

of labor. One's position, thus, adjusts according to the reference point against which cultural comparisons are made.

The data presented here came mainly from the respondents' non-work related impressions. The dearth of non-Chinese colleagues under local engagement contracts meant respondents were less able to comment solely based on work experiences. The respondents' limited interactions with Malays in their work and personal lives discounted the veracity of their impressions. But it reflected the reality where interracial interactions, most often than not, do not lead to deep, meaningful relationships.<sup>35</sup> Counterexamples where respondents sought to dispel peer orientalism were present across the four typologies. Through the exemplified instances of their Malay friends or friends from other cultural groups, some corporate representatives have shown how interracial solidarity has improved with increased contact. With the successful establishment of friendships, it seems the expression of solidarity can cut across the typologies without significant differentiation in the types of goodwill being expressed.

For corporate representatives who have yet to find meaningful interracial friendship outside of the social circle that characterized that of ECI, they appear to be more liable to have negative impressions of the Malays. Further elaboration on their impressions of the Malays tended to present descriptions of peer orientalism and selective preference for 'lazy native' or 'willful native' imageries. Groups who perceived themselves as possessing cultural capital superior to that of the Malays came from more affluent childhood socioeconomic circumstances, and tended to echo 'lazy native' constructions. Situational Chinese and Born-Again Chinese respondents tended to attribute Malay 'shortcomings' to hapless afflictions. Groups from less affluent childhood socioeconomic circumstances saw Malays as threatening peers, and tended to echo anxieties toward the 'willful native.' Integrated Chinese and Repressed Chinese respondents tended to attribute Malay 'shortcomings' to intentional acts of diffused aggression.

The Situational Chinese had grown up in families with English-speaking cultures. Endowed with the officially endorsed medium of intercultural communication, it would be expected that this group would be the most active in socializing with non-Chinese friends. Some of them had indeed made the best use of this endowment, while others mentioned the lack of opportunities for cross-cultural contact. Characteristic of the Situational Chinese position, the reason for the lack of opportunities for cross-cultural contact was explained as a 'function of socioeconomic credentials' (Peter).

Carlos highlighted the homogeneity of the ethnic profile of ECI corporate representatives to support his point:

There aren't many Malays in this industry. Same reason as why this industry is dominated by males. This industry requires engineering expertise and that rules out a lot of women. To be in an engineering organization, you need some fundamentals. You need mathematical and science abilities and that means schooling. Do the Malays like to go to school that much? I don't know.

Carlos perceived of Malays as being subject to a structural handicap, as with the case of female employees, in entering the ECI environment. This formed a natural barrier of exclusion from contact, which thus diminished the chances of friendships from forming. When allusions were made to the 'lazy native,' Carlos echoed British colonial musings about the beauty of laidback native lifestyles:

They are a lot more laidback and that's the type of value that is worth keeping ... But that's coming from my perspective from having a Chinese outlook, wanting to embrace a little more of the Malay culture, knowing that at the end of the day, if I really need to crank up the engine a little bit in order to produce things, I can. But if I were a true, true Malay, I may not be able to that, whatever.

Carlos reiterated the belief that prevailed among Situational Chinese that the transcendence of cultural boundaries is more accessible to the fortunately endowed. Although a cultural escapade into the 'laidback' culture is enticing, it is not desirable if one is native to this fantasy. Reminiscent of British colonial beliefs about Malay cultural impoverishment, Situational Chinese views about the 'lazy native' expressed concordance with the belief that the Chinese possess richer cultural capital than the Malays, thus occupying a higher position in the racial strata. Substantiations of this belief were supported by Ron through observations of who has the stronger social capital at the ECI:

If you look at companies we serve in the region, the biggest ones, they usually have an Asian face, oh sorry, a Chinese face, more than a Malay-looking person. Most of the companies here, our biggest markets in this region, are in Taiwan, China, or Hong Kong. So they may like to match a particular face to a particular customer.

Coalescing with Singapore's 'East Asian' brand campaigns, Ron had likewise tightened the definition of the 'markets in this region' to the 'biggest.' With the restriction of significant markets to the 'emerging,' such as those in 'Taiwan, China, or Hong Kong,' cultural exclusions were made against 'developing' markets in the other parts of Asia. Given that ethnic Chinese in Singapore are 'better matched' in terms of racial attributes to the 'East Asian' markets, and ethnic Malays in Singapore are restricted to 'developing' markets in Asia, Ron expressed his apology in making known the reality of how cultural transcendence is more accessible to those located in the more advantaged strata in the global division of labor.

Born-Again Chinese saw themselves as fortunately endowed and bounded by social obligations to the lesser endowed. When a Pan-Asian view was undertaken, the diversity of Asian identities in Singapore was seen to make the city a model Asian example of multiculturalism. Born-Again Chinese corporate representatives, however, found it more challenging to transcend occidentalism. Towards 'Westerners,' they saw the need to 'stand up' to the injustices they and their peers in China had experienced. For those who also subscribed to peer orientalism, discriminatory treatment of the Asian other brought forth the nurturing aspects of Born-Again Chineseness. Seeing the Malays as a contented lot, Alvin did not take on a competitive posture towards them:

Malays are more communal, meaning they are more *kampong* [Malay: 'village'], they stick together and are not interested in making money but just interested in outward appearance and of course generally not interested in upgrading.

Living in urban environments against their will, Alvin believed the Malays had established their own communes to retain old village sentiments. In the modern economy, Malays are thus, according to Alvin, consumers of material goods to embellish outward appearances, rather than producers interested in capital accumulation. As with 'lazy native' imagery, Alvin saw them as victims of 'modern progress,' which had resulted in them becoming social misfits. Enjoining with Alvin, William saw it as a 'happy problem' having to pay more tax to support the socially needy:

If you choose not to work hard, it's ok, it's your choice. The government will not cast you aside, but you will get what you will get in return. As much as many people will disagree, I still think it's a fair system. If I earn more,

I pay more tax. If I pay more tax, I treat it as a happy problem, because I earn more.

Echoing the voice of the Singapore government, William demonstrated his strong subscription to the call to take up the civic responsibility of providing for the lesser endowed on behalf of the state. The different posturing of the Born-Again Chinese echoes the implicit understanding of racial stratification. A ‘courageous’ disposition was undertaken towards ‘Westerners’, as would insurgents from a lower stratum aspiring upward mobility to a higher stratum. As the Malays occupied support positions at ECI, Born-Again Chinese were thus more inclined towards taking postures of ‘benevolence,’ rather than ‘belligerence.’ This racial stratification is underpinned by tacit rules that similarly guided social relationships are defined by wage structures. It would be ungracious of corporate representatives, for instance, to complain that the profits they have earned on behalf of ECI are shared with support staff in the form of bonuses.

If contact with the peer oriental is rare, the most intensive exposure to information about the other would be during one’s school days. Informed by its colonial past and days of ethnic strife, Singapore has made intensive efforts to educate the population on the sanctity of multiculturalism. Rites and ceremonies, such as the National Pledge and Racial Harmony Day, remind students of the importance of equality and respect for diversity. Textbook content was also designed with racial representation in mind. The use of local ethnic names in textbook personas, such as Xiaoming (Chinese), Ahmad (Malay), Muthu (Indian), and Molly (Others), depicts interracial friendship as an everyday Singapore reality (although local jokes circulate about how, in math problems, Xiaoming is often depicted as owning more marbles than Ahmad). Embedded within these caricatures was the hope that national education could strengthen positive interracial attitudes. However, memories of schooling have proven to be highly interpretive. Although equally affluent in present socioeconomic circumstances, Integrated and Repressed Chinese displayed an ambivalence towards the Malays as would disgruntled ‘next-door neighbors.’ Seeing the peer oriental as a ‘willful native’ thus characterizes their responses toward the Malays. The ‘otherness’ of the peer oriental was attributed to willful disengagement with mainstream society.

As a group who highly value intercultural integration, Integrated Chinese respondents expressed their dislike towards ‘antisocial behavior.’ Martin was frustrated by how cultural goodwill had been a one-sided gesture:

The Malays still insist that they must have halal food [prepared according to Islamic guidelines] wherever they go. Even if they are with their Chinese friends, they still insist on going to halal restaurants.

Echoing the concern of ‘the Malay press about their freedom of religion,’<sup>36</sup> Martin expresses his disgruntlement with how multicultural accommodation is only expected of the Chinese. From the perspective of the efforts the Integrated Chinese had made in the realization of a multicultural Singapore, to them, ‘willful native’ caricatures stood out the most. Compared to the Situational and Born-Again Chinese, Integrated Chinese saw the Malays as equal in standing but not pulling their weight. Phillip’s allusion of his insecurity over the news about the rising Islamic fundamentalism was articulated with the analogy of the lack of neighborliness:

It is important to go home safely to a neighbor who may be Malay, for example, without feeling that while you are away, your house will be in trouble.

Alluding to the close shave where plans to launch terrorist attacks were mooted and thwarted in Singapore’s own backyard, Phillip’s views underpinned why he related to the Malays as ‘neighbors’ and not ‘family.’ Nonetheless, in the use of ‘neighbor’ in his references to the Malays, Phillip felt the need to find ways to get along due to proximity, as one has little choice in determining who lives ‘next door.’

Where Malays are concerned, the Repressed Chinese expressed the greatest frustration as to the socioeconomic strains created by ‘willful natives.’ Norman’s childhood was characterized by similar childhood circumstances, which led him to complain about the different parenting practices between the Chinese and Malays:

As Lee Kuan Yew puts it, if you cannot afford it, do not have kids. To Chinese, we always try to [exercise birth] control. But if we can afford it of course we can have more kids. If you are talking about the Malays, even if they have no money, to them, if they have kids, they have kids. They just keep on giving birth and then they have less education and I guess the parents don’t control them so they go wild.

In contrast to the light-hearted comments made by Born-Again Chinese William, that being asked to shoulder social burdens financially is a ‘happy problem,’ Norman saw it as socially irresponsible of ‘willful natives’ to burden the rest of society with their problems. Shane weighed in on Norman’s position about ‘willful natives’:

Malays, I don’t know, they don’t seem to have any good points at all. I am just speaking honestly I find that since the past, the Malays like to buy Proton cars [Malaysian production]. What is the reason? Probably it’s a way of showing support to cars made in Malaysia.

Seeing Proton cars as Malaysian national emblems, Shane shared his doubts about Malay loyalty in times of national conflict. The peer orientals’ ‘willful’ social disengagement, according to the Repressed Chinese, runs contrary to innocent expressions of free-spirited village mentalities and quirky consumer tastes. Rather, they underpin beliefs about the symbolic complicity of the ‘willful natives’ to disengage with the ‘Chinese majority’ Singapore.

#### IDENTITY GRAFTING AND PEER ORIENTALISM

As an outcome of ethnic management initiatives, racial stratification among Singaporeans tends to take precedence over that of class. A close ‘neighbor’ is, thus, nonetheless, a cultural outsider that one develops competitive postures toward, if little or no positive encounters had been established. In contrast, those seen as occupying a social stratum further from one’s own are better accepted. Through the examination of the peer orientalization of Malays, the insights derived from the previous chapters are further refined.

The majority of the respondents demonstrated the internalized perception that although Malays are fellow Singaporeans, they are nevertheless a communal outgroup to the Chinese Singaporean. Some respondents saw Malays as ‘lazy natives’ who *could not* help themselves. Others viewed them as competition. National loyalties were questioned in the belief that Malays are ‘willful natives’ who *would not* perform their national obligations. Upon a closer examination of peer orientalism, these perceptions, however biased, may not be purely random whims of fancy. Racial attitudes changed with the target of comparison. Respondents related to cul-

tural outgroups as if a hierarchy of prestige existed between them as ethnic Chinese and the racial other.

The Born-Again Chinese and Situational Chinese, coming predominantly from affluent childhood backgrounds, viewed themselves as having greater social proximity with the 'Western occidental' than the 'Malay peer oriental.' Malays, although perceived as a cultural outgroup, were seen as further in terms of social proximity and thus did not pose a competitive threat. Hence, 'lazy native' stereotypes were subscribed to, which excuses the Malays as hapless against their own will. Seeing themselves as transnational professionals, Situational Chinese assumed distant cultural others found themselves in the lower strata of the racial hierarchy due to limited economic and cultural capital necessary to transcend ethnoracial boundaries. This is further exacerbated by weak social capital, which limits Malay ability to tap into ethnonational networks to facilitate their entry as participants of transnationalism. The Born-Again Chinese habitus of committing themselves to address social inequality found its fulfillment through cultural others. Competitive postures took shape against Western expatriates, which spurred them to 'come out of my shell and be more vocal' (Alvin). In the Malays, they saw in the peer oriental the importance of being benevolent towards those who are commonly 'non-occidentals,' but in a 'poorer' position to stand up for themselves. Therefore, 'lazy native' behavior was treated as 'a happy problem.' In contrast, Integrated and Repressed Chinese saw themselves as closer to 'Malay outsiders' than to 'Western outsiders.' Being accustomed to seeing Malays as national fellows who do not share similar cultural descent, ambivalence appeared to have arisen out of this closeness when positive impressions failed to develop out of intercultural contact. Competitive postures emerged, bringing into question why efforts to reach out to this 'neighbor' tended to be one-sided. Having enjoyed successful encounters where proactive efforts to reconcile the interests of diverse cultural entities were reciprocated with similar goodwill, the Integrated Chinese may have found the lack of reciprocity objectionable. This resulted in the insecurity of questioning whether this 'next door neighbor' is willing to play by the rules of reciprocal goodwill when conflicts of interest arise. Repressed Chinese individuals drew upon personal experiences of constant vigilance to adapt to mainstream values, in spite of the socioeconomic marginality in their childhood. Observations of unconventional behavior among the Malays were thus deemed objectionable as antisocial behavior among 'willful natives.'

The above statements are framed in terms of perceptions because judgments on social proximity are constructed, based on the reference point of one's childhood socioeconomic circumstances. Although currently as affluent as their peers, Integrated and Repressed Chinese spoke as if they were still living in childhood circumstances, echoing the values they had learnt at school, and speaking out against those who have failed to do their part for the nation. Besides, judgments on Malay socioeconomic circumstances appeared to selectively echo state discourses, rather than first-hand experiences. The state-perpetrated impressions, as the findings suggest, were based on respondents' internalized pasts. Its replications represent the habitus that has been shaped by peer orientalist imagery, in ways mediated by the position one *had been* situated within the field of power. Reproductions of racial stratifications among ECI corporate representatives illustrated how implicit hierarchy of relations was internalized by the habitus. Although it was childhood socioeconomic backgrounds that appeared to shape respondent perceptions of cultural outsiders, the source from which the information was derived appeared to be traced to past exposures to state ethnic management. In spite of the confidence about the veracity of the racist beliefs that were shared, ECI respondents who had developed negative impressions about the Malays admittedly did not have sufficient and/or in-depth first-hand experiences to substantiate their beliefs. This suggests the racist habitus was formed via living the experience vicariously through discursive knowledge transmissions, rather than through the examples of their parents.

In the hurry to distinguish itself from the legions of newly independent postcolonial nation-states, Singapore lost no time mulling over its national identity, and focused on the development of its national economy. It was taken for granted that the national population was to comprise racial communities whose boundaries cannot be transcended, according to how the British had depicted the colony, albeit with the resolve to ensure inter-racial mixing and co-existence as a united nation. Therefore, instead of addressing the entrenched structural inequalities that came to manifest as racial divisions in postcolonial Singapore, inherited assumptions from the British of 'lazy natives' came to characterize ethnic management views of the prevalence of economic under-performance in specific racial segments of Singapore society.

In seeking to convince global investors of Singapore as the preferred location choice due to its East Asian brand associations, Singapore's brand pitch was that of a promising investment site, distinguished from

the ‘developing’ economies Southeast Asia. Neighborly tensions between countries further complicated domestic relationships. As with neighboring nations that treated population segments that ran contrary to the national character with ambivalence, the same characterized Singapore’s treatment of population segments that ran contrary to its East Asian brand. Discursive constructions of the ‘willful native’ further contributed to the stock of negative stereotypes in the employment of peer orientalism.

In Aihwa Ong’s study of how transnational immigrants are obliged to adopt the ethnoracial order of the host society, she describes the implicit hierarchy of relations between nation-states.<sup>37</sup> Within the Singapore domestic landscape, observations of how peer orientalism performs similar disciplining functions were also observed, where Malay Singaporeans have come to adopt mainstream ‘Confucian’ values as core to their personal identities.<sup>38</sup> Conversely, resistance against the adoption of mainstream practices comes with the costly ramifications of affirming the veracity of peer orientalist caricatures, from which one’s economic independence and national loyalty are brought into question. Peer orientalism among ECI respondents served as the instances where judgments by state and society were exercised. More often than not, these judgments were decisions over whether the Malays ought to be excused as ‘lazy natives,’ or dismissed as ‘willful natives.’ However, as racial stratifications are reflections of developmentalist imperatives, the stratification of social relationships domestic to Singapore is subject to the dynamism of economic growth plans. With the introduction of liberal immigration laws to tackle the low fertility (replacement) rate among the local population, tensions have arisen over the eclipse of the local population by new migrant groups. It seems, in a migrant society such as Singapore, it will not be the Malays who remain the exclusive targets of peer orientalism.

In the haste to reify the dual hegemonic landscape, an oversight may have occurred as to Singapore’s unique selling point. The openness that characterized China’s willingness to consult Singapore for its foreign and domestic policies, and in Singapore’s readiness to accept China’s hegemony, lies in the distance of their primordial relationship. As the diasporic ‘South,’ the scorch of an ascendant hegemon seeking to assert its influence is diffused by geographic distance. Exposure to conditions in the ‘South’ had also enabled diasporic Chinese communities in Singapore to develop effective strategies of ethnic and identity management that remain blind spots to those that had remained in the ‘North.’ While China, for example, is not short of ideas on how Xinjiang Muslim dissidents could

be disciplined by coercion, lessons could be learnt from Singapore about the effective co-optation of diverse community interests. It is perhaps the accounts of individuals who had transcended peer orientalism to form friendships with cultural communities beyond the ECI circle, with or without the accompanying economic benefits, that have won the admiration of countries that continue to experience ethnic strife.

In Samuel Huntington's thesis, differences between East and West are deemed irreconcilable.<sup>39</sup> Through the exemplars of transnational Chinese entrepreneurs, Aihwa Ong challenges the Huntington thesis on how civilizational differences can be effectively bridged with the rise of a dual hegemonic global landscape.<sup>40</sup> Against the broader leitmotif of dual hegemony, exemplars have emerged among ECI corporate representatives that supported Ong's proposition. However, counterexamples also exist in the reification of orientalism, whether in the forms of auto-orientalism, occidentalism, and especially peer orientalism. In particular, reifications of the Huntington thesis as a result of identity-grafting (mis)management remains a persistent issue. The fascination with distinct models of Chinese and Western capitalist developments, especially among late-industrialization economies, overshadows the diversity of ethnocultural differences resident within capitalist industrial societies. This chapter on the peer orientalizing of the Malays illustrates how ethnic Chinese corporate representatives were also perpetrators of ethnocultural inequalities in the business organization, as much as they were victims of this practice. Bringing the discussion back to the issue of Chineseness, the dominance of the dual hegemonic framework also serves to downplay the devitalization of Chinese cultures that do not comply with prototypes of its hegemony. In this, I refer to the hegemony of Mandarin variants of Chinese culture over other variants. As would how American culture is hegemonic in the Western hemisphere, the Mandarinization of Chinese cultural landscape had resulted in the eclipse of 'folk' variants, such as the Chinese 'Dialects' that were spoken as home languages of Dialect-primacy corporate representatives. Yet, dispositions appeared far more enduring than language proficiencies. Indeed, Chinese Dialect language usage is in rapid decline and is no longer the primary medium of communication among Dialect-primacy ECI corporate representatives. Dialect-primacy dispositions, nonetheless, remained distinguishable. This suggests it is the tacit and dispositional forms of cultural capital (that is, linguistic primacy), rather than overt language use, that endure with intergenerational transmission.

## CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, findings have shown that value assumptions of virtue and vice vary between individuals. Furthermore, value positions are symbolic manifestations of one's position within the field of power. Chapter 6 highlights the use of peer orientalism among ECI corporate representatives, where state discourse of ethnic Malay Singaporeans as 'lazy native' and 'willful native' were replicated as a point of comparison with themselves as ethnic Chinese. Although childhood socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds continued to influence, the positions taken in the construction of Malayness differed from those taken in the construction of Chineseness. In the next chapter, I consolidate the key findings presented in the ECI case study to draw together the policy and theoretical implications of identity grafting. Methodological issues of adopting a single case study will also be addressed with the presentation of findings conducted on a larger scale on the enduring effects of linguistic primacy. In order to provide a richer narrative of the relationship between social reproduction and transformation, I have chosen to extend the study to a different segment of professionals. Rather than engage in a repeat round of statistical replication, I seek to further the investigation with the study of ethnic Chinese teacher professionals. As the socializing functions of state ethnic and identity management are mainly implemented through schooling, their educational implications wrap up this inquiry into *Managing Chineseness*.

## NOTES

1. Chua, 2007b.
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3. Gill, Kharas, Bhattasali, & World Bank, 2006, 6.
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5. Hsu, 2000.
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## Singapore Society in Transition, Really?

Ms. Wong was my science teacher in primary (elementary) school. She opened my eyes to the wonderful world of the physical sciences. As she also taught art, the boundaries between the two disciplines of art and science learning were fuzzy. When she took us out to the school yard for our sketching classes, I was attracted to the natural foliage that extended beyond the school fence. Then, I was blessed, perhaps not by design, to be in a school that was surrounded by the fast-disappearing natural foliage of Singapore. I was drawn to a palm tree that stood just outside the border of the school fence. Its messiness was a distinguishing feature amid the pruned orderliness of the casuarinas that lined and camouflaged the borders enacted by the school fence. Drawn to the unpruned arbitrariness of the palm, I captured the nuanced layers of light and shade with much enthusiasm on my sketchpad. Art lesson doubled as science lesson as I noted the distinctive characteristics of the wild palm and the disciplined casuarina trees that laced the school compound. But my enthusiasm for science became lost as I progressed to secondary (middle) school, which adopted different schooling philosophies. The study of the ‘pure sciences’ became a privilege, and prioritization translated into a stringent examinations-driven endeavor. This resulted in my loss of interest for ‘Science.’ Ironically, my interest developed in history. History gave me the awareness of how Singapore, with its examinations-driven schooling, is the product of past events happening in the country and around the world. Unfortunately, being streamed (tracked) into the ‘pure sciences,’

my interest in history was not allowed to develop. I decided to pursue a different track. In junior college (high school), Ms. Nam found me struggling with history. When being called to her office after failing to answer a series of questions she had directed at me during class, I was anticipating some advice that I drop the subject. Then, I was a student too accustomed to being warned that my poor performance may affect the overall results of the school's benchmarks in the national-level examinations. Knowing I had no background in the subject, she nonetheless encouraged me to forge on with my interest. I was touched by her kind gesture. Fortunately, I have not disappointed Ms. Nam's belief in the power of formative learning. I managed to do reasonably well and qualify for university. At university, it was my blessing to be mentored by professors who have chosen to look beyond my academic awkwardness. Instead, Professors Ananda Rajah, Syed Farid Alatas, Thomas Menkhoff, and Vedi Hadiz saw my determination to gain entry into the academia.

Similarly, ECI corporate representatives were shaped by past schooling experiences that had resulted in their interest in high-tech engineering. As would how Carlos (Situational Chinese) had reasoned, a complicity somewhat exists among graduate Chinese Singaporean boys that they would grow up to become engineers, the breadwinners of the nation. In this extended reasoning of why engineering is not for women, a corresponding reality somewhat exists among graduate Chinese Singaporean girls that they would grow up to become nurturers. In contrast to the engineering machismo, teaching is a nurturing profession predominated by females. Gender distinction, however, do not appear to differentiate in response to state ethnic and identity management; unlike linguistic primacy, and perhaps class. By typologizing the sense-making of the corporate representatives about their Chineseness, ideal type classifications were inducted from these accounts to extract insights about *Managing Chineseness*. Although the richness of individual experiences would have been best presented as unique testimonies, the relegation of discrete life worlds into ideal-types enriched the theoretical framing of identity grafting. Prototypical exemplars, grounded in the interwoven first-hand experiences and my interpretation of these accounts, formed the resources to the theorization of how seemingly fragmented cultural landscapes, while irreducible to a single standard, could be traced to symbols that were structural in nature. At the most immediate level, corporate representatives drew upon, unsolicited, past schooling experiences to articulate the identity grafting of Chineseness in their engagements as transnational professionals. These

accounts were compared with state discourse to theorize the impact of identity grafting upon specific segments of Singapore society. Dispositions toward transnational professionalism, it seems, are grounded within historical milestones of schooling a society to cope with postcoloniality and late industrialization. Through simplistic messages of coping with development, complex societies were shaped through identity grafting as paradigms shift. In these experiences, teachers played crucial roles in shaping the schooling experiences of the corporate representatives. By getting to the essence of educational messages, that is, the ‘hidden curriculum’ transmitted along with the acquisition of content knowledge, similarities in professional dispositions can be derived between professions. Singapore’s identity grafting measures lends a case example of how the necessity for global integration was rapidly implemented, and the dynamism of this endeavor was demonstrated as it adapted to the dual hegemonic political economy. Although each society may be structured by distinct historical milestones, there exists common denominators in structures that allow for comparison, transfer, and adaptation of diverse case experiences for social reform. Distilled from the accounts of ECI, three factors stood out in the shaping of dispositions: language, SES, and education. In this chapter, I will first reiterate the identity work of ECI corporate representatives within the global political economy, before drawing the comparison with the identity work of teachers within the global education context. Employing the concept of linguistic primacy, I aim to establish the enduring effects of identity grafting upon dispositions through the concept of power distance. I will then explore the leverage for change, given the influence of identity grafting, and whether change occurs in the dispositional or behavioral realms. Through the comparison of ECI corporate representatives as recipients of schooling, and teachers as makers of schooling, I will draw the policy and theoretical implications of identity grafting.

### SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF CHINESENESS

Nations take on strategic positions in the global political economy and state representatives articulate these positions on behalf of the nation through political rhetoric.<sup>1</sup> Through these statements, generic impressions of a nation were formed by an international audience, from which domestic nationals strive to attain coherence between national and personal identities when they engage in transnational business exchange. Exposed to the exchange of political rhetoric between nations, Chinese Singaporean

ECI professionals identified the key attributes to the ‘Singapore’ brand, and engaged in identity work to fashion themselves as corporate representatives of the Singapore-based ECI regional headquarters. However, as identity work is an interpretative experience, varied dispositions inform the way these professionals had enacted the ‘Singapore’ brand.

Born-Again and Repressed Chinese corporate representatives were acutely aware of the power differentials entrenched within identity grafting. They had sought primordialist strategies that align with state direction. However, even as observation of state direction took priority, personal identities were found to interfere with the interpretation of these imperatives. Personal identification with hierarchical worldviews resulted in action bounded by the upholding of the East-West dichotomy. For the Born-Again Chinese, occidentalist state rhetoric lent the greatest immediacy, resulting in retaliatory responses against Western colleagues at the ECI.<sup>2</sup> Repressed Chinese corporate representatives took to conciliatory responses in the ECI office, whereby earlier auto-orientalist state rhetoric was accommodated to. Although ‘avoidant’ strategies of the Repressed Chinese can be said to be attributable to structural factors, individual personality and ‘cultural’ attributes tended to be more salient at a superficial glance when explanations were sought as to the causes of change-inhibition.<sup>3</sup>

The Born-Again and Repressed Chinese identity work can be said to resonate with earlier phases of Singapore’s development strategies. In seeking to establish Singapore as the preferred low-cost manufacturing option, normative initiatives in the anglicization of the nation were used to discourage primordialist worldviews and sentiments deemed incompatible with a Western-dominant political economy. Education parallels this imperative with the establishment of standards through international accreditation, and education reforms today continue to subscribe to UK/US accredited ‘international models.’<sup>4</sup> In the formative stages of Singapore education, the hunger for international accreditation forged its current education habitus of prioritizing English as medium of instruction. Content mastery was sought in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and evidence-based accreditation of this mastery had resulted in its examinations-driven culture. Even as Singapore education establishes its foothold in international education benchmarks, state agencies continue its stringent monitoring of Western education reforms. Significant departures, however, can be observed of current reform measures. Although English continues to be seen as the ‘hege-

monic language' in Asia, Mandarin operates alongside as the 'overriding power' against other Chinese Dialects.<sup>5</sup> A primordialist undertone, thus, can be said to characterize present-day adaptations of Western education reforms to Asian cultural contexts.<sup>6</sup> The Born-Again Chinese appeared to have effectively embodied the standards-based disposition, coupled with primordialist views of the multicultural business landscape. Although, it seems the internalization of the belief that primordial sentiments as 'anti-standards' is deeply entrenched among the Repressed Chinese. But educational visions have gone past the privileging of parochial primordialisms. While it is realistic to expect that education philosophies are culturally mediated, work is currently being invested in finding complementarity out of the paradoxes in embracing distinctive education paradigms.

The Situational Chinese observed expectations imposed upon them by dual hegemony, but were on active lookout for opportunities to transcend hierarchical divides. Response to identity grafting was thus characterized by seeking authenticity in one's personal inclination towards transcending dual hegemony. This had resulted in the refusal to replicate orientalist worldviews that had characterized earlier state rhetoric. Correspondingly, Integrated Chineseness represents an intuitive approach to arbitrating cross-cultural relationships, acquiring and adapting aspects of dual hegemony in the process to form individual identity. Integrated and Situational Chinese identity work characterize the later refinements attempted in education policy. Rather than emulating the standards established upon distinctive historical and cultural bases, adaptive strategies were employed as education reforms are deployed. Yong Seng Goh articulates the education paradigm that characterizes recent language reforms:<sup>7</sup>

I faced a big challenge: How to teach them? When I speak Chinese, they can't understand me. But at that time, we can only use the monolingual-direct approach, namely, Chinese only. Speaking English in a Chinese classroom was prohibited.

In spite of the public outcry against the loss of language authenticity and standards, Chinese Language B, or the use of English for the teaching of the mother tongue language (Mandarin), went ahead. Having mandated its ethnic Chinese populace acquire exogenous language proficiencies for the past decades, present-day language planners have come to concede that Singapore will never become mini China, United Kingdom, United States, or Finland. Neither will China be an exact realization of

the Singapore test-bed on a massive scale. In contrast to the earlier optimism of replicating exogenous prototypes, the current policy paradigm seeks the soft balancing of dual hegemonic demands. Underlying this new approach is perhaps the recognition of the ramifications of orientalist worldviews that had emerged from past education policies. In the quest to replicate 'international' standards, external benchmarks have been achieved at the expense of developing confident and adaptive professionals. With the embracement of holistic education initiatives, recombination strategies were thus preferred over past zero-sum approaches. Currently, formative teaching practices distilled from Finnish education strategies complement existing benchmarks of teaching for student outcomes.<sup>8</sup> On the one hand, the giving of formative feedback ensures students are learning not just for benchmark examinations. Paying attention to reforms occurring in the West ensures a dynamic education that does not become dulled by familiar traditional routines. On the other hand, the preservation of standards-based examinations ensures teaching remains based on deliverable outcomes. This preserves the developmentalist rationale highly prized by East Asian education for stellar placements in international benchmarks.<sup>9</sup>

If the typological dispositions of ECI corporate representatives may be mapped along a continuum of teaching dispositions, starting from 'standards-based' on the one hand and 'formative' on the other, their professional dispositions may be situated along the following gradations: the Repressed Chinese may be most stringent in the application of external standards to assess outcomes-based performance of students; followed by the Born-Again Chinese, who may seek to identify standards they prefer to assess student outcomes; the Situational Chinese may pay attention to prescribed element between old and new teaching paradigms and apply a transcendentalist teaching approach; and, the Integrated Chinese may recombine summative and formative practices to generate an adapted teaching approach. Dispositions that characterize the Integrated Chinese, namely 'balancing' and 'recombination,' are the currently preferred global strategies embraced by political economies within the dual hegemonic landscape.<sup>10</sup> This strategy also characterizes current education reforms in Singapore. Based on the comparisons between prevalent global strategies of network states in East Asia and dispositions of ECI corporate representatives, it appears some corporate representatives may be more change-enabled to align with currently relevant strategies than others. As the recipients of education, ECI corporate representatives have undergone and completed their education journey. This experience has

been found to create a cumulative impact upon their constructions of Chineseness, which mediates the practice of transnational professionalism. Being schooled under a national curriculum, however, has not created a standardized workforce. Rather, family socialization coalesces with schooling, which shaped the selective attention the corporate representatives had paid towards specific school memories. As another cohort of professionals, teachers have undergone schooling under the same education paradigms as the corporate representatives, but education missions continue to be central to their professional lives. As both recipients and makers of education, being change-enabled is critical in two regards. Change capacity not only enables professional rejuvenation, but also the adaptive capacity of future cohorts of human capital.

### RECIPIENTS AND MAKERS OF EDUCATION

While it may be possible to support a small number of senior management corporate representatives to tackle transnational professionalism strategically, change practice for an education system of teachers may be much more challenging to develop, especially if one is entrenched within dispositions disinclined towards the initiative. I endeavor to tackle this supposition by first examining the extent of dispositional endurance. Dispositional differences among ECI corporate representatives could be inferred from typologizing in-depth observation and dialogue. More efficient measurements of dispositional differences among a large sample of teachers are needed. For this purpose, I employ the measure of power distance, which according to Geert Hofstede,<sup>11</sup> refers to the ‘acceptance of the legitimacy of hierarchy’.<sup>12</sup> If the measurement of power distance may be applied to ECI, the Born-Again and Repressed Chinese corporate representatives may have demonstrated, vis-à-vis their peers, the highest inclinations towards the hierarchical ordering of social relationships. Strict observations of externally defined by ECI corporate guidelines characterized the professionalism of the Repressed Chinese, and according to the Born-Again Chinese, the currency of tacit business practices in one’s ‘home ground’ was qualified by cultural standards from the reference point of China. Situational Chinese corporate representatives may be less inclined towards power distance, followed by the Integrated Chinese. For the Situational Chinese who sought the transcendence of inequality, cultural stratifications lacked legitimacy. Awareness of the divisions to be transcended, however, remains requisite for effective situational transcen-

dence of cultural stratifications. Integrated Chinese adapted the roles they play according to the exchanges that transpire within the dual hegemonic framework. Having to take on both assertive and supportive postures as a result, interpretive perception predisposed them to work unfettered by the inequality that stood between them and the personalities they had sought to engage. A comparison of mean scores in power distance among Singapore teachers by linguistic primacy also points to Mandarin-primacy teachers having the highest average scores in power distance, followed by English-primacy and Dialect-primacy teachers respectively (Fig. 7.1).

Among teachers, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) point to significant power distance correlations in terms of linguistic primacy. Dialect- and Mandarin-primacy teachers were found to differ statistically in terms of power distance. Dialect-primacy teachers, as would the Integrated Chinese, were found to be significantly lower in their inclinations toward power distance vis-à-vis their peers from English- and Mandarin-primacy cohorts. Mandarin-primacy teachers, as would the Born-Again Chinese, stood in contrast with Dialect-primacy peers with significantly stronger predispositions toward power distance. Average power distance scores of the English-primacy cohort were found to fall in between those of the Dialect- and Mandarin-primacy, corresponding with the ambiguous position of the Situational Chinese. The findings suggest linguistic primacy has an enduring impact upon dispositions for both ECI corporate representatives and Singapore teachers. As linguistic primacy stems from a dominant childhood language that one may no longer use as home language as an adult, its correlation with current power distance dispositions points to its function as an enduring influence on the habitus. Through the comparison of two professional cohorts, it is conclusive that linguistic primacy shapes earlier life experiences, which forms enduring predispositions as to how one evaluates professional ethos. By far, ANCOVA shows that linguistic primacy predisposes enduring worldviews in power distance among Singapore teachers. However, enduring dispositions need not necessarily manifest in practice.

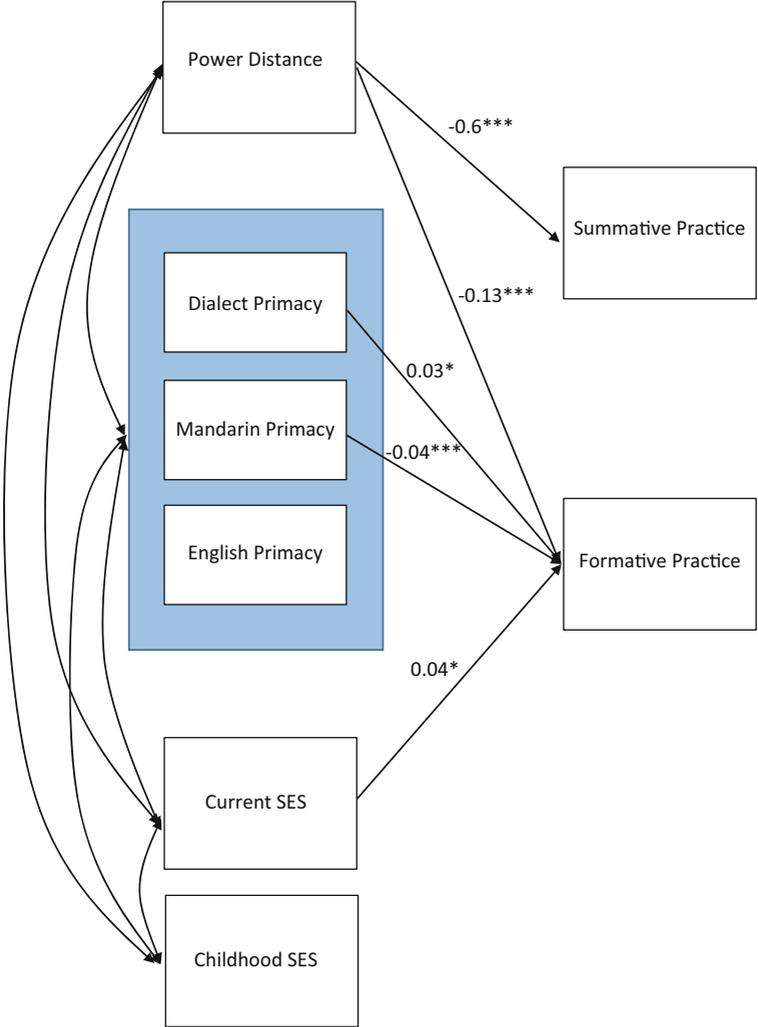


Fig. 7.1 Dispositional comparisons between ECI corporate representatives and Singapore teachers by power distance

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) offered further indications as how identities and dispositions relate to practice. Holistic education practices encourage formative learning by instilling in students the confidence to overcome learning challenges (hereby referred to as ‘formative’ practices, assessed through the measures: ‘I create conditions for students to feel the confidence to learn’ and ‘I ensure students receive constructive feedback about their work’). Furthering the investigation on power distance, the disposition has been found to be inversely related to overall teacher focus on student learning. Power distance, significantly, impacts upon both teacher capacity to enact ‘formative’ and ‘summative’ practices. The findings suggest being too conscious of the pecking order distracts teachers from focusing their priorities on students. However, when considered in relation to one’s linguistic primacy, distinctions in practice among teachers appear to affect only the capacity to enact ‘formative’ practices. The largest distinction emerged between Mandarin- and Dialect-primacy teachers. While Dialect-primacy teachers were found to be more amenable toward ‘formative’ practices, the inverse is true of Mandarin-primacy teachers. Differences in priority accorded to formative student learning may be attributable to perceptions about the effectiveness of ‘formative’ pedagogy. Teachers who strongly recognize the legitimacy of hierarchies (high power distance) are less likely to endorse ‘formative’ practice, which were perhaps viewed as ineffective in determining educational outcomes (e.g. targeted benchmarks).

Although linguistic primacy was established in childhood, the results show significant statistical causality between the constructs. Combined analyses illuminate upon the reality that the influence of the habitus extends to the domains of both disposition and behavior. Dialect-primacy teachers possessed the strongest inclination in terms of low power distance dispositions, and were found to possess the stronger capacity, relative to Mandarin-primacy colleagues, to actualize ‘formative’ practices. I shall proceed to present SEM findings with regard to childhood and current SES to further elucidate upon the potential for achieved identities to influence change practice. Among teachers, childhood SES, unlike linguistic primacy, did not have any statistically significant relationship with current enacted practices. In contrast, current SES was found to be influential towards the enacting of ‘formative’ practices. As power distance reflect current dispositions, its significance is understandably the strongest at influ-

encing current teaching practice. However, it is noteworthy that the more distantly acquired linguistic primacy is stronger than the presently achieved current SES with regard to influencing enacted practice (Fig. 7.2).



$p > 0.001^{***}; > 0.01^{**}; > 0.05^*$

Fig. 7.2 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Results

Findings presented in the statistical analysis reinforced the influential and enduring impact of linguistic primacy. Although an identity associated with childhood home language, linguistic primacy is not only correlated with current power distance dispositions. Its influence can also be traced to current and actual enacted behavior. In contrast to its mediation of Repressed Chineseness among ECI corporate representatives, childhood SES did not possess any statistically significant effects among teachers, whether directly or indirectly, in its influence towards teaching practice. The difference, perhaps, points to the importance of continuous professional development in mediating childhood SES effects.

Contrary to prevalent conceptualizations of home language as one of the indicators of SES, language has proven to be not just distinguished from SES, but also influential at shaping both future dispositions and behavior. As a distal identity that had taken shape during childhood (which may or may not be actively used to define one's current identity as in the case of home language conversion), its effect on one's receptivity to 'formative' teaching practices is more impactful than current SES. More importantly, linguistic primacy is correlated to power distance, the influential factor on both 'formative' and 'summative' practices. The findings coalesce with Bourdieu's theorization of language as symbolic power. Its influence is indirect and therefore defies direct empirical confirmation. Its enduring entrenchment within an individual's habitus is bolstered by the 'misrecognized' forms in which power has been imposed upon the body. Therefore, in the identity grafting of new and desired home languages, one must be aware of the limits the habitus imposes upon change efforts before one's embeddedness within the field of power can be overcome. In the case of late-industrialization, it is the necessity to recognize and reconcile the ramifications of accelerated development, and embroilment within dual hegemonic tensions within this ecology.

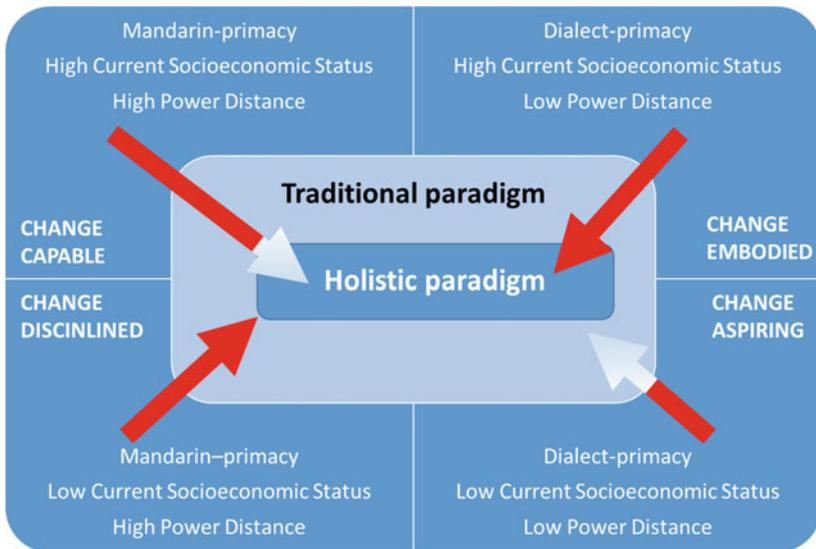
On a more positive note, the potential is present for change with the acquisition of desired achieved identities, as indicated by the positive effects of current SES on receptivity towards 'formative' teaching practices. In the light of the findings, I further the discussion by typologizing the potential and scope for change in the following: Change Capable; Change Inhibited; Change Aspiring; and Change Embodied.

In a profession where the function of one's salary is hierarchically and significantly distinguished by seniority, current SES may be considered as the differentiation in authoritative influence. As a result, capacities for enacting 'formative' practices can be developed even if one was disinclined

towards proposed change paradigms. A significant cohort of Mandarin-primacy teachers appeared to enjoy good leverage for change capacity. Although predispositions have been found to be enduring, Mandarin-primacy teachers with high current SES have demonstrated the capacity to be Change Capable. In spite of the correlation of Mandarin-primacy with high power distance, teachers in this cohort were more likely than junior-rank colleagues to practice 'formative' teaching. The available and advantaged access to leadership appears to be a possible enabler. In contrast, Mandarin-primacy Born-Again Chinese, who appeared more inclined towards a hierarchically defined professional environment, tended to not enjoy similar flexible attitudes toward transnational professionalism. Perhaps the nature of leadership influence at the ECI did not allow for the same change capacities among Born-Again Chinese corporate representatives as it had been for teachers who shared similar profile attributes. That being said, while support for change capacity is in principle availed by change initiatives, access to change resources appears limited for Change Inhibited teachers. Change Inhibited teachers are predominated by Mandarin-primacy, high power distance, and low current SES. Some plausible insights may be drawn from the change inhibition demonstrated by the Repressed Chinese corporate representatives. The persistent and entrenched beliefs that one is disadvantaged manifested in resistance against current professional demands, which were believed to compromise one's professional effectiveness. Extending this rationale to Change Inhibited teachers, inhibition against enactment of 'formative' practices may be more likely if one is disinclined and not consecrated with the authority for teacher leadership. Nevertheless, change aspirations need not necessarily result in changed practices. While low power distance inclines the embracement of holistic paradigms, current SES influences the capacity for implementing change. Therefore, low current SES and Dialect-primacy teachers, in spite of low power distance dispositions, may aspire change but experience some challenges in terms of enacting 'formative' teaching in practice. This cohort of the teachers may be typologized as Change Aspiring. The Change Aspiring, other than being less disposed to uphold hierarchical inequality (low power distance), were also subordinates within the professional strata. However, change capacity among the Change Aspiring would be expected to increase as they acquire upward professional mobility. Finally, low power distance dispositions have higher chances of being actualized in the case of the Change Embodied. Change Embodiment is predominated by teachers of Dialect-primacy, low

power distance, and high current SES. At the ECI, the Integrated Chinese closely aligns with Change Embodied teachers. The flexibility to enact change appears to be enabled if one is not just ideally predisposed, but also endowed with the influence to do so (Fig. 7.3).

The insights from the findings can be summarized as the following. Corporate representatives at the ECI have greater freeplay in determining professional conduct. As affluent professionals who are empowered to devise their own strategies to cope with identity grafting, barriers to top management positions are limited by how they were disposed to bridge the local-expatriate divide. But moving on to top management depended upon the actor's ingenuity, or rather, the ability to engage in identity work that effectively grafts one's acquired habitus into effective cultural capital. Much of the process is tacit, which results in heavy reliance on enduring dispositional inclinations with the potential to both enhance and hinder. Due to the weaker presence of continuous professional development, corporate representatives relied upon interpretive intuition to guide practice, which resulted in the stronger mediation of acquired statuses, such as



**Fig. 7.3** Typologizing teacher dispositions and actually enacted teaching practices

childhood SES. In support of the effective embodiment of new educational paradigms, professional learning communities for teachers are structured and rigorous, but not necessarily exhaustive in reaching out to the profession. Given the hierarchical nature of the teaching profession, junior-rank teachers may experience lower success in change capacity, regardless of whether change initiatives appealed to them or otherwise. Although predispositions toward ‘formative’ teaching is identifiable by linguistic primacy and power distance, a teacher’s standing within the professional hierarchy (current SES) adds further complexity to one’s capacity to enact change. Nevertheless, the finding bodes well in terms of state capacity to bring to effect change initiatives, at least in terms of enacted practice, in spite of the endurance of the habitus. In the case of teachers, achieved status (current SES) appeared to mediate the inhibitory effects of highly enduring acquired identities, such as in the case of the senior-ranking Mandarin-primacy teachers. However, when change involves state-led orchestration, some further considerations are needed for the refinement of reform measures. A key limitation that had emerged from the findings was the disadvantaged access of junior-rank teachers to change capacity, even if positively disposed towards new education visions. I will ensue to draw policy and theoretical implications of identity grafting by comparing the dispositions of ECI corporate representatives as recipients of schooling, and teachers as makers of schooling. Policy implications of the findings will first be examined, pertaining to policy gaps in which identity grafting measures require further attention. Theoretical implications of the concepts raised will be examined in relation to the potential for social change, and the realms in which this change would be rendered more effectively.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Developmental states, far from having met with demise, have gained rejuvenation in their strategic thrust by adopting complementary, as opposed to zero-sum strategies in their enactment of identity grafting. Aligned with previous developmentalist paradigms, the Repressed Chinese and Born-Again Chinese performed identity work according to external reference points with regard to standards, resulting in the reproduction of orientalist worldviews. With the enduring belief that ‘primordial’ sentiments are incompatible with commerce, ‘Western’ professionalism was prioritized by the Repressed Chinese based on estimations of its essential characteristics according to state discourse. Born-Again Chinese sought to change strate-

gic alignments by ‘bandwagoning’ with the entity that was seen as ascendant. These enactments resonate with older educational leitmotifs, where the teaching of one language proficiency mandates the displacement of the other language proficiencies. Nevertheless, a good representation of corporate representatives from each typological disposition did make it to the top management. Regardless of paradigmatic shifts in business values, those selected to become top managers were able to deliver according to ECI’s corporate guidelines and performance standards. As with teachers, short of those whose high power distance had prevented them from focusing on both ‘summative’ and ‘formative’ aspects of student learning altogether, being Mandarin-primacy has no statistical influence in the performance benchmarks focused ‘summative’ domain. Therefore, it is likely that corporate representatives who are disposed towards orientalist worldviews, but were able to continue meeting corporate guidelines and performance targets (domains highly appraised by the Repressed Chinese especially), would have managed to acquire leading positions even if gaps remain in the demonstration of leadership capacity. While this strategy continues to work efficiently in increasing one’s competitive advantage to leadership positions, it may be advisable to be aware of the long-term limitations of these approaches, and to embrace alternative strategies that offer complementary solutions. Situational and Integrated Chinese retained aspects of their core identity as they adopted ‘transcendentalist’ or ‘balancing’ approaches to adapt external demands and scenarios. Currently, reforms in education resonate with the latter approaches, which sought a good balance between the dual hegemonic framework. While keeping tabs on aligning with Western-originated education movements, Singapore education remains mindful about preserving its primordial links to ‘East Asian education.’ Good practices, regardless of their cultural origins, are recombined to create its Singapore blend. Underlying this reform approach is the commitment to allow for greater flexibility in the intuitive use of professional tacit knowledge, so as to alleviate the reliance on external benchmarks. Among the teachers, dispositional flexibility in tapping upon tacit knowledge, for better or worse, is much less coherent. The switch to achieving a balance between ‘holistic’ and ‘traditional’ teaching may be intuitive to the Change Embodied, even if these actors may be less stringent about relying upon external standards as determinants of teacher professionalism. For these teachers, tacit dispositions were enhanced by explicit authoritative influence to actualize inclinations. As a diametrically opposing typology, Change Inhibited teachers may remain disinclined

towards enacting ‘holistic’ paradigms due to the absence of both tacit and explicit resources availed to them. The enthusiasm of the Change Capable to bandwagon and align with state-endorsed reform, even if less intuitively disposed, is realized with accessibility to explicit resources availed by this initiative. In contrast, inclinations may not be given access to actualization in action when the Change Aspiring lacked support by explicit resources. The triangulations of findings appear to partially suggest the continued utility of identity grafting in ‘overcoming the negative legacy of past policies’.<sup>13</sup> However, given the reality that a segment of professionals remain change inhibited, it is important to address the gaps to change capacity. I shall seek the answers through the identification of the structural inhibitors to change embodiment.

While it remains plausible that reform can be sustained via developmentalist strategies, effective identity grafting of normative realities is a challenge to sustain if state-led initiatives retain its rigidity of stratified access to professional autonomy. Indeed, scholars of education who voiced their skepticism against ‘contrived collegiality’ would likely be concerned about the strong state presence in Singapore education reforms.<sup>14</sup> In *The Fourth Way*, Hargreaves and Shirley expressed their reservations:<sup>15</sup>

You can’t just adopt the end product of something that took others years to develop, too short and rushed for deep understandings ... they can rarely copy them completely because their styles and personalities as well as accompanying skill sets are just too different... For the same reasons, countries cannot be cloned either...

Admittedly, it is challenging to embody change ideas mooted in distinctive locales. Steiner-Khamsi cautioned about the existence of barriers to replicating the success of league leaders such as Singapore (or Finland and Shanghai), noting the specific contexts within which reforms had taken shape.<sup>16</sup> Bringing the discussion out of education, Evans acknowledged that most efforts in accelerated development had ‘retained their old flaws but were besieged in new ways’.<sup>17</sup> However, it may be unfair to assume that contrived settings inevitably results in wholesale imitation. While the continued scrutiny over systemic flaws of state-led models is essential for highlighting domains that require improvement, the use of these insights for the justification of exclusion is unhelpful for integrated efforts in global educational improvement. I would like to consider this statement in the light of the dialectical gridlock between ‘international’ and ‘local.’ As globalization mounts in intensity, increased opportunities for international

collaboration can give rise to stronger integration between global and local domains. Taken from this vantage point, every local educational success is an instantiation of the successful circulation of international knowledge transfer. This view is underpinned by the assumption that education systems know how to adapt success stories to suit unique local contexts. From another perspective, 'international relevance' is a set of standards that 'local' systems ought to cohere. Failing which, knowledge transfer, even if successful, will not be sustained. Both views are essential for effective knowledge transfer. However, when taken to the extreme, knowledge transfer becomes confounded by orientalist perpetuations. Obliteration of local diversity in the conceptualization of 'international relevance' results in the uncritical importation of 'international standards.' When the 'international' most often than not takes on Euro-American centric references, 'international relevance' becomes 'local' to specific regional realities.<sup>18</sup> By privileging the hierarchy of 'international relevance,' knowledge loses its value when it is derived through imitation, serving to intensify the value of power distance as individuals rely on state mediation to define 'international standards.' Even if contained within a small segment of the population, auto-orientalist attempts to embody unintuitive paradigms have severe ramifications, especially when change inhibition becomes dispositional. Yet, when 'privileging the context' takes the other extreme, policy implementations minimize the distortion of local realities through defensive xenophobia. Retaliating against beliefs that only concepts empirically validated in Euro-America are relevant knowledge, rejection of 'international' knowledge as irrelevant are colored by occidentalist lenses. The preoccupation over national, regional, and international boundaries distracts from the reality that societies share the common experience of stratified access to economic and symbolic power. The case of Singapore education illustrated how de-escalation of orientalist vicious cycles have resulted in the potential for positive change. Among Singapore teachers, preservation of stratified relations traditional to the teaching profession hampered the educational purpose of focusing on student learning. Key education decision-makers in Singapore may justify the preservation of this professional tradition as an inextricable part of the Singapore high power distance culture. However, going against the grain, state-led professional learning communities were implemented nationwide in Singapore, but schools were given the confidence to adapt the initiative to suit their teachers' professional development needs.<sup>19</sup> From the qualitative observation of how holistic learning has gained traction among Singapore students, Hargreaves and Shirley attest to multiple ways to change embodiment in *The Global Fourth Way*.<sup>20</sup>

'Formative' practices, it appears, were complemented by state intervention. It is premature, however, to draw the conclusion that successful state intervention pervades the system. Based on the statistical findings here, it does affirm that professional learning communities have facilitated change, but this capacity is stronger among senior-rank Change Embodied and Change Capable teachers. Access to teacher leadership for junior-rank teachers remains hampered by the inhibited establishment of egalitarian collegial relationships between ranks (power distance). Opportunities for egalitarian forms of intercollegial interactions must be arranged for, even if contrived, in high power distance contexts.

As it stands in high power distance contexts, teachers need to rise above the professional hierarchy before effective teacher leadership can be exercised.<sup>21</sup> If I may add a disqualifier, the statement may not be applicable as an absolute. In the qualitative observations of professional learning communities established by state initiatives, when junior-rank teachers were empowered with teacher leadership opportunities, teams acquired risk-taking cultures that were lacking when these teachers operated in isolation as individuals.<sup>22</sup> According to survey findings, most teachers of the teams observed scored highly in risk aversion. However, when brought together in the 'contrived' setting of state-led professional learning communities, young teachers were taking on leadership in implementing pedagogical changes for the holistic development of their students. Notwithstanding, the importance of reduced power distance does appear to improve individual access to teacher leadership opportunities. Common across these change-enabled teams was the prevailing composition of individual teachers who had low scores in power distance. While opinions might differ, these teams shared similar individual values for low power distance regardless of rank seniority. Senior-rank teachers played a crucial role in the empowerment of teacher leadership among the junior-ranks. They were facilitating mentors who knew equal access to professional autonomy is critical for the improvement of Singapore education. That being said, exemplary cases where teacher leadership among junior-rank teachers is facilitated by empowering mentors may be exceptional, rather than commonplace. In the deliberation over how the intended professional growth can be made more accessible to junior-rank teachers, the dilemma of how power distance is to be overcome is entrenched within the plausible unintended consequences that may arise. For the benefit of students, every rank and file teacher ought to be change-embodied, or at least change-capable. Given that senior-rank teachers are in a stronger position for change practice due

to authoritative influence, the simplest solution is to transcend the power differentials created by a highly stratified professional hierarchy. But egalitarian solutions may lower performance incentivization. In the absence of upward career advancement, an education system will largely rely upon the intrinsic motivation for teacher leadership. A realistic reconciliation of this paradox may be to maintain professional hierarchies, while improving rank-and-file teacher access to authoritative influence. Under this arrangement, access to teacher leadership ought to be restructured into more egalitarian collegial networks, while the continuation of professional hierarchies encourage competitive career advancement in the pursuit of extrinsic rewards. Professional learning communities currently play a critical role in offering a complementary platform for the organization of teachers. In its existing structure, however, there remains room for the improvement of its organization among teams characterized by high power distance cultures.

In comparison to the solidarity emergent from authentic collegiality, it remains questionable if the contrived collegiality mandated by state initiatives can indeed bring about effective knowledge transfer. I maintain an optimistic view with regard to the efficacy of state-led initiatives, insofar as centralization tendencies refrain from taking zero-sum views about co-existing alternative network arrangements. Organic communities where tacit knowledge is informally circulated have always existed. The lunch cliques of ECI, where corporate representatives have chosen colleagues they liked to have lunch and share gossip represents a good example of organic professional learning communities. Organic communities will form with or without a boost from state initiatives. While familiar relationships are helpful for circulating existing knowledge, the leverage for generating new knowledge through critical dissension is limited when like-mindedness is the foundation. If Repressed Chinese corporate representatives are more likely to choose likeminded colleagues as their lunch buddies, for instance, it may be less probable for dispositional change to take effect. Organic solidarity offers affirmative professional linkages, but lacks the provocative tension that motivates individuals to think out of the comfort zone. As much as contrived professional learning communities continue to be of concern,<sup>23</sup> state involvement creates linkages between teachers that may otherwise have been inhibited by divisions within the professional hierarchy. In the study of Chinese software engineers in the Mainland, Assimakopoulos and Yan employed Granovetter's concept of 'weak ties' to frame their illustration of how tacit knowledge is circulated among virtual strangers in online forums.<sup>24</sup> Although egalitarian collegial relations

between junior- and senior-rank teachers may be contrived within a hierarchically defined profession, these ‘weak-ties’ are essential for empowering teacher leadership among junior-rank teachers, especially within high power distance contexts. The development of these vertical linkages, thus, cannot be left to emerge gradually and organically. Chris Benner<sup>25</sup> surmised while tensions exist with regard to the sustainability of deliberately organized learning communities, the importance of organized initiatives is intensified by the paucity of sustained organic networks that offer these resources. State agencies can offer support to enhance the sustainability of professional learning communities. In the optimism I have expressed about state-led professional learning communities, it is important to be mindful of the limitations that persist. Indeed, teams of mixed seniorities cannot be put together without first addressing the reality that power differentials exist in these group configurations. As much as empowering team configurations have emerged in state-led professional learning communities, teams where high power distance prevailed were also observed in the qualitative observations. In these teams, junior-rank teachers obliged to the requests of senior-rank teachers to complete administrative tasks, even though such usage of professional development time did not seem to contribute effectively to their professional growth. Rather than attribute the existence of contrived collegiality as the outcome of state intervention, I am inclined to explore how linkages between teachers of different seniorities can be improved to encourage facilitating mentoring relationships. State-led professional learning communities can be said to be highly successful among teams that embrace low power distance culture, but much less effective among teams entrenched within high power distance cultures. In the search for possible solutions to increase the effectiveness of high power distance teams, it may be useful to explore some of the practices that characterize the more organic forms of learning communities.

In comparison to the stratified teaching profession, ECI corporate representatives only needed to reckon with the unraveling ethnocultural divide between locals and expatriates. Once out of school, however, professional development availed to these corporate representatives, such as those offered by the state-initiated Professional Engineers Board (PEB) and Singapore Institute of Engineering Technologists (SIET), are delimited by workshops aimed to impart hard engineering expertise. Internationally based professional development organizations, likewise, focus predominantly on engineering expertise.<sup>26</sup> Understandably, it is hard to envisage professional workshops conducted to teach tacit knowledge. Expert-led

workshops can only facilitate, but not transmit tacit knowledge. As a knowledge domain where those who directly engage in this reality are the strongest holders of its expertise, tacit knowledge offers the competitive advantage that functions as natural barriers to imitation. As would identity grafting, users of tacit knowledge, when access has been granted, will need the adaptive skills to develop own knowledge repertoires to render it effective. Due to this, engineering networks had emerged in response to the demand for collaborative professional development of tacit knowledge. The Silicon Valley Webgrlls<sup>27</sup> is a case example. Within a profession where males dominate, the emergence this community of practice had arisen out of the need for gendered tacit knowledge. As tacit knowledge is circulated based on learner demands,<sup>28</sup> professional development in these organic learning communities are highly customized to the needs of its members.

Currently, professional development mounts in the growth of multi-skills competency, rooted within the global demand for flexibility, risk-taking, and collaboration. However, technical skills have limited traction for the empowerment of adaptive professional practice. More than just the circulation of tacit technical knowledge (for example, sharing of software program codes in internet-based technology forums), there remains the scope for the establishment of professional learning communities that target the development of tacit knowledge in the substantive domains. In a longitudinal study of senior students and novice professionals of Mechanical Engineering in Sweden, Dahlgren et al.<sup>29</sup> observe the gap in the professional development of substantive knowledge. While identity formation was well developed of engineers as problem solvers and flexible knowledge workers with specialized expertise, disconnect between professional development and actual work demands persists. There remains the demand for identity work that can be translated into substantive competencies, such as tacit knowledge required in the effective cross-cultural communication with clients. In the array of professional development availed at ECI, for instance, funding and support were invested in workshops for technical expertise updates, cross-cultural management workshops, and corporate enculturation (French language lessons). Corporate representatives have also taken their own initiative to obtain MBA credentials to strengthen their professional standing. While professional development workshops are available to teach effective cross-cultural business negotiations, the use of static case studies tend to stereotype intercultural understanding. Reliance on external expertise is unsustainable for developing dynamic strategies for cross-cultural business negotiations. ECI corporate

representatives had devised their own identity work and informal networks through lunch cliques. The variety of strategies lent insight to the importance of tacit knowledge, which offers the differentiation between brands otherwise comparably supported in terms of technical expertise. The pockets of innovation in professional development that seek to address this gap appear promising, but lack organized support for the sustainment of substantive tacit knowledge building. In drawing the conclusion to the study of the gender-based Silicon Valley Webgrrls, Benner identified a key weakness of the ‘informal and self-organizing’ support group.<sup>30</sup> While information flow is facilitated by the lack of hierarchy in this community of practice, they are constrained by the absence of institutional organization for sustained growth and change. For example, in the absence of intentional design for cultural representation, Silicon Valley Webgrrls is predominantly monocultural.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, while substantive tacit knowledge was acknowledged as ‘non-work related messages’ (housing opportunities, for example) and ‘formed a significant portion of traffic’, they were interpreted as trust-building communication, rather than core to professional efficacy.<sup>32</sup> In my observation of the ECI high-tech engineers, it is most often than not the substantive tacit knowledge, or the corporate representative’s adaptivity to the cultural context, that seals commercial wins. The findings in this study illuminates upon the importance of a seamless view of professional, cultural, and personal domains. From the proliferation of informal networks that lend access to the development of substantive tacit knowledge and professional dispositions, these resources continue to be perceived as belonging to the domain of the non-commercial. Formalized professional learning communities can function as critical network linkages to address this gap. More than just practice-based professional interactions, the explicit encouragement of inquiry-based reflective dialogues is needed to reassure time spent on exploring domains that may not result in concrete technical expertise, tangible products, or task completion is nonetheless critical for enhancing professional capacity. In the management of Chineseness, Singapore state agencies had engaged in comprehensive coordination, industrial paradigm-style, the acceleration of the tacit domains of human capital development. Within the dual hegemonic framework, and likely the emergence of multiple hegemonies in the future, more empowering paradigmatic re-orientations are needed.

In the case of teachers, professional learning communities are available in all Singapore schools. However, even within the same school, not all teachers have similar access to high quality support networks. In one of the schools

I have observed, some of the strongest teams exist alongside some of the weakest ones. In one of the teams, a low power distance culture was embodied by all teachers, and lively debates transpired as teachers exchanged notes on customizing teaching to differentiated student needs (gender being one of the considerations). In another team, senior teachers took charge of the meetings to complete administrative demands, and junior teachers quietly obliged to these directions. As a whole system, Singapore teachers have shown the capacity to complement summative focuses with formative ones in their teaching practice, but it seems teacher leadership support has yet to attain an exhaustive reach to all segments within the professional hierarchy. There remains the need to improve the effective transmission of holistic paradigms. In order to address the existence of high power distance cultures in specific learning communities, policy initiatives can emphasize the following in the practice of professional learning communities:

- Focus on customized learning needs of individual members, not whose needs should take priority
- Complement transmission of technical expertise with empowering innovation and change
- Complement production of tangible outcomes with teacher leadership in creating adaptive teacher identities and professionalism
- Complement task completion with whole-person development

Schools seek to remain competitive by keeping tabs on systemic benchmarks. While summative measurements of performance can lend insight to current competitiveness, they need to be complemented by formative improvement efforts that sustains the leverage to build future capacity. In the former, concrete evidence shows how well one is doing in currently known domains, which is important for justifying future investments. However, without the latter, there will be no investment in dispositions to tackle unknown domains of the future, which is important sustaining future returns.

In drawing the conclusion that policy initiatives have been effective in orchestrating education reform, it is noteworthy that successful change has been demonstrated only in the realm of practice. Although cultural change has been observed in highly effective professional learning teams, reform remains restricted in its influence upon individual teacher dispositions. Change Embodied teachers were well disposed to enact change practice, but low power distance dispositions had existed prior to state

initiatives. Change Capable teachers were enabled by learning networks for the effective transformation of their teaching practice, but remained disposed by high power distance habitus. Within teams where dispositions of high power distance prevailed, engagement in professional learning communities have yet to overcome the ramifications of contrived collegiality. Change Aspiring teachers might have to forego their aspirations for change capacity, so as to align with the prevalent professional culture of their colleagues. Change Inhibited teachers might have found affirmation in prevalent high power distance cultures that had resisted policy reform initiatives. In terms of policy implications, reforms have been found to be effective in changing teaching practice, but did not penetrate deeply into the realm of dispositions. The habitus, as demonstrated by both ECI and teacher samples, is a domain predominated by familial socialization. Notwithstanding, embedded within changed teaching practices is the optimism that the future of society will not be doomed to reproduce social psyches that have passed their relevance.

### THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Bourdieu's works on how teacher assessment of student work reproduces the cultural capital of the elite has inspired a proliferation of research on the impact of schooling.<sup>33</sup> Adoption of this theoretical lens has brought to attention the resources availed to students out of the confines of the school. In terms of the conceptualization of who are the recipients of cultural capital, however, the focus remains confined within the school compounds. In addition, achievement tends to be framed in terms of academic achievement in high-stakes examinations. There is also silence when it comes to the aspirations of the state at influencing not just the value of education, but also the value of cultural capital in the broader social context. With the examination of ECI corporate representatives as ex-recipients of the 'hidden curriculum,' the following theoretical insights bring to focus the enduring and extensive impact of education.

In the theorization of teachers as functionaries of schooling, references to teacher professionals by Bourdieu are made according to their associated roles in the reproduction of elite values.<sup>34</sup> However, within a profession of highly stratified career advancements and salary differentiation, teachers also occupy different positions of power. Given that knowledge exists in both tacit and explicit realms, the embodiment of professional dispositions requires access to the context within which initiatives are mooted. Especially in the case where knowledge paradigms are derived

from sources exogenous to the reality within which professionals are situated actors, knowledge empowerment is highly dependent on one's access to knowledge resources. In this, I would like to revisit the theoretical implications of identity grafting upon these endeavors.

As mentioned earlier in Chap. 1, effective identity grafting is premised on the capacity to manage accelerated development and dual hegemony. As policy initiatives are most often than not derived from Western paradigms, the quest for upward mobility is characterized by a continuous process of adjusting to external influence. This gives rise to the pressure for accelerated acquisition due to the lack of the indigenous embodiment of cultural capital, or the tacit rules defined by the initiators of paradigmatic shifts. Adding to the complexity, the backdrop of dual hegemony presages the importance of contextualization, but not always in ways that cohere to how actors perceive local realities. For instance, the refrain on the importance of preserving 'Confucian' or 'East Asian' traditions even as one embraces 'Western theories,' as mentioned in the earlier chapters, originate from sources that are equally exogenous to indigenous realities. In the process, actors acquire high power distance orientations as they seek alignment with prescribed specifications of identity grafting. This may be said to characterize the dispositions of the Mandarin-primacy, and to some extent, the English-primacy. But at the same time, actors have also demonstrated low power distance orientations as they seek to adapt and recenter the discourse to situate oneself at the core of this action. The Dialect-primacy, who traverses along the peripheries of dual hegemony, appears to be predisposed towards adaptive strategies.

Bourdieu's concept of the habitus was useful in lending insight to change resistance due to the influence of intergenerational socialization. With the demand for accelerated development, identity grafting is a dynamic process, but identities gain stability once they have been internalized. Language and SES represents two of the most dominant factors that mediate identity socialization. As one is required to 'change identity' in order to adapt to diverse and shifting global demands, the constructs of identity grafting have been devised to capture the dynamic process actors encounter as they adjust to these demands. Conceptual distinctions were thus made between home language (current) and linguistic primacy (childhood); and, current and childhood SES.

Practices may be quickly adjusted to, but habitus adjustments need not necessarily accompany changed practice. By distinguishing between domains of practice and the habitus, I have demonstrated in the findings that state intervention is effective at influencing changed practice. Actors

have demonstrated the capacity to engage in identity grafting, albeit some have proven to be more effective than others. In the absence of continuous professional development, it may have been onerous for Repressed Chinese corporate representatives to effectively engage identity grafting. The endurance of marginal childhood SES, thus, has proven to be rather insurmountable in its identity socialization. Given the access to continuous professional development and tight mentoring chains, childhood SES did not seem to create the same barriers for teachers. Upward social mobility, demonstrated by current SES, when coupled with continuous professional development, has proven to be highly effective for changed practices.

The findings in this study suggests, while social transformation can occur through external intervention and at a large scale, transformation may be restricted to the realm of practice, thus representing a limited form of identity grafting. Linguistic primacy has proven to be the more challenging barrier. As much as home language can be changed, linguistic primacy remains a powerful mediating factor for enduring dispositions in power distance orientations. While its effects may be alleviated in terms of facilitating change in the realm of practice by current SES, both ECI corporate representatives and teachers struggle with dispositional change due to identity socialization by linguistic primacy.

Dispositions aside, the actual enacted practice however, transcends linguistic primacies. In the case of teacher professionals, availability of continuous professional development had alleviated change inhibition, especially for senior-rank teachers. Perhaps given the stronger license to exercise professional autonomy, teachers located at the upper strata of the professional hierarchy were more empowered to enact adaptive change. ECI illuminates upon a different situation. In the absence of professional development that relate to the authentic experiences of their everyday work realities, professional practice has gained a stability that closely aligns with the habitus they had acquired since childhood. Although corporate representatives represent the top echelon of local employees at ECI, professional development support has yet to address the demand for tacit knowledge, which is essential for the knowledge economy. Therefore, the leverage for empowering professional autonomy rests upon individual resourcefulness. While professional currency is updated through MBA credentials, and a training budget is allocated for the corporate representatives to attend expert-led workshops, the absence of sustained avenues for contextualized learning poses challenges to change practices that derive from reflexive professionalism.<sup>35</sup>

Through the comparison between ECI corporate representatives and teacher professionals, the following theoretical implications are forwarded in the light of Bourdieu's theories of social reproduction and transformation. In Bourdieu's theorization of the habitus, social reproduction originates from class stratification, and change is embedded within collaboration between intellectuals and disenfranchised classes.<sup>36</sup> In surveying the late-industrializing landscape, this proposition is problematic on a number of structural distinctions. Firstly, late industrialization is a global phenomenon. An analysis of late-industrializing societies is limited in its bandwidth if narrowly confined to focus on domestic class relations. I have sought an extended view of the theoretical landscape through the concept of identity grafting. Due to state-led accelerated development, class identity is much less enduring than in first-mover societies. In applying the distinction between childhood and current SES, I have demonstrated the potential for alleviating the impact of the habitus instilled by childhood SES. In contrast to the enduring dispositions of 'the Complex' that had taken shape among Repressed Chinese corporate representatives, childhood SES did not emerge as statistically significant in shaping power distance dispositions of teachers. Rather, upward social mobility has been shown to facilitate change in teaching practice, illustrated by the construct of current SES.

In the overemphasis on the debilitating effects of developmental states, late-industrialization theorists who have undertaken this analytical focus may have overlooked the facilitating role of effective state orchestration for the upward mobility of the class-disenfranchised. The presence of economically affluent but auto-orientalism disposed Repressed Chinese corporate representatives demonstrate how education access has enabled upward socioeconomic mobility. Although, due to the dearth of state access granted through continuous professional development, this cohort of professionals, unlike their contemporaries in the teaching profession, were not given the sustained access to state-led facilitation throughout their career trajectory. Teachers, in contrast, once having gained access to the upper echelons of the professional hierarchy, were empowered to enact change practices.

Notwithstanding, state monopoly of power does possess limiting effects. The presence of effective strong states may overshadow the potential for intellectual change agenda perceived to threaten state interests. State monopoly to political, class, and intellectual domains implies only the state could lead in empowering the disenfranchised. While the

Singapore state has proven to be highly effective as a self-starter of reform, the indeterminacy of identity grafting imposes strain upon a workforce of monolithic access to professional development. State monopoly of change influence can be problematic, as no single entity can realistically stake a monopolistic claim to the ownership of cultural capital within the dual hegemonic framework.

The concept of linguistic primacy offers explanation of how successful identity grafting occurred in spite of the gaps that had arisen from state-led orchestration. The Dialect-primacy provided the case-in-point. 'Dialects' continue to be an array of Chinese languages strongly discouraged by the state. Yet, at various points of the study, low power distance dispositions have emerged as critical for effective professional engagement. Perhaps operating along the margins of shifting identity and ethnic management has forged the disposition to recombine and soft balance power, rather than cohere with it. This demands of individuals the propensity to work against the grain and seek egalitarian collegial relationships in the face of stratified professional cultures. Dialect-primacy ECI corporate representatives have relied upon these dispositions to effectively negotiate the recombination of the dual hegemonic transnational business landscape. Qualitative observations of effective professional learning communities surfaced the same insight. When individuals share similar values for low power distance team cultures, conditions for the acquisition of risk-taking is forged through the facilitating of diverse, even conflicting perspectives. As individuals reconcile the range of alternative pathways to achieving common goals, they come to embody practice as authentic to professional dispositions.

The findings highlighted a linguistic situation that distinguishes from prevalent conceptualizations of language subgroups. Theoretical assumptions personify the Mandarin-primacy as diametrically opposed to the English-primacy. However, In terms of dispositions toward power distance, the disjuncture have proven to be greater between the Mandarin-primacy and Dialect-primacy according to the findings. Extending upon Bourdieu's<sup>37</sup> theorization of language and symbolic power, the influence of a language is contingent upon the position of its users within the field of power. Within the dual hegemonic framework, English and Mandarin are symbolic representations of hegemonic spheres of influence. In the Western hemisphere, the English language has been established as the international business language, asserting its dominance over rival symbolic systems (French and German, for example). In the Eastern hemisphere, Mandarin has likewise crossed national boundaries in its establishment as a dominant symbolic system, which renders it the preferred language to acquire for

the facilitation of business relationships. Tensions that had arisen from the imposition of Mandarin in 'Chinese' locales, thus, underlie the power dialectics among rival Chinese symbolic systems (Cantonese and Hokkien, for instance). As the international lingua franca, a power conscious primacy is vested upon its users. Therefore, in contrast to English and Mandarin, 'Dialects' represent a rival system against Mandarin that operate along the peripheries of this framework. Dialect-primacy, at least in the case of Singapore, resonates with strategies that reinforce low power distance orientations, manifest in the strategies of recombining and soft-balancing dual hegemonic tensions. The endurance of Dialect-primacy lends insight to the theoretical significance of linguistic primacy in explaining current geopolitical tensions from the subaltern's vantage point. To this effect, I would like to propose a reframed view of language in terms of its symbolic attachments, as opposed to actual usage. Given the centralized, developmentalist, and pragmatic character of developmental states,<sup>38</sup> linguistic usage wax and wane according to prestige planning. By conceiving of language identities in terms of linguistic primacy, the definition of linguistic vitality extends beyond usage into the domain of habitus. Dialect-primacy represents the symbolic struggles of operating along the peripheries. As a part of this geopolitical imagination, references to Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Taiwan were frequently made by ECI corporate representatives as extended constructions in their endeavors of managing Chineseness. In its various incarnations, 'Dialects' form a unitary identity that solidifies the inclination towards Dialect-primacy. Within the field of Dialect-primacy, linguistic conversions from minor to major 'Dialects' in the past have been forgotten. From the linguistic conversions of minority Teochew to majority Cantonese (Hong Kong), or to Hokkien (Singapore and Taiwan), the nuances of 'Dialect' usage were superseded by the symbolic struggles of dual hegemonic consciousness. Likewise, references to the 'West' white-washes the variety of symbolic systems that prevail. Notwithstanding, being English-primacy in the subaltern represents a symbolic reference point that shapes the habitus in the form of linguistic primacy. The English-primacy of the Situational Chinese, represents the desire to transcend the dual hegemonic divide, while they were consciously made aware of the hierarchical divisions between cultures immanent within their habitus. The Mandarin-primacy of the Born-Again Chinese is the embodiment of occidentalist bandwagoning strategies. The confrontational posture adopts the reference point of seeking greater 'Pan-Chinese' representation within the 'Western'-dominant hierarchy. As these transnational professionals tra-

verse physical boundaries across business sites, their linguistic primacies are heightened, but much to their unconsciousness. The influence of language is no longer defined by its conscious usage, but unconscious habitus.

In spite of its propensity to unite, linguistic primacy has equal propensity to stall collaboration. At this juncture, temptation lurks for the reinvocation of retrospective visions, where Anglicization was believed to be the resolution to cultural fragmentation. In the place of cultural pride, however, stands the even more debilitating effect of auto-orientalism. When actors are stripped to bare socioeconomic credentials, linguistic primacies are merely displaced by class dispositions. In the case of the Repressed Chinese, marginal childhood SES was foregrounded in their habitus instead of linguistic primacy. In the face of culturally-mediated scenarios, the Repressed Chinese had maintained their resolution to repress linguistic primacy, rendering these occurrences invisible. In the refusal to recognize a culturally fragmented landscape for what it is, Repressed Chineseness triggered dispositional inertia, as what is rendered invisible cannot be feasibly tackled by change measures. Repressed Chineseness, perhaps, lends insight to similar experiences among Changed Inhibited teachers. Being located at the subordinate segment of this stratification debilitates the confidence in one's capacity to enact effective change.

Returning to the question of the relevance of Bourdieu's theories about schools as reproduce forces of elite privilege in late-industrializing societies, I am inclined to see strong relevance in the continuation of this theoretical angle. In the place of class elites, however, are state elites who are able to ensure the longevity of their authority through successful nationalized education. Singapore is by far the most successful example, where the PAP had dominated since independence. In Taiwan, Kuomintang (KMT) had ensured its longevity through schooling a population into nationalistic consciousness through the notion of Chinese Renaissance. Its current legitimation crisis points to the overeffectiveness of past schooling measures, rather than its ineffectiveness. Given the change in party orientations from the days of Chinese Renaissance under Chiang Kai Shek, current KMT leaders seek to align with One China positions of the Mainland. Ironically, it is the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), currently under the leadership of the incumbent president Tsai Ing-wen, that continues the legacy of Taiwanese national determination. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Japan continues to hold sway, and disruptions to its continuous domination far from suggests a legitimation crisis for the conservative political party. In Hong Kong, the legacy of the state continues from the

British colonial administration to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Insofar as calls for Hong Kong's independence do not threaten to become reality, China is likely to maintain its tolerance towards the rising assertiveness of this Special Administrative Region. Tolerance, however, does not preclude the mounting efforts to discipline the intellectual incubators of political agitation. The education sector has become the hotbed for identity grafting within the dual hegemonic framework in Hong Kong. Student movements that mooted the formation of the pro-independence party Demosistō underlie the anxiety towards a future after the end of its Special Administrative Region status, while Chinese leaders interpret these agitations as Hong Kong's 'failure to decolonize.'<sup>39</sup> It may be expected, that the CCP will enjoy much stronger leverage over education in the Mainland, as would the PAP in Singapore. State monopoly and intervention resulted in progressive school reforms that alter the social fabric of privilege, more often than not, to the advantage of state elites. Notwithstanding, as much as state elites appear to possess a tight grip over the forces of social reproduction, the teaching profession is far from monolithic in its orientation.

Within the late-industrializing landscape, education and economy are the instrumental fields of power play critical for the augmentation of state longevity. Migdal,<sup>40</sup> however, points to the politicization of discourses that lend credence to all achievements in developmentalist political economies to the state. In *Managing Chineseness*, I have undertaken the complementary analysis of how actors manage the developmental state to achieve professional efficacy. In the adoption of this angle, I have discovered state initiatives are far from monolithic in its effects, be it among the ECI corporate representatives, or the Singapore teaching profession. It may be, perhaps, due to this diversity of professional dispositions, that Singapore's political economy has sustained its capacity for continuous change and growth. Successful change, rather than an outcome of having obliterated diverging dispositions, is the mediated outcome of the negotiation between structure and agency. Viewed from a long-term perspective, the persistence of linguistic primacy in the tacit domains had worked for, rather than against state interests. It is the diverse responses to monolithic state forces that had enabled the sustained capacity for social change. New centers of interests are constantly in the making, creating the pressure for the state to adapt to changing interest demands. But national professional attributes are not invented from a blank slate. Rather, identity grafting is the recombination, adaptation, and synthesis of identity attributes that becomes diverse professional attributes. The success of

developmentalism, in the case of Singapore, is rooted in the diversity that underlies professional dispositions, even when actions are carried out in alignment with the state vision. When paradigms shift, so do valued professional attributes. When it comes to professional dispositions, however, an organization is better off with a diverse set of human capital. With the rising sophistication of capitalist societies and developmental states, it has become increasingly unfeasible for ethnocentric prescriptions of which culture is allowed to flourish. Professional empowerment, beginning at the level of the rank and file, is thus essential, as effective change depends on the ability to maneuver paradigm flows. It enables professional capacity to link up to institutional strategies, rather than await instructions 'from above' when informed about the need to shift paradigms.

Orientalism, in its various permutations, represents ethnocentric prescriptions that impose coherence based on externally defined standards. Imposed identity grafting has been shown to hold its imitators captive. As shown in the everyday struggles encountered by ECI corporate representatives, blanket assumptions were applied upon their leadership abilities, based on salient auto-orientalist professional dispositions among some of their colleagues. In the reversal of orientalism, occidentalist professional dispositions (mis)assume that cultural primordialism naturally creates professional like-mindedness. Colleagues, whether 'Easterner' or 'Westerner,' are thus not assessed on individual merit, but whether s/he is likely to align with 'our' camp. Try as agents might for the embodiment of the desired traits, imitative strategies have proven to be short term solutions to pragmatic demands.

In the theorization of dual hegemony, vigilance needs to be exercised in upholding the distinction between naming a phenomenon, as opposed to upholding a phenomenon. In the application of dual hegemony as the analytical lens, theoretical insights surfaced with regard to how prevalent orientalism has colored the value positions of the scholarly community as we survey the empirical landscape.<sup>41</sup> Orientalism continues to prevail in assumptions taken about who comprises the 'international.' The ECI Vice-President's assertion that his international mobility was 'perfectly natural' gains traction from assumptions that 'international' is restricted to the dominant Euro-American core. As a method in exercise, selection of candidates eligible for leading positions thus had to originate from immersion in Euro-American empirical realities. This brings to question, if scholars who utilize empirical data from the subaltern can make theoretical assertions that are of 'international' relevance. Efforts to devolve orientalist assumptions in scholarly knowledge paradigms continue as a

challenge to be reckoned with. Joseph (ECI corporate representative), in his objections against orientalist assumptions in the assessment of his leadership eligibility, highlighted the imperative of redefining what ought to comprise the ‘international.’ He challenged the orientalist resistance against ‘reverse flow’ in international mobility. The objection raised doubts against the predominant unidirectional flow of ‘internationally relevant’ knowledge expertise from ‘core’ Euro-American regions. In its practice, however, occidentalism prevails in this assertion. In the rejection of regionally exogenous ‘Western’ paradigms as irrelevant, occidentalist scholarship ignores the embeddedness of diverse regions within international scholarship. In this deliberation, I am reminded of Ashis Nandy’s<sup>42</sup> intimation that orientalism is but one facet of diverse Euro-American scholarship.<sup>43</sup> There remains the liberating potential of learning from diverse knowledge origins to enrich indigenous knowledge. Collaborative efforts exist in both Western and subaltern scholarship against hegemonic discourse confined by orientalisms. Towards this endeavor, Dipesh Chakrabarty<sup>44</sup> cautions against the reinforcement of the myth that issues of ‘indigeneity’ concern only subaltern locales. This concern illuminates upon the persistence of tribalism in the conceptualization of ‘indigenous knowledge.’ The assumption prevailed among ECI corporate representatives of themselves as East Asians, and the ‘local’ representatives that distinguish from internationally mobile ‘expatriates.’ Furthermore, the absence of ‘other’ local ethnic representation was perceived as a reflection of the economic backwardness of ‘indigenous’ peoples. In this orientalizing of the self and the peer, leadership eligibility in the region was justified by means of emphasizing the exogeneity<sup>45</sup> of Western expatriates and indigenosity (as opposed to indigeneity)<sup>46</sup> of ethnic Malay Singaporeans. In the effort to stimulate interest in subaltern scholarship, similar attempts have been made in Asian scholarship of their ‘East Asian’ focus.

Decades after Syed Hussein Alatas<sup>47</sup> had illuminated upon the ‘captive mind’ in development studies, the entrenchment within the semi-periphery continues to weaken subaltern scholarship in spite of economic and educational excellence. In the exercise of peer orientalism, Asian scholarship continues to be fragmented by concerns of exogeneity, indigeneity, and indigenosity that plague their own backyards. According to Syed Farid Alatas,<sup>48</sup> the broader issue of the exclusion of subaltern scholarship from ‘international’ participation continues to be overlooked as discourse in the Asian social sciences continue to emphasize ‘regional’ relevance. Admittedly, in my personal journey, I often found myself baffled by ‘indig-

enous' scholarship dialogues. Lacking in the common conceptual tools to hold our conversation together, it is a constant struggle on my part to be reflexive about the relevance of postcolonial constructs beyond contexts from which they have been derived. I hope, in spite of my mental captivity, I have done justice with a good representation of 'indigenous' concepts in *Managing Chineseness*. In extreme cases of self-stereotyping, the Repressed Chinese corporate representatives are the harshest critics of 'indigenoussness,' or 'backward' behavior of fellow Asians. Auto-orientalism, however, is not confined to the mindsets of 'commercial people' or 'professional practitioners.' Ambivalence continues to characterize ruminations over 'fidelity of implementation' in the scholarly examination of how theories are empirically contextualized. Objections against 'local perversions' of scholarly ideals were as forceful as protests in defense of preserving local knowledge traditions. Underlying the discourse on paradigm shift, associated literatures on the obsolescence of traditional (Asian) pedagogies, the defense of these pedagogies, and/or the perversion of (Western) pedagogies in its translation to distinct (Asian) contexts, have illuminated upon socially constructed, but real cultural divides. The unwitting awakening of orientalist sentiments, however, has also accompanied these deliberations. Efforts to go beyond orientalism were attempted with the emergence of the dual hegemonic landscape. On the one hand, paradigm shifts have been buttressed with the expansion of the locus of power. Yet, discursive constructions have merely become more complex at the expense of the transcendentalist potential of cultures. This brings to mind the difficulties of a value-neutral conceptualization of social change.

Bourdieu-inspired theorization of social change prevail in the belief that intellectual mentorship can help with the transformation of social actors who are entrenched within negative cultural capital.<sup>49</sup> While external interventions bode a good start in breaking vicious cycles of social reproduction, findings that evidence 'transformed habitus'<sup>50</sup> remains tentative. As SES remains the prevalent construct employed in the study of identity socialization, language remains a relatively underexplored domain. Understandably, language poses less barriers when home language, medium of instruction, and business language are well aligned. This is the far from the case for many subaltern societies.<sup>51</sup> The examination of linguistic primacy, in particular, highlighted how identity socialization can become enduring dispositions. Where dispositions run counter to change rationales, observable changes may still be successfully enacted, but only in the domain of practice. As dispositions remain distinctly traced to linguistic primacy, and may run counter to change rationales, the findings suggest external intervention

is limited in transforming the domain of the linguistically-informed habitus. In Bourdieu's<sup>52</sup> assertion that the habitus is enduring, he refers to the symbolic influence of cultural capital, rather than tangible assets indicated by SES. In the adoption of Bourdieusian analysis, focusing on overcoming identity socialization barriers created by SES may be insufficient for a theoretical understanding of social transformation in the domain of the habitus. While there may be limited leverage for the empirical study of linguistic primacy in monolingual societies, the imperative remains for the global examination of the symbolic impact of this habitus. Due to the accelerated population mobility brought forth by globalization, changes in population demography have resulted in the rising diversity of language usage and linguistic primacies. Given these rapidly changing circumstances, the theoretical relevance of linguistic primacy may be fast becoming a global phenomenon, rather than a feature restricted to the subaltern.

With the rising complexity in the forms of social reproduction, the original agenda for social transformation proposed by Bourdieu needs to be reconsidered in the light of the disconnection between intellectuals and the disenfranchised. In the presence of strong states, state agencies are tasked with playing the role of intellectual mentorship in initiating self-audited processes of social reform. Through vertical tight coupling, this process relies on mentoring relationships to cascade change, first equipping the upper echelons with the capacity to diffuse transformation.<sup>53</sup> Having known the importance of soft-balancing summative and formative focuses, some of the senior-rank teachers embodied change, and managed to facilitate the same embodiment in these mentoring networks. Transformation, among Change Embodied teachers, thus, permeated from habitus to practice. Junior-ranks aligned with the aspirations embodied by their mentors flourished in the actualization of professional growth. Originally change-disinclined teachers might also be coaxed out of the comfort zones of their habitus to develop change capacity. In the case of high power distance oriented teachers, amenability to change might be dependent upon the priority given to instructions from 'above.' The function of state endorsement, in these diffusion chains, would be critical. Although holistic teaching initiatives might appear counterintuitive to high power distance teachers, some have proven to be Change Capable as they sought to exemplify state visions. As these teachers sought to lead the diffusion of formative teaching in earnestness, they demonstrate by example the commitment to change capacity. As policy has limited effect in the domain of habitus, gaps in the mentoring chain may arise. At this

juncture, it is important to sustain change leadership with the awareness on the need for constant renegotiations in the sustainment of effective vertical tight coupling. This may be the case especially for Change Aspiring junior-ranks, where low power distance relationships are more likely to facilitate effective mentoring outcomes. For the case of Change Inhibited junior-ranks, a high power distance mentoring arrangement might appeal. However, the outcome of vertical tight-coupling may vary in efficacy when change inhibition is excused for based on the belief that change capacity is unequal (high power distance). There exists potentially alienating elements that could result from change inhibition. As exemplified by the experiences of the Repressed Chinese, leaving them to their own devices may only aggravate professional isolation. The task at hand is how change inhibition can be meaningfully addressed to inspire the continued engagement of Change Inhibited teachers within the broader educational framework. Mutually affirming habitus, under these circumstances, would likely result in meandering processes to change diffusion. Under such circumstances, it may be more appropriate to give proactive guidance where systematic instructions give reassurance for the development of change capacities. Given the dynamic interactions between habitus and practice, state-led initiatives, or any externally-led initiative for the matter, will need to be vigilant over the unintended ramifications that accompany effective and sustained change. For the purpose of alleviating these unintended ramifications, I wonder if the necessary existence of vertical tight coupling could be complemented by more direct access of rank-and-file teachers to change leadership. If teachers get to jointly articulate policies about professionalism, they will be better empowered to enact change.

As much as barriers exist against the transformation of professional dispositions, the importance of organizing for change from the domain of professionalism has proven to be core to social transformation.<sup>54</sup> As state agencies work towards implementing reforms by influencing practice, there is also the growing awareness that changed practices will remain superficial if hovering at the level of action. With the interest in gaining influence over the values and ideologies that represent the professionalism of occupation groups, 'professionalism' has increasingly become the 'disciplinary mechanism'<sup>55</sup> introduced 'from above.' As a normative value system, however, overt compliance is poor indication of authentic conversion to prescribed forms of professionalism. It is also important to examine the sources of professionalism that emerge 'from within.'<sup>56</sup> In the event of failures to align with policy visions, individuals inevitably bear the brunt of the blame in

their refusal to forego old professional paradigms. But as individuals do not lose their socialized identities once they don the corporate suit, the origins of dispositional resistance may be traced to the historical legacies of past state initiatives. Especially within an empirical reality where the state has strong influence in prestige planning, the mediation of professional dispositions by linguistic primacy may well be the outcomes of previous state-led initiatives. Likewise, the 'failure' of old language policies in ridding Chinese Dialects in the domain of linguistic primacy has proven to become enablers of future change imperatives. The issue at hand is not whether Dialects ought to be preserved as integral to Singapore's heritage, but whether state-led transformations ought to be driven with an over-exacting hand. In this, I would like to bring to attention how value-diversity among teachers has brought forth the dynamism between policy and practice, but not necessarily in ways that will disrupt positive social change.

Teachers remain core to the making of professions. However, by performing their roles as professional agents, and not just handmaidens of social reproduction, teachers have demonstrated the capacity to implement state visions, but not necessarily in ways that complies with state prescriptions. This does not mean professionals ought to do whatever they desire. Rather, sustainable change initiatives will have to be interpreted by rank-and-file teachers, not for them. After all, it is most often than not the junior-rank teachers who have the most frequent access to students and parents. Effective educational transmission, thus, is highly dependent upon the ability of this professional stratum in communicating educational messages through their practice. Working class mothers, for instance, need not socialize their children in ways that reproduce the working class habitus. However, if in the process of parental engagement, teachers unwittingly re-enact class structures when they communicate with working class mothers,<sup>57</sup> efforts to correct social inequality that were perfectly implemented in the classroom may be nullified by counteractions that were not prescribed. Training teachers to implement prescribed instructions with high fidelity has its limits, in comparison to widening the circle of empowered intellectuals. High standards in professionalism, then, becomes a non-negotiable commitment expected of all professionals, regardless of where they stand within the professional hierarchy. Relationships within professional learning communities, then, can facilitate in the development of self-reflexivity, as peers offer support in illuminating upon issues that may be overshadowed by the habitus. Educators have been found to play crucial roles in igniting the future transformative potential of society.<sup>58</sup> Although teacher empow-

erment may not eventually result in the successful transcendence of habitus among these professionals, it has tremendous potential for determining the habitus of many students who will become professionals of the future.

In the theorization of the state, the choice of empirical context appears to shape the priority given to the examination of state influence. In Bourdieu's studies of French society, the state appears to be non-existent in terms of its influence upon social reproduction and transformation. Likewise, Castells' earlier works focus on how social movements in the North and South Americas resulted in the weakening of the state.<sup>59</sup> However, the theoretical slant adjusts as his empirical focus shifts to the Asian context. Migdal perceives of the state as important insofar as society continues to uphold its legitimacy, focusing primarily on Latin America.<sup>60</sup> To Evans, the state is central as he focuses on the role of highly successful developmental states in NIEs.<sup>61</sup> As the global political economy tightens in its integration, views about what encompasses the 'global' have become increasingly indeterminate. Theoretical insights about the state's function thus vary according to the choice of empirical context. In the region of the first-wave industrialists, the French industrial revolution was led by the capitalist industrial bourgeoisie. Class elites are thus the movers of social reproduction, and the players to be engaged in the negotiations for social transformation. As the second-wave industrialist, the United States, takes hegemonic position. Its global reputation as the champion of human rights has inspired social movements in the late-industrializing Latin Americas who seek to neutralize the oppressive influence of their states with US hegemonic influence. States that seek to assert their influence thus appear 'weak' in the face of globally endorsed social movements. In the third wave, the treatment of states can be said to be characterized by ambivalence. Violent oppressions were integral historical milestones to the formation of third-wave developmental states. Where conflict is less protracted and economic deliverables are strong (as was the case for the Asian Four Little Dragons), strong states were rated more favorably. Latin American states, for instance, encountered greater ambivalence. It was at the turn of the twenty-first century that China created the tipping point in favor of statist developmentalism. This time, however, China does not just represent the third-wave industrialist, but a distinctive theoretical view of state functions within the dual hegemonic political economy. With this shift in global reality, strong states are gaining leverage over strong societies. Strong state expediency, when coupled with the flexibility to revise unproductive past measures, have proven to be highly effective in supporting social rejuvenation.<sup>62</sup> Notwithstanding,

I wonder if it could have been a theoretical oversight to have excluded a role for society in contributing to social rejuvenation. The fascination with strong states may have created the oversight towards the existence of active social interpretation of state visions. Absence of overt dissension need not necessarily reflect uncritical duplication of state instruction. In the perception of state and society as theoretical constructs, a more productive conceptualization focuses on how their differences have generated the diversity that is essential for continuous and sustained transformation. Whether in the case of the strong state or strong society, efforts are better invested in ensuring diversity is productively engaged and deployed rather than oppressed. While monopolistic ownership can be imposed through prestige planning,<sup>63</sup> overexacting measures produce unintended consequences of throttling the future potential of human capital.

In taking a long-term view of ‘intended outcomes,’ unilateral assessments of how ‘the other’ has ‘deviated’ from one’s expectations cannot produce effective identity-grafting processes. As much as individuals have proven capable of diversifying in the face of state influence (even in the presence of a strong developmental state such as Singapore), states do possess the inclination to be instrumental in ensuring policy agendas are met. This instrumentality accelerates the potential for both productive and destructive outcomes. Even for the most highly productive states with the foresight to minimize unintended ramifications, oversights can be costly under strong state influence. Compounded by accelerated development, ramifications produce greater damage in the face of weak social diversification to effectively avert negative impact. Within the dialectical dual hegemonic framework, a multilateral approach may be more effective. This brings to mind the ECI Vice-President’s comment, ‘(the) old-fashioned, middle-aged, kangaroos or whatever’ of today could be tomorrow’s assets.

## NOTES

1. Lee, 2012.
2. Lee, 2013a.
3. Lee, 2013b.
4. Steiner-Khamsi, 2014.
5. Majhanovich, 2014, 175.
6. Sim, 1991.
7. Singteach, 2012.
8. Lee, Hong, & Niemi, 2014.

9. OECD, 2013.
10. Shiraishi, 2012.
11. Hofstede, 2001.
12. Franke, Hofstede, & Bond, 1991.
13. Evans, 1995, 213.
14. Hargreaves, 1992.
15. Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009, 51.
16. Steiner-Khamsi, 2014.
17. Evans, 1995, 213.
18. Alatas, 2001; Chakrabarty, 2009.
19. Lee & Lee, 2013.
20. Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012, 88.
21. Hairon & Dimmock, 2012.
22. The junior-rank teachers observed comprised only younger cohort teachers. Unfortunately, although the term 'junior rank' does not preclude older teachers, there were no instances of older cohort junior-rank teachers that emerged in the observations.
23. Hargreaves, 1992.
24. Granovetter, 1973, Granovetter, Marsden, & Lin, 1982, cited in Assimakopoulos & Yan, 2006, 99.
25. Benner, 2003.
26. See, for example, *National Agency for Finite Element Methods and Standards (NAFEMS)*, The Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers, The Institution of Engineers Australia, and The Institution of Structural Engineers.
27. Benner, 2003.
28. Some of the resources made available, as listed by Benner, are: general or more specific technical questions, courses, resources and job opportunities, career or business advice, and non-work-related resources and advice.
29. Dahlgren, Hult, Dahlgren, Segerstad, & Johansson, 2006.
30. Benner, 2003.
31. Saxenian, 1999, cited in Benner, 2003, 1819.
32. Benner, 2003, 1825.
33. See, for example, Byun, Schofer, & Kim, 2012; Jackson, Jonsson, & Rudolph, 2012; Behtoui & Neergaard, 2015; Bonizzoni, Romito, & Cavallo, 2014; Kiilo & Kutsar, 2012; Lehmann, 2012; Liu, 2013; O'Donoghue, 2013.
34. Bourdieu, 1998.

35. Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992.
36. Bourdieu, 1985.
37. Bourdieu, 1991.
38. Lee & Lee, 2013.
39. Iyenegar, 2015.
40. Migdal, 2001.
41. Alatas, 2006.
42. Nandy, 1989.
43. Lee, 2013a.
44. Chakrabarty, 2009.
45. Benjamin, 2013.
46. Weaver, 2000.
47. Alatas, 1972.
48. Alatas, 2006.
49. Costa, 2006.
50. Lehmann, 2013, 533.
51. Kiilo & Kutsar, 2012.
52. Bourdieu, 2011.
53. Dimmock & Tan, 2013.
54. Evetts, 2013.
55. Evetts, 2013, 782–786.
56. Evetts, 2013, 786.
57. O'Donoghue, 2013.
58. Lehmann, 2012.
59. Castells, 2011a.
60. Migdal, 2001.
61. Evans, 1995.
62. Evans, 1995.
63. Zhao & Liu, 2010.

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## Indeed

In the ‘third wave’ of capitalist-industrialization, developmentalist models stood out from the free market principles strongly upheld by first-mover political economies. Entering late into a race defined by exogenous normative climates, developmental states played critical roles in late-industrializing locales. Capitalist-industrialization was perceived by developmental states to be critical, although incompatible with indigenous normative climates. Therefore, developmental states wasted no time on organic sociopolitical adaptation. Accelerated development resulted in the rapid displacement of indigenous norms. In spite of these efforts, some of the most successful ‘third wave’ nation-states remained semi-peripheral in their influence over the global political economy. China’s participation in the capitalist-industrial core marked a historical turning point in the global political economy. The rise of a dual hegemonic landscape has resulted in the symbolic disjuncture between the prevailing Western normative climate of the free market and the countervailing alternative of guided economies. As tensions mount, Chineseness became a normative identity for the framing and counter-framing of where one stands within the capitalist-industrial political economy. Developmental states played active roles in attempting to encourage the identity grafting of normative attributes deemed desirable for economic participation. For the Singapore developmental state, proactive management of Chineseness characterized its ethnic and identity management.

In the first phase, ethnic management initiatives steered the nation away from identity associations with the 'Third China.' As a result, most young families today speak English as home language. The second phase purported to be an effort at 'resinification.'<sup>1</sup> This phase, however, would be more accurately described as identity-grafting strategies that prepare its workforce for normative adaptation to the rise of dual hegemony. Most Chinese Singaporeans now identify with Mandarin as their mother tongue, regardless of the language spoken at home. The third phase of identity grafting took on an inward-looking slant. Government Linked Corporations (GLCs) represent the proud testaments of regional knowledge in infra-structural adaptation and labor management. Initially emerging alongside vituperatives against 'Western permissiveness,' identity-grafting efforts have since mellowed to the current soft-balancing approach of recombining normative interests. Currently, GLCs represent the Singaporean brand of the unthreatening, neutral but capable umpire that, in wanting a piece of action in all realms of the global market, had engaged in identity grafting to align normatively to the dual hegemonic pecking order. The fourth phase captured the rising complexity of Singapore multiculturalism, which echoes an economic landscape where multinational corporations, government-linked corporations, and small-medium enterprises cooperate and compete to enhance competitive advantage. Foreign direct investment is no longer unidirectionally inward, but rather, circulated in multiple directions among globally networked economies. Chineseness, over this historical trajectory, has become more diffused. Its boundedness in identity grafting, nonetheless, persists within the confines of accelerated development and dual hegemony.

By choosing to commence its history from the time it became a British colony, the richness of Singaporean history as a fifteenth-century entrepot has been rendered invisible. Upon independence, Singapore could have built a confident nation that relives its glorious days as a cosmopolitan hub with a substantial population of Arab and Chinese traders. A robust historical foundation, when taught as lessons at school, offers to the young the aspiration to continue the historical legacy of their forebears. In its place, the official history maintains British impressions of Singapore as a fishing village, whose economic potential only actualized with colonial recognition. Stripped of cohesive ties as a colonial trading outpost, Singaporean history is thus highly amenable to reinvention. A founding myth that aggrandizes others' glory rather than one's own, however, created orientalist ramifications. It is a moot point whether success could have been

achieved with or without the management of Chineseness. The answer is likely positive, but pessimistic. Without state orchestration of identity grafting, orientalist dispositions may be less prevalent, as professionals would have developed a robust self-concept through organic experiences of adapting to business transnationalism. However, bearing in mind that Singapore's leading asset results from its being a first mover in the late-industrializing world, the chances of reliving its glorious cosmopolitan past would have been slim, and even slimmer as China joins the competition. Indeed, orientalism-infused state discourse had perpetrated persistent reproductions of self-limiting beliefs, with its residuals continuing to manifest in varied permutations among its recipients. Its reproduction, however, allowed for the estimation of exogenous normative climates in efficient forms, thereby allowing for the ease of internalizing the unfamiliar at an accelerated pace.

Through the scrutiny of professional actors engaged in managing Chineseness, nuances in identity grafting demonstrated the diversity in which state symbolic power has come to be embodied and enacted. State-led initiatives have won credit for their highly efficacious achievements in rejuvenating its political economy. Much less attention, however, is paid to the unintended consequences of the interventionist state upon the society. More importantly, even less is known about the contingent ways in which individual actors have supported the actualization of state visions. Bourdieu's concept of the habitus lent insight to how individual views about appropriate courses of action underpin differentiated possession of cultural capital. However, the gaps in theorization of the ECI empirical reality had also arisen with the application of this concept. These theoretical gaps echoed Aihwa Ong's issue with the assumed immutability of cultural capital, given the similar focus on transnational Chineseness in *Flexible Citizenship*.<sup>2</sup> In my study of *Managing Chineseness*, significant effort has thus been invested in theoretical development. The concept of identity grafting was devised to address gaps in the application of Bourdieusian conceptions of cultural capital. Through the scrutiny of how accelerated development has taken shape in empirical reality, it became apparent that state elites have taken the place of class elites as the authoritative shaper of education and the economy. As the hegemonic influence in growing the economy, developmental states have strong leverage unencumbered by fragmented class interests. From this view, late-industrializing states are strong states.<sup>3</sup> For the sake of accelerated development, on the other hand, developmental states are also

weak states responding to changing tides in the global political economy.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, developmentalism is not just a state attempt to influence society, but also the attempt of society to maximize its leverage with the next tide of re-engineering initiatives.<sup>5</sup> Through the scrutiny of how dual hegemonic consciousness has been transmitted and received, the habitus has been empirically shown to be enduringly influential, but much less homogeneous and immutable in its effects of social reproduction. The nuances articulated in the interpretation of dual hegemony also demonstrates the diversity with which state symbolic power has come to be embodied and enacted as professional agents partake in the imagination of themselves as a part of the global value chain. In some of these cases, the reproduction of orientalism has posed barriers to social transformation and continuous identity grafting.

Critics of developmentalist models believed implanted norms offered poor imitations that were unsustainable for long-term capitalist-industrial development. The proliferation of orientalism in the region further affirmed these observations. In the case of the Repressed Chinese, auto-orientalism underlies the cultural disengagement strategies adopted in professional practice, and occidentalism prevailed in Born-Again Chinese cultural engagement. While orientalist strategies may have served past economic purposes, adaptive strategies that extend beyond orientalist constructions of Chineseness have not emerged among Born-Again and Repressed Chinese. As demonstrated by the instances of enduring orientalist discourse reproductions among ECI corporate representatives, overenthusiasm with aligning with externally defined benchmarks affirm critics' assessments that imitative grafting of rapidly cobbled-together identities lacks sustainability. Long after state discourses put an end to the deployment of zero-sum positions in the articulation of new state visions, orientalism prevailed in the mindscapes of corporate representatives. However, not all corporate representatives were similarly disposed, as adaptive dispositions were also as represented. Reproduction of orientalism had not emerged among Integrated and Situational Chinese.

By typologizing the everyday constructions of Chineseness in terms of childhood SES and linguistic primacy, a sociological understanding of the reproduction of orientalism has been achieved. Late-industrialization theorists highlighted the distinctive structures that drive preferences for accelerated development, which helped advance the explanation of how orientalism had influenced the everyday professional lives among some ethnic Chinese Singaporeans. Explanations of accelerated development

also served to bring to attention to the emergence of a dual hegemonic political economy. The theory of identity grafting offered an extended view of the development process as not just a race for capitalist-industrialization, but also the assertion of symbolic power that obliges normative adaptations by 'swing states.' By surveying family, education, and economy as overlapping domains of influence, integrative insights lent explanation to the reproduction of orientalism in the construction of Chineseness and the potential for social transformation beyond culture-bound constructions.

Literatures focused on the impact of SES on school achievement were essential foundations upon which the conceptual distinction between childhood and current SES could be elaborated. An awareness of the dearth of literatures looking at diffused aspects of achievement that extends into the lifecourse of a person's professional career also became apparent. The need for a dynamic view of achievement resulted in the theoretical differentiation between childhood and current SES. Childhood SES performs the socializing function of an acquired habitus, while current SES denotes later achievements. In the instance of late-industrializing societies, the disjuncture between childhood and current SES is more prevalent due to accelerated development, which lends significance to the incidence of auto-orientalism among the Repressed Chinese.

The significance of home language as a theoretical construct has offered a good start for the rearticulation of linguistic vitality in the domain of the habitus. Given the recognition of home language as influential to academic achievement, discussions about home language set the foundation for the theorization of linguistic primacy, which posits a retake of linguistic vitality in the tacit domain. Distinguished from current active usage denoted by home language, this investigation into the tacit revealed enduring linguistic vitalities that persist despite home language conversion. The theorization of linguistic primacy gives further insight into the distinction between usage-based home language and the symbolic power vested in a language. While the Born-Again Chinese may or may not currently speak Mandarin as a home language, the linguistic significance of Mandarin primacy transcends its current usage. Furthermore, this group presents the case example that offers insight to the plausible predispositions of the rising incidence of affluent migrant families who speak home languages that differ from the prevalent medium of teaching instruction. Born-Again Chineseness represents a phenomenon whereby children originating from affluent classes were

misaligned with the dominant language. The Situational Chinese offered a case of contrast. Given that the majority of Singapore homes currently use English as their home language, an examination of Singaporean society in terms of home language is unlikely to highlight the distinctiveness of Situational Chinese experiences. Viewed in terms of linguistic primacy, however, Situational Chineseness represents only a small segment of Singapore's social demographics. The facilitating circumstances within which the Situational Chinese had been raised predisposed this cohort toward optimism in the transcendence of culture-boundedness. The Situational Chinese case offers foresight to the predispositions of individuals whose linguistic primacies are aligned with central government efforts at establishing Mandarin as the medium of instruction in China's territories.

The Integrated Chinese represents a cohort symbolically predisposed to languages that used to prevail as the mother tongues(s) of the ethnic Chinese majority in Singapore. Chinese Dialects are no longer recognized in the education domain. The supplanting of their 'mother tongue' with Mandarin, however, did not appear to incur significant negative ramifications in terms of the Dialect primacy habitus (excluding those already predisposed by marginal childhood SES). The experience of Integrated Chineseness may, over the next decades, become prevalent with China's Mandarinization efforts. While the more distant provinces and territories have proven to be highly resilient to these symbolic incursions, the transformation of the Guangzhou linguistic landscape appears to suggest solid grounds are yielding.

For the Repressed Chinese, the voluntary suppression of people's authentic professional voice appeared to be negative demonstration of leadership capacity from the Vice-President's view. It seems that the more the Repressed Chinese attempted cultural disengagement, the more Chinese stereotypes were foisted upon them. Chineseness became a burden, which had to be repressed, honored, proven, and negotiated based on external benchmarks of authenticity. Employing Jeremy Bentham's work on the panoptic prison, Michel Foucault likens state incursions to the panoptic surveillance that instigates self-disciplining repression.<sup>6</sup> The case of the Repressed Chinese appears to abide by conventional responses to panoptic surveillance. As much as self-disciplining auto-orientalism serves to enhance the ease of subordinating actors through the reining in of professional autonomy, it also constrains the development of professional capacities requisite for the long term. However,

not all actors are predisposed to interpret the presence of the panopticon in the same way. Within this atmosphere of self-restricting surveillance, the Situational Chinese characterized proactive transcendence of barriers as effective identity grafting. Cultural divisions will remain prevalent as echoes of symbolic power, but amenable to transcendence when one finds the structural levers for change. The Situational Chinese savor experiences where they had transcended the scrutinizing eye of the developmental state, believing the watchers behind the venetian blinds have been outwitted, even for a moment, despite their vigilance. This perhaps served as one of the unintended consequences that had enhanced the social compact between state and society, thereby fueling the success of the developmental state. By playing according to the rules of the game, actors get to actualize the authentic self by demonstrating cooperative acquiescence. Although salient impressions may inaccurately reflect the prevalent reality, they nonetheless become blanket assumptions. Late-industrializing political economies need to extricate themselves from salient impressions of auto-orientalism and its negative associations.

Convinced of the vigilance of those behind the venetian blinds, the presence of panoptic surveillance spurred Born-Again Chinese performativity into overdrive. Chineseness was an expression of primordial like-mindedness, which nonetheless requires continuous renewal due to the distal links Chinese Singaporeans possess in relation to more proximate locales. In anticipation of the types of behavior deemed exemplary by the watcher in the observation tower, the Born-Again Chinese played up characteristics that would put him in a favorable light, while reversing those deemed undesirable. Selective cultural alignment embodied the habitus of the Born-Again Chinese, passionate in weighing in on controversies to provide the tipping point of dual hegemonic influence. Counterweighing against the incursion of orientalism, Born-Again Chinese engaged in retaliatory occidentalism. As with the Born-Again Chinese, Integrated views of Chineseness concur with the existence of cultural zones of proximity that required proactive engagement. However, as the presence of the watcher behind the venetian blinds remained unknown, the Integrated Chinese decided to disregard the presence of the observation tower. Rather than ruminating over how dominant languages had served to eclipse Dialect linguistic vitality, the Integrated Chinese focused on building their leverage in the arbitration of tensions that may arise with the presence of a dual hegemonic framework. Identity grafting, thus, built upon intuitive action, shaped by observations of how a variety of communities take posi-

tion in relation to the hegemonic core (Hong Kong and Japan were cited as examples of comparison). Although taking an aggregate observation of inmate behavior to ascertain the appropriate response to the observation tower may mean one becomes twice-removed from 'the truth' behind the venetian blinds, it may be equally futile to ascertain the stirrings occurring in the observation tower by obsessing over it. Although the social compact between state and society are looser in this configuration, the lower sensitivity toward state direction need not necessarily be inimical to developmental visions. By playing according to own rules of the game, actors are twice watchful over the needed responses to adapt to authentic contexts.

In the 'third wave,' Asia comprises a composite of nations who represents the front-runners of economic growth. Among which, 'East Asian' economies are leading the pack. These nations lead in the semi-periphery, 'enculturated' by orientalist discourses about the cultural exceptionalism of 'East Asians' from the rest in the periphery. Scrambling to qualify for a place in the semi-periphery, Asian nations assert their 'East Asian' lineage, some with greater persuasion than others. Singapore's insecurity of being on the semi-periphery triggered continuous efforts to revalidate economic competitiveness against same-cohort peers. Chineseness, then, became the 'East Asian' reference point employed in the construction of the peer oriental. In contrast to hegemonic first-movers who were more likely to view under-development as 'hapless,' being in competition as peers breeds competitive postures. In contrast, tensions between peers of more proximate competitiveness tend to mount as one tries to outdo the other at the borders of the semi-periphery. Peer orientalism, when exercised, thus took on more intensive forms of typecasting 'willful' opponents. Similar patterns have emerged among corporate representatives. While Born-Again and Situational Chinese corporate representatives were able to take on less competitive views of Malays as peer orientals, stronger ambivalence was demonstrated by the Integrated and Repressed Chinese. Most importantly, these responses have been found to be related to the habitus. Impressions were formed through the vicarious experiences of interracial relationships with the peer oriental in state discourse. Past schooling experiences formed a significant segment of resources from which the corporate representatives drew upon in support of their explanations. While corporate representatives differed in the reliance upon orientalist discourses in their self-constructions of Chineseness, those who admittedly have less actual contact with Malays relied heavily upon orientalism in their constructions

of the peer other. This suggests actors are more likely to rely upon external references availed by the state when feeling less confident over the tacit knowledge they possess.

As a self-starter of reforms, Singaporean state agencies deemed it timely to complement excellence in international benchmarks with formative approaches to whole-person development. While formative and summative practices are by no means incompatible, they do commence from different assumptions about the relationship between teacher and learner. Using the teaching of Mandarin as an instance, compromises may need to be made with regard to pre-established achievement standards if the teaching paradigm is informed by the formative value of scaffolding the learning process with English communication support. While the teacher remains the knowledge expert, s/he will need to play a facilitating role that operates by student learning needs rather than teacher expectations. At the level of professional dispositions, teachers are differently inclined toward such recombination strategies. As with ECI corporate representatives, low power distance teachers are more inclined towards recombination strategies than would high power distance teachers. Furthermore, the Dialect primacy has been found to be more inclined toward low power distance than Mandarin primacy. Notwithstanding, although findings suggest linguistic primacy has an enduring impact upon the habitus, dispositions may not always actualize in action. The overriding factor remains entrenched within unequal access to influence due to professional hierarchy, as indicated by a teacher's current SES. Nonetheless, upward mobility in the teaching profession seemed to have enabled the transcendence of effects on the habitus by marginal childhood SES, which had no statistical effect on dispositions and practice among teachers. This suggests that Singapore education has successfully upheld its principle of meritocracy, whereby the acquired effects of family socialization may be effectively transformed by educational success and upward mobility, at least in the domain of professional practice. The influence of strong states in transcending the effects of strong families, however, appears more influential in the public sector, where the teaching profession is located, than in the private sector where ECI corporate representations were situated. In addition, the value of professional influence, it seems, appears to be more distinguished with the existence of hierarchical stratification (such as the teaching profession). In comparison, flatter professional structures (such as among ECI corporate representatives) tended to possess weaker leverage in instilling a sense of authoritative influence among its professionals.

In recognizing the achievements of the strong state, however, I remain uncomfortable with the observation of how the state has come to perform the role of ‘intellectuals’ in change leadership. In recognizing salient state contributions to social transformation, the corresponding contributions by the agentic will is often overlooked. For its contribution in sustaining the capacity for continuous economic and social renewal, the agentic will remains extremely fragile, and avenues for exercising this leverage can be expediently throttled out by efficient state instruments.

The advantages offered by hierarchical stratification, importantly, should not be confused with power differentials, which have an adverse influence on change empowerment. While hierarchical stratification motivates its professionals to take leadership initiatives in continuous professional development, high power distance cultures curtails professional autonomy and has an inverse effect. In surveying the global landscape, distinct cultural attributes do tend to prevail across regions and continents.<sup>7</sup> Value judgments of the types of culture that ought to universally prevail are as dangerous when exercised in absolutes as when given as justifications for the different types of culture that ought to be distinguished across regions. In *Managing Chineseness*, two aspects of the global political economy have been highlighted with the theorization of identity grafting. On the one hand is the value proposition of classic capitalist development, where the free market is the underlying principle believed to buttress development. The contextual backdrop is conducive for the formation of an open-ended and exploratory culture, where autonomy is sacrosanct. At ECI, the flat organizational structure is undergirded by this value principle and contextual backdrop, where corporate representatives relied upon their own resourcefulness to gain a place in the top management. However, contextual misfit exists in the organization of ECI. ECI is situated within a sociopolitical landscape organized along the principle of state-led intervention, and an organizational structure with a track record of an expatriate top-management layer. While free market principles underpin ECI culture, its organizational structure replicates the characteristics of late industrialization and postcoloniality. In the reconciliation of accelerated development and dual hegemony, identity-grafting strategies of some of the corporate representatives thus characterized responses to orientalism. Yet, justifications for allowing distinctive cultures to prevail are also problematic in their assertions. A segment of teachers were found to remain change

inhibited as highly stratified professional hierarchies were accompanied by high power distance cultures. A plausible solution is to close the cultural gap by 'doing both.' Recombination strategies, however, are not magic solutions for every dilemma. When inappropriately implemented, high power distance cultures may become further endorsed with the removal of the recluse to external intervention. Nonetheless, when appropriately exercised, stratified professional structures could be empowering if egalitarian relationships and autonomy are endorsed as solutions to reduce prevalent high power distance relationships. As much as diversity enhances creative destruction, irreconcilable differences have the propensity to splinter social cohesion and organizational coherence. The organization of professional relationships may be better off if similar values are shared, although diversity of opinion ought to be endorsed. Notwithstanding, as dispositions and practice recombine in copious permutations, initiatives to reduce power distance will need soft-balancing approaches, rather than strategies mandated by selective alignment.

By theorizing linguistic vitality in terms of its primacy, the influence of a language is extended beyond usage to its symbolic power on the habitus. The concept of linguistic primacy sheds insight into the potential and limits of social transformation. Observed adjustments in behavior need not necessarily point to the transformation of the habitus. As the findings from the teacher sample suggested, shifts in language usage need not necessarily point to the transcendence of linguistic primacy. This theoretical insight has brought forth policy implications that may be essential to engagement in prestige planning. Language planners may need to consider linguistic vitality as impactful in both salient and tacit domains. When considered in light of salient language usage, linguistic vitality may be instrumental for strategic language planning that yields short-term economic consequences. In the long term, however, the impact of language planning yields tacit, but highly enduring consequences that may be unanticipated by language planners. Notwithstanding, when professionals are empowered by authoritative influence within a professional hierarchy, effective social transformation has the leverage to impact practice. While the effects of previous initiatives were by no means nullified by policy corrections, they do signify the potential for deep transformations in the social habitus through the future generations of a society, especially

when change practice has been found to succeed among teachers, the makers of professions.

### AN AFTERTHOUGHT ON IDENTITY GRAFTING

In spite of late industrialization, successful newly industrialized economies share the common feature of being supported by outstanding education systems. Education excellence, in particular, is demonstrated by the outstanding performance in international benchmarks. In the postindustrial age, however, overachievement in standardized benchmarks may not be an accurate qualifier of education quality. This awareness has perhaps informed the state-led decision to embark upon holistic education reform in Singapore. Given the continued capacity to overperform despite recent adjustments to international benchmarks,<sup>8</sup> it does seem that holistic education initiatives are enjoying high rates of success. Strong mandates for continuing strong state practices, it seems, were also given by the electorate, as demonstrated by the landslide victory of the PAP in the 2015 elections. With a healthy dose of skeptical criticism, I wonder if the Singapore political economy has continued to do well because, or in spite of, the longevity of state-led centralization, developmentalism, and pragmatism.<sup>9</sup> Can sustained economic and educational success be solely attributed to state efforts at reinventing Singaporean history? It does seem the case from the vantage of some at ECI, who are strong subscribers to the belief that ‘permissive cultures’ in the West have bred ‘too many visionaries’. With a strong state leadership core, according to these sentiments, docile local professionals can enjoy the fruits of economic labor, even if they may not be outstanding through their individual merit.

In *Managing Chineseness*, I have raised doubts with regard to these views. By typologizing the way ECI corporate representatives have made sense of their Chineseness, I had sought to capture ideal types that will facilitate the investigation. The work of naming the phenomenon, however, has been carried through with the intention of deconstructing, rather than reifying Chineseness. Tracing the process of identity grafting in these typologies, discussion of ‘the Complex’ was an attempt to go beyond orientalist assumptions of the docility of Singaporean professionals. Deconstruction commenced by highlighting the skewed representation of professional dispositions that paid attention to behaviors that affirm the existence of auto-orientalism. A deeper probe then ensued

to identify the plausible structural factors that had mediated variations in professional dispositions. The mediation of marginal childhood SES has demonstrated that Repressed Chineseness might have much less to do with Chineseness than an articulation of professionalism that is collocated with the micro, meso, and macro foundations of the global political economy.<sup>10</sup> When postcolonial and late-industrializing entities had little choice but to adopt the normative habitus of the core, identity grafting for the subaltern was fixated upon accelerated development within a monocultural political economy. To the affluent childhood SES Situational Chinese, English-primacy was not perceived to be threatened by the growing need to be Mandarin proficient. But it was the marginal childhood SES Repressed Chinese who felt their cultural identities were marginalized prior to Chinese ascendancy. In contrast to adaptive approaches that exemplify Situational Chineseness towards the rise of dual hegemony, Repressed Chineseness depicted disengagement in the face of change. Born-Again Chineseness was distinguished by identity-grafting strategies of bandwagoning with the ascendant. In subscribing to occidentalist mindsets that people will remain in the peripheries when aligned with the exogenous West, the normative alignment in Born-Again Chineseness was with the indigenous East. In comparison, Dialect-primacy Integrated Chineseness indicated much less optimism with regard to accessing core membership through professed likemindedness. While culture was an integral consideration in Integrated Chinese professionalism, soft balancing strategies were preferred over bandwagoning. Embodying an identity treated as peripheral to Chineseness, the habitus of Dialect-primacy agents disinclined from being overly enthusiastic about becoming a core incumbent within the dual hegemonic framework. Realistic awareness of the processes of identity grafting, it seems, is essential to effective engagement in this endeavor. In the absence of strong critical awareness, stronger unanimity has been expressed, such as in the peer orientalizing of ethnic Malay Singaporeans. In the statistical study, teacher responses in the survey likewise demonstrated the interpretive enactment of change visions. In spite of the solely ethnic Chinese profile of the teachers sampled in this study, mentors varied in their views about encouraging teacher leadership among the junior ranks.

For the purpose of ensuring a feasible theorization of linguistic primacy, this study has limited scope in capturing a more realistic depiction of the Singapore society. In order to field only a restricted number of language mediums, the investigation has not taken into account non-ethnic

Chinese Singaporeans, Singaporeans overseas, or immigrant professionals in Singapore. With about half the population now comprising foreign residents unexposed to local education, can the buoyancy of the Singaporean economy be rightfully attributed to the success of Singaporean education? Given today's economic affluence, how does family investment in private tutoring and enrichment classes create factors that hinder any reliable assessment of the quality of Singaporean education?

The absence of conceptual distinctions between 'Chinese languages' resulted in the misassumption of 'English' and 'Chinese' as ontologically opposed symbolic systems. Given the rapid decline of 'Dialect' linguistic vitality in terms of their usage, the examination of the enduring effects of intergenerational language socialization is enabled through the concept of linguistic primacy. By framing theoretical distinctions between languages in terms of linguistic primacy, this study has facilitated an examination of the differences between the dominant and subordinate 'Chinese languages.' A focus on linguistic vitality in terms of the habitus (linguistic primacy), as opposed to usage, enabled the study of the distinctions between Mandarin and other Chinese languages ('Dialects') within the domain of dispositions. One of the key theoretical limitations of adopting the 'Dialect' linguistic grouping is the inability to siphon off the nuances that exist between the varieties of Chinese languages subsumed under this label. Due to the empirical limitations of available data, there is also limited scope for comparison between nationalities. It may be interesting to see if different symbolic configurations exist, for example, between Hong Kong and Singapore. With Hong Kong's current dilemma over the imposition of Mandarin as medium of instruction, how will Mandarinization, if successful, impact upon its current education configuration? Will it threaten the linguistic vitality of Cantonese, or co-exist as does English with Cantonese? More importantly, with its predominantly Cantonese-speaking culture, would Dialect primacy mediate identity grafting in ways distinct from Singapore's? What is the resultant relationship between dispositions (linguistic primacy) and actions (identity grafting) within the framework of social reproduction and transformation? Further empirical investigation of linguistic primacy, and its role in mediating identity grafting, will enrich theoretical understandings.

In making the decision to focus on political economy, I have taken on the analytical assumption that the economy is core to sustaining societies. Within this configuration of identity grafting, the efficacy of states and professionals are examined vis-à-vis its capacity to support economic

sustainability. The key function of education, then, serves as the instrument through which state economic visions are actualized through the socialization of human capital. Although professionals may interpret state visions in ways that vary from state prescription, the interpretive framing in terms of identity grafting demonstrates the recognition of the position within which Singapore's political economy is situated. They recognize the importance of rapid implementation, as accelerated development is the means to economic competitiveness. Within the dual hegemonic landscape, identity grafting of value-assumptions propounded by hegemonic authorities is a balancing act. But education is not just about economies, or alignment with state visions. There remains much to be desired in terms of education for the actualization of human potential, for freedom of expression, happiness, and love.

There was the historical memory of how student movements had defended Chinese education, which led to the eventual collapse of the British colonial government. Chinese students fought with conviction to retain their right to an education that actualizes their vision of Singapore's future. They rejected identity-grafting measures as false consciousness, contrived to discipline them into submission. But if Singapore's independence was secured as the Third China, the immense financial reserves secured by its human capital today would have been wishful thinking. Hegemonic coercion would throttle this economy from accessing networks to financial accumulation, and sympathizers would refrain from exercising compassion lest they offend the hegemon. Notwithstanding, Singapore has taken a different course to independence and currently enjoys the security backed by enviable financial reserves. In spite of calls from opposition party candidates for the electorate to stand up and find its lost voice, relentless support for the incumbent government continues to be demonstrated. Compared with the radical student movements of Singapore's historical past, young university graduates, who form a significant segment of the support base, demonstrated conservative support for the status quo. The key discomfort for the opposition, however, may not be an agenda for change, but eagerness to dip into the financial reserves in order to effect change.

Nevertheless, the success of state longevity, although qualified by economic sensibilities, will need to be sustained by holistic strategies that go beyond standardized economic yardsticks. In the domain of education, change agenda in holistic development of human potential represents one of the means through which invitations were extended to society to

partake in the collaborative shaping of a new state agenda. This appears to be good progress from one-sided engineering rationales of the old industrial paradigm. Under the industrial paradigm, the means to foster an engineering disposition is to encourage disengagement with heritage sentimentality. Convinced that Chinese Dialects have no economic worth compared with dominant business languages, linguistic vitality, in terms of usage, experienced rapid decline. Yet in terms of linguistic primacy, the authenticity of identity heritage has far from waned in intergenerational transmission. The sentimentality towards Singlish (Singaporean English patois) and Chinese Dialects persisted in spite of state insistence that these poorer linguistic forms are hurtful for the Singapore economy. In a bid to justify the retention of Chinese Dialects, respondents in this study had even attempted to justify the economic utility of these languages, believed to still possess business worth in China when building rapport with the Southern provinces. Whether real or imagined, the articulations show an entrenched desire for sentimentality in spite of respondents being 'pragmatic Singaporeans.' As with articulations about Chineseness, cultural sentimentalities underlie the need for the confidence that arises from emotional, intellectual, and identity authenticity. Being authentic, according to ECI corporate representatives, need not be radical acts of retrogression to revive lost heritage. It does, however, illuminate the importance of being able to uphold a sense of professionalism that is authentic to one's professional dispositions. While it is important that professionals work towards the corporate vision, not against it, stipulations that castigate diversity in its enactment can be highly effective, but woefully contrived.

Finally, in studying two distinctive professions, I am struck by the gendered stratification of professional roles between ECI corporate representatives and teachers. The prevalently male ECI corporate representatives have commercial careers with the transnational leverage. As observed by Daniel Goh,<sup>11</sup> within the hierarchy of civil service careers, 'elite masculinity' characterizes the upper rungs in politics, and females populate the teaching profession. Teachers perform the functions of social reproduction, care for the young, and oversee the domestic front of economic growth. Aihwa Ong surmises,<sup>12</sup> in the network of transnational mobility, that women play supporting roles, subject to the transnational aspirations of fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons.

## NOTES

1. Clammer, 1998.
2. Ong, 1999.
3. Evans, 1995.
4. Castells, 2011b.
5. Migdal, 2011.
6. Foucault, 1979. Foucault analogizes state surveillance to the panopticon, a prison surveillance system designed for the minimum investment of surveillance resources through the installation of venetian blinds in observation towers. Unable to discern when surveillance is actively enforced, inmates became disinclined to act in contravention of prison rules.
7. Hofstede, 2001.
8. OECD, 2012.
9. Lee, Hong, & Niemi, 2014; Lee, 2015; Lee, 2014; Singteach, 2015.
10. Evetts, 2013.
11. Goh, 2015, 137.
12. Ong, 1999.

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