Singapore’s structural dependence on foreign talent: causes and consequences

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E762 – From the East Asian “Miracle” to the world “Re-Orient-ation”

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1. Introduction

Since Singapore’s independence in 1965, the country’s ruling People’s Action Party (PAP) has orchestrated a remarkable economic development for its citizens, who now enjoy a quality of life comparable to that in the world’s richest countries.

In achieving this success, the PAP faced Singapore’s two omnipresent scarcities: labour and land. In this paper, I address the policies by which the PAP addressed Singapore’s labour scarcity, consisting of both a numerical shortage of workers and a qualitative shortage of specific human capital (e.g. skill and occupation). I pay particular attention to high-skill jobs, with the assumption that, in the face of unavoidable labour scarcity, Singaporeans prefer to hold these and leave low-paying jobs to foreigners.

The PAP government had two broad policy fields with which to address its labour shortages: (1) domestic production through education, training and mobilisation of underemployed segments; and (2) migration. Initially the PAP government characterised migration as a periodic, short-term tool to supplement the long-term development of Singapore’s domestic labour force (Fong, 1985, p. 28). But in recent years party leaders have treated skilled migrant workers – “foreign talent” – as an indispensable factor in Singapore’s growth, even if they cause unemployment among Singaporeans (Fong, 2006, p. 160).

My hypothesis is that Singapore has become structurally dependent on foreign talent, due to the alignment of its benefits with the PAP’s political imperatives. Broadly speaking, Singapore’s authoritarian, developmental social contract is based on the government delivering high economic growth to the country’s middle class, in return for unchallenged executive power, an exchange
facilitated by importing talent rather than producing it domestically.

The resulting structural dependence on foreign talent, and its associated disincentive to capital investment, has complicated Singapore’s desired transition to a knowledge economy by stifling productivity growth, innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. This and other challenges to Singapore’s transition from a “developing” to an “advanced” economy raise questions about how the PAP government will continue to balance its economic plans with its developmental contract with Singaporeans.

2. Economic plan and implications

Singapore stepped into independence somewhat unwillingly in 1965 with its forced withdrawal from the Malaysian Federation. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and the ruling PAP responded decisively: the government introduced a developmental capitalist state with an export-oriented economic plan. It threw open its borders to multinational companies (MNC) and foreign direct investment (FDI) (Islam, 1997, p. 197), building a welcoming investment environment and offering fiscal incentives that have remained unmatched in Asia to this day (Chowdhury, 1993, p. 109). By 1995, Singapore had the world’s highest private investment ratio over the previous 30 years and hosted 5,000 multinational enterprises (Huff, 1999, p. 224).

The export-oriented and FDI-intensive strategy paid immediate dividends. Singapore’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 10 percent annually in the decade following independence, leading to a focus on GDP growth as the key measurable output in the government’s planning process.

2.1 Industrial plan

Singapore aimed to achieve high, sustainable GDP growth through a long-term industrial
development plan. The initial phase involved directing FDI to labour-intensive, low value added, light manufacturing sectors. The plan acknowledged Singapore’s initial lack of technological and human capital, but foresaw a steady absorption and adoption of the technologies and skills imported by foreign investors. Once Singapore had grown into these initial capabilities, subsequent development phases repeated the import-adopt process for progressively higher value added manufacturing sectors (Kuo & Chen, 1987, pp. 356-7; Chowdhury, 1993, pp. 199-200).

By the beginning of the 1980s, Singapore was losing its comparative advantage in many labour-intensive manufacturing sectors, especially to China. Its planners began to talk about an “information society,” first as a modernisation of its labour force and manufacturing sector with education, computerisation, research and development (Kuo & Chen, 1987, p. 357). By the mid-1990s, planners began promoting a transition to a “knowledge-based” economy, formalised in the “towards a dynamic global city” theme of the 2003 report by the cabinet-level Economic Review Committee (ERC, 2003).

2.2 Implications

This industrial development plan, coupled with the government’s aggressive GDP growth targets, placed an immediate and unrelenting demand on Singapore’s labour supply. Table 1 shows that the pressure on the domestic labour supply has intensified since independence, as total population has grown by an annual average of only 2.2 percent, compared to GDP growth of 7.4 percent.
Barring a massive mobilisation of previously unemployed segments of the population, Singapore’s domestic labour market could never supply the needs of the country rapid economic growth.

3. Policy alternatives

Singapore’s leaders had two broad policy alternatives with which to address the country’s labour shortage. First, an open immigration policy could fill the numerical labour shortfall with foreign workers; targeted programs within it could address specific skill or occupational requirements. Second, a domestic production policy involving the education, training and mobilisation of local labour could raise the overall proportion of Singaporeans in the workforce, and specifically in high-income jobs.

Below I review the advantages and disadvantages of each broad policy option.

3.1 Import foreign labour

Fong and Lim (1982, pp. 553-4) describe seven benefits of importing labour. A supply of foreign workers can:

(1) Add to the domestic labour supply and reduce wage costs.
(2) Relieve acute labour shortages during periods of economic boom.
(3) Be laid off and repatriated during periods of economic recession, minimising the political
and social costs of unemployment among citizens.

(4) Encourage labour peace and increased productivity among citizens through healthy competition.

(5) Externalise education and training costs to the worker’s home country.

(6) Fill undesirable jobs that citizens are unwilling to perform.

(7) Lower the cost of labour-intensive goods and services, thereby increasing the real income of citizens.

Fong and Lim (1982) also identify four consequences of importing labour. The availability of cheap foreign labour may (p. 554):

(1) Encourage the development of industries that the local labour supply could never support.

(2) Discourage labour-saving capital investment.

(3) Discourage investment in education and training in the host country.

(4) Discourage the development of the domestic labour supply through flexible work schemes, mobilisation of women workers, etc.

The benefits of imported labour are all relatively immediate in effect, but the consequences have more lasting effects. This temporal mismatch between the costs and benefits of importing labour suggests that such policies should be used in a supporting role to policies with more durable benefits.

3.2 *Produce domestic labour*

The increased production of domestic labour through education, training and labour mobilisation policies can:

(1) Increase the proportion of Singaporeans in the workforce.

(2) Decrease long-term unemployment among Singaporeans.
(3) Raise the average citizen’s income by replacing skilled foreign workers with domestic talent.

(4) Raise the country’s research and development (R&D) capabilities, which reduces dependence on foreign technology, increases productivity and encourages entrepreneurship.

Cost-wise, these policies could:

(1) Reduce labour availability and increase wages.

(2) Cut short-term growth prospects with increased education and training expenditures.

(3) Raise citizen unemployment during economic recession.

(4) Balance more Singaporeans in high-skill jobs with more low-skill foreign workers, a group to whom Singaporeans often attributed social problems (Fong & Lim, 1982, pp. 554-5).

The benefits of producing domestic human capital are more durable than those of importing it, but its costs are more immediate.

4. Political imperatives

Singapore’s authoritarian, developmental model relies on different political imperatives than other models. By extension, when faced with the same policy options as a government with a different political model, Singapore’s government will choose its policy according to its specific political imperatives. A full analysis of the relationship between politics and policy is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead I have selected three political imperatives to illustrate the later analysis of Singapore’s labour supply policy choices: high GDP growth targets, appeasement of the middle class and a “recourse to force.”
4.1 High GDP growth targets

Typical of a strong, developmental state, Singapore’s government has intervened significantly in its economy. Predictably, the consequences of this intervention mirror its motivations: the state becomes powerful, but its political legitimacy becomes intertwined with its economic achievements (Ayubi, 2001, pp. 30-1).

For the decade after independence in 1965, Singapore’s GDP grew by an average of 10 percent annually (Islam, 1997, p. 198) and has since remained exceptional: average GDP growth (at 2000 market prices in Singapore dollars) from 1965-2009 was 7.4 percent.¹

More importantly, Singapore’s population of five million now enjoys a quality of life comparable to that in the world’s richest countries by most indicators, including (all 2009 figures): an estimated GDP per capita (USD, PPP) of approximately $50,000 per year, an average life expectancy of 82 years and the world’s lowest infant mortality rate at 2.31 deaths per 1,000 live births (CIA, 2010).

But throughout the country’s development, the GDP growth rate has remained the core economic target (MTI, 1986; 1991; 2009), leading Singaporeans to associate their quality of life improvements with GDP growth, ignoring other indicators (Hui & Hashmi, 2004, p. 17).

Delivering consistent, high GDP growth rates requires policies that deliver “growth now.” This includes favouring cost control over growth-reducing investment, and postponing adjustment periods for fear of recession.

4.2 The middle class

Garry Rodan (1992) referred to the PAP’s rule as a “dictatorship of the middle class.” He

explained that: “…its leadership has not only been pre-eminently middle class, but it has actively promoted the interests and cultivated the privileged social power of that class” (p. 370).

Rodan (1992) argued that after the PAP lost its parliamentary monopoly in 1981, the party leadership felt it could no longer campaign to all Singaporeans, so it roped its political wagon to the middle class (p. 220).

Government policies have since favoured the middle class over other classes. For example:

- The public service, military and the Government Linked Corporations (GLC) promote a meritocracy through an extensive scholarship system that grooms academic “high fliers,” from which virtually all senior positions in Singapore are filled. The meritocratic system encourages middle class families to associate hard work and academic achievement with opportunities for success.

- More generally, the government has favoured consumption, taxation, education, recreational and quality of life improvements targeted specifically at middle class Singaporeans (Rodan, 1992, pp. 216-7).

The PAP’s middle class focus requires that new policies contribute to the meritocratic discourse, minimise unemployment among middle class workers and maximise their spending power.

4.3 Recourse to force

Pierre Bourdieu (1976) wrote that dominance based on force or coercion is inefficient, as it requires a constant effort with diminishing returns (p. 126). Dominance achieves an efficient reproduction when the dominated voluntarily align their interests with those of the dominator. The state, in attempting to dominate its population, can achieve this by imprinting its values on the institutions and norms that permeate daily life and to which the population identifies and submits
In recent years, the Singapore government has adopted more efficient modes of domination, using in particular economic modes that Singaporeans accept as part of the country’s continued development. For example it now uses institutions such as fines and libel suits, and norms such the shame of bankruptcy, to marginalise its political opponents (Tremewan, 1994, p. 163).

That said, elements of the more forceful, inefficient modes of dominance remain in the background, in case the new, efficient modes should fail. For instance, Singaporeans do not have freedom of assembly or speech and the government remains intolerant of public criticism of its policies. Any new policies, though they are often directed at more efficient modes of domination, must preserve the recourse to forceful intervention and must not develop the political power of the population beyond the capacity of the government’s “recourse to force.”

5. Policy choices

To illustrate how political imperatives affect the decision about whether to use migration or production policies to meet labour needs, the evaluation matrix in Table 2 assesses matches between the characteristics of the two broad policy choices and the three political imperatives described above. The matrix shows a “✓” for a positive match and an “✗” for a negative one. By subtracting the negative matches from the positive ones for each policy alternative, we have a rudimentary illustration of whether the PAP’s political imperatives favour one policy over the other.

The net score for each policy option (migration 7 : production -3) in the Table 2 matrix shows that, relative to the three political imperatives presented, migration is the preferable policy tool for meeting Singapore’s labour needs.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy 1: Support labour needs</th>
<th>Policy 2: Produce labour needs</th>
<th>Policy 3: Contribute to social empowerment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide opportunities and growth now</td>
<td>Prevent political tension</td>
<td>Prevent political tension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevent political tension</td>
<td>Secure middle class</td>
<td>Consistent GDP growth</td>
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<td>Secure middle class</td>
<td>Laureate immigration</td>
<td>Smooth economic cycles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laureate immigration</td>
<td>Reduce cost control</td>
<td>Consistent GDP growth</td>
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<td>Reduce cost control</td>
<td>Economic education</td>
<td>Smooth economic cycles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic education</td>
<td>Labour force</td>
<td>Secure middle class</td>
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<td>Labour force</td>
<td>Short-term volatility</td>
<td>Consistent GDP growth</td>
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<td>Short-term volatility</td>
<td>External education costs</td>
<td>Smooth economic cycles</td>
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<td>External education costs</td>
<td>Discourage capital investment</td>
<td>Smooth economic cycles</td>
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<td>Discourage capital investment</td>
<td>Discourage education, training investment</td>
<td>Smooth economic cycles</td>
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<td>Discourage education, training investment</td>
<td>Discourage domestic hour mobilisation</td>
<td>Smooth economic cycles</td>
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<td>Discourage domestic hour mobilisation</td>
<td>Costly adjustment to time lag between investment and production</td>
<td>Smooth economic cycles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costly adjustment to time lag between investment and production</td>
<td>Price increases due to short-term volatility</td>
<td>Smooth economic cycles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Price increases due to short-term volatility</td>
<td>Increase citizen share of growth</td>
<td>Smooth economic cycles</td>
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<td>Increase citizen share of growth</td>
<td>Baseless entrepreneurship, etc.</td>
<td>Smooth economic cycles</td>
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Table 2: Evaluation matrix. Below supply policy options and potential interventions
Although the matrix suggests that a migration policy is the clear political preference, it also indicates a specific political alignment of education policy with middle class aspirations. Indeed, the Singapore government has not depended on foreign talent to the exclusion of domestic talent production. But its structural dependence on foreign talent has ensured that these policies have remained secondary.

For example, Singapore has developed its universities to be among the best in the world: in the Financial Times’ 2009 ranking of world business schools, the National University of Singapore ranked 11th and Nanyang Business School 24th. Yet even among their domestic population, Singapore’s universities trail major foreign universities in prestige: “degrees from prestigious foreign universities are seen… as a passport to the upper ranks of the civil service and business in Singapore” (Sanderson, 2002, p. 92). In fact, Singapore’s government scholarship program sets perhaps the strongest example in favour of foreign degrees. Its scholarship program grooms almost all of the country’s future senior public servants, but a large proportion of scholarship winners choose to study overseas (Olds, 2007, p. 17).

As the matrix suggests, migration policy has been central to Singapore’s labour supply plan. The PAP government has shown unwavering commitment to a migration-based talent policy since the late 1970s. It has established among the most welcoming immigration policies in the world and guaranteed employers access to foreign labour even during periods of recession and layoffs. Throughout, Singapore’s leaders have been vocal not only of the economic contribution of skilled foreign workers to the economy, but also the value of their competition and collaboration with Singaporeans (Fong, 2006, pp. 155, 157-8). Foreign talent remains a core part of the PAP
6. Structural dependence

Castles (2003) broadly defines a structural dependence on migrant labour as when a country “[can] not dispense with migrants despite the existence of high unemployment, because migrant workers [are] concentrated in jobs which locals [are] unable or unwilling to do” (p. 210).

Leaving aside for the moment the “structural” component, Singapore is clearly dependent on migrant labour. No policies can alter the very real labour constraints the country faces. Table 3 shows the citizen and non-citizen breakdown of Singapore’s population and workforce, as well as the country’s GDP growth over the period 1980-2000.

<table>
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<th>Table 3: Proportion of Singapore workforce, citizen and non-citizen, 1980-2000</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number (000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanent residents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-residents (students, foreign workers, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total non-citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working persons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total working persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GDP in 1995 Singapore dollars (millions) | 37,959 | 77,299 | 161,143 | 7.2% |

Source: (Appendix 2005, Table 1, p. 21)

Table 3 shows that Singapore’s GDP has grown by an annual average of seven percent over the 20-year period. This growth has required an additional one million workers, of which 650,000 were non-citizens and 350,000 citizens. This represents an average annual growth rate in the non-citizen workforce of nine percent. Table 3 also shows that Singapore’s 776,000 non-citizen workers
Recent data raises questions about whether this growth of foreign talent in the workforce has continued. Singapore’s Ministry of Manpower (MOM, 2010) reported that Singapore’s non-citizen workforce has grown by an annual average of only 3.2 percent from 2000-9, reaching 1.04 million in 2009. This represents a fall in the share of non-citizen workers in the total workforce to 35 percent (p. 5). The shift may lie in differences between Appold’s and MOM data, but it raises the possibility of a shift in Singapore’s use of foreign talent.

Nonetheless, citizen workers have grown at an annual average of less than two percent, roughly equal to the growth of the overall population. This figure alone does not reveal much about the characteristics of the citizen workforce (e.g. average income and occupation), but it does show that Singapore has not increased its labour mobilisation rate.

Singapore’s dependence on foreign talent can only be considered structural if it can not curtail the flow of migrant workers to cushion the unemployment effect of recessions on its citizen population. Table 4 shows Singapore’s annual unemployment rate against numerical flows of migrant workers over the period 1999-2009. Year-to-year comparisons give mixed results, for example Singapore shed 70,000 foreign workers during a spike in unemployment during 2002-3. But over the ten-year period, Singapore’s resident unemployment has risen by 0.5 percent despite an average annual immigration of 39,000 foreign workers.
Table 4 shows a quantitative structural dependence on foreign workers. But what about the qualitative breakdown of these inflows?

The Singapore government reports qualitative data such as occupation and education level only for resident workers, not for foreigners. In Table 5, I reprinted Appold’s (2005) estimates of an occupational breakdown by residency status that he based on MOM reports (p. 100). Note that the names of the occupational categories used by MOM changed over the years, blurring the data somewhat. For brevity, I have regrouped the occupational categories into “high-skill” and “other.”
Table 5 shows that the proportion of non-citizens in high-skill jobs rose steadily throughout the period. This is somewhat overshadowed in the table by the huge jump in the proportion of foreigners in the workforce from 20 percent in 1990 to 37 percent in 2000, a period during which migrant workers accounted for 470,000 of the 560,000 new workers in the country.

Although we can not project Appold’s occupation estimates to 2009, we can do so for another index he used: prospects for Singaporean university graduates. If we assume that Singapore’s efforts to establish a knowledge economy result in a growing proportion of new jobs requiring a university degree, it follows that Singapore’s degree holders would be in increasing demand, resulting in lower unemployment and higher wages relative to other education levels. Instead, Appold (2005) found
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that Singaporean degree holders were disproportionately more likely to lose their jobs than other labour segments, could no longer rely on finding a new job quickly (pp. 85-6), and that their income growth defied expectations by underperforming that of non-graduates (p. 95). This trend has continued: in 2009, 27 percent of Singaporeans held degrees, but their share of the country’s unemployment rose to 24 percent from 21 percent the previous year, a share exceeded only by those with less than a secondary education (MOM, 2010, p. 9).

Put otherwise, despite the increase in jobs demanding university degrees, the position of Singaporean degree holders has worsened, suggesting that employers are filling those jobs with foreign talent.

All of this suggests that Singapore has a structural dependence on foreign talent, but one that may be easing: the decline in the overall proportion in the workforce from 2000-9 may be a result of two recessions during the period, but may also suggest less reliance on foreign talent.

7. Towards a knowledge economy

Singapore’s structural dependence on foreign talent, in particular in the high-skill segment, has significant implications for the government’s planned transition to a knowledge economy. The PAP government sees its challenges as: low productivity growth, and a lack of both innovation and entrepreneurship (ERC, 2003).

7.1 Productivity

We saw earlier that a long-term consequence of the availability of cheap foreign talent is a disincentive for employers to invest in capital improvements that would raise their worker’s productivity (Fong & Lim, 1982, pp. 553-4). This leads to the common criticism that Singapore’s growth rate can be almost entirely accounted for by an initial one-off mobilisation of domestic
labour and savings, followed by the importation of foreign labour and capital, with little or no improvement in the economy’s productivity (Huff, 1999; Islam, 1997; Krugman, 1994). The argument implies that without short-term growth sacrifices to invest in productivity-boosting capital, Singaporeans can only expect continued economic growth so long as foreign inputs continue to flow into the country. In other words: they argue that Singapore’s current growth model is unsustainable.

7.2 Innovation

Singapore’s post-independence economic plan, based on moving from low to high capital-intensive manufacturing industries, relied on a laggard strategy of adopting and copying technology imported by foreign investors; it required little domestic technology creation. Knowledge-based industries do not allow Singapore to be a technological laggard. These industries rely on the creation and commercialisation of ideas and knowledge.

In addition, they require that Singapore compete with heavyweights. Where once Singapore competed with developing countries for manufacturing jobs outsourced from industrialised countries, the knowledge economy is the current frontier and Singapore must compete with those same industrialised nations, who can apply their decades of experience and infrastructure as technology leaders.

Before it can compete on ideas and technology, Singapore must first source the talent to generated innovation, and compete for the private research and development (R&D) funds to fuel it – a state-funded approach would be insufficient. The Singapore government has acknowledged its new competitive environment for years (ERC, 2003). Its efforts have included building a host of new research institutions and recruiting top international talent to staff them (Normile, 2007).

But to date it has fallen short on attracting private R&D investment. Widely available, cheap foreign labour has meant that Singapore’s foreign investors have developed largely labour-intensive

7.3 Entrepreneurship

Once innovators develop a new technology, they require an entrepreneur to assume the risk, raise the capital and establish a network to commercialise their innovation. According to Islam (1997), Singapore’s development model, based on a mix of strong government, foreign capital investment and foreign talent, includes the following disincentives to entrepreneurship (p. 114):

1. The dominant public and corporate sectors “crowd out” local entrepreneurship by snapping up available talent.
2. Creates a “labour aristocracy” of privileged, salaried MNC employees.
3. Lack of linkage between the MNC and local sectors denies potential opportunities and thus capital to local entrepreneurs.

Huff (1999) adds to this list “the Singapore state’s emphasis on autonomy and reputation at the expense of genuine political participation and individual initiative” (p. 239).

In short, Singapore’s reliance on FDI and foreign talent contributes to a poor atmosphere in the country for the entrepreneurship required for its knowledge economy to take root.

8. Conclusions

“[The] PAP state is trapped between the society it created and the society it now desires” (Wee, 2001, p. 989).

Singapore is poised between two phases of its economic development. Its post-independence industrial plan has generated rapid growth and quality of life improvements. This industrial plan has undergone evolutions, for example from light, low valued added manufacturing to higher value
manufacturing and services. But until the 1990s it remained homogeneous in its reliance on foreign inputs, its laggard strategy of adopting and copying imported technology and its competition against other developing economies. We could roughly call Singapore’s first 30 years its “developing economy” phase.

During the last 15 years, the PAP government has recognised that to meet the growing expectations of Singaporeans, the economy must move beyond its “developing economy” phase. The party has identified a knowledge-based economy as its goal, a transition that demands a competitive overhaul of the system of economic production established during its “developing economy” phase. Its competitors in the knowledge marketplace will no longer be other developing economies, but the world’s most advanced ones; its outputs no longer cost-effective substitutes but innovation. Such an overhaul implies a new “advanced economy” phase in Singapore’s development.

Unsurprisingly, the transition has proven difficult. In any society, the interconnectivity of modes of reproduction – economic, political, social – ensures that fundamental change in one area causes the same in the others. In Singapore’s case, the developmental, interventionist PAP government has defined its political legitimacy in large part by its economic achievements: change on one side of the equation must be balanced on the other.

This paper has analysed Singapore’s structural dependence on foreign talent. I argued that the political imperatives particular to Singapore’s developmental state have tilted its labour supply policy towards migration. But the resulting dependence on foreign talent, created in the image of Singapore’s “developing economy” phase, hinders the country’s transition to a knowledge economy, to its “advanced economy” phase, by stifling the productivity, innovation and entrepreneurship that knowledge industries require.
Leaving aside the frequent criticisms of the PAP’s democratic credentials, the party has not retreated from the fundamental societal changes inherent in the economic transition it has proposed. It has admittedly proceeded slowly, attempting to reshape the economy with a minimum of political upheaval. And from the labour supply policy perspective presented in this paper, its efforts have to date been insufficient to assure the desired transition. But developments since 2000 suggest it may be progressing. For example: the 2000-9 rate of increase in the foreign workforce (approximately three percent) was no longer in excess of GDP growth (five percent); Singapore’s universities continue to gain in worldwide prestige; and the government persists with its goal of becoming an R&D centre by building research institutions and hiring top minds to staff them.

Ultimate success remains unsure and distant, and it will require more political concessions than the PAP has made thus far. But whether or not I agree with the PAP’s politics, its adaptability and durability over 45 years of rule suggest a strong chance that it will find solutions to enable Singapore’s current transition from a developing to an advanced economy.

Singapore is perhaps the world’s most successful developmental state. How its government uses policy and other tools to confront challenges to its transition, among them its structural dependence on foreign talent, will provide lessons for other developmental states, such as China, in how to continue delivering economic development to their citizens.
References


