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Local Uniqueness in the Global Village:
Heritage Tourism in Singapore

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Abstract

It is commonly assumed that the development of tourist attractions, the formulation of tourism policies and the marketing of destination areas are dictated by the needs and interests of foreign visitors. What is ignored is the role that local factors and agencies bring to bear upon the process. This thesis is devoted to exploring the ways that local *and* non-local factors are responsible for shaping the form and function of tourism development. Drawing upon the case of Singapore, the thesis examines the country's heritage tourism phenomena as the outcome of 'local' and 'global' forces. This argument is elaborated along four lines of enquiry. They include a study of government policies on tourism, a look at entrepreneurs involved in heritage projects, an exploration of marketing and promotional strategies, and the examination of a particular urban landscape - the Little India Historic District. To conceptualise the global-local nexus, the thesis adopts two bodies of theory. They are the 'locality concept' advanced by industrial geographers in the 1980s and writings on 'globalism-localism' by cultural/economic geographers in the 1990s. Both theoretical discussions reinforce the argument that place uniqueness is not necessarily sacrificed as a result of globalisation. They also provide a way of viewing tourism geographies as the product of global and local forces.

Résumé

Il est généralement présumé que le développement d'attractions touristiques, la commercialisation de destinations et la formulation de politiques touristiques sont imposés par les besoins et intérêts de touristes étrangers. L'on ignore toutefois le rôle joué au niveau local par des facteurs et organismes locaux sur le développement de ces processus. Cette thèse vise à explorer les façons dont les facteurs locaux et non-locaux influencent le mode et la fonction du développement touristique. Se basant sur une étude de cas de Singapore, cette thèse examine les phénomènes liés au tourisme patrimonial dans ce pays comme résultant des interactions entre des forces locales et globales. Cet argument est élaboré sous quatre angles différents. Ceux-ci incluent une étude des politiques gouvernementales en matière de tourisme, un regard sur les entrepreneurs impliqués dans des projets patrimoniaux, une exploration des stratégies de commercialisation, et l'examen d'un paysage urbain en particulier, le *Little India Historic District*. Afin de conceptualiser le phénomène de superposition des facteurs locaux et globaux, la thèse adopte deux corps théoriques. L'un est le concept de "localité" proposé par les géographes industriels des années 1980, et l'autre, basé sur les travaux de géographes culturels et économiques des années 1990, porte sur le concept de "globalité-localité". Ces théories s'appuient sur l'argument que l'unicité d'un lieu n'est pas nécessairement annhilée par des phénomènes globalisants. Elles permettent également de concevoir les lieux touristiques comme résultant de l'intéraction de forces globales et locales.

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T.C. Chang, Montreal, Christmas 1996

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Common Abbreviations Used

BT (*The Business Times*)

HDB (Housing and Development Board)

HEB (Hindu Endowments Board)

LIA (Little India Arcade)

MTI (Ministry of Trade and Industry)

ST (*The Straits Times*)

STPB (Singapore Tourist Promotion Board)

STWE (*The Straits Times Weekly Edition*)

URA (Urban Redevelopment Authority)

WTO (World Tourism Organization)
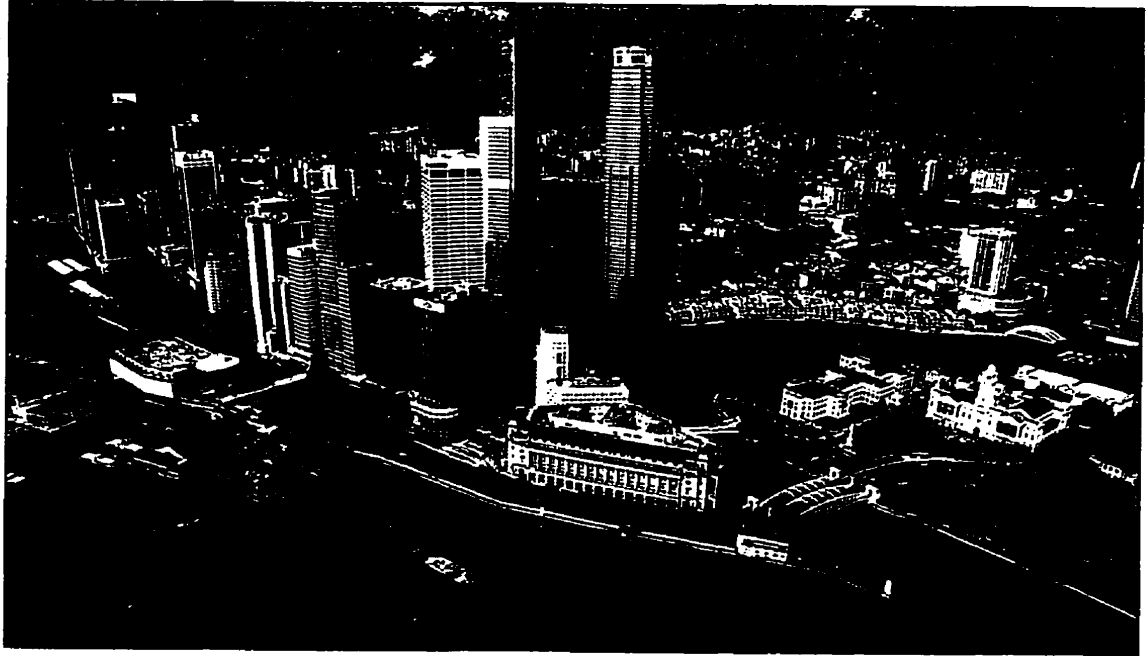
How can an island just 41 kilometres long and 22 kilometres wide hold so many surprises, so many impossible contrasts? In a tropical fantasy here are the dynamic skyscrapers and quaint old Chinese shophouses. The clamour of commerce, the serenity of vast green parklands. Gold-domed mosques and temples smoky with incense. Quiet backlanes and bustling bazaars. A computer-age city where the age-old abacus is never far from hand. (STPB 1988, 11)

Chapter One

Introduction to the Thesis

"Travel itself" observes Paul Fussell in *Abroad*, "even the most commonplace, is an implicit quest for anomaly," and the most remarkable anomalies in the global village today are surely those created by willy-nilly collisions and collusions between East and West: the local bands in socialist Burma that play note-perfect versions of the Door's 'L.A. Woman,' in Burmese; the American tenpin bowling alley that is the latest nighttime hot spot in Beijing; the Baskin-Robbins imitation in Hiroshima that sells 'vegetable' ice cream in such flavours as mugwort, soy milk, sweet potato and 'marron'; or the bespectacled transvestite in Singapore who, when asked to name the best restaurant in a town justly celebrated for its unique combination of Chinese, Indian and Malaysian delicacies, answers, without a moment's hesitation, 'Denny's'. (Iyer 1988, 11)

1.1 Thesis Argument and Objectives

Travel destinations of pristine environments, traditional cultures and unadulterated natives exist only in the minds of romantic travellers and in the pages of fiction writers. As a global village, the world is characterised by instant communication, immediate accessibility, the proliferation of transnational corporations and the pervasive influence of mass media and popular cultural trends from the West. One of the effects of globalisation, as some have pointed out, is an increasing homogeneity between landscapes and societies. In Pico Iyer's travel accounts of the Far East (*Video Night in Kathmandu*, 1988) and other remote areas on the earth (*Falling Off The Map*, 1993), he reveals that places are no longer as "lonely" or as "far East" as one would imagine. The cultural imperialism of America, the dominance of CNN and the unsurpassed popularity of Rambo have eroded the concepts of isolation, loneliness and solitude. As Iyer (1988, 14) wryly notes, "No man, they say, is an island; in the age of international travel, not even an island can remain an island for long."

An example of globalisation is the spread of tourists. According to the World Travel

Organization, international tourist arrivals in 1950 stood at 25.3 million. The number increased to 159.7 million in 1970 and 567 million in 1994 (WTO 1995). In revenue terms, the amount earned by the global industry rose from US$2.1 billion in 1950 to US$371 billion in 1994. Few places have remained impervious to the monetary lure of tourism and the wanderlust spirit of the tourist. In Asia alone, countries formerly closed to the travelling world such as Nepal, China and Vietnam have emerged as the latest hot spots for visitors. In China, tourist arrivals which stood at 1.8 million in 1988 soared to over 18.9 million in 1994 (WTO 1995, 12). The opening of the Chinese economy and its burgeoning tourism industry clearly underline the country's avowed rejection of its isolationist past and its emergent status as a superpower. Better than any activity, tourism provides a way through which places and people are drawn into the web of a global economy.

The globalisation of tourism has engendered concerns over the effects the industry might have on destination areas. Predictably, such concerns centre on tourism's negative impacts on local environments, cultures and social systems. The central metaphor has been the 'power of the global' and its 'adverse effects on the local'. Such a stance views tourism as a harmful force emanating from the West and relegates people and cultures in the developing world into submissive positions, incapable of inflecting the external influences exerted upon them. Book titles proclaiming 'In the Wake of the Tourist' (Bosselman 1978), the 'Golden Hordes' and the 'Pleasure Periphery' (Turner & Ash 1975) as well as concepts like neo-colonialism, dependency theory and core-periphery models (see Britton 1980) reinforce the notion of an unequal relationship between tourists and locals, and between generating areas and recipient sites. This political-economy approach has also been expressed in geographic terms underlining the spatial inequities in tourism. The idea of tourism enclaves or environmental bubbles (Jenkins 1982), the spatial outflows of revenues towards Western metropolitan centres (Hills & Lundgren 1976) and the effacement of 'Third-World' landscapes and cultures (Lea 1988) clearly articulate the negative repercussions in developing countries.

While this study does not seek to discredit the validity of earlier tourism works, it maintains that "[k]nowledge is socially constructed and temporally specific" (McDowell 1994, 150). The 'pessimistic view' of tourism outlined above was a product of its time, and it depicted a trend that was specific in time, place and subject matter. In contemporary research, however, a more optimistic view has been offered where the focus is on the local scale instead. This change emerged because of growing interest in community development and the demand for sustainable growth, with the result being a greater concern for and awareness of the role of locals in determining their own fate. It is from this wellspring of optimism that concepts like indigenous tourism and green/responsible travel have risen (Wheeller 1990) alongside planning approaches like the community approach (Murphy 1985; C.M.Hall 1995, chapter 6) and theories of post-Fordism and flexible specialisation (Poon 1989; 1990; Milne 1996). The contention here is that local agencies are not passive recipients of tourism's impacts but actively engage external forces in a dynamic process of interaction. Unlike previous views of tourism as a form of imperialism, a more balanced approach is to adopt Nash's "transactional view of imperialism" (1989, 44). While Nash agrees that the relationship between tourists and locals is unequal, he also concedes that local communities are capable of determining the rate and pace of tourism development. Tourism, he argues, is a dynamic process involving exogenous agencies (such as tourists and transnational corporations), endogenous people (local entrepreneurs and resident communities) and "cultural brokers" like tourism planning authorities which mediate the guest-host relationship (Nash 1989, 45).

In interrogating the transactional view of tourism, there should be room to assert the role that local forces and agencies bring to bear upon development. Tourism development must be seen as meeting the cultural and leisure aspirations of the local community, providing residents with a greater sense of belonging to place and fulfilling non-economic objectives such as political, social or environmental goals. This perspective of 'shoring up the local' is rarely explored and it is my aim to address this issue. Even more remote has been research focusing on the interactions between the local and global scales. My

thesis will thus investigate the interface between these two perspectives as they impinge upon tourism. The role of the state in mediating these conflicting interests and its challenge in straddling the global-local divide are also analysed.

This thesis will contribute to discussions on the global-local nexus in tourism development. The specific argument advanced is that heritage tourism in Singapore is the outcome of interactions between local pressures and global forces in the country (see Chang *et al.* 1996). On the local side, heritage tourism is seen not simply as an economic tool aimed at enhancing visitor numbers and revenues but a strategy directed at the Singaporean community as well. The benefits residents derive from heritage conservation, the socio-political goals of tourism and also the role of local site constraints and thus explored. To assert only the local dimension without considering the global environment in which it takes its form, however, is incomplete. For this reason, the thesis will also highlight the 'power of the global' in influencing Singapore's tourism industry and work towards a middle-ground approach in understanding the tourist-local dialectics. Towards this end, issues pertaining to tourist-local conflicts, the mediating role of the state, and the dynamic tension engendered by shifting power relations between global and local forces are discussed.

In advancing the argument of a global-local nexus, I shall pursue four lines of enquiry. Beginning with the premise that the government plays a reconciliatory role, the first theme focuses on state policies. Tourism policies in Singapore negotiate the tourist-local divide by catering to the perceived desires of visitors on the one hand and the interests of residents on the other. This negotiation process is highly flexible and policy changes is a reflection of the shifting powers between contending global and local forces. The second area of enquiry is linked to the first. Not only is the tourism authority in a position to mediate the dichotomy, entrepreneurs are also skilled at negotiating the global-local divide. With the help of case studies, I shall show that 'heritage entrepreneurs' exploit local history in order to meet the needs of both visitors and the Singaporean leisure market. Varying levels of success are achieved by the entrepreneurs striking

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differing levels of balance across the tourist-local rift.

Heritage tourism in Singapore is strongly predicated upon the conservation of urban landscapes and marketing images of 'exoticity'. The third theme thus focuses on a particular urban conservation site - the Little India Historic District. Here, I explore the notion of a tourist attraction as a contested terrain by examining Little India as a site of struggle between 'insider and 'outsider' factions. The themes of globalism/localism and tourist/local conflicts are interrogated using the insider-outsider framework. The final area of enquiry brings me back to the government's attempt at negotiating the tourist-local divide, this time with the focus on tourism marketing strategies. Depictions of Singapore *viz*. marketing slogans and themed promotion have highlighted the country's cultural heritage. Far from just an economic tool geared towards visitors, imaging strategies also embody socio-political goals aimed at the local polity. I shall show that the evolution in Singapore's marketing imagery is the outcome of global/economic and local/political influences impinging upon each other at different points in time.

The objectives of my thesis are three-fold. The primary objective is to explore the global-local nexus in the development of heritage tourism in Singapore and in so doing contribute to a 'critical geography of tourism. As section 1.4 will reveal, writings in tourism geography and other tourism disciplines have focused inordinate attention on the global and local dimensions separately and comparatively few works have engaged both perspectives together. My thesis hopes to forge a dialogue between the global and the local and to insert this discussion as a theme within tourism studies. Tourism geography has been maligned as non-critical because it is overly concerned with its "own unique problems" (de Kadt 1979 cited in Shaw & Williams 1994, 16) and neglects tangential issues of philosophical, political and social concerns (C.M.Hall 1995, 7). Tourism geography has also been criticised for its emphasis on descriptive details and avoidance of conceptual discussion. Rojek's view of leisure studies as "microscopic", "self referential" and "tenaciously atheoretical" (1985, 1-2) equally applies to tourism. By embracing the global-local concept, stimulating questions and contemporary debates

occuring elsewhere in the social sciences may be grafted onto the geographic analysis of tourism.

Just as the global-local debate provides a starting point for tourism's engagement with wider social issues, analysing the heritage tourism phenomena might in turn offer a conceptual advance in global-local debates. The second objective of this thesis, therefore, is to shed light on the ways global and local forces interact with each another using tourism as a case in point. While much has been written both within and outside geography about the effacement of local places by the inexorable forces of globalism, a number of other writers have begun urging an alternative viewpoint which argues a case for local proactivity and a dynamic global-local negotiation (Oakes 1995). Yet, very little has been offered from the field of tourism. It is for this reason that my thesis will piece together some pertinent concepts in order to construct a framework to analyse the power of the local and its engagement with global structures in tourism.

Finally, the empirical objective of this research is to shed light on Singapore's tourism industry. In advancing the position of tourism geography and in contributing to conceptual knowledge in the global-local debate, tourism development in the country is explored. Related to the four lines of enquiry mentioned earlier, my objective is to examine the way tourism policies, heritage entrepreneurs, urban conservation and marketing strategies in Singapore have been shaped dually by global and local influences.

The remaining discussion in this chapter will set the context for my research. In the next sections, key terms are defined (section 1.2) and the empirical setting of Singapore introduced (section 1.3). This is followed by a literature review of pertinent studies in heritage tourism (section 1.4) and a chapter by chapter outline of the thesis (section 1.5).

1.2 Definition of Key Terms

In this section, three key terms are defined and related to the Singapore case site. They are 'heritage tourism', the 'global' and the 'local'. Strictly speaking, 'heritage' refers to anything of value inherited from the past encompassing both tangible objects such as family heirlooms, historic architecture and landscapes as well as intangibles like ideas, values and traditions. Used in conjunction with tourism, the term 'heritage tourism' emphasises mainly tangible components that can be marketed, promoted and consumed for touristic purposes (Yale 1991, 21). The geographic manifestations of heritage tourism are two fold: natural historic landscapes and human-built environments. In this thesis, I am concerned with the latter with a specific focus on the historical and cultural landscapes in urban Singapore.

'Heritage tourism' has also been used in two different but interlinked ways: as an 'umbrella term' and a 'radical concept'. As an umbrella term, heritage tourism refers to all forms of tourism experience relating to the social and cultural manifestations of a people. Valene Smith's (1977) typology of 'historical', 'ethnic' and 'cultural' tourism best captures the diversity of this term. While historical tourism refers to experiences associated with relics and artifacts from past cultures, ethnic tourism involves an experience with a living culture or a group of people in a remote locale. Cultural tourism on the other hand focuses on the practices, customs and products of those same groups where the emphasis is on material objects rather than on the people themselves (Smith 1977, 2-3). Although all three forms overlap, a strict classification would view historical tourism as being concerned with an 'alien past', ethnic tourism as focusing on a 'foreign people' and cultural tourism as having an interest in an 'unfamiliar practice'. All three divisions are in turn subsumed within the umbrella term of heritage tourism.

Heritage tourism has also lent itself to use as a radical concept. Apart from the act of 'consumption', heritage tourism is also a 'production process' in which local landscapes and lifestyles are packaged, marketed and promoted for leisure purposes. Instead of

speaking about the inheritance of heritage, therefore, the radical use of the term allows us to think instead of the "creation", "manufacture" and "interpretation" of heritage, "a practice... adopted (some would say hijacked) by the tourism, leisure and public relations industries" (Uzzell 1989, 3). In the production process, Ashworth distinguishes between 'history' and 'heritage' in the following way:

> History is the remembered record of the past: heritage is a contemporary commodity purposefully created to satisfy contemporary consumption. One becomes the other through a process of commodification....[historical r]esources are converted into [heritage] products through interpretation. (Ashworth 1994, 16-7)

The production process thus embraces two components: the economic process of 'heritage creation' geared towards a leisure audience and the political act of 'historic interpretation' aimed at reinforcing particular ideologies. It is critical we explore heritage tourism as possessing both an economic and political perspective just as we acknowledge the dual market of tourists and locals.

Heritage tourism in Singapore draws upon the country's multiethnic composition of Chinese, Malays, Indians and 'others' of European or Eurasian descent. Since the establishment of the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB) in 1964, the multicultural community has served as a reservoir of tourist resources. The marketing image of an 'Instant Asia' replete with diverse cuisines, festivities and lifestyles was common in the 1960s and 1970s. Following the conservation of historic landscapes in the 1980s, tourism promotion emphasised urban ethnic districts as attractions. This thesis will thus focus on heritage tourism as it pertains to various aspects of culture, ethnicity and history in Singapore. I take as my point of departure the government's own definition of multicultural heritage as having a dual objective. Not only is it a "psychological defence" which helps to forge a sense of belonging among Singaporeans, multiculturalism is also a "valuable tourism asset" which makes the country "different and interesting" to visitors (*Committee on Heritage Report* 1988, 11 & 30).

Heritage tourism does not exist as a discrete subsystem in Singapore. Although it is

possible to delineate a heritage industry, tourists do not simply come for the express desire to enjoy the country's multiethnic attributes. The main reasons for visiting Singapore include sightseeing, shopping, business and attending conventions (STPB 1994, table 11). Unlike cities like Venice or Stratford-upon-Avon, heritage consumption is only one aspect of a much wider touristic experience and heritage production is undertaken for many reasons of which only one is to lure tourists. Singapore thus offers a good example to explore heritage tourism within the wider framework of capitalist accumulation and urban redevelopment.

The second key term to be defined is 'global'. The notion of a 'global village' is predicated upon the interconnections linking places and people on the earth to each other. First coined by Marshall McLuhan in 1962, the term was originally applied to improvements in communications and transportation technology and its 'shrinking' effects on the globe (see McLuhan 1996). The process by which 'space time compression' occurs is globalisation. Globalisation transcends political, economic and cultural boundaries resulting in three phenomena. According to Allen and Hamnett (1995, 8-9), globalisation leads to "cultural convergence" exemplified by universal trends in fashion and music; "economic integration" whereby transnational corporations link the world through networks of capitalist production and markets; and "political overlapping" characterised by supranational entities such as the European Community. Simply put, there are different strands of globalisation which draw places and people closer together.

Heritage tourism in Singapore bears the imprints of global influences. Tourism policies are formulated based on the perceived needs of visitors and their changing market composition over time. It has even been argued by some that the turn towards heritage conservation in the mid-1980s was spurred mainly by the fall in visitor numbers and revenues (Leong 1989). Likewise, the development of historic-themed attractions is explained as a function of visitor complaints that Singapore is dull and overly modern (Teo & Huang 1995). To counter these views, marketing images and promotional slogans depict the country as uniquely Asian and exotic. In the context of this thesis, therefore,

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I shall define 'global' as referring to both the real and imagined needs of international tourists, and the way such needs influence tourism policies, marketing strategies and development processes.

On the other hand, heritage tourism also reflects the power of localising influences. Heritage tourism is 'necessarily local' because it is centred around a particular cultural group living in a particular locale. The development of any tourism industry is dependent on local factors such as site constraints, local population characteristics, the role of the state as well as the availability of *in situ* historic and cultural attributes. Hence, while many places may boast a heritage industry, unique products nonetheless emerge because of the local milieux in which they are embedded (Chang *et al.* 1996). Singapore's tourism industry likewise reflects the imprint of local pressures. Heritage conservation is not just a tourist attracting strategy, it is also aimed at the local community providing opportunities for leisure pursuits, cultural aspirations and social interaction. Furthermore, tourism policies are not only shaped by tourist demands but also determined by local factors like political considerations and community interests. In this thesis, the 'local' is thus explored in terms of the needs of Singaporeans, the socio-political goal served by heritage and the role of 'place' (or site) in shaping the form and function of tourism.

1.3 Introducing Singapore: A Local Setting For Global Flows

The definitions above suggest that global and local forces are relational rather than oppositional and that global-local interactions occur over space. According to Doreen Massey, places are sites for "the intersections of particular bundles of activity spaces, of connections and interrelations, of influences and movements" (Massey 1995, 59). Cities best exemplify a 'local place' in the 'global village' because they are tied into the global network of capital flows, movements of people and technology while also serving as nodal points in which global processes converge and are organised. As Graham Todd puts it, cities are where globalisation is "brought home" and where global processes are

made visible in a local setting (1996, 49-50).

In this thesis, the terms 'heritage tourism', 'global' and 'local' are operationalised in the context of Singapore (Figure 1.1). Singapore was founded as a British trading post by Stamford Raffles in 1819 and it gained self-government in 1959 and independence in 1965. The total land area is 646 square kilometres comprising the main island of Singapore and over 50 offshore islands. Its population numbered 2.93 million in 1994 giving a density of nearly 4,540 persons per square kilometre. Singapore's population comprises 77.5 per cent Chinese, 14.2 per cent Malays, 7.1 per cent Indians and 1.2 per cent 'others'. The country's economy has grown phenomenally over time. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased from S$2.1 billion in 1961 to about S$105 billion in 1994 (US$1.00 equaling S$1.4 in 1996 prices), a feat achieved through development of its manufacturing industry and service sectors like finance and telecommunications.

The global-local nexus is exemplified by the case of Singapore. On the one hand the country is inextricably linked into the global flow of capital and on the other hand it is also a local setting in which a distinct society and culture has evolved. Singapore is tied into global tourism flows in many ways. As a tourist destination, it attracted 7.14 million visitors in 1995 up from only 100,000 visitors in 1965. In revenue terms, the tourism industry grossed US$7.55 billion in 1995 ranking it the tenth largest earner in the world just ahead of Switzerland and Canada (STWE[1] 23/3/96). Singapore's open-skies policy, the development and continual expansion of Changi Airport and worldwide marketing on the part of the STPB (Singapore Tourist Promotion Board) have boosted the tourism industry and entrenched the city-state's position within the global economy.

Singapore's role as an international convention centre is also undisputed. In 1991, it was placed seventh worldwide by the Union of International Associations in terms of total

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[1] From henceforth, STWE refers to *The Straits Times Weekly Edition*, Singapore's weekly English newspaper while ST refers to *The Straits Times*, the daily edition. The other local newspaper referred to includes *The Business Times* abbreviated as BT.
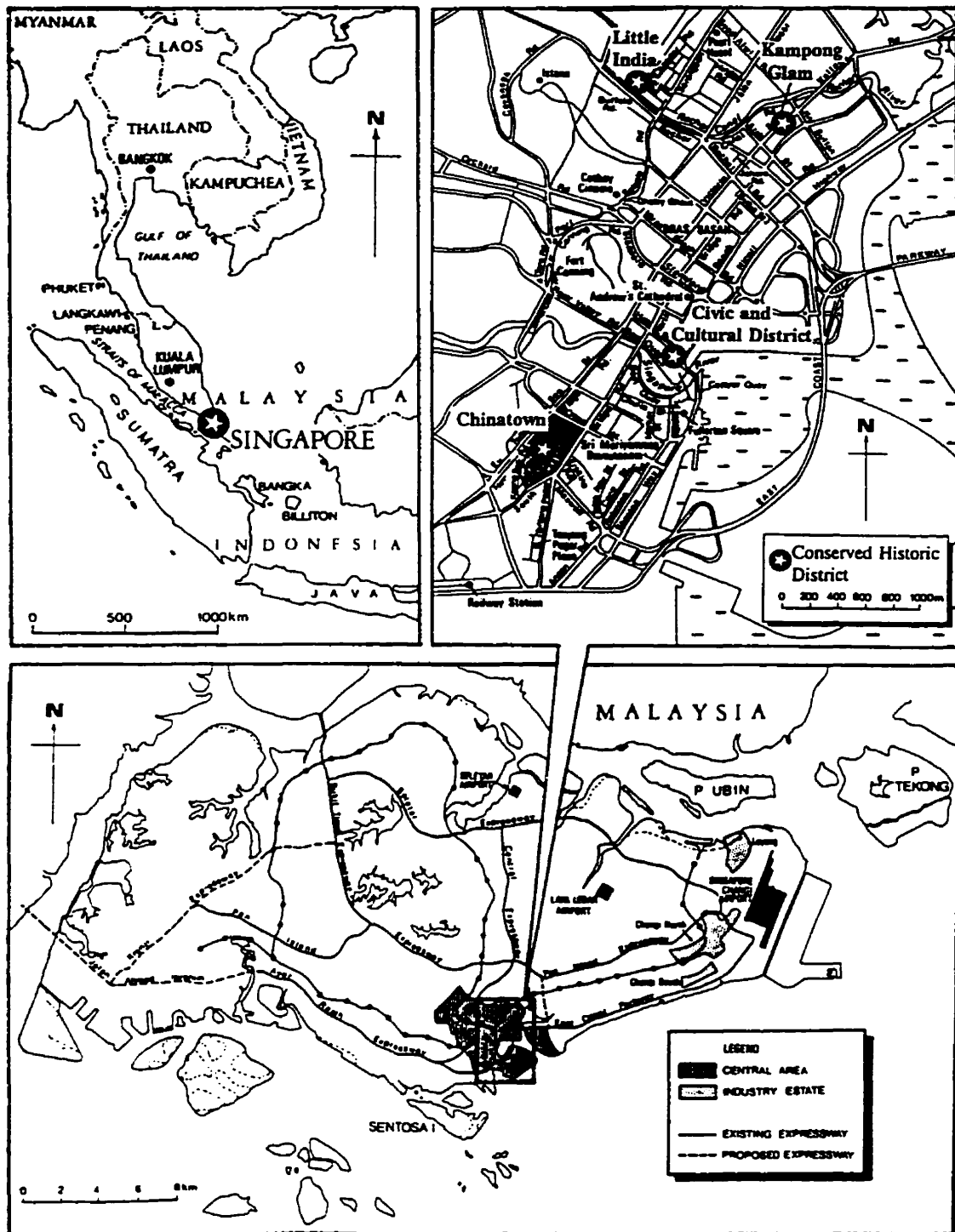
Figure 1.1 Location and physical layout of Singapore

number of international meetings held. A total of 110 conferences were hosted by Singapore, far more than other Asian cities such as Hong Kong (102) and Tokyo (84) (STPB 1993a, 27). In 1995, the number of international conventions hosted increased to 226 (EIU 1996, 20).

Current plans to develop the country as a cruise centre and cultural and entertainment hub of Southeast Asia further exemplify its openness to visitors and investments. Singapore is presently the world's busiest seaport servicing more than 600 shipping lines with links to over 800 ports (Ministry of the Information and the Arts 1993, 117). In air communications, it is linked directly to 124 cities in 56 countries with a total of 66 airlines making over 2,800 weekly scheduled flights at Changi Airport in 1994 (Ministry of the Information and the Arts 1995, 148).

Historically, Singapore has always been open to the world. Since its founding, Singapore served as a port of call and trading post for ships plying between Europe and the Far East. The island's fortuitous location in Southeast Asia secured its many central functions. In 1826, Singapore became the centre of government in the Straits Settlement, an area controlled by the British India Company comprising other ports like Penang and Malacca. In the 1870s with the development of rubber plantations in Malaysia, Singapore also became the world's major processing and export centre for the commodity. The country's prosperity attracted many immigrants particularly the Chinese from China, Indians from India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, as well as Peninsular Malays, Sumatrans, Bugis and Boyanese from Indonesia. Singapore's population soared from about 150 in 1819 to 10,683 in 1824 and 80,792 during the 1860 census (Ministry of Information and the Arts 1993, 20). By the end of the 19th Century, it had one of the most cosmopolitan communities in Asia.

Singapore's status as a world city cannot be understated. In Friedmann's (1986) hierarchy of world cities, he identified four categories: core primary cities such as London and New York; core secondary cities like Sydney; semi-periphery primary cities such as

Singapore; and semi-periphery secondary cities like Hong Kong (cited in Hamnett 1995, 111). World cities are strategic sites of control for the flow of capital and people and are "tightly interconnected with each other through decision-making and finance... constitut[ing] a worldwide system of control over production and market expansion" (Friedmann & Wolfe 1982 cited in Hamnett 1995, 110). Although its 'world city' reputation was originally founded on its role as a manufacturing centre and hub for transnational corporations in the 1970s, today Singapore is tied into the global economy in many other ways. Since its labour is no longer as cheap or abundant as other Asian countries, it has carved new niches in the international division of labour by establishing itself as a centre for headquarter firms, hi-tech industries and a hub for transportation and communications networks. Singapore has also fostered a reputation for political stability, reliable infrastructure and low corruption. As Allen and Hamnett put it, Singapore's world city status today is more deeply entrenched than ever before because its relationship with global capital is now "many sided" as compared to the "one-sided form of dependence of earlier years" (1995, 245).

Despite its openness to the world, Singapore has also remained in the words of one commentator "uncompromisingly independent, and no pushover for unwanted foreign influences" (STWE 6/1/96). Notwithstanding its global orientation and free economy, Singapore has actively asserted its own identity particularly in the realm of culture and political ideology.

Since the 1970s, the Singapore government has been strongly advocating the inculcation of 'Asian values' in its citizens through the channels of education and religion (see Hill & Lian 1995, chapter 8). The objective is to supplement 'alien' influences pervading the society by emphasising the Asian way of life. Because Singapore is a country where English is widely spoken and taught as the first language, it is particularly feared that a "pseudo-Western society" might evolve and its people will become "superficially Westernised" (Hill & Lian 1995, 212 & 214). In 1989, a National Ideology was formulated to focus on four core values thought to be compatible with the various

ethnic groups in the country. These include placing society before self; upholding the family as the basic building block; problem solving by consensus rather than contention; and preserving multiracial and multi-religious harmony (Buang 1989, 1). It is hoped these values will help Singaporeans retain their sense of 'Asianess' even as they become more cosmopolitan because as George Yeo, Singapore's Minister of Communication and the Arts had urged,

> We must balance this contradiction between being cosmopolitan and being nationalistic. We cannot be a trading nation, if we are not cosmopolitan. We cannot be a nation, if we are not nationalistic. We must be both at the same time. (cited in Hill & Lian 1995, 215)

In mediating between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, the assertions of local identity cannot be viewed separately from global Western influences. The two co-exist in the same time space and Singapore's National Ideology attempts to marry both perspectives. As Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong had said, economically open societies must be vigilant in weeding out certain foreign influences while welcoming others:

> By striking the right balance between tradition and change, we can remain securely rooted by our heritage without being imprisoned by the past....We can, and must, consciously shape the character and norms of our society....The Singaporean skyline may look somewhat like New York, London or Sydney, but the Singapore ethos is and must remain different....That requires us to manage the external influences so that we absorb the good and filter out the undesirable....They enable us to have a wholesome and stable society, modern in outlook and yet traditional in core values (cited in STWE 4/2/95)

This proactive stance is likewise exemplified by the government's unrelenting approach towards political ideology, policies of multiculturalism and social control (see Hill & Lian 1994). In Singapore, economic liberalism does not necessarily entail the loss of cultural autonomy or a total acceptance of Western style democracy and political standards (Naisbitt 1996). Instead it provides an opportunity for global and local forces to operate, coexist and interact with each other.

1.4 Approaches to the Study of Heritage Tourism: A Literature Overview

Having defined the three key terms of this thesis, a perusal of pertinent studies indicates that 'heritage tourism', the 'global' and 'local' are seldom integrated. Tourism studies tend to emphasise either the global scale or the local arena and little has been done to combine both perspectives. This section offers an overview of previous works stressing the weaknesses associated with focusing on either the global or the local dimension, and the strengths embodied by an integrative approach.

1.4.1 Tourism in the Global Village: The 'Top Down' Approach

The 'top down' approach privileges the power of the global in determining the shape and outcome of tourism in various localities. This structuralist perspective views heritage tourism as the product of external forces and global conditions while precluding the role played by local agencies. Two broad themes are identified: heritage tourism as the outcome of global economic forces and heritage tourism as the cause of 'placeless' landscapes around the world

It is commonly argued that heritage tourism emerged because of global economic trends. According to Law (1993, 1), four factors have propelled cities towards tourism development in the 1980s: the decline in traditional manufacturing sectors, the resurgence of the service industry centred around leisure activities, the need to create new economic activities or face high levels of unemployment, and the hope that tourism might help revitalise urban landscapes. Heritage tourism in particular is deemed a viable replacement industry because it helps to revalorise decaying urban structures, promotes an image of vitality while preventing the outflow of capital and residents to rival sites. Cameron's (1991) paper on arts tourism in the industrial cities of the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania, Buckley and Witt's (1985; 1989) work on the emergence of British heritage towns in working class locales and Law's (1993) account of Manchester and Baltimore underline

the pervasiveness of urban industrial tourism. As suggested by Hewison (1987) in his polemic on Britain's heritage industry, the contemporary interest in culture has arose because of the need to absorb the unemployed, soothe the disenfranchised and reuse the derelict landscapes left behind by manufacturing.

This view of heritage tourism as the outcome of global economic restructuring is rather uni-dimensional. The notion of manufacturing decline and subsequent rise in urban tourism downplays the possibility that a heritage industry might develop in countries with relatively healthy manufacturing sectors. For example, heritage tourism has emerged in Newly Industrialised Countries such as Hong Kong (Barrett 1993), Taiwan (Maitland 1990) and Singapore (Teo & Huang 1995) and it is imperative we identify the global processes contributing to this phenomena too. Existing case studies unfortunately draw only upon the experience of Western developed countries and research focusing on the developing world is rare.

The second sub-theme to emerge under the global perspective maintains that heritage tourism is the cause of 'placeless' landscapes around the world. The view here is that whenever heritage is deployed as a tourist resource, this inevitably leads to the denigration of local cultures, the alienation of residents and the creation of homogeneity between places across the globe. Let me take each strand of this argument and critique it in turn.

The first reason why placelessness is thought to have occurred is due to the deculturation effects of heritage tourism. In a stocktaking account of tourism's cultural impacts, Shaw (1992) distinguishes between two effects: the 'demonstration effect' and the 'commodification process'. In the former, local cultures and landscapes are modified *by* tourists in an unconscious manner as locals are influenced in subtle but profound ways. Also described as a 'billiard ball' effect, local societies are seen to be passive whereas tourism is regarded as a dynamic external force intruding upon indigenous cultures. Such a process usually exists in developing countries where the locals are most prone to aspire to Western habits and standards of living (see Smith 1977; Dearden 1991). Alternatively,

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the impact of tourism may be described as a commodification process in which local societies are changed *for* tourists under a consciously-planned scheme initiated by profit minded entrepreneurs and governments. Such visitor oriented projects occur equally in developed and developing countries (see, for example, Greenwood 1977; Simpson 1993). The combined outcome of the commodification and demonstration processes is markedly similar: a deculturation process occurs resulting in the "mythic reconstruction" of place and the falsification of history and identity (Machlis & Burch 1983, 684).

The deculturation thesis faces a number of shortcomings because of its emphasis on globalism and inattention to the local scale. While not disputing the obvious influence of tourism, a more balanced perspective may be proposed to overcome the inherent weaknesses of the commodification and demonstration schools of thought. For a start, it is an oversight to view local cultures as passive and inert and proclaim tourism as the most important avenue of social change. An alternative viewpoint would perceive local societies as changing all the time and tourism serving as only one of the many contributors to the process. As Robert Wood (1993, 66) has argued, there is no such thing as a "pristine pre-tourism cultural baseline" by which to measure tourism's impact and our emphasis would be better focused on the "complex ways tourism enters and becomes part of an on-going process of symbolic meaning and appropriation." Cultures and traditions change continuously with or without the aid of tourism and it is helpful to keep in mind Gampner's (1985, 251) observation that tourism "is not the only context in which host populations interact with outsiders, nor is it always the most important one....tourism might best be viewed as one of several, albeit a very important, catalysts of change." It is inadmissible, therefore, to view the commodification and demonstration processes as moving *only* in the direction of Westernisation or 'touristisation'. Rather, we should begin to acknowledge the constellation of global *and* local forces which effect cultural change.

It is arrogant to say that local cultures should remain exotic in order to be appraised as 'authentic' in the eyes of the global traveller. The deculturation thesis perpetuates this

notion because it presupposes destination areas to be timeless, static, "largely unchanged by the forces of Western colonialism, nationalism, economic development and even tourism itself" (Silver 1993, 304). It is often the cynical tourist who wishes away modernity in the place he or she has come to visit but as Iyer (1988, 14) warns, what is considered "corruption" by the West might be interpreted as "progress" in the East. In the discourse on East-West/tourist-local relationship, the view that modernisation is an evil external force objectifies locals as "passive, non-participatory...above all, non-active, non-sovereign with regard to itself" (Malek 1963 cited in Said 1978, 97). In other words, the local is seen to be a "living tableau of queerness" open to inspection by the West (Said 1978, 103).

A second reason why heritage tourism has led to 'placelessness' is due to the alienation of locals from their landscape. As heritage sites are geared towards tourists, it is supposed that locals are marginalised since their interests have not been considered. In the tourism arts, it has been suggested that crafts are commodified into souvenirs which suggest very little about local lifestyles and place identity (see *Annals of Tourism Research* 1984, vol.11 no.3; 1993, vol.20 no.2). In the worst case scenario, local crafts degenerate into 'made in Taiwan' products and the tourist-local relationship is characterised by "the substitution of cash for deference" (Machlis & Burch 1983, 676). Greenwood's (1977) classic work on the commodification of the Alarde ritual in Fuenterrabia, Spain similarly maintains that tourist-local exchange is mediated primarily in economic terms because of the lure of tourism dollars. Simply put, "The commodification process does not stop with land, labour, and capital but ultimately includes the history, ethnic identity, and culture of peoples of the world. Tourism simply packages the cultural realities of a people for sale alongside other resources" (Greenwood 1977 cited in Greenwood 1989, 180). In this economic exchange, cultures are inevitably drained of their veracity.

The view that tourism robs local cultures of their meaning precludes the possibility that cultural commodification may also be undertaken for non-economic reasons with benefits

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for the resident community. Rather than a vehicle of destruction, is it not possible to consider tourism as an agent of cultural renaissance? And where deculturation occurs, is it also not possible to point the finger at other agents of change rather than isolate tourism as having special powers? In rethinking the case of the Alarde, Greenwood (1989) is persuaded against his earlier pessimism and it is worthwhile to quote this change of heart at some length:

> Further reflection on what I wrote earlier suggested to me the need to place the process described in the chapter within a broader context. After all, local cultures have been transformed by tourism, but so have they been by industrialization, urbanization, pollution, poverty, civil war, immigration, and a host of other factors. Does tourism have unique effects? Are its cultural manifestations always negative?....Are we correct that all local cultural values are being destroyed? Or are they changing once again, under the press of circumstance and from their own internal dynamics....Some of what we see as destruction is construction; some is the result of a lack of any other viable options; and some the result of choices that could be made differently. (Greenwood 1989, 181-2)

In an attempt to understand the "broader context", the role played by local factors should be acknowledged and tourism's impact must be seen as being "played out in an already dynamic and changing cultural context" (Wood 1993, 67-8). We must therefore avoid an 'either or' scenario and work towards a perspective which views tourism as *both* positive and negative, and local places as a *combination* of stability and change. Greenwood (1989, 182) articulates this challenge in the following manner:"To argue globally against cultural change is a startling position; to accept all change is good is mindless and cruel. The challenge, as yet unmet, is to conceptualize communities as a complex process of stability and change, and then to factor in the changes tourism brings."

The final reason how tourism affects localities is by eroding the difference between places. According to this line of thought, heritage tourism has become a 'global best practice' in various destination sites to the extent that it produces homogenous landscapes. For example, the duplication of waterfront zones, festival marketplaces and historic-tourist precincts in cities has been highlighted as representing a convergence in market demands, global cultural trends and urban planning policies. The result is criticised as a "reiteration and recycling of already-known symbolic codes and historic forms to a point of cliche"

(Boyer 1992, 188) giving rise to cities which exude a "postmodern anywhere feel" (Short *et al.* 221). This notion of a 'placeless city' is further accentuated by corporations specialising in the serial reproduction of urban structures. Examples include the Rouse Corporation which is responsible for the widely emulated Faneuil Hall in Boston and Baltimore's Harborplace, and the Pyramid Companies which specialises in mall development in the rust-belt cities of Northeastern U.S.A. The entry of such terms like "Faneulization" and "Rousilization" into the urban planning lexicon (Zukin 1982, 87) also reinforce the idea of urban homogeneity.

It is misleading to say that local identity and place attributes are compromised simply because certain urban structures are duplicated across national boundaries. Cities differ in their inheritance of urban forms and undertake heritage conservation for varied reasons. Local political vision and economic aspirations also differ ensuring that the heritage projects adopted by planning authorities vary from place to place. Thus, although heritage tourism may be the chosen strategy, different destinations tend to accentuate themes peculiar to their culture and location as a way of differentiating themselves from competitors. In this age of global competition, place uniqueness becomes highly prized according to Law (1993, 170):

> It is very unlikely that visitors will want to travel to clone cities; hence the need for cities
> to develop something either distinctive or specialized. This can be based on something
> inherent in the place and history, or a theme which has been identified.

Manchester's focus on industrial archaeology (Law 1993, 139-40), Bradford's promotion of its West Asian community (Urry 1990b, 144) and the 'Oil City' imagery in Syracuse (Roberts & Schein 1993; Short *et al.* 1993) are examples of cities capitalising on their local distinctiveness.

1.4.2 Tourism and Local Uniqueness: The 'Bottom Up' Approach

While the 'top down' approach privileges the role of global forces, the 'bottom up' approach focuses on the specific forms and structures of urban destinations without engaging in debates on the internationalisation of capital and culture. This largely empiricist approach views urban sites as unique and 'one of a kind' but the processes that underlie the development of this uniqueness are left largely to the readers' imagination. Most of the works here are descriptive and they emphasise specific case studies and "local detail" rather than offer "comparative generalisations" (Ashworth 1989, 45). Two subthemes are evident: a 'user approach' which identifies various user groups in the city and an 'actor-centered approach' which describes the role played by key agencies such as the municipality, entrepreneurs and communities in tourism development. The local/'bottom up' approach is also the Archilles' heel in tourism geography because of geographers' preoccupation with empirical detail at the expense of wider conceptual debates.

According to Ashworth (1989, 43), the user approach addresses four issues: who the urban tourists are, why they visit the city, what they do in the area and their likes/dislikes. Such works offer a plethora of data for tourism boards and urban authorities and serve a pragmatic purpose in planning, marketing and crowd control. For example, Wall and Sinnott's (1980) work on tourist patronage of cultural attractions in Toronto, Murphy's (1980; 1992) papers on pedestrian behaviour in Victoria's harbour and Jansen-Verbeke's (1988) research on visitor segmentation in historic Dutch cities demonstrate the enormous potential of urban tourism and the need for careful monitoring. These works and others suggest that urban heritage areas are multifunctional and cater to a multi-segmented group of people.

While site-specific studies serve an applied purpose, they seldom provide a conceptualisation of the urban tourism experience. The global processes behind heritage tourism are seldom explored and heritage sites are studied in isolation from their wider

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economic, political, cultural and historical circumstances. The onus is thus upon the reader to draw comparisons between different places and to discern the common/different processes that operate in each site. Hence, according to Pearce (1987, 209),

> There is a need to move away from the isolated, idiographic case study to more systematic and comparative research and replicate studies from place to place and time to time so that the general might be distinguished from the specific.

Geographers have tended to treat tourism as a "discrete economic subsystem" and in so doing "many revealing links have been missed between tourism and other politically and theoretically important geographic issues which demonstrate the wider role and position of tourism in capitalist accumulation" (Britton 1991, 466). Infusing tourism case studies with insights on wider structural change in society (Urry 1990b, 82; 1995) and other issues like multiculturalism and ethnic pluralism (Tunbridge 1984, 178) thus provides an avenue to supplement the local approach with a global sensibility.

While the user approach spotlights visitors and tourists, the actor-centred approach looks at the roles played by the state, local entrepreneurs, residents and community groups. Most of the works in this genre focus on the micro-scale. For example, the actor-centred approach emphasises the way various tourist facilities and merchants are distributed in the city (also termed the "facility approach") and the role of government policies in tourism development (the "policy approach") (Ashworth 1989). The mapping of heritage sites and retail facilities in urban-historic areas most commonly characterise research in this area (see Ashworth & Tunbridge 1990; Burtenshaw *et al.* 1991, chapter 9; Prentice 1993, chapter 7).

Micro-scale analyses presuppose local agencies as having a free will unconstrained by various 'top down' structural forces. In the study of urban waterfronts, we see that this is certainly not true. For example, Tunbridge (1988) has shown that local and non-local agencies conflict and negotiate with each other in the process of development and that 'players' are certainly not free to do as they wish. Likewise in Portsmouth, Riley and

Shurmer-Smith (1988) have argued that port redevelopment is propelled simultaneously by global forces, national pressures, local actors and site conditions, and the result is a unique restructuring experience unlike that of other cities. While these studies draw on non-tourist sites, they raise a number of issues relevant to our understanding of the global-local nexus in tourism. They indicate that while local conditions are critical in shaping the development process, non-local processes must also be recognised. Because tourism does not exist in a vacuum, development is a process of conflict and negotiation involving various actors at various scales. An acknowledgement of the role played by both global and local factors is essential if we are to gain a more dynamic understanding of urban restructuring and tourism development.

1.4.3 Local Uniqueness in the Global Village: The Global-Local Nexus

In prioritising either the 'top down' or 'bottom up' approach, we fail to consider the interrelations between the global and local scales. Although local agencies are autonomous, they are certainly not disengaged from global circuits of capital, culture and technology. As Oakes has argued (1993, 49): "The locality is not the political counterpoint to the global, not merely the 'refuge' of cultural politics which distract us from the grander conflicts of history; it is the ever shifting and unstable stage we build to play out those grand and global shifts themselves." Put in another way, local places are not antithesis to the global space of flows but a "contingent component" of it (Oakes 1993, 63). In the study of tourism, a few writers have attempted to integrate the global and the local. These efforts at linking specific locales to broader processes have been advanced along two fronts: the economic and the cultural. While the former stresses the autonomy of local entrepreneurs in the tourist industry, the latter emphasises the cultural negotiation between indigenous societies and global influences.

Along the economic front, the global-local nexus is invoked by studies which look at the economic linkages between local entrepreneurs and the tourism industry. In defying

the dependency theory and arguments on neo-colonialism, the alternative concepts of post-Fordism and flexible specialisation have been offered as guiding principles in 'bottom up' development. Centred around what has been called 'new tourism', Poon (1988; 1989; 1993) argues that the international travel industry has undergone a transformation stemming from global trends. These trends include the diffusion of information technology, worsening environmental problems and increasing leisure time all of which have forced destination areas to respond in ways that are markedly different from the past. The emergent 'post-Fordist' form of tourism is based around flexibility, market segmentation and diagonal integration between firms all of which privilege small, locally-owned businesses.

In developing countries, disenchantment with mass tourism and the recognition of new market niches have encouraged local governments, entrepreneurs and businesses to play a more proactive role. A number of recent case studies amplify this theme including Poon's (1993) work on local ownership of hotels in the Bahamas, Milne's (1996) paper on indigenous entrepreneurship in South Pacific tourism, Zurick's (1992) study on Nepalese involvement in adventure tourism and Oakes' (1993; 1995) research on ethnic communities and the tourism industry in Guizhou, China. The general thrust of these works suggests that in the present climate of global competition, local-level involvement is an economically viable model of control. Tourism development involves the "voluntary acceptance" and "voluntary participation" of local people often in conjunction with expatriate interests and transnational corporations (Nash 1977, 34). Although it may expose small economies to the vagaries of global trends, tourism also stimulates local ownership of firms and provides a common ground where healthy cultural exchange occurs.

Autonomy in the economic sphere parallels arguments in the cultural realm which suggests that local societies are not as defenceless as commonly portrayed. Rather than deculturation, the prognosis is more optimistic and argues for a dynamic relationship between local cultures and global tourism. The global-local nexus is supported by the

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alternative thesis of 'transculturation' in which societies are seen as evolving all the time because of global-local interactions. The transculturation thesis rejects tourism as having any special powers and maintains that local landscapes and societies are hybrids of multiple factors. Unlike previously thought, local societies are thus "adaptive and resilient" (Wood 1993, 55) rather than "passive receptors of a total package of 'modernization'" (McKean 1989, 120).

Oakes' (1993; 1995) research on village communities in China illustrates the claims of a proactive local and its negotiation with external forces. In rejecting earlier stereotypes of a global force erasing local identity, he argues that tourism is an "adopted component of a local culture's internal dynamics of on-going change, rather than a force bearing down upon locals while remaining beyond their grasp" (Oakes 1995, 10). By way of a case study, he shows that the Miao villagers in Guizhou actively draw upon global interest in heritage and national goals of modernisation in strengthening their own ethnic identity. Miao festivals are promoted via state sponsorship drawing upon the government's call for rural development and its new stance towards multiethnic unity, stability and human rights (Oakes 1993, 59-60). In this way, the local actor is not "in opposition to a broader system of control, but engages it and makes it meaningful, while building a stage for local identity and action" (1993, 61). In rejecting what Wood (1993, 56-7) describes as "pessimistic hand-wringing" of earlier works, Oakes concludes that tourism is not an "outside force which 'flattens' local culture" but has been appropriated as an important ingredient in local constructions of culture, tradition and identity (1995, 1).

Apart from the proactive role of local agencies, the positive cultural impacts of tourism must also be noted. This is not to deny that some form of 'staging' is bound to occur when local dances and festivals, for example, are presented to visitors except to say that tourism has both positive and negative impacts. As a number of writers have suggested, what is often derided as "staged inauthenticity" (Cohen 1988) may actually have some beneficial effects. Sanger's study of the Barong dances in Bali (cited in Hitchcock et al.

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1993), Murphy's (1985) example of the Polynesian Cultural Centre and Valene Smith's (1989) paper on the Alaskan Eskimos all suggest that tourist attractions heighten local awareness of heritage, provide a glimpse of native cultures while mitigating against disturbance in other areas. Local entrepreneurs also play a key role in developing and managing these sites not only as tourist attractions but also as places for community interaction.

Before closing, attention is drawn to a number of heritage tourism studies concerning Singapore. While most of these works focus on specific urban landscapes or attractions, the global-local theme comes through in some of them. Particularly in Teo and Huang's (1995) paper on the Civic and Cultural District, Chen's (1995) thesis on Clarke Quay Festival Marketplace, Tieh's (1989) dissertation on Chinatown and Lim (1987) work on Emerald Hill, the emphasis is on government policies in urban conservation and the way they have benefitted tourists and locals. In Teo and Huang's (1995) case study, for example, they argue that state policies are generally inclined towards the needs of visitors. The result is the creation of 'elite' landscapes and 'inauthentic' attractions. On the other hand, Lim's (1987) thesis on Emerald Hill suggests a gradation in local affiliation to the landscape. Singaporeans' attachment to the area range from apathy and antagonism towards tourists, to enthusiasm and euphoria that Emerald Hill is being given a 'new lease of life'. Local response towards heritage landscapes, therefore, is a multifaceted issue reflecting the varying attitudes of people towards place. With scarce land and limited natural attractions, Singapore's cultural sites serve dually as tourist attractions and local recreational areas. Tourist-local conflicts are contained in certain cases while rampant in others. My thesis will reveal the different ways in which this global-local divide has been negotiated in various sites.

In drawing the literature review to a close, I have suggested that heritage tourism writings may be classified under one of three categories: the global, the local or the global-local nexus. In engaging both the global and local, writers emphasise the economic proactivity of local enterprises and the cultural negotiation between indigenous

societies and international tourism. Advances made on both fronts support Philip McKean's (1989) contention that tourism in developing countries is characterised by "economic dualism" and "cultural involution". According to him, many developing nations have dual economies in which traditional (indigenous) and modern (tourism) industries co-exist. While earlier studies were more pessimistic in their view of a pre-capitalist society losing out to Western late-capitalism, a more optimistic perspective today considers tourism as an "addition" to rather than "replacement" of traditional sectors (1989, 123). On the cultural front, McKean argues that tourism's social impacts exist alongside other influences in a "continuous syncretic process" and while it is impossible to distinguish between these effects "it is possible to see adumbrations of each in the current blend" (1989, 125). The concepts of economic dualism and cultural involution reinforce the global-local nexus in heritage tourism. Not only do they show that local societies continue to maintain their traditional ways of life alongside tourism, we also see tourism serving as one component of a much larger set of factors determining social and cultural change.

1.5 Thesis Organisation

In this opening chapter, the objectives and argument of my research were laid out and three key terms defined. Global and local forces are relational rather than oppositional and towards this end, the literature review and the introduction to Singapore illustrate the dynamic interplay between these forces. Chapter Two will expand upon the conceptual focus of the global-local nexus. This is done in two ways, firstly by providing a background to bodies of theory that will aid in asserting the importance of 'localities' and secondly by identifying conceptual threads that may be applied to tourism. A research framework and conceptual model are then constructed. Chapter Three rounds up the introductory aspects of the thesis by discussing the methodologies adopted in my study and the practicalities of fieldwork.

Chapters Four to Six analyse the results of my fieldwork. I begin by looking at tourism policies and the way they have been shaped by the needs of visitors and Singaporeans (Chapter Four). In particular, I explore heritage conservation as an area of potential conflict between the two groups. Case studies of tourism entrepreneurs are then offered to interrogate the tourist-local dynamics. Chapter Five extends the theme of global-local interaction with an insight into the Little India Historic District. Here, the various insider/outsider factions in the area are studied using data derived from a questionnaire survey. The conflicts and negotiations between global/outsider forces and local/insider pressures are also investigated. The final empirical chapter (Chapter Six) charts Singapore's tourism marketing strategies from the 1960s to the 1990s. Combining both qualitative and quantitative research techniques, I shall argue that tourism marketing is a highly dynamic phenomenon affected by local influences and global concerns. In Chapter Seven, I conclude the discussion by synthesising the main findings and outlining research implications for the geography of tourism. Insights gleaned from the Singapore experience are also expanded upon to shed light on conceptual debates concerning globalism and localism.

Chapter Two

Exploring the Global-Local Nexus in Heritage Tourism:
A Conceptual Framework

> The formation of concepts and the construction of theories have always been vital aspects of human activity....Theories provide cognitive maps for finding our way in a complex and changeable environment. The cognitive map may not be stable or even coherent. Experience leads us to construct, transform and modify all the time. Purposeful theory construction, in much the same way, seeks an ordered and consistent though never entirely closed map, to improve our understanding and command of daily practices (social, political, economic or technological). Sophisticated or unsophisticated, the urge to construct and the need for some kind of cognitive map is a basic human attribute. (Harvey 1989a, 2)

2.1 Introduction

The development of a heritage industry is usually pursued in the hope of attracting visitors and fulfilling the needs of local communities. This chapter reviews some conceptual and theoretical material that might help us better appreciate the significance of local factors in tourism development. To do so, I first outline various debates which inform the relationship between global forces and local pressures (section 2.2). Two theoretical bodies of work are introduced: the 'locality concept' which has been spearheaded by industrial and economic geographers in the 1980s, and the writings on 'globalism and localism' which have been dominated by both cultural and economic geographers as well as other social scientists in the 1990s. From the discussions, I shall then draw upon some conceptual insights relevant to my research and propose a four-fold argument which supports the global-local nexus in heritage tourism (section 2.3). Finally a research framework and a conceptual model are constructed (section 2.4).

2.2 Reclaiming the Local: A Theoretical Background

To better understand the interactions between the global and local scales, two bodies of research are introduced: the locality concept and discussions on globalism-localism. Reclaiming the 'power of the local' provides a first step in acknowledging the global-local nexus.

2.2.1 The Locality Concept: Geography Matters

The genealogy of the locality concept is traced to economic and industrial geographers writing in the mid-1980s in reaction against the positivist mould of explaining social phenomena through general laws and theories. Under positivism, the effort to make geography 'scientific' through the search for universal truths led to the demise of notions of place uniqueness and time specificity in the 1950-60s. Since positivism was "predicated upon the insistent rejection of uniqueness in order to sustain the legitimacy of general laws with universal applicability", any local variation was considered "mere curiosity or unexplainable abberation" and summarily dismissed (Warf 1988, 57). Positivism prioritised theory making over idiographic descriptions of place earning geography its nickname as the study of "theories without region" (Johnston 1991, 248). This status was in turn a shift from the preceding view of geography as a study of "regions without theories" reflecting the equally myopic paradigm of regionalism.

In the 1980s, however, 'reconstructing' geography as a discipline equally concerned with region *and* theory became the fundamental project of geographers. The notion that 'geography matters' and that space/place *do* make a difference in social phenomena has become the *de facto* agenda of geographers in theoretical backgrounds as varied as humanism, realism, postmodernism, feminism and the 'new regional geography'. By asserting the pre-eminence of space in explanations of social phenomena it is hoped that geography may be realigned with contemporary social theory and resituated "at the very

centre of a newly defined paradigm of human enquiry" (Dear 1988, 267). The locality concept is attributed as the seedbed from which this ambitious project first took root and the reconstruction of human geography is expected to flower.

The locality concept advanced by Doreen Massey in her groundbreaking *Spatial Divisions of Labour* (1984a) argues that economic restructuring in Britain in the 1960s-70s took different forms and effects in different places because of variations in the social structures in these sites. Such social factors include different class structures, labour processes, socio-cultural characteristics of residents and local governments all of which contribute to diverse site conditions and in turn mediating global processes in markedly varied ways. To substantiate this point, Massey cites the examples of 'old' coal mining areas in Wales, England and Scotland and the 'new' coalmine of Cornwall. While all were affected by manufacturing decline at around the same time, they reacted in very different fashion because of variations in population characteristics, gender relations, ownership patterns and wage levels (see 1984a, chapter 5). Indeed, "general processes can have particular outcomes in unique areas" giving rise to areal differentiation (Johnston 1991, 241).

Apart from the differential characteristics of 'bottom up' factors, localities also vary because 'top down' processes are unevenly spread over space and time. Over the years localities undergo various rounds of investment and economic activities with each round effecting specific forms of labour processes, state intervention, cultural conditions and particular economic roles of power and dominance over other locales (Massey 1984a, 118). Through time, the superimposition of these various 'layers' of investment, economic roles and socio-political structures are sedimented together to create a unique locality unlike others with different histories of investment and production (Gregory 1989, 76). Each round of production is thus "indelibly etched into local social and physical landscapes" such that different localities bear imprints from a whole series of successive production phases from the past (Warf 1988, 54). Uneven developments 'on the ground' therefore interact with 'top down' processes in diverse ways perpetuating further inequality

between places.

Basically, the locality concept emphasises the role of local factors in mediating global processes and the unique outcomes which arise from this interaction. This argument is reinforced in an edited collection of essays bearing the theme Massey introduced in her first book and appropriately titled *Geography Matters! A Reader* (Massey & Allen 1984). In this volume the authors exemplify in various ways the inseparability of social and spatial processes. Put in another way, all social phenomena are influenced by geographic-site factors and conversely, geographical processes are outcomes of social conditions existing in particular localities. Hence, how and why a social process occurs depends on *where* its occurs. The locality concept provides an insight into the way social processes are played out in space by "keep[ing] a grip on the generality of events, the wider processes lying behind them, without losing sight of the individuality of the form of their occurrence" (Massey 1984b, 9).

Clarke's (1984) chapter in the book exemplifies one way localities negotiate the effects of globalisation. The author debunks the thesis of a universal culture by showing that different communities in different places successfully revive local identities through gentrification and by asserting their ethnic cultures in urban Britain (Clarke 1984, 63-4). What is happening in different communities throughout the world, therefore, is the merging of global trends such as youth/pop/yuppie culture and local forces such as ethnic and place identities. The outcome varies across localities with the result being a "plurality of landscapes" reflecting a "plurality of cultures" (Jackson 1992, 171).

The importance of locality and place differentiation was also emphasised in a major research programme financed by the British Economic and Social Research Council relating to 'Changing Urban and Regional Systems' (CURS). According to Philip Cooke the co-ordinator, the main objective was to explore the impact of economic restructuring in the United Kingdom in the 1980s at national and local levels, emphasising in particular the role of government policies in helping/constraining localities in their attempts to deal

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with the changes (Johnston 1991, 241-2). At a conceptual level the research introduced the notion of 'locality' to a wider audience by arguing that local areas and agencies are "not mere recipients of fortune or fate from above" but are "actively involved in their own transformation" (Cooke 1989a, 296 in Johnston 1991, 242). In a study of Lancaster, for example, Murgatroyd and Urry (1984) demonstrate that manufacturing decline had a different effect here compared to other industrial sites. Since its decline, the city has not emerged as a service centre because local restructuring policies here emphasise public-sector services and small manufacturing firms instead (Murgatroyd & Urry 1984, 124-5).

Apart from highlighting local factors, the CURS programme also emphasised the various local agencies operating in a particular site. Cooke's (1989b) summary paper identifies three agencies: the individual, local or national organisations, and the nation state. While individual citizens constitute the weakest agent of influence, organisations in the form of social movements, trade unions and interest groups are often powerful bodies which ensure collective needs are emphasised and local interests met. At the highest level lies the nation state. It is here that federal governments negotiate global processes by implementing local policies of benefit to its citizens. Beyond the locality exists supranational/global institutions such as the European Community or the United Nations (Cooke 1989b, 271). The point emphasised by the CURS research is that at the local level, commonality in 'place' galvanises agencies with the possible effect of inflecting the structural forces imposed upon them. As Cooke explains "[l]ocality seemed to be one of the bases along with other non-locally specific ones such as class, gender, ethnicity, religion and nation, around which people mobilise, possibly having significant effects upon supra-local structural powers as a consequence" (1989b, 269).

By no means is the locality concept a widely accepted one. Criticisms exist in different forms ranging from philosophical comments to attacks on its definitional ambiguity and practical use. Philosophically, the concept is viewed as resurrecting the redundant paradigms of regionalism, determinism and marxism rather than introducing something new (see Cochrane 1987 and Beauregard 1988 for critiques dealing with marxism). Due

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to its emphasis on place-specific details, the CURS programme is criticised for its "new atheoretical empiricism" which takes us full-circle back to the idiographic studies of the 1960s (Duncan & Savage 1989, 194; Gregson 1987, 368). Unlike positivism which seeks universal laws, locality research over-reinforces notions of uniqueness to the point of being submerged in a mass of statistical information, a problem not unlike that of regionalism (Johnston 1991, 242). Hence, the locality concept gives the impression that statistical data are collected for their own sake and as each site is different, there need not be any generalisation. What then, one wonders, is the purpose of such a piecemeal project? Neil Smith (1987, 62) expresses this problem succinctly:

> If the comparability of results between the different localities is not stressed, the danger is that the CURS project will do little more than repeat the empiricist locality studies of an earlier generation which deliberately examined individual places for their own sake, and not attempt to draw out theoretical or historical conclusions

The locality debate thus runs the danger of rehearsing the Hartshorne-Schaefer argument over idiographic and nomothetic practices in geography, an indication that geographers have advanced little since the 1950s (Smith 1987, 66).

While Cooke concedes the reluctance to generalise as the strongest drawback, he argues that locality researchers do make helpful generalisations *within* case studies rather than *across* cases (1987, 76-7). By comparing various case studies, an in-depth understanding of social phenomena is achieved as opposed to a simplistic knowledge gained from positivist or structural models. As Warf observes "if much of the simplicity and certainty of mechanical explanations is lost, then gained is a rich view of the world as a multi-layered ontology, 'as it really is' and not as only abstracted models paint it to be" (Warf 1988, 59). Regarding the charge of empiricism, Cooke is also at pains to assert that the locality concept promotes "empirical" research (that is, data collection which helps to refine or refute theory) as opposed to "empiricist" research (data collection for its own sake) (1987, 72).

The 'geography matters' argument has also been criticised for supporting the notion that social agencies are independent of external forces *but* constrained by local site factors, a view straight from the school of determinism (Johnston 1991, 243). This 'spatial fetishism' over-prioritises the importance of geography by viewing space (or place) as an independent entity influencing and even determining social behaviour (Duncan 1989, 131). Seen from this angle, the locality research is accused of abetting in "smuggling spatial determinism back into explanation" (Duncan & Savage 1989, 195).

In its defence, proponents of the locality concept maintain that space in itself does not have any special powers. Rather, geography "constitutes the spatial locus" and serves as a "vessel" (Feldman & Florida 1994, 211-2) wherein local agencies are organised with a possible effect of inflecting global processes. Locality research aims to combat the 'structural determinist' notion that local agencies are "fated to be the victims or beneficiaries of the capricious resolution of forces which exogenously produce 'spatial variation'" (Cooke 1989b, 268). Towards this end, the CURS programme supplements the top-down perspective by supplying the 'missing dimensions' of local human actors and place-specific considerations. Of course, the challenge remains in striking a "middle ground relativist" approach (Duncan 1989, 132) which acknowledges uniqueness and local proactivity on the one hand and the role of structural forces and external processes on the other.

Aside from philosophical concerns, the locality research has also been criticised for its ambiguous terminology. Different writers use the term 'locality' in many ways such that it has become a "catch all term for absolutely anything to do with the local" (Gregson 1987a, 8 cited in Duncan & Savage 1989, 193). In CURS research, for example, "locality equals local labour market equals local economy and local social relations in the workforce and local electoral politics and local gender roles and ..." (Duncan & Savage 1989, 193). Urry's review paper also listed ten different meanings of the word 'local' including community and local culture, place effects and identity (1987b, 442-3). What then exactly constitutes 'local' and on what spatial basis can we undertake research?

Duncan and Savage suggest that the term is a 'quick conceptual gap filler' proposed as a defense against structural marxist thought and they urge instead the use of alternative terms like case study areas, towns, labour market areas, or even places and areas in specifying the 'unit' of study (1989, 196).

While such criticisms are valid to a certain degree, they reinforce the original CURS contention that every locality is different and the use of the term is contingent upon the specific site, time and research agenda to which it is applied. A case-by-case, site-by-site analysis is thus essential when undertaking research in the locality genre (Warf 1988, 58).

One useful concept to which the terms 'locality' and 'local' have been applied is 'community'. Here, the local refers not only to a geographic area but to the people living there and their cultures and lifestyles. In tourist analyses, the 'local community' is distinguished from the 'tourism community' because of their differing needs and sense of belonging to place. Urry (1995, 73) integrates 'locality', 'local effects' and 'the local' in the following way:

> It [the local] is part of the culture of those living in a given geographical area that there is a distinction drawn between those who are local, 'people like us', and those who are non-local, 'outsiders', 'offcomers', etc. This binary opposition may be set up and reproduced in a variety of ways, relating to people's very sense of belonging to a given 'community'. A general feature of the culture of a given region or nation may be that strong distinctions are drawn between the local and the non-local.

As my conceptual framework will also show, the 'local' and the 'non-local' resonate within tourism studies and 'locality effects' will be applied to the role of the state, the needs of the host community and geographic site constraints.

Notwithstanding the above criticisms, the enduring legacy of the locality concept has surely been to heighten our awareness of the importance of local agencies and the contribution of local factors in determining social outcomes. Increasingly, social scientists agree that geography matters and the locality concept provides one way of realising this

goal. Not just economic geography but other subdisciplines have been reconstructed on the principle that 'bottom up' influences are crucial to the development of landscapes and social phenomena. The retheorised 'new cultural geography', for example, rejects the notion of 'culture' as a superorganic force and argues instead for a more consensual approach which views culture as a constantly negotiated process by different people in different places and times (see Jackson 1992). Similarly the 'geography matters' argument has been espoused in diverse fields such as the study of innovation diffusion (Feldman & Florida 1994), abortion rates in the U.S. (Gober 1994) and feminist geography research (Monk 1994). Simply put, social phenomena of various kinds manifest differing levels of intensity and diverse characteristics in different sites because of the 'power of place'.

2.2.2 Globalism-Localism: Exploring Global-Local Interactions

While the locality concept provided a means of reclaiming the local in the 1980s, another body of literature emerged with a similar agenda in the 1990s. Discussions of globalism and localism not only highlight the power of the local but focus attention on the role of the global as well. In the same way the locality debate has prompted a questioning of the unmediated role of general processes, writings on globalism and localism also serve to critique the over-emphasis on local factors. The global-local debate therefore seeks to reclaim the role of the local neglected by positivist research while acknowledging the power of the global which has been underplayed by locality writers. The goal is to engage ideas on *both* globalism and localism and to enquire how global and local processes interact with one another in different places. This is the global-local nexus or the global-local dialectics.

It is fitting that Massey who spearheaded the locality concept was also one of the many voices in the 1990s who cautioned against an over-prioritisation of the local. Just as it has been argued that places do not respond in identical fashion to general processes, it is equally asserted that places do not react in entirely diverse ways as well. Massey's stance

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is as much a resistance towards globalisation and the homogeneity it entails as it is an attack on an unthinking over-emphasis on localism and notions of uniqueness. This follows Neil Smith's critique of the locality concept when he argued: "As regards the unique, everything is unique, but that really does not tell us much. The essence of the intellectual enterprise we are engaged in is to construct sustainable generalizations and to judge when these generalizations are no longer sustainable..." (Smith 1987, 67). In this section, I shall focus on some of the writings on globalism and localism that have emerged with an emphasis on themes relevant to my thesis namely, issues of culture/heritage, urban development and Asian societies.

Global and local processes interact in a number of ways. The idea of a 'global culture' has attracted the greatest share of attention anchored principally around one argument: the dominance of Western culture and the erosion of local lifestyles and societies around the world (Featherstone 1993). Most particularly, the argument is made of America's economic and technological supremacy and the export of its pop-culture through Hollywood, Disneyland and MTV. What results is the creation of a "global citizen" who shares similar tastes, needs and lifestyles (Robins 1991, 26). Opposing this point of view, writers adopting a global-local perspective counter that local cultures and societies are not obliterated by globalisation but are enhanced and made more prominent instead. Writing about America's cultural hegemony, the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai observed that a process of "indigenization" is underway and Western cultural trends are indigenised in recipient countries to suit local tastes and conditions (1990, 295).

An example of the indigenisation process is offered by John Naisbitt's (1996) work on Asian societies. He observed that while modernisation was once synonymous with Westernisation, economic renaissance in the 1990s has stimulated a new Asian assertiveness which has enabled member countries to create new forms of governance and lifestyle that combine elements of the East and West (Naisbitt 1996, chapter 2). Asia's phenomenal growth is predicated upon the embrace of Western technology and management on the one hand and Confucianist ethics of community and reverence

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towards authority on the other (Naisbitt 1996, 61-3). The differential combination of 'top down' Western trends and 'bottom up' Asian values in different countries thus gives rise to unique societies and cultures because "each place is the focus of a distinct *mixture* of wider and more local social relations and, further again, that juxtaposition of these relations may produce effects that would not have happened otherwise" (Massey 1993, 68 original emphasis).

The indigenisation of global trends gives rise to new cultural and geographic expressions which are at once both global and local. This is often viewed as a form of "postmodern culture" (Jameson 1984) or the "geography of postmodernism" (Yeoh & Chang 1995). On the urban geographic front we see the simultaneous occurrence of two apparently opposite phenomena. On one hand, we witness the proliferation of universal cultural and corporate artifacts in cities as a result of the "localization of globality" (Featherstone 1993, 175). Wherever we go around the world, we are subjected to certain common items such as fast food, pop music and denim jeans. Over time, urban landscapes and societies begin to look more like each other because of the "convergence of lifestyle, culture, and behaviour among consumer segments across the world" (Robins 1991, 29). In short "The global is becoming local for many of us" (Sykora 1994, 1161).

At the same time the above is occurring, we also witness an opposite trend -- the 'globalisation of localities' exemplified by the restructuring of sites on par with other international cities. In what has been termed "glocalisation" by Eric Swyngedouw (cited in Sykora 1994, 1162), cities and towns are being re-developed with global architectural themes, international services and facilities to portray an 'up to date' appearance in order to attract tourists, residents and investments. In this global-local paradox, Sykora asks whether the "local community" has disintegrated or whether the local has just been lifted to a "more extended geographical scale" (Sykora 1994, 1161). The answer is that both globalisation and localisation are occurring simultaneously and the result is a conflation of homogenising and localising influences in various sites. Hence, the global and local "constitute each other" and "causality is not all 'top down'" (Massey & Jess 1995b, 227).

As Friedman aptly noted "Ethnic and cultural fragmentation and modernist homogenization are not two arguments, two opposing views of what is happening in the world today, but two constitutive trends of global reality" (1990, 311).

Apart from the indigenisation process, a second way in which globalism and localism constitute each other is through the idea of "uneven development". The argument is that far from bringing about homogeneity, globalisation gives rise to unequal effects and uneven development in different places. Global economic and cultural processes work themselves out unevenly because people and places are tied into the global village to differing degrees. Hence, for example, a particular site which is intimately linked into the global economy may be affected by globalism more dramatically than another place which is 'off the map'. For this reason, a stock market crash may be more adversely felt in New York or Tokyo than say Thimpu in Bhutan (Leyshon 1995). And even if two places were tied equally into the global village, Allen and Hamnett further argue "it does not follow that everywhere is moving in the same direction, along the same path of development, with the same prospects and converging lifestyles" (1995, 235). Government policies, local communities and other on-site considerations mediate the globalisation process in diverse ways. Globalisation thus gives rise to local uniqueness because global processes "work themselves out unevenly and, in turn, are shaped by the pattern of uneven development previously laid down" (Allen & Hamnett 1995, 235).

The concept of uneven development also suggests that global cultures are 'translated' differently in different places. Let me take two examples drawn from pop culture: fashion and music. Although denim is a universal fashion wear, it does not mean that everybody wearing it is 'globalised' in the same way and to the same extent because the symbolic meaning attached to denim varies from one society to the next. While it may be regarded as a fashion statement in one place, it could be considered an act of rebellion in a different society or a conformist uniform in yet another (Allen & Hamnett 1995, 8). Global fashion thus finds local expressions in place.

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The same may be said with music (*Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 1995, volume 20, no.4). While contemporary music is global in its reach, it is also 'necessarily local' because of individuality of expressions. Local motifs enjoy global popularity as exemplified by hip-hop and rap sounds (Leyshon *et al.* 1995), African music (Smith 1994) and Asian tunes (Kong 1995; 1996). Unique sounds are the product of "transculturation" at work because musicians are "influenced dually by their own local cultural traditions and by the music industry's transnational standards"; the result therefore is "local music with a transnational flavour or transnational music with a local flavour" (Kong 1996, 276).

The arguments on "indigenisation" and "uneven development" have interesting implications in the urban arena. For some commentators, the global-local nexus provides a conceptual device to explain the process of contemporary urban change. On the one hand globalism erases barriers between cities, but on the other local identity becomes doubly important in the race between cities to attract capital and people. Simply put, cities are 'sites of struggles' or 'contested landscapes' between globalising forces and localising tendencies. As Roger Keil (1996, 40-1) put it: "While the world appears to be in an ever tighter grip of global forces, it also seems to be disintegrating into countless splinters....Much of this showdown takes place on the stage of the world's major cities." Contemporary urban change exemplifies this tension as evidenced by Roberts and Schein's (1993) work on urban redevelopment in Syracuse, Jacob's (1994) paper on heritage conservation in central London (1994) and Sykora's (1994) research on post-communist restructuring in Prague. The general thrust of all these works suggests that urban restructuring is a dynamic process involving onsite factors and external pressures, and the end product depends on the relative powers of global/local processes in each case.

By way of summary, therefore, the discussion here reveals that global and local forces interact with one another in markedly diverse ways. Globalisation does not entail universal homogeneity because places and societies are influenced by global processes differently. Global economic and cultural trends are "indigenised" in localities giving way

to uneven development and unequal effects. Reclaiming the 'power of the local' provides the first step in acknowledging that geography matters. At the same time, this insight must be tempered with an understanding of the role of the global. Together, the locality concept and writings on globalism-localism alert us to the global-local nexus inherent in all forms of social outcome and provides me with some conceptual tools necessary to begin constructing a framework for this thesis. As I shall show next, heritage tourism involves interaction between global and local factors. Government policies, urban landscapes, marketing images and entrepreneurial activities are shaped by global tourism trends as much as they are by local needs and concerns.

2.3 The Global-Local Nexus in Heritage Tourism: Exploring its Conceptual Underpinnings

The challenge in this thesis is to move beyond looking at the tourist destination area as an outcome of dominant global forces to examining the different ways local factors also shape the tourism industry. In constructing a framework which addresses the local 'underside', the goal is to acknowledge the interactive relationship between global and local processes. Such a consensual approach would grapple with

> how the general and the particular are combined in explanation, how the particularity of
> place is preserved and modified within the generality of social change to produce different
> outcomes in different places (Allen 1984, 107)

The combined insights from the locality concept and the globalism-localism literature provide a platform to explore the global-local nexus in heritage tourism. The discussion below will draw together various conceptual threads under four themes relevant to my research. They include the effects of global processes in different destination areas (section 2.3.1); urban landscapes as sites of struggle between 'insider' and 'outsider' forces (section 2.3.2); the economic and political goals of tourism (section 2.3.3); and the role

of heritage entrepreneurs in catering to tourists and locals (section 2.3.4).

2.3.1 The Effects of Global Processes on Tourist Destination Sites

Global processes such as deindustrialisation, technological shifts and the 'service revolution' affect localities in various ways. These processes do not "floa[t] above the real world in some spaceless realm" but are constituted in different forms in different places (Duncan 1989, 134). The notion of a 'spatial division of labour' was introduced to illustrate the variable outcomes of global trends (Massey 1984a). As we saw earlier, deindustrialisation in the U.K. effected a variety of restructuring strategies, employment opportunities and labour outcomes in different towns and cities (Murgatroyd & Urry 1984). Why some localities respond in a particular way while others respond differently is attributed to 'bottom-up' conditions. Every 'round of investment' thus involves the allocation or denial of functions in different places giving rise to uneven development.

The 'spatial divisions' concept has also been employed by non-economic geographers. Jackson introduces the concept of the racial division of labour (1992, 184), Duncan and Savage speak of similar attempts in the spatial divisions of civil society, state and patriarchy (1989, 204) while Feldman and Florida (1994) wrote of the spatial division in technical innovation. The study by Feldman and Florida raises a number of relevant themes. They show that technical and product expertise is unevenly distributed in the U.S. with different sites specialising in different innovations. For example, California focuses on high-tech electronics while New Jersey specialises in pharmaceutical products. Since each locality has a different history of investment and technical input, different labour and infrastructural specialities are built up over time resulting in a spatial division

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of technical innovation. The authors maintain that individual firms and corporations do not give rise to innovation *per se*. Rather, the synergy of being together in a particular place enhanced by local infrastructure and expertise account for innovation patterns and their uneven distribution (Feldman & Florida 1994, 226). Place or locality is therefore the locus upon which 'bottom-up' factors are assembled with the power to effect trends.

The spatial division concept is also applicable to tourism. For example, Urry wrote of the "international division of tourism sites" (1990b, 48) and the "global division of tourism" (1990b, 108). The basic proposition is that globalisation (in the form of deindustrialisation, the internationalisation of travel and improved transportation) has propelled different countries to specialise in forms of tourism that give them the greatest chance of 'standing out'. In a world seemingly characterised by homogeneity, local distinctiveness becomes highly prized and countries turn to their natural and cultural attributes to serve as tourist lures. Hence, the U.K. has come to specialise in heritage tourism while Spain has capitalised on its reputation as a cheap 'sun and sand' destination and Switzerland as a mountaineering paradise (Urry 1990b, 108).

Like the spatial division concept, tourism specialisation entails a voluntary prescription of different 'roles' to different locales. Not all sites respond in similar ways to globalisation because they all have very different capabilities and resources. Hence, for example, the current global interest in ecology has raised the eco-tourism potential in certain countries like Nepal and Costa Rica while having little or no impact on others such as Hong Kong or Singapore. Global green concerns thus effect "different tourism geographies" with specific relevance for some localities more than others (Shaw & Williams 1994, 248).

'Locality' and 'place' play crucial roles in the spatial division in tourism because why/how a particular form of development emerges depends on *where* it emerges. Britain's heritage tourism experience is a case in point. Heritage promotion was endorsed in the 1980s not only as a way to boost tourism but also to fulfil certain local needs. Heritage tourism helps to absorb those left unemployed by the manufacturing slump, provide new uses to old buildings and bolster civic pride (Hewison 1987). Connor and Harvey (1990) add that the heritage industry was also aimed at achieving the Thatcherite ideal of local enterpreneuralism while socialising Victorian values in its polity. However, even though heritage tourism was widely endorsed as a national plan, only certain sites within Britain actually benefitted from it. This is because heritage tourism only flourishes in areas with strong place-attributes such as an interesting industrial past or a diverse ethnic population, as well as in places where residents and local governments welcome the heritage industry (Urry 1987a, 19-23). In short, interrogating local factors and circumstances help us better appreciate why and how heritage tourism emerges in particular places and times.

Finally, the locality concept familiarises us with the proactive role of local agencies. The global division of tourism does not willy nilly prescribe roles to different destination areas regardless of site considerations and local political ethos. Instead, governments and local planning authorities actively negotiate the type(s) of tourism they desire by looking at the resource endowment in their country while weighing their socio-political goals and potential needs of visitors. Hence, even though heritage tourism may be adopted by various cities, their local manifestations are quite diverse from place to place. As Chang *et al.* (1996) have shown, heritage tourism in Singapore and Montreal arose because of similar economic pressures in the 1980s. However, local considerations in both cities gave rise to unique outcomes "in the form of specialized heritage themes, the division of

roles between local agencies, the varied motives served by heritage enhancement and the diverse urban landscapes which result" (Chang *et al.* 1996, 301). Chapter Four of the thesis will look at the emergence of heritage tourism in Singapore by studying the way government policies have negotiated global economic trends and local site constraints.

2.3.2 Urban Areas As Contested Landscapes

While the preceding section looked at global trends and local considerations of site, the discussion now turns to the global-local dialectics as it operates 'on the ground'. Tensions are inevitable between different groups of people with divergent motives in and claims on place. The urban locality is a good example where different interests are represented by planning authorities, merchants, residents and visitors. As David Ley succinctly stated, "[t]he city consists of an arena of political coalitions...and the changing spatial form of the city is in part the *negotiated* outcome of their interaction in the field of urban politics....[t]he city is therefore often a place of *conflict*, as opposing interest groups seek to impose their values on the urban landscape" (1983, 280-1 emphasis added).

In this thesis, I am specifically concerned with urban tourist areas as the terrain upon which global and local processes intersect. A starting point would be to explore the relationship between different people with territorial claims to the city. The social and urban geography literature reveals many examples such as tensions between 'yuppies' and 'yuffies' (young urban failures) in downtown redevelopment zones (Short 1989), friction between the bourgeoisie and urban poor in gentrified districts (Harvey 1987) and conflicts between dominant ethnic groups and minorities sharing a common urban space (Tunbridge 1984; Western 1985). The relationship between tourists and locals warrants some investigation as well (C.M.Hall 1995, chapter 6).

A useful concept in showing the divergent opinions and values of people towards the

landscape is provided by Edward Relph's 'insideness-outsideness' distinction (1976, chapter 4). According to him, the relationship people have with landscapes ranges from one end of the spectrum *viz.* a feeling of 'insideness' to the other end as a feeling of 'outsideness'. This distinction is clarified in the following way:

> To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is the identity with the place....from the outside you look upon the place as a traveller might look upon a town from a distance; from inside you experience a place, are surrounded by it and part of it. The inside-outside division thus presents itself as a simple but basic dualism, one that is fundamental in our experience of lived space and one that provides the essence of place. (Relph 1976, 49)

The sense of belonging to a place is in turn a function of the different values and claims one brings to bear upon that place. Hence, there are many forms of 'insideness' and 'outsideness' which vary according to human intent and motive:

> These zones are defined by our intentions; if our interest is focused on our homes then everything beyond home is outside, if our concern is with our local district then everything beyond that district is outside, and so on. In short, as our intentions vary, so the boundary between inside and outside moves. In consequence there are many possible levels of insideness. (Relph 1976, 50).

Rather than a static dichotomy, Relph's concept reveals many subtle shadings of 'insideness' and 'outsideness', and human interaction with place is seen to fall "somewhere along a continuum between two polarities" (Kong 1991, 54).

The 'inside-outside' divide is conceptually useful as a starting point to interrogate the global-local dialectics operating within an urban area. Relph's concept is helpful in exploring two sets of relationship pertinent to my research. Firstly between tourists and locals as they relate to the city, and secondly between planners/policy makers and everyday users of the urban landscape.

Many writers adhere to the view that tourists and locals embody fundamentally different needs and interests even as they share a common meeting ground. In tourist

sites, 'insider' locals and 'outsider' visitors are brought face to face with each other often on an unequal footing. While the visitor is there by choice for the purpose of entertainment, the locals are there by circumstance with immediate needs of economic fulfillment. The outcome of this meeting is one of two effects as Chapter One has suggested: a 'demonstration effect' or a 'commodification process'. While not disputing the obvious impacts of tourism, a more balanced perspective may be proposed to overcome the 'tourist versus local' duality. As the literature review has shown, tourism development does not *only* benefit outsiders and the relationship between tourists and locals is not *always* combatory. In studying the tourist-local dialectics, we should be mindful of possible benefits from urban development as well as dynamic interactions between visitors and residents in the city.

The insider-outsider relationship is dynamic because not all tourists will embody feelings of outsideness and not all locals necessarily embody a sense of insideness towards place. Relph offers the example of 'empathetic insideness' which he describes as a sense of belonging to place derived from a respect for or knowledge of the place. This is not unlike the reverential attitude many tourists might have towards religious sites. On the other hand, residents may also embody a sense of 'existential outsideness' towards a place to which they are accustomed and which has over the course of time been drained of its special meaning. In the global-local nexus, therefore, it is presumptuous to regard all tourists as sharing a sense of alienation towards place and residents as inextricably linked by feelings of local identity. Places embody multiple meanings which are interpreted in diverse ways by diverse people.

Apart from tourists and locals, many other insider and outsider groups also exist in a given area. Many other groups of people lay claim to the city and the tourist-local relationship is only one component of a much larger negotiation over place. To appreciate the global-local nexus more fully necessitates we look at other forms of interaction such as between planners and users of the urban landscape.

Conflicts are inevitable when urban space is manipulated by one group with little consideration of the needs of other groups. This distinction was made by Henri Lefebvre (1991) when he wrote of 'representational space' and 'representations of space' (see also Shields 1992, 54-5). While the first refers to spaces that are used in everyday life by the lay person, the latter refers to planned or controlled spaces of the powerful, members of which include urban planners, architects and technocrats. Conflicts occur when the two groups have divergent ideologies on the way space ought to be used. While the state works from a functionalist perspective as an 'outsider' holding dear such values as pragmatism and rationalism, the general public typically has far more localised concerns as 'insiders' for their home, neighbourhood, and community.

Urban derelict zones are often viewed by planning authorities as a blight on the city and redevelopment is regarded as necessary in enhancing its aesthetic and economic value. This posture of "objective outsideness" demands that planners "separate themselves emotionally from the places which they are planning and to restructure them according to principles of logic, reason, and efficiency" (Relph 1976, 52). In contrast, insiders may view urban upgrading as benefitting only a select few and resulting in a "gilded ghetto which no longer exudes social and cultural diversity.... display[ing instead] an unintended elitism" (Ley 1989, 57). Urban development and historic conservation thus pave the way for conflicts between those in charge of urban changes and those who use the city and are directly affected by these changes.

The upheavals at Thompkins Square Park in New York City (Smith 1992a) and the longstanding Volleyball riots at People's Park in Berkeley (Mitchell 1995) are two documented cases of contested landscapes. As Mitchell explains, conflicts arise because of the collision of two irreconcilable visions on the purpose of public space. While the planners of People's Park envision public space as a "place of order, controlled recreation, and spectacle", the homeless and activists harbour visions of "public space as a place of unmediated political interaction" free from the coercion of powerful institutions (1995, 125). Rarely, therefore, does urban development occur in a context-free environment.

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Questions relating to 'whose heritage' and 'what heritage' to conserve (Tunbridge 1989; Hardy 1988) and 'who gains and who loses' from urban change (Jackson 1992, 58) exemplify the political and social tensions encapsulated in the process.

I shall adopt Relph's inside-outside concept to frame my discussion of Little India and illustrate place contestation to be a dynamic process. Urban historic conservation has introduced new land uses and visitors into Little India and the result is an interface between the new and the old, the tourist and resident, the Indian and non-Indian all of which are occurring simultaneously with varying outcomes. While I do not deny potential tourist-local conflicts, the discussion will demonstrate that the struggle over place is a far more complex phenomena than suggested by the 'commodification' or 'demonstration' lines of argument. Contested sites embrace many insider and outsider factions in addition to the oft-cited one of 'visitors' and 'locals'. At the same time, insider-outsider relationships need not always be conflictual and insider groups are not necessarily weak or passive in the face of external pressures. Local place identity need therefore not be decimated by the juggernaut of globalism.

2.3.3 Balancing the Economics and Politics of Heritage Tourism

Moving from the power relations between different groups in the city, this section extends the theme of 'power' by exploring the economics and politics of tourism. Specifically, I shall focus on the government's use of tourism imaging strategies in fulfilling economic and political goals.

The term 'tourism imaging strategy' refers to the slogans and catch-phrases that destination sites acquire to "embody the overall vision of the place" (Page 1995, 227). Marketing slogans are not just an exercise in word play, representing instead a "powerful tool to harness some of the city's actual, perceived or imagined attributes" (Page 1995, 229). As a form of 'brand name', a city's marketing slogan also serves as its development

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vision. As Hall demonstrates, urban imaging strategies embody many related components from brochure design and place marketing to cultural festivals and development projects (C.M.Hall 1995, chapter 6). The 'Great Britain Cities Marketing Group Project' established in 1984 with thirteen member cities offers a fine example. For each city, local distinctiveness was identified and accentuated through sloganeering, urban rejuvenation and themed attractions. The project also bestowed memorable titles to each place. Thus, Nottingham is represented as a 'City of Legend, Lace, Literature and Life', Bradford as 'A Surprising Place', and Stoke-on-Trent as 'The City that Fires the Imagination' (Page 1995, 227). My thesis will show that heritage themes have been co-opted into Singapore's tourism marketing strategy.

Three related arguments will be expanded upon. First, tourism imaging strategies are undertaken by the government to achieve the economic objective of attracting visitors and the political goals of community and nation-building. How the global/economic and local/political goals are balanced constitutes the focus of my study. Secondly, I shall also show that tourism images are highly dynamic. Promotional images of cities evolve *over* time because of the different economic and political circumstances which engendered them at different points *in* time. The dynamic tension between economics and politics as they impinge upon a destination area is therefore analysed. Finally, tourism imaging is also dynamic because its effects and influences vary across different groups of people. Tourism marketing affects locals and visitors differently and the 'politics of place representation' has unequal outcomes.

Tourism imaging strategies must project an attractive appearance to outsiders while fulfilling local goals of socio-political development. While the economic goals are usually obvious, the political objectives behind tourism are obscure but no less important (Richter 1989). In exploring the global-local dialectics, we need to accentuate the local dimension by explicitly teasing out the political uses of tourism. The concept of 'ideology' is helpful here. In a general sense, ideology refers to a system of beliefs about "social and political issues that have strong effects in structuring and influencing thoughts,

feelings and behaviour" (C.M.Hall 1995, 11). Ideologies exist to serve a goal, usually the pursuit of particular interests of the state or the ruling class (Johnston et al. 1991, 214).

Through tourism, certain ideologies that the state believes as essential to society may be pursued without politics appearing as the main objective. Heritage tourism may be promoted, for example, to legitimise state-endorsed versions of multiculturalism, urban renaissance or national identity (C.M.Hall 1995, 157 & 162). Shenhav-Keller (1993) offers an illuminating case of the *Maskit* arts industry in Israel. Far from being a value-free souvenir, the *Maskit* craft is shown to be a symbol of 'Israeliness' which glorifies the country's history, Judaism and the cultural richness of the Jewish artisan while deliberately de-emphasising the role of Arab and Palestinian artisans (Shenhav-Keller 1993). The power of ideology, therefore, lies in its attempt to use tourism as a means to 'naturalise' or legitimise state-sanctioned ideas without politics being the focus of attention. "Tourism colours our belief systems" by "socialising certain values in individuals and reinforcing dominant ideologies" (C.M.Hall 1995, 188 & 176). For this reason, tourism has been described as a "new form of politics" (Wood 1984, 371) and a "continuation of politics" (Edgell 1990 cited in C.M.Hall 1995, 2).

Tourism marketing and state ideology are closely intertwined because what is successfully portrayed to visitors stands a greater chance of being endorsed by the local community. For this reason, urban imaging techniques cannot be separated from the "interest, values and power of those who formulate them" (C.M.Hall 1995, 172). In his classic *The Image. A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1992 edition), Daniel Boorstin (1992, 185) defines an image as a "pseudo-ideal". By this he means that images are studiously crafted as 'goals' to be achieved rather than embodiments of what has already been attained. Likewise, a tourism image may serve as a goal to which the destination area and its people can aspire, rather than a statement about what the place has to offer to visitors. Advertising images create expectancies on the part of tourists which locals and local societies must in turn fulfil if they wish to continue to be a destination area (C.M.Hall 1995, 178). Simply put, tourism images are a "means" and as such represent

a "search for self-fulfilling prophecies" (Boorstin 1992, 198). The economics and politics of tourism are thus mutually reinforcing goals.

The power of ideology is best exemplified by the case of heritage tourism serving as the basis for the construction of national identities. In presenting visitors a unique image, the authorities also strive to create a sense of self or nationhood. Tourism images and local identities are interrelated according to Urry:

> How are identities constructed amidst the processes of globalisation and fragmentation, especially when part of the image of the place is increasingly produced for actual or potential visitors? Identity almost everywhere has to be produced partly out of the images constructed for tourists. (Urry 1995, 165)

An example of cultural tourism coming to the aid of nationalism is offered by the Ainu ethnic minority in Japan (Friedman 1990). By developing Ainu villages where cultural activities are enacted. the ethnic group not only defines its distinctiveness to Japanese visitors but revives local practices and re-defines its sense of identity. Rather than incur a "de-authenticating effect", the presentation of tourist villages serves as a "political instrument in the constitution of that selfhood" for it is by "defining themselves for the Japanese. their significant Other. that they establish their specificity" (Friedman 1990, 321). Hence. "[w]hat tourists are given to look at as the dominant images of the host culture is also what local people must look at and consider as images of who they are" (Simpson 1993, 171). In this way, tourism provides an important medium through which a sense of collective community emerges.

Tourism imaging strategies evolve over the course of time because of the dynamic interplay between global and local forces. In advancing the global-local nexus, we should therefore look not only at the way economic and political goals are being balanced but more critically at the "ebb and flow of power" between these contending goals over time (Nash 1977, 34). To put it in another way, tourism imaging strategies should be seen as dynamic rather than static, evolving from the power relations between economic and political influences. While the economic goal of attracting tourists may preside over local

objectives in one period, the opposite may be true at another time. In this way, tourism marketing is a dynamic process not only for the different goals it serves but because of its temporal variations.

The concept of 'multiple senses of place' may be introduced to capture the dynamic nature of the tourism imaging exercise. In Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960), he explains 'sense of place' as the identity and uniqueness of places evoked through their landmarks, structures and people. Since cities change all the time because of evolving population characteristics, economic activities and political ideologies, the 'image' of cities also change as a result. The urban sense of place is therefore not an objective or fixed entity but temporally variable. Applying this argument to tourism, we can say that urban marketing is dynamic because of the need to keep up with the latest trends in travel and monitor changing consumer profile and preferences. As Goodall (1990) stated, the idea of a 'marketing image' is tied to the idea of a 'targeted audience' and tourism images are continuously adapted to suit changing tastes and emerging market needs. Tourist destinations have multiple senses of place because marketing identities "evaporate or become outmoded or [are] replaced" over time (Urry 1995, 196).

Sense of place also varies between people. While planning authorities construct specific images for economic and political ends, tourists and locals are free to either endorse or reject these images. Hence, multiple senses of place are constructed by different groups of people within the same locale. The position taken in this thesis, therefore, is not the conventional view that tourist sites are always 'inauthentic' and possess 'no sense of place'. Rather, the position advocated is that we need to go "beyond a sense of place" by showing that cities have a multiplicity of meanings because of the multiplicity of people (Shurmer-Smith & Hallam 1993, section 1). According to Shurmer-Smith and Hallam, "[t]he way that people experience and conceive of places varies enormously through time, between groups and between individuals.... notwithstanding their concreteness, all places are imaginary, they exist in the mind as well as on the ground" (1993, 15).

At any one point in time, different images represented by different factions may be conflated, giving rise to multiple identities. Rob Shields (1992) offers the case of Niagara Falls as an attraction with numerous images promoted by different agencies concerned with their respective bottom line. Hence, Niagara Falls is simultaneously promoted as: a 'Shrine of Nature' by conservationists and the parks commission, an 'Industrial Powerhouse' by local industrialists, a 'Honeymoon Haven' by hoteliers and the tourism board, and an 'Attraction and Spectacle Image of the Carnival' by entrepreneurs and entertainment operators (Shields 1991, 146-7). This example supports the view that tourist cities are "multifunctional urban space[s]" (Ashworth & Tunbridge 1990, 90) which are "sold simultaneously as different products to different users" (Ashworth 1994, 23). The global-local nexus must interrogate not only the different images depicted by the tourism authority but also alternative or *"rival claims to define the meaning of places"* (Jess & Massey 1995, 134 original emphasis). Only then can we fully grasp the politics of tourism and its success/failure in disseminating ideology to the people.

To conclude, the study of urban marketing images provides a means for amplifying the global-local dialectics in tourism. Urban areas embody different marketing identities because they serve different purposes and audiences. Imaging strategies fulfil the economic goal of attracting visitors as well as the political objective of nation-building in addition to other social, environmental and cultural goals. The power relations between global/economic forces and local/political needs are not consistent over time and across groups of people. In exploring the tourism imaging process, we should therefore be sensitive to the "ebb and flow of power" between contending global/local forces and the different ways people respond to various marketing images.

2.3.4 Heritage Entrepreneurialism and Cultural Capital

In this final section. I want to focus on yet another 'balancing act' between the global and local. Apart from government authorities, entrepreneurs also try to cater to the needs of

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different market segments. The challenge is to ensure that the 'heritage product' is attractive to tourists while also meaningful to residents. The commodification argument in the tourism literature often portrays the global-local balance as tipped in favour of visitors. As Ashworth and Tunbridge commented, tourism is usually seen as leading to the "'bowdlerisation' of history" and the "reduction of the complexity and richness of the urban heritage to a few simple recognisable and marketable characteristics" (1990, 54). The result is a falsification of history and the creation of 'inauthentic' spaces (Shaw & Williams 1994, 169-71).

The commodification argument is narrowly conceived because it tends to view heritage products as geared only towards tourists and serving strictly economic goals. It fails to consider the dynamism of those in charge of heritage and their ability to negotiate the tourist-local divide. A more balanced view would consider the autonomy of local entrepreneurs in developing different types of heritage for different needs. It must also consider heritage as a product demanded not only by tourists but locals as well. In other words, heritage must be seen not just as a set of cultural practices frozen in place and time given over to the tourism industry, but an ever-changing process that is "variable, relative, contingent" responsive to the demands of host communities (Hitchcock *et al.* 1993, 8). As Hitchcock *et al.* argue "when culture is conceived of as a static entity, lacking the dynamics of change, the actions, motivations and values of local participants are ignored" (1993, 9).

What I propose to do in this thesis is to provide case studies of different entrepreneurs or private-sector agencies as they try to create 'dynamic' heritage products which cater to different people, places and time. We shall see that heritage is not a 'relic' but a self-generating 'resource' or a form of 'capital' that can be moulded and transformed for different purposes. This is not to say that the commodification process does not lend itself to abuse. Deculturation effects obviously occur. My discussion, however, stresses that heritage entrepreneuralism is not *only* directed at tourists and that the effects on local identity are not *always* harmful. The cultural impacts of commodification range from

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negative to positive depending on the entrepreneurs' ability to mediate the tourist-local rift.

The concept of 'cultural capital' is helpful for my purpose. While this concept has most often been used in the context of urban political economy (see Harvey 1987; 1989b; Kearns & Philo 1993; Kenny 1995; Zukin 1995), Britton (1991) has suggested that tourism geographers can profit by adopting it to study contemporary urban change. This is because tourism promotion, as with urban redevelopment, depends upon place-bound qualities and local identities to boost capital growth. Urban cultures, ethnic histories and heritage are appropriated by governments, civic leaders and entrepreneurs as a form of capital to compete with other places and a way to promote *their* city. In using cultural capital, "place becomes a marketable commodity capable of generating wealth and power" and heritage resources "are employed for capital gain either as commodities to be bought or sold or as an incentive for investment in the locality on the part of industrialists, tourists and shoppers" (Kenny 1995, 441).

In tourism, the use of cultural capital involves questions regarding 'whose heritage' is being promoted and 'who benefits' from heritage enhancement. While the best compromise is for both locals and tourists to benefit, this is not always achieved. If heritage is geared only towards outsiders, charges of 'inauthenticity' and 'artificiality' are bound to occur; if directed at locals alone, the place might be construed as 'user unfriendly' or 'antagonistic'.

In her book *The Cultures of Cities*, Zukin (1995, chapter 3) provides a vivid example of the struggle to create a common ground in the global-local divide. Using a case study of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA), she shows that the development of a modern art museum in the town of North Adams was originally conceived as a way to boost arts-based tourism and promote folk traditions and craft industries. Over time, however, the project began to shed its 'local identity'. In the hope of being integrated into the "global art worlds", it began to present itself as a "project of

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international significance connected with institutions around the world and largely independent of its local context" (Zukin 1995, 92 original emphasis). Conceptual avant-garde art thus began to replace local folk art. As a branch of Manhattan's Guggenheim Museum's international network, the MASS MoCA was designated as "an outpost of global culture rather than a local social institution" (Zukin 1995, 103). In the mid-1990s, economic difficulties forced the museum to restructure once again this time with a focus on niche groups like seasonal visitors, year-round residents as well as local artists and craftspeople. Negotiating the global-local divide is therefore an inevitable challenge if a tourist attraction is to cater to as wide a clientele as possible.

Applying the cultural capital concept to tourism entrepreneurs, my intention is to examine the ways 'local heritage' has been appropriated for economic goals in Singapore. I shall explore the case of boutique hotels, the reconstruction of street activities and the adaptive re-use of the Little India Arcade. In each case, the private sector plays a key role in developing and marketing local heritage for public consumption. As we shall see, not all the projects are equally successful in mediating tourist-local demands and in creating a product which is attractive and meaningful at the same time.

2.4 The Global-Local Nexus and A Critical Geography of Tourism: An Agenda

Having explored possible conceptual avenues for this research, two frameworks are created. First, an organisational framework for my research (Figure 2.1) and a conceptual model which dramatises the global-local nexus in tourism geography (Figure 2.2). The organisational framework pulls together the various concepts introduced above along with the aims of this thesis and its methodological procedures. Four bodies of enquiry are offered exploring government policies, landscape contestation, imaging strategies and heritage entrepreneurialism. In interrogating these, the thesis will also touch upon many economic, cultural and political issues. The emplacement of heritage tourism within this wider framework of issues provides one opportunity for a 'critical tourism geography' to

Global Processes and Local Effects: a study of Government Policy

* concept: global division of tourism

* aim: to study the emergence of heritage tourism

* procedure: to look at how external economic processes and local considerations of site are mediated through state policies

Insider-Outsider Relationship in Urban Areas: a look at Landscape Contestation

* concept: Relph's Insideness-Outsideness framework

* aim: to examine human interactions in an urban landscape

* procedure: identity multiple interest groups and their conflictual and/or complimentary relationship with each other

Global-Local Nexus and Heritage Tourism

Economic Goals and Political Agenda in Tourism: exploring Tourism Imaging Strategies

* concept: ideology, multiple sense of place

* aim: to chart and explain the changing political and economic goals of tourism

* procedure: focus on tourism imaging strategies and its changing form over time and fluctuating effects for people

Tourist Needs and Local Benefits: investigating Heritage Entrepreneuralism

* concept: cultural capital, commodification

* aim: to offer case studies of heritage projects that cater to the needs of locals and tourists

* procedure: analyse heritage entrepreneurs and their ability to cater to different market groups

Figure 2.1 Organisational framework: concepts, aims and methodological procedures
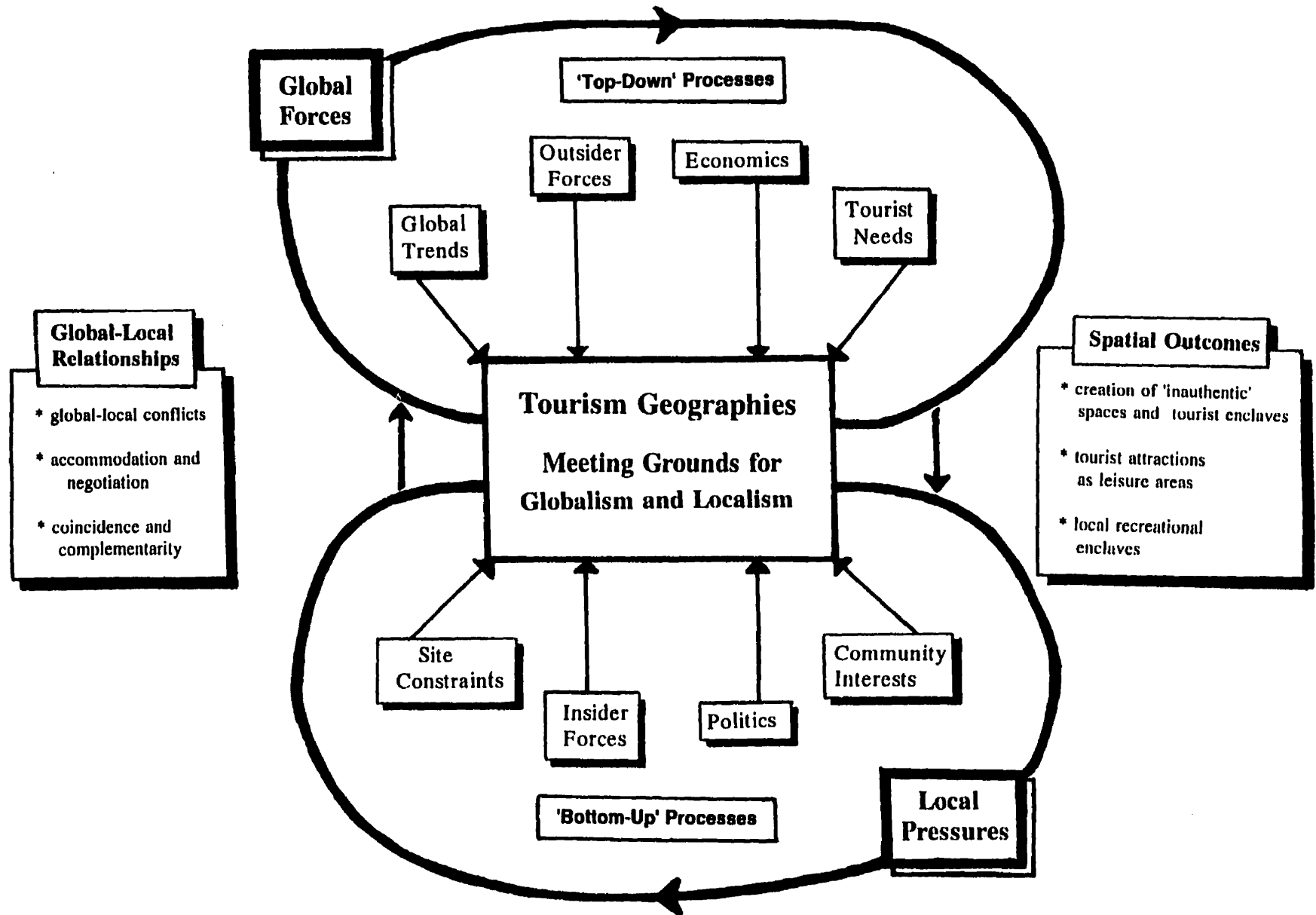
Figure 2.2 Conceptual model: tourism geographies and the global-local nexus

The diagram contains the following labelled elements:

- **Global Forces**
- 'Top-Down' Processes
- Outsider Forces
- Economics
- Global Trends
- Tourist Needs

Global-Local Relationships
* global-local conflicts
* accommodation and negotiation
* coincidence and complementarity

Tourism Geographies
Meeting Grounds for Globalism and Localism

Spatial Outcomes
* creation of 'inauthentic' spaces and tourist enclaves
* tourist attractions as leisure areas
* local recreational enclaves

- Site Constraints
- Insider Forces
- Politics
- Community Interests
- 'Bottom-Up' Processes
- **Local Pressures**

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develop.

Geographers have increasingly called for a more critical approach to tourism both as a means to centralise the tourism discipline within geography and rejuvenate it by incorporating concepts which have sparked stimulating debate elsewhere (see Britton 1991; Shaw & Williams 1994). The challenge of a critical geography of tourism may be taken up in different ways. A good way to begin is to consider tourist destination areas as meeting grounds whereupon 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' processes intersect. The conceptual model for my thesis acknowledges this fact by showing that the geographies of tourism are shaped by various needs, trends and forces emanating from the global and local scales (Figure 2.2).

According to Britton (1991), urban tourism research demands not only a 'local' understanding of cities but also engagement with 'global' economic issues such as the internationalisation of capital, the rise of the service sector and urban economic restructuring (Britton 1991, 475). Similarly, the global-local nexus proposed in this research looks at the way broader processes interact with local forces and the resultant spatial outcome in Singapore. The geographic tourism product is therefore moulded by countervailing pressures -- global trends and site constraints, insider/outsider forces, economic and political agencies, as well as the needs and interests of tourists and residents.

The global-local dialectic takes numerous forms and spatial outcomes. According to Massey and Jess (1995b 226), the global and local constitute each other and this could take the form of outright conflicts; a process of accommodation and negotiation; or even complementary and mutually co-operative relationships. The study of tourist landscapes affords us a glimpse at the global-local interaction and its manifestations over space. Various outcomes emerge. Where global pressures preside and when the needs of tourists are prioritised over those of residents, the result is 'inauthentic' tourist spaces (see Murphy 1985, chapter 8). On the other hand, where the needs of the community override those

of visitors, local recreational enclaves develop. Depending on the way the global-local divide is balanced, therefore, the geographies of tourism take different shape, form and function.

Traditionally, geographers have tended to conflate tourism analyses with economic geography (see Wolfe 1964). The result of this has been the emphasis on economic issues in tourism at the expense of non-economic social perspectives. More recently, Shaw and Williams (1994, 16) have encouraged geographers to explore the way tourism shapes and is in turn shaped by society, popular culture, politics, technology and ecological concerns. Similarly, Squire (1994, 5-9) identifies heritage tourism research as providing associative links to social issues like the 'politics of conservation' and the process of 'place construction'. Indeed, tourism development does not occur in a vacuum and it is influenced by economic and non-economic factors. My study will feature these non-economic dimensions and the different ways tourism development is intertwined with cultural-politics and community concerns in Singapore.

Finally, tourism geography is criticised because of its disengagement from other fields within the discipline. Tourism geographers have a reputation for dealing only with empirical and theoretical issues that concern them and nobody else. Hughes asserted that tourism geography has a "pre-social status" (cited in Squire 1994, 4) while Britton (1991, 475) laments its "narrow scope and shallow theoretical base." While much has been written about globalisation and local responses (see the edited works of Allen & Massey 1995; Allen & Hamnett 1995; Massey & Jess 1995a), for example, tourism geographers seldom contribute to this debate. To address this shortcoming, my research will test the broad based applicability of global-local concepts in tourism analysis while at the same time adding a new dimension to the tourism literature. The conceptual model proposed here offers a starting point to view the geographies of tourism as outcomes of globalism and localism. It also attempts to pull together a number of economic and non-economic issues for discussion.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the locality concept and debates on globalism-localism were introduced to set the theoretical context of my work. This is followed by isolating specific concepts relevant to my study and weaving them into a discussion on the global-local nexus in heritage tourism. An organisational framework and conceptual model were then constructed and a research agenda proposed. Both the research framework and model provide me with what Harvey (1989a, 2) has described in the beginning of this chapter as a "cognitive map for finding our way in a complex and changeable environment." The conceptual model in particular draws our attention to the dynamics of the global-local interaction. Different types of global/local forces were identified, various relationships delineated and diverse spatial outcomes noted. The geographic landscapes of tourism are thus the meeting grounds for and the products of globalism and localism. In the next chapter, I shall proceed to expand on one component of the research framework -- methodological procedures. In particular, I shall take up the challenge of devising methodologies which are sensitive in exploring the global-local dialectics and tourism development in Singapore.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Three explains the methodological procedures and the practicalities of conducting fieldwork. The discussion begins with an introduction to realist methods that have been applied in locality research and writings on globalism/localism (section 3.2). This is followed by a brief overview of data sources and the ways this research has been informed by realist principles (Section 3.3). Sections 3.4 to 3.6 focus specifically on my fieldwork in which I shall discuss my information requirements, my procedure in data gathering and the problems encountered along the way.

3.2 Realist Principles and Methods

In the social sciences in the mid-1970s, realism emerged as an opposition to the ruling philosophy of positivism. Unlike positivism which seeks rules and regularities in social phenomena, realism posits that all phenomena are specific to the place and time in which they occur, and that general laws are incapable of explaining and predicting them. As Chouinard *et al.* (cited in Johnston 1991, 224) stated, "Because social scientists (by definition) cannot guarantee an invariant relation between specific causal mechanisms, processes and empirical events, the 'laws' posited by theory must be treated as *tendencies* and not as empirical regularities" (original emphasis).

This revolt against law-making also occurred in human geography. In the 1980s, realism arose as a dual-critique of positivist methods espoused by spatial scientists and idealist methods advocated by humanist geographers. This dual critique lies at the heart

of the locality concept. On the one hand, realism debunks the notion that human activities may be explained by universal laws and that social behaviour operates like clockwork. On the other hand, realism also resists the humanist notion that people have a free will to do anything they wish unconstrained by society, economics or history. Realism thus presents itself as a middle-path checking the excesses of humanistic geography *and* the reductionist tendencies of positivism. The works of Andrew Sayer (1984 (1992 edition); 1985a, b, c) are credited as translating realist methodologies and practices to the discipline.

A number of realist principles have been employed by locality writers. A fundamental principle is the one on 'open systems' as opposed to 'closed systems' preferred by positivist geographers. While the goal of realism, like positivism, seeks to explain empirical events by looking at the causes of these events ("causal mechanisms" or "processes"), it does not lead to law making generalisations as the latter does. According to Sayer (1992, 122), the making of laws presuppose two conditions. Firstly, mechanisms are assumed to be invariant or unchanging and secondly, the relationship between these mechanisms and the conditions in which they occur are constant. In the physical and natural sciences, it is possible to create a closed system (such as in a laboratory) in which the 'environment' is controlled and where constant conditions give rise to replicable outcomes and hence law making. In the social sciences, however, closed system analyses run the risk of denying human volition and site differences. In espousing realist principles, therefore, the locality concept rejects the goal of law making because in doing so, "something [is] sacrificed - the importance of specificity, the ability to explain, and recognize the significance of, the unique outcome" (Massey 1984b, 9).

In the 'real' world, human societies function more like open systems in which conditions and mechanisms are not easily controlled and empirical events or human behaviour are not always replicable over space and time. Instead, 'one of a kind' outcomes are attained because of the time-space specificity of causal mechanisms. Social phenomena are spatially and temporally constituted, and different 'bottom up' factors give

rise to diverse outcomes. In the words of Cloke *et al.* (1991, 148-9):

> Here is a complex social system in which the activation of particular mechanisms produced effects that may be unique to a particular time and space. With different contingent conditions, the same mechanism may invoke different events, and by the same token the same kind of event may have different causes.

Such a view strongly accords with the writings on localities and globalism-localism which hold dear the tenets of local contingency and place uniqueness.

The study of open systems requires sensitivity to the many complex facets that make up society. This brings us to a second realist principle which distinguishes between 'abstract theory' and 'concrete research'. According to Sayer, abstract theories provide a way for the researcher to explain the complexity of a phenomenon under study. In these explanations, the phenomenon may be abstracted or simplified into a theoretical statement which provides a clear albeit one-sided picture of the phenomenon. Sayer (1992, 87) explains the relationship between abstraction and concreteness in the following way:

> ...an abstract concept, or an abstraction, isolates in thought a one-sided or partial aspect of an object. What we abstract from are the many other aspects which together constitute concrete objects such as people, economics, nations, institutions, activities and so on. In this sense an abstract concept can be precise rather than vague....And the things to which these abstractions refer need be no less real than those referred to by more concrete concepts.

Let me take an example from tourism. In making a statement on its economic effects, we are essentially viewing tourism as an economic activity abstracting away its political, social and cultural dimensions. While abstraction facilitates our understanding of the economic impacts, the analysis is necessarily incomplete and fails to grasp the concreteness of the tourism phenomena. Nevertheless, we make abstractions because they provide a first step in appreciating the complexity of tourism.

Abstract theories and concrete research reinforce each other because abstractions provide the starting point to understand a concrete object. According to Sayer, concrete

objects "are usually constituted by a combination of diverse elements or forces" each of which may be "isolated in thought by means of an abstraction, as a first step towards conceptualizing their combined effect" (1992, 87). In undertaking research, the realist is compelled to integrate abstract theories and concrete study in a mutually reinforcing manner:

> the understanding of concrete events or objects involves a double movement: concrete -> abstract, abstract -> concrete. At the outset our concepts of concrete objects are likely to be superficial or chaotic. In order to understand their diverse determinations we must first abstract them systematically. When each of the abstracted aspects has been examined it is possible to combine the abstractions so as to form concepts which grasp the concreteness of their objects (Sayer 1992, 87).

In locality writings, this "double movement" is practised when the global and local scales are interrogated simultaneously. Abstract research on globalisation is embellished with concrete research on local/empirical issues and vice versa. As Massey noted, "Pointing to general processes does not adequately explain what is happening at particular moments or in particular places. Yet any explanation must include such general processes. The question is how" (Massey 1984b, 9). A realist position involves dual insight into global events and local factors so as to appreciate evidences of local contingency while also recognising commonalities between places. Time-space specificity is thus tempered with a global sensibility.

The third and final realist principle I wish to highlight centres on methodology. To conduct theoretically informed concrete research, we need a combination of methodologies that will address the complexities of social phenomena. Realist methodology advocates the use of extensive and intensive research designs (Sayer 1992, 241-51). While extensive research uncovers general patterns in a social phenomena, intensive research focuses on causal mechanisms and how particular processes work. The methods employed by extensive research include formal questionnaires, standardised interviews, statistical analysis and a large sample base. In intensive research, interactive interviews and qualitative assessments are employed for a specific case study or for a

small number of cases. Both forms of research complement each other. While extensive research seeks to generate data for exploratory and comparative purposes, intensive research is more sensitive to detail and is employed in explanatory analysis.

A good example of realist methodology is offered by Sarre's (1987) work on ethnic housing in Bedford, England. Combining a questionnaire survey of minority households with a semi-structured interview with housing institutions, supplemented by census records and other studies of the city, different "layers of interpretation" were obtained and collated (Sarre 1987, 8). This methodology provided insight into a complex topic -- on "whether ethnic segregation should be regarded as a result of choice of ethnic minorities or constraint by the majority society" -- one that would not be possible to interrogate with either positivist or humanist method alone (Sarre 1987, 8). While quantitative methods provide an overall picture of the housing market, qualitative research gives a more nuanced perspective on the cultural meanings of different ethnic groups towards housing. As Sarre and Sayer both point out, the use of intensive and extensive research is not confined to realists. However, this blend of positivist and humanist methods provides a balanced research strategy which realism advocates and has come to be associated with.

3.3 Overview of Methodology

In undertaking a global-local approach in my research, this study faces a number of challenges. For each challenge, realist principles were contemplated and used where applicable. Firstly, the thesis relies on a wide number of sources of information at different levels. Data had to be obtained on government policies in tourism and marketing, views of tourists and locals on various aspects of heritage, and the role of entrepreneurs. Figure 3.1 classifies the data sources as either qualitative or quantitative in nature. Because of the diversity of these sources, a mix of extensive and intensive research techniques was deemed necessary. For example, while interactive interviews

Qualitative Data Sources

Government Documents

* STPB Annual Reports,
  Tourist Guidebooks,
  Masterplans and policies,
  advertisements

* URA Annual Reports,
  policies

* ministerial speeches

* government newsletters

Little India Questionnaire Survey

* 79 tourists,
  76 residents,
  71 local visitors
  41 merchants

Informant Interviews

* officials from the Singapore
  Tourist Promotion Board

* boutique hotel owners

* heritage theme park
  operators

* tour organisers

* Little India Arcade & Bugis
  Street Owners/Developers

Changi Airport Questionnaire Survey

* 240 Western tourists,
  274 Asian tourists,
  344 Singaporeans

Government Documents and Statistics

* tourism statistics provided
  by STPB

* economic statistics provided
  by Department of Statistics

Secondary Data Sources

* unpublished research
  dissertations

* published research

* newspaper accounts

* letters to the press

Quantitative Data Sources

Figure 3.1 Overview of data sources

were conducted with a small number of entrepreneurs and policy makers, structured questionnaires were used with a much larger sample of tourists and locals. I shall discuss each methodology in turn in the subsequent sections.

A second challenge is the high degree of abstraction required in this work. As mentioned in Chapter One, the use of the term 'heritage tourism' in Singapore is in itself an abstraction. Heritage tourism does not exist as a discrete subsystem in the tourism industry and visitors do not come to the country specifically for cultural reasons. In using this term, therefore, my study attempts to abstract various elements from the larger tourism industry -- elements relating to culture, ethnicity and history -- and study them in detail. A second form of abstraction pertains to the various components of heritage tourism I have chosen to highlight. The thesis focuses on four issues: tourism policies, the commodification of heritage by entrepreneurs, urban conservation and the politicisation of marketing images. These four dimensions once again represent abstracted components in the heritage industry and they will be subjected to concrete research. In the concluding chapter of my thesis, I shall synthesise these abstractions in the hope of providing a more concrete understanding of heritage tourism in Singapore.

Finally the theme of local uniqueness also draws credence from realist philosophy. As we have noted, social systems are open to all kinds of influences and realism supports the notion of local uniqueness without sacrificing the role of general processes in the development of places (Cochrane 1987, 354). Hence, even though heritage tourism has arisen in many cities (Ashworth & Tunbridge 1989), different forms and functions nonetheless prevail because each locality is unique to begin with. As Massey has argued,

> 'General process' never work themselves out in pure form. There are always specific circumstances, a particular history, a particular place or location. What is at issue - and to put it in geographical terms - is the articulation of the general with the local (the particular) to produce qualitatively different outcomes in different localities. (Massey 1984b, 9)

The realist principles of 'specificity' and 'contingency' thus provide a platform to argue

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my case of local uniqueness in the global village.

My fieldwork in Singapore spanned two periods of time: August-December 1993 and June-September 1995. In the first phase, I familiarised myself with government tourism documents and began the first leg of my interviews with entrepreneurs. During the second fieldwork, I undertook two separate questionnaire surveys and continued with interviews of heritage entrepreneurs and some government officials. In the next sections, I shall detail the methodological procedures undertaken in fieldwork. Specifically, I will address the strategies adopted to interrogate the tourist-local dialectic and the difficulties encountered in the process.

3.4 Government Documents

Various types of government documents were consulted to fulfil different information requirements. They include policy statements and annual reports of relevant statutory boards, ministerial speeches and various types of government publications (Figure 3.1). Three issues were clarified: tourism policies, marketing and promotional images, and urban conservation.

To better understand the government's policies on tourism, the STPB's annual reports and its various masterplans were consulted. My goal was to chart the evolution of the industry emphasising heritage development and the benefits intended for visitors and locals. A large part of my focus centred on the 1983 tourism crisis and various government reports published regarding its possible causes. This theme was pursued because urban historic conservation was vociferously endorsed by the government *after* the fall in tourist numbers prompting some commentators to argue that heritage development is geared towards visitors alone.

The documents that proved most helpful in providing insight on tourism marketing

included the STPB's annual reports, its monthly publication *Singapore Travel News*, tourist guidebooks as well as newspaper and magazine accounts. My objective was to identify various promotional images used to market Singapore and to account for the changes over time. Since one aim of the thesis was to interrogate the politics and economics of marketing, knowledge of Singapore's political and economic circumstances at different points in time was necessary. This was accomplished by reading up on the history of the country particularly its early days of independence.

The third and final area which required documentation pertained to urban conservation with special reference to Little India. Here, I had to look to the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) for its annual reports, conservation masterplans and manuals, newsletters and numerous magazine and newspaper articles. The goal was to obtain some background on the reasons why urban conservation was undertaken, its target audience and the division of labour between the URA and STPB. The charge that conservation is an economic tool aimed at promoting tourism was also investigated.

Obtaining government documents did not pose any problem as they were either available in the National University of Singapore Central Library or at the statutory boards themselves. Tempting as it was to look only to the government for its 'version' on tourism and urban issues, however, I realised this view represented only an official perspective and was therefore likely to be biased. What was also required was an 'on the ground' assessment of the URA and STPB policies based on the layperson's views. Secondary data drawn from empirical studies on public perception thus proved useful. These works range from specific case studies on Clarke Quay Festival Market (Chen 1995) or the Civic and Cultural District (Teo & Huang 1995), for example, to broad based research on state policies (Kong & Yeoh 1994). By using these data sources, the tourist-local-state nexus was more fruitfully interrogated.

Another challenge in using state documents lay in 'reading off' or interpreting the government's political goal. I began with the premise so well captured by Relph in his

description of place images as "not just selective abstractions of an objective reality" but "intentional interpretations of what is or what is believed to be" (1976, 56). With this in mind, I looked through the *Singapore Travel News*, a trade magazine/publicity newsletter, the STPB's promotional posters, annual reports and guidebooks. At the same time, I kept an eye open for other strategies of nation-building implemented by the government after independence in the 1960s.

The image of multiculturalism which featured strongly in tourism marketing provided a starting point to investigate the politics of tourism. Much help was gained by referring to a wealth of tourism writings which sought to explain ideological meanings through socially constructed artifacts. For example, writers focused on historic farmhouses in Japan (Ehrentraut 1993), archaeological finds (Evans-Pritchard 1993) and traditional dances (Simpson 1993) as 'texts' wherein meanings encoded by the producer/state may be read. These works combined an in-depth knowledge of government ideology with qualitative analysis, a method which I have adopted for my fieldwork too.

The use of government documents thus served two goals. On the one hand, they provided the background information required to chart the evolution in tourism policies and marketing strategies. On the other hand, they also supplied the raw material from which I was able to interpret the political goals served by tourism. In the latter, the use of secondary data and broader knowledge on politics and nation-building were also essential.

3.5 Informant Interviews

To corroborate the findings obtained from government documents, interviews were conducted. Two individuals from the STPB were involved, one from the 'Tourism Culture' and the other from the 'Strategic Marketing' departments. Open-ended questions were asked in an attempt to keep the interviews spontaneous and informal. The agent

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working in the marketing department also showed me a portfolio of advertising campaigns undertaken by the STPB over the years. This proved helpful as some of the marketing posters were new to me.

Through the interviews, I hoped to learn more about the socio-political issues relating to tourism. Specifically I was concerned about the benefits Singaporeans derive from conservation projects and the political goals behind tourism promotion. Rather than ask pointed questions, however, I allowed the interviewees to speak very generally about the STPB's positions on multiculturalism, heritage and marketing. In enquiring about the politics of place representation, innocuously phrased questions were asked. One went like this: "Singapore has been portrayed an a multicultural 'Instant Asia'. Do you agree with this view or would you say this is only a marketing slogan?". I also asked questions dealing with specific 'historic' sites such as Little India and Bugis Street to flesh out my fieldwork findings. A list of questions asked is presented in Appendix 1.

The interviews were also conducted with the aim of obtaining 'fresh' data on heritage entrepreneurs. Here, I turned my attention to tourism businesses. As the sample size was small, in-depth interviews were conducted. Three groups were initially considered: heritage theme park operators, tour organisers and boutique hoteliers. My goal here was to look at how heritage businesses have attempted to cater to tourists and locals. In my first fieldwork session, I sent out cover letters to four theme park operators, four tour organisers and three hoteliers. I conducted preliminary interviews with all the tour organisers, two hoteliers and a theme park manager. In studying their responses, it was decided that boutique hotels provided the broadest scope for analysis.

Boutique hotels are small sized luxury establishments. Most of the hotels were established after 1990, have less than 100 rooms, with costs ranging from mid-level to amongst the most expensive in the city (see Table 4.3). In Singapore, boutique hotels are also synonymous with urban conservation since all the hotels are preserved historic buildings and are located in historic sites. I chose this group over the other two for

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various reasons. The first was because boutique hotels represent a growing trend not only in Singapore but around the world (Brooke 1995). Furthermore, the boutique hotel trend epitomises the urban gentrification process in Singapore. In Chinatown alone, four new hotels were set up in the 1990s as part of its redevelopment process (Figure 4.2). The contentious issues of tourist infiltration and upmarket gentrification provided much scope for investigating possible local-visitor conflicts. By contrast, studying theme parks and tour operators will offer less potential. Through the preliminary interviews, I learnt that the heritage theme parks were essentially 'family entertainment centres' rather than historic attractions while heritage tour operators were mainly concerned with organising package tours for visitors alone.

There were a total of seven boutique hotels in Singapore in 1995. I interviewed four of them while two declined the interview. Each interview lasted thirty minutes to an hour covering numerous topics such as guest profiles, urban conservation, government policies and tourism trends (see Appendix 1). I also asked the interviewees what they felt about the urban gentrification process in general. In most cases, I spoke to the manager/owner of the hotel. The information I obtained was supplemented by newspaper accounts.

The third set of qualitative interviews I conducted pertained to Little India. To supplement the data derived from my questionnaire survey, I wanted a 'behind the scenes' look at the people in charge of the area. I focused my attention on the Little India Arcade (LIA), an adaptive re-use/conservation project comprising three blocks of 1913 shophouses located in the heart of the historic district (see Figure 5.2). In 1995, the LIA reopened as an Indian-themed shopping and food centre under the management of Raffles International Pte. Ltd. and co-owned by the Hindu Endowments Board and Raffles International. I spoke to three representatives: the chairperson and the publicity officer of the Hindu Endowments Board, and the marketing manager at Raffles International. In all cases, I asked the interviewees what their vision for LIA was, how they felt about its radical land use change and whether they thought the LIA has become, in the words of some respondents, a "tourist attraction with nothing for the locals" (see Appendix 1).

I conducted the interviews after completing my questionnaire survey and this provided me ample opportunity to corroborate my findings.

The final set of interviews was conducted with the operations manager of Bugis Street Management. Bugis Street offered an interesting contrast to boutique hotels and the Little India Arcade. This is because while the other two represented adaptive re-use schemes, Bugis Street was constructed anew as a 'historic' attraction. The original Bugis Street was demolished in 1985 and following complaints by many in the tourism industry, it was recreated in 1989. More than any other attraction, Bugis Street epitomised the commodification of history and the creation of an 'inauthentic' landscape. I was therefore most interested in talking to the manager about Bugis Street's re-emergence and its image as a 'tourist trap'.

In conducting the various interviews, I faced one difficulty and that was getting people to talk about things they have seldom thought about let alone articulated. My research interests dealing with the politics of place representation and tourist-local interaction are certainly not issues that were immediately grasped. Although it helped by phrasing my questions in a comprehensible and non-pointed manner, it posed a problem when interviewees misinterpreted my intent. Realising that practice makes perfect, my interviews were staggered so that with the experience and information gained from earlier rounds, new questions could be posed in the next. Hence in speaking with boutique hoteliers, for example, I gathered the fears and concerns which my first interviewee expressed and attempted to work them into my conversations with the others. Sayer describes this "learning-by-doing" strategy as a form of intensive research in which "learning about one object or from one contact leads to others with whom they are linked, so that we build up a picture of the structures and causal groups of which they are a part" (1992, 244). I found this method helpful in gaining my composure and putting questions across to interviewees in a non-confrontational yet decisive manner.

To sum up, interviews were conducted with four groups of people: STPB

representatives, boutique hoteliers, and the managers and owners of the Little India Arcade and Bugis Street. The objectives were two fold. With the STPB and Little India officials, the aim was to substantiate my understanding of tourism policies and flesh out my survey findings. With boutique hotels and Bugis Street, I was breaking new ground by exploring uncharted areas of research. As such, my questions for the latter groups were mainly exploratory. All the interviews were relatively unstructured in that while I had particular questions in mind, the interviewees were allowed to speak freely. This was necessary in winning their trust particularly with those entrepreneurs who were initially suspicious of my intent. I was also extra careful not to insist on confidential or sensitive information. For example, some hoteliers were reluctant to divulge their expenditures on conservation works while others were dismissive of suggestions of tourist-local clashes. In such cases, I relied on secondary data and newspaper accounts for additional information. Appendix 1 provides a list of the questions I asked the informants.

3.6 Questionnaire Surveys

While interviews provided detailed qualitative insights, questionnaire surveys generated useful quantitative data upon which to ground my discussion of tourist-local interaction. Two separate surveys were undertaken. The 'Little India Survey' was concerned principally with uncovering the views of different people making use of the area while the 'Changi Airport Survey' provided data on general perception and attitudes towards tourism.

One of the aims of the thesis was to explore the urban tourist landscape as a contested site. I chose the Little India Historic District as my case study because it is a multifunctional area catering to different people. Not only is it a social and cultural site for the Indian community, it is also a historic district and a popular heritage attraction. In 1989, the URA gazetted Little India as a conservation district and in 1993, it was ranked the fifth most popular attraction visited by 19.5 per cent of tourists (STPB 1994b,

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I chose Little India over the other heritage districts of Chinatown, Arab Street and the Civic and Cultural District for various reasons. The Chinatown and Civic District, for example, have already been studied by others. The focus of these earlier works was on urban conservation as well as heritage tourism (for example, Tieh 1989; Teo & Huang 1995). By comparison, existing works on Little India were mainly concerned with redevelopment issues or the Indian community (Boey 1989; Powell & Tracy 1989; Siddique & Shotam 1990). Nothing has so far been written about tourism. Relatively little has also been written on Arab Street (cf. Yeoh & Huang 1996). Studying Arab Street was therefore a possibility until I visited the site during my second fieldtrip to discover that urban restoration was underway, and the place was devoid of visitors.

Since one of my research goals was to explore landscape conflicts between people, different groups were surveyed. The four chosen groups reflected differing levels of 'insideness' and 'outsideness' within Little India and they included tourists, local visitors, local residents and merchants working there. A questionnaire was constructed for the first three groups to elicit information on user patterns and perceptions (see Appendix 2). As for the merchants, I was also concerned with clientele profile and their reasons for establishing business in the area (Appendix 3). Both closed and open-ended questions were posed.

A pilot survey was conducted with a number of respondents. While the questionnaire for the merchants was altered slightly, I had to rethink my entire strategy for getting the other respondents. While I had initially hoped to chat with each tourist or visitor in Little India for a few minutes, practically nobody had the time or interest to participate. When I gave out self-administered questionnaires with postage-paid envelopes instead, the response improved dramatically. Hence, for both tourists and Singaporean visitors to Little India, questionnaires were given to pedestrians along Serangoon Road and within the Little India Arcade. Hoping for a response rate of between 30-40 per cent, I gave

over 200 questionnaires to each group and I received 79 responses from tourists and 71 from locals. A bio-data breakdown of the tourist and local sample is provided in Appendix 4.

A different strategy was adopted for the residents and merchants. Unlike tourists and visitors, these people were 'bound' to the area either as a place of residence or a place of work or both. Instead of providing self-administered questionnaires, I undertook face to face interviews. The merchants I targeted were those working in Little India's "core" -- an area designated by the URA as the main commercial and conservation site. I surveyed 41 merchants in all. As for the residents, I conducted a door to door survey of people living in the Housing Development Board flats in Kerbau Road (1 block) and Zhu Jiao Centre (3 blocks). A total of 76 respondents were obtained (see Appendix 4 for a bio-data breakdown). A map of Little India is provided in Figure 5.2. In a few cases, the residents I surveyed were also merchants. However, since they were not working in Little India's core area, they were not classified as such. The 'residents' and 'merchants' thus represented mutually exclusive groups in my respondent samples.

Only a few problems were encountered chief of which was suspicion on the part of respondents. Among the merchants and residents I spoke to, there was often an initial wariness that I might be working for the URA. This either elicited a reluctance to be interviewed or an opposite reaction -- a barrage of pleas and requests for structural improvements in the area. This was a serious problem since my survey was concerned with public perception of the government's conservation efforts. It was important that I was not viewed as a government official as this would influence the views and opinions of my interviewees. I therefore had to reassure the respondents and win their trust by introducing myself as a foreign student, and explaining at length my project and research interests.

I discovered that the best way to elicit reliable information from my respondents was to assume an 'insider' identity. By showing concern for those with problems or by

listening patiently to the woes and complaints of respondents often won me their confidence. Being able to speak a second language (Mandarin in the case with some merchants and residents) and being a Singaporean further affirmed my insider status. In this way, I was able to converse with my respondents rest assured that I was receiving their genuine opinion and feedback.

On the opposite side of the coin, however, being Chinese and not being able to speak Tamil or any other Indian dialect was a drawback. This is particularly the case with the Indian merchants I spoke with who might consider me an 'outsider', and who would withhold or dilute their views pertaining to race issues. This was something I had little or no control over and the only precaution I could take was to be extra careful in asking sensitive questions and extra impartial in receiving contentious answers. To achieve an even representation of respondents, the Little India survey was spread over a period of two months (July and August 1995), August being an appropriate time as this is the month Singapore traditionally receives the most visitors. Personal interviews were conducted in both English and Mandarin.

A larger sampling frame was required in the second questionnaire survey which was conducted in the departure hall of Singapore Changi Airport. Here, the aim was to elicit general data on visitors' and Singaporeans' attitudes towards marketing slogans and tourist attractions. The questionnaire featured only close-ended questions and respondents were asked to record their views along a five-point ranking system (see Appendix 5). The airport was considered an ideal interview site because there were many tourists and Singaporeans mingling about. The majority of visitors enter or leave Singapore through Changi and in 1994, 76.3 per cent of visitors arrived by air (STPB 1994a, 3). The airport was also ideal because departing tourists had both the time and experience necessary to answer the questionnaire.

While the main objective was to explore convergence/divergence in tourist and local opinions, I also realised that different tourist segments have different needs and interests.

According to Lew (1987), Western and Asian visitors have different perceptions of Singapore and it is the Westerners who are most attracted by local heritage. With this in mind, I divided my tourist sample into two subgroups surveying a total of 240 Western visitors and 274 Asian tourists. In addition, 344 Singaporeans were also sampled. The tourist questionnaire was also translated into Japanese and Mandarin and a assistant proficient in Bahasa Malay was recruited to help with the interviews. I made a total of eight visits to the Airport in the months of July and August 1995.

Although the respondents at the airport were randomly chosen, overall I aimed for a sample comprising tourists from diverse countries and Singaporeans of different ethnic groups. The background characteristics of the sample groups are provided in Appendix 6. Even though the sample was not supposed to be representative of the larger population, I relied on the 1994 figures on tourist and local composition as a guide for my sampling frame. While the 'country of origin' and 'gender' of the tourist sample approximated the 1994 figures, the 'ethnicity' and 'gender' of the Singaporean sample was less reflective (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). This was hampered by the fact that local male respondents were far less willing to be surveyed than females, and Chinese respondents were more reticent than the other ethnic groups. Furthermore, minority groups like the Indians and 'others' were also sampled disproportionately higher in order to yield a more reliable data set.

3.7 Conclusion

Tourism development in Singapore is shaped by many factors such as economic and political conditions, the changing needs of its population as well as shifts in tourist market composition. While acknowledging the 'local uniqueness' of the heritage tourism phenomena, this research also accepts the fact that global processes exist as the starting point in the development of the tourism industry. Destination areas are therefore a combination of generalities and peculiarities as general and local processes interact with

Tourist Sample and actual 1994 Proportions (country of origin & gender)	Sample number (%)		Actual 1994 proportion (in %)
Western Tourist Sample			
(a) Europe	128	(53.3)	(51.5)
(b) Oceania	63	(26.3)	(21.9)
(c) America	34	(14.2)	(21.6)
(d) Africa	15	(6.3)	(5.1)
(a) male	147	(61.3)	(62.7)
(b) female	93	(38.8)	(37.3)
Total	240	(100.0)	(100.0)
Asian Tourist Sample			
(a) Southeast Asia	115	(42.0)	(44.1)
(b) East Asia	108	(39.4)	(37.3)
(c) South Asia	44	(16.1)	(4.5)
(d) Middle East	2	(0.7)	(n.a.)
(a) male	169	(61.7)	(60.0)
(b) female	105	(38.3)	(40.0)
Total	274	(100.0)	(100.0)

note: the total number of tourists visiting Singapore in 1994 was 6,898,951 of which Asian tourists numbered 4,918,838 or 71.3 per cent and Western visitors (from Europe, Oceania, America and Africa) numbered 1,979,729 or 28.7 per cent (STPB 1994a, 12).

Table 3.1 A comparison between the tourist sample (by country of origin and gender) and actual 1994 tourist proportions

Singaporean Sample and actual 1994 Proportions	Sample number (%)	Actual 1994 proportion (in %)
Ethnic Groups	.	
(a) Chinese	202 (58.7)	(77.5)
(b) Malay	37 (10.8)	(14.2)
(c) Indian	61 (17.7)	(7.1)
(d) Eurasian & 'others'	44 (12.8)	(1.2)
Gender		
(a) male	137 (39.8)	(50.4)
(b) female	207 (60.2)	(49.6)
Total	344 (100.0)	(100.0)

note: the 1994 population in Singapore was 2.93 million of which the Chinese comprised about 2,269,600, the Malays 415,900, the Indians 209,400 and persons of other ethnic groups 35,300 (Ministry of Information and the Arts 1995, 31).

Table 3.2 A comparison between the Singaporean sample (by ethnic groups and gender) and actual 1994 population proportions

each other over space and time.

The methodological procedures adopted in the research are aimed at exploring the global-local dialectics in tourism development. Because of the different information requirements in the thesis, both qualitative and quantitative data sources were used and intensive and extensive research techniques employed. While questionnaire surveys were employed to generate broad data on visitors and locals, in-depth interviews were conducted with entrepreneurs and officials on specific matters dealing with conservation and tourism marketing. Secondary data and newspaper/magazine accounts were also used for corroborative purposes. Having described my methodology, the next three chapters will proceed to discuss and analyse the results of my fieldwork.

Chapter Four

Tourism Policies in Singapore:
Mediating Global Needs and Local Interests

Why should anybody come to Singapore to begin with? What did we have? We brought in six million tourists. We only had a name, then Raffles Hotel, and what? A few quaint habits and customs and the mediums and the temples, the Indian with his *kavadi* walking over heated charcoal...that is not going to bring in six million. But we created the attraction. We created the interest that brought the six million tourists. We developed a marketing strategy. And we made ourselves useful to the world. (Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, STWE 16/6/93)

4.1 Introduction

Singapore's popularity as a tourist destination owes an immeasurable debt to its role as a cruise and transit hub, and its status as a financial and convention centre. As the second most visited Asian city after Hong Kong, its success with neither the "ingredients popularly associated with tropical-island tourism fantasy" (Wong 1987, 140) nor the historic allure of old-world cities testifies to the STPB's ability in orienting the country to be of 'use' to the world market. However, tourism development in Singapore is geared not only towards attracting visitors but ensuring that the needs of the local community are met as well. Local considerations of 'site' and 'community' are critical in understanding the evolution in Singapore's tourism industry, the emergence of heritage tourism and government policies concerning heritage attractions.

This chapter explores the role played by global and local factors in various aspects of economic change. These changes include sectoral shifts in the national economy, restructuring of the tourism industry, and the emergence of heritage concerns. I begin with a general discussion of Singapore's evolving economy viewed within the context of global and regional shifts in capitalism (section 4.2). As part of the wide sweeping range

of economic changes in the 1980s, the tourism industry also underwent a restructuring process which led to the 'heritage turn'. Tourism restructuring was propelled by a combination of external and internal pressures and it is my contention that heritage enhancement serves as a tool in attracting visitors as well as to promote civic pride, enrich local culture and create a distinctive urban landscape. Tourism policies are investigated to substantiate this argument (section 4.3). Since the late 1980s, the urban conservation movement has spawned new enterprises in the tourism industry. My discussion concludes with two case studies highlighting the tensions entrepreneurs face in negotiating between tourist needs and community interests (section 4.4).

4.2 Global Economic Changes and Local Responses

To better appreciate the changes that have occurred in Singapore's tourism industry, the wider context of the national economy is analysed. To set the groundwork, sectoral shifts in Singapore's economy are briefly sketched (section 4.2.1) followed by a closer look at tourism restructuring (section 4.2.2). Changes in the national economy and tourism industry represent local adjustments to economic shifts at the global and regional scales. New 'international divisions of labour' and 'spatial divisions of tourism' have emerged over time accounting for the country's evolving roles.

4.2.1 Sectoral Shifts in the National Economy

As a country industrialises, three sectors dominate the national economy over time: primary (agricultural), secondary (manufacturing), and tertiary/quaternary (services). Daniel Bell describes this as a shift from a pre-industrial phase with an emphasis on extractive processes, to an industrial phase focusing on the fabrication of goods, and culminating in a post-industrial society centred around the processing of information and knowledge (Bell 1976, xii). Sectoral shifts in Singapore's economy parallel this 'natural

history of industrialisation' as evidenced in Table 4.1. While commerce and entrepôt trade dominated the 1960s till the mid-1970s, manufacturing and finance/business services have become more important recently. In the 1990s, manufacturing led the way although average growth rates in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contribution pale to that of services. While the GDP contribution of transport and communications expanded on an average of 10.6 per cent between 1990 and 1992, for example, and financial/business services by 8.8 per cent, the manufacturing sector grew by 5.6 per cent for the same period. On the other hand, any claim of a 'manufacturing slump' must also be refuted because of the dynamic hi-tech electrical sector which produces personal computers, disk drives and semiconductors. In 1993 alone, the contribution to GDP of the electronic sector expanded by 20 per cent (STWE 24/12/94).

Sectoral shifts from commerce to manufacturing to services were propelled by external factors. As an island state with virtually no natural resources and a limited domestic market, Singapore has had to rely on its strategic location and foreign raw materials/markets to fuel its economy. Since its founding, Singapore served as a trading port for Asian goods and resources destined for Europe. During its entrepôt heyday, the seeds of a flourishing manufacturing sector were sown because raw material and agricultural products from neighbouring countries were sent to Singapore for processing and export (Neville 1992, 48). Its status as Southeast Asia's top processing centre, manufacturing hub and entrepôt lay unchallenged till the mid-20th Century.

While geography aided in its boom, geopolitics was to blame for Singapore's near-demise as a trading centre. In the 1960s, nationalist independence movements in and political conflicts with neighbouring countries nearly crippled the economy. As countries clamoured to develop their own manufacturing industries or turned increasingly to direct-trading, Singapore's role as 'middle-person' was curtailed (Ho 1993, 49). The Indonesian Confrontation (1963) and Singapore's expulsion from Malaysia and subsequent independence in 1965 further alienated the country from its neighbours.

Select Economic Sectors	Per Cent Contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)							
	1960	1970	1980	1990	1992	1993	1994	1995
agriculture & fishing	3.6	2.3	1.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
manufacturing	11.9	20.7	28.1	26.4	27.9	27.0	26.7	26.7
commerce/entrepot trade	34.4	28.6	20.8	15.6	15.6	17.8	17.0	18.3
transport & communications	14.0	11.0	13.5	11.8	13.7	12.1	12.0	11.9
financial & business services	11.8	14.2	19.0	29.7	27.0	28.8	29.5	28.8
GDP at market prices (S$ billion)	2.0	5.7	26.1	69.3	80.6	92.8	106.2	118.6

Sources: Neville (1992); Ho (1993); Ministry of Information and the Arts (1993; 1995);
EIU (1995; 1996)

Note: the tourism industry does not constitute a discrete economic sector in Singapore.
Instead, its contribution to the GDP is spread across sectors like 'transportation',
'business services' and 'other services'.

Table 4.1 Percentage contribution of select economic sectors to gross
domestic product (GDP) in Singapore (at current market prices)

The shift from entrepôt to manufacturing became a policy of necessity after independence. To circumvent the problem of sourcing raw material from its neighbours, Singapore undertook an industrialisation programme spearheaded by multinational corporations (MNCs). The reasoning was that MNCs could help reduce unemployment, provide a large proportion of the population with income while equipping the country with foreign capital, technology and ready markets in the West. Like its earlier entrepôt status, the government sought to establish Singapore as a premier hub for manufacturers by advertising its strategic location and cheap labour, upgrading its harbour, airport and communications infrastructure, quelling labour unrest and creating a conducive socio-political environment for industrial operations. While early manufacturing focused on wood and food products, the 'middle phase' concentrated on electronics, textiles, garments, petroleum and transport equipment while more recently the focus has been on computer parts, chemicals and pharmaceutical goods (Ho 1993, 49). The 'middle phase' in the late 1960s/early 1970s represented Singapore's first foray into the global electronic production process, marking therefore its entry into the international division of labour.

While Singapore's rapid growth in the 1970s was part of a larger investment wave comprising the redeployment of labour-intensive production from developed countries to low wage sites, by the 1980s it was on the 'giving end' of the expansion process. Having attained full employment, wage-levels and standards of living increased rapidly pushing production and labour costs along. In what has been described as a process of "industrial downloading" (Taber 1992, 24), manufacturing firms are pushed to sites of cheaper labour in the Asian region. Transnational corporations dealing in semi-conductors, for example, moved from Singapore to Malaysia in the late 1970s, then to the Philippines in the early 1980s and finally to Thailand in the late 1980s (Ho 1993, 55).

As the NIE 'dragons' of Hong Kong and Singapore lost their core manufacturing firms to the "new generation" of dragons, most noticeably Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia (Taber 1992, 21), the race was on to retain the service aspects of manufacturing particularly headquarter and administration services, as well as upgrade existing firms to

technology-intensive operations. Such a strategy was aimed at restructuring the NIEs into high-tech, capital-intensive service economies, thereby engendering a more elaborate spatial and technical division of labour within the Southeast Asian region (Ho 1993, 55).

The need to fill a 'hollowed out' economy shifted prominence to the burgeoning service sector. This is not to deny the continued importance of manufacturing except to say labour-intensive, low-tech manufacturing processes have reached a stage of maturity whereupon services and hi-tech production sectors have begun to overtake them. The emergence of services, however, cannot be fully acknowledged until we consider a key point in Singapore's economic history -- the 1985/6 recession which brought the national economy practically to a standstill. GDP growth rates fell from an average of 7.4 per cent in 1975-9 and 8.5 per cent in 1980-4 to -1.7 per cent in 1985 and -0.7 per cent the following year. In 1985 alone, 46,000 jobs were shed in construction and 35,000 in manufacturing (MTI 1986a, 26 & 39).

An Economic Committee was convened in 1985 to review the crisis and propose new directions for growth. Its report - *The Singapore Economy: New Directions* - published by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI 1986a) attributed the recession to a combination of external and internal factors. External causes include the fall in petroleum prices which affected the ship building/petroleum industries; slower economic growth in the U.S., Singapore's chief importer of goods; and falling commodity prices which led neighbouring countries to protectionistic policies. On the homefront, rising labour costs and high domestic savings were blamed. The report viewed 1985 as a "watershed year" and "a turning point" in the country's economy (MTI 1986a, 35 & 4). In the transition to a "more mature phase of development" (MTI 1986a, 163) the implementation of new policies and the restructuring of existing ones became imperative.

A clarion call to boost the service sector was sounded. While the continued importance of manufacturing was undisputed, service advances were more promising and therefore worthy of promotion:

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> Our greatest potential for growth lies in this area:- banking and finance, transport and communications. and international services.... The government must promote services actively, the same way it successfully promoted manufacturing. (MTI 1986a, 19)

The need to complement manufacturing with services was based on the assumption that Singapore's "present niche as merely an offshore production centre for the developed world will have been eroded" and a new niche has to be created for the 1990s (MTI 1986a, 11). An avenue would be to develop Singapore as an "international total business centre" specialising in the export of *both* manufactured goods and services (MTI 1986a, 12).

Taking into account Singapore's geographic limitations, the 'Operational Headquarters' scheme was suggested as a way of retaining MNC headquarters in the city while diversifying labour intensive operations to neighbouring countries. This strategy emphasised specialisation through the division of labour in two ways: a 'technical division of labour' with Singapore focusing on capital intensive production, and a 'spatial division of labour' with the city-state emphasising services *vis-à-vis* its hinterland. According to Ho,

> The service sector has an inherent bias towards cities because of its dependence on skilled labour and infrastructural support, so this division between services and manufacturing also highlights the spatial division of labour between cities of different sizes and between cities and regions. It is in this respect that Singapore as a city-state can claim an advantage in the provision of services. (1993, 60)

The transition to a service niche thus marked a simultaneous transition to a new division of labour.

Although the transition in Singapore's economy was guided by global and regional forces, the role played by 'site' must be recognised. Over time, Singapore's geographic centrality has provided a way of overcoming its resource and market limitations thereby allowing the city to serve first as an entrepôt and then as a manufacturing hub and regional-service centre. Not having much by way of land and resources, the government

has consistently emphasised the country's fortuitous location and supplemented this with constant upgrading of its transportation and communications facilities.

The power of the local is also exemplified by the proactive role of the state. It was the government's economic restructuring policies that had in part enabled Singapore to carve new niches and serve new goals in the ever-changing regional divisions of labour. Political stability, quality administration, harmonious industrial relations and a unitary parliamentary system which allows for highly centralised policy decisions have played decisive roles in the rate and direction of industrial change (Chia 1988, 271; Neville 1992, 252). As Peck and Tickell have argued in the context of "uneven economic development", greater attention needs to be focused on the way "regulatory mechanisms and forms are effectively rooted and/or dispensed at different spatial scales, from the local to the supranational" in order to understand growth/decline of localities (Peck & Tickell 1992, 360). Likewise, an analysis of Singapore's economic evolution is incomplete without taking into account the role of state intervention.

4.2.2 The Need for Restructuring in the Tourism Industry

Unlike sectoral shifts within the national economy, the tourism industry underwent only one structural change. Since independence in 1965, there have been four episodes of declining tourist growth rates in 1974-5, 1978-9, 1983-5 and 1990-1 (see Figure 4.1 and Table 4.2). Although each downturn was described as a "crisis" by the local press, only the 1983-5 episode presented a true watershed for the tourism industry. The alliance of global/external pressures and local/internal factors in the early 1980s contributed to the severity of the downturn whereas only external factors were to blame for the other 'crises'. New policies and growth strategies were therefore formulated to combat the 1983 slowdown.

8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0

Number of Tourists (millions)

1965   1970   1975   1980   1985   1990   1995
Year

— Number of Tourists ■ Annual Growth (%)

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
-10

Annual Growth (%)

1965   1970   1975   1980   1985   1990   1995
Year
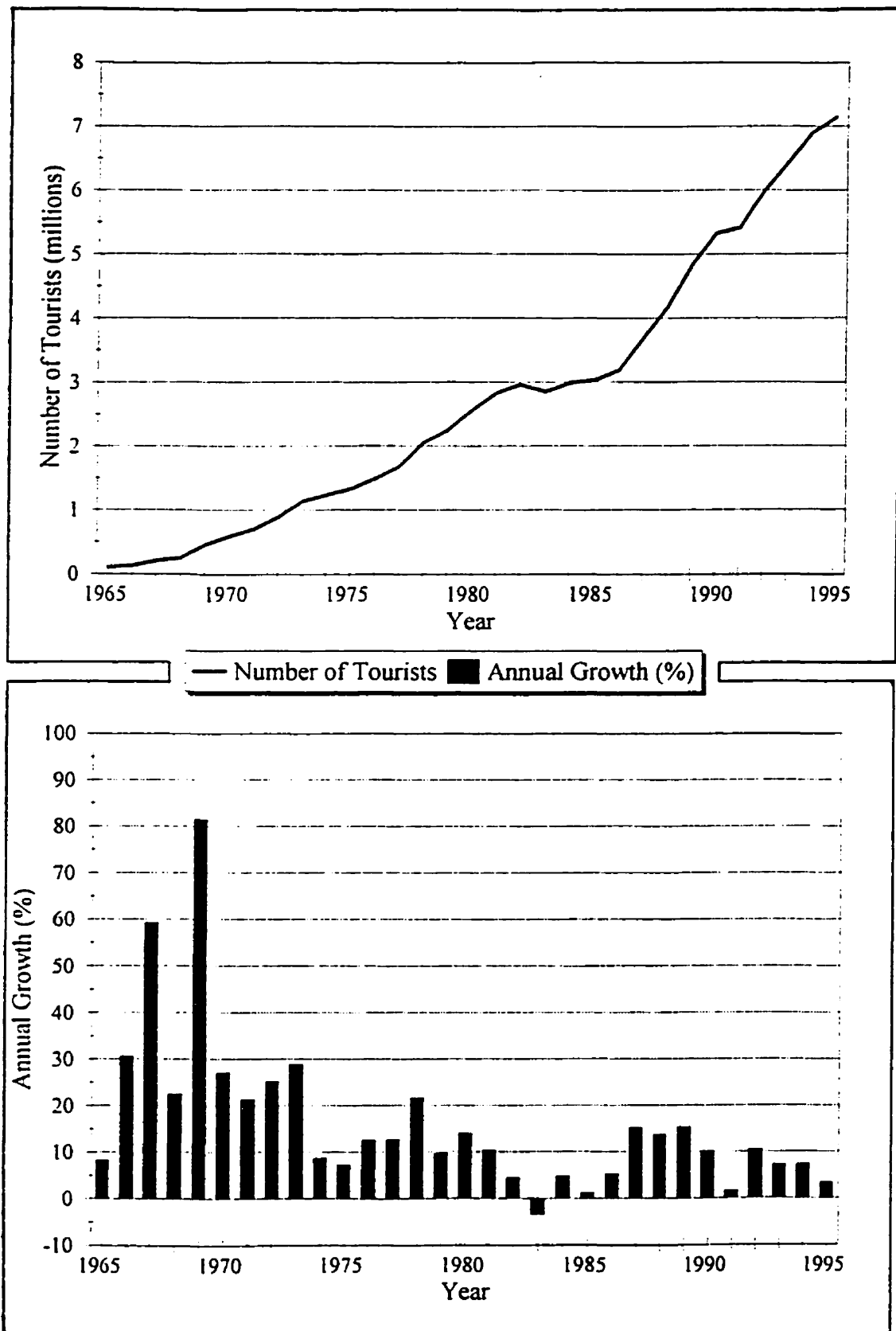
Figure 4.1 Tourist arrivals in Singapore and annual growth rates (1965 - 1995)

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Year	Tourist arrivals	Annual percentage change	Year	Tourist arrivals	Annual percentage change
1964	90,871	--	1980	2,565,058	14.0
1965	98,481	7.7	1981	2,828,622	10.4
1966	128,670	30.7	1982	2,956,690	4.5
1967	204,852	59.2	1983	2,853,577	- 3.5
1968	251,135	22.6	1984	2,991,430	4.8
1969	455,764	81.5	1985	3,030,970	1.3
			1986	3,191,058	5.3
1970	579,284	27.1	1987	3,678,809	15.3
1971	703,089	21.3	1988	4,186,091	13.8
1972	880,200	25.2	1989	4,829,950	15.4
1973	1,134,493	28.9			
1974	1,233,854	8.8	1990	5,322,854	10.2
1975	1,324,312	7.3	1991	5,414,651	1.7
1976	1,492,218	12.3	1992	5,989,940	10.6
1977	1,681,985	12.7	1993	6,425,778	7.3
1978	2,047,224	21.7	1994	6,898,951	7.4
1979	2,247,091	9.7	1995	7,137,255	3.5

source: STPB, *Singapore Annual Report on Tourism Statistics* (various years)

Table 4.2 Tourist arrivals in Singapore and annual rates of change
(1964 - 1995)

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The 1983-5 downturn has been described as a 'structural' problem compared to the 'cyclical' nature of the other crises. While a cyclical crisis refers to the fall in tourist numbers due to the occurrence of unforeseen global events such as a war or hike in oil prices, a structural crisis is the outcome of a far more substantial reason -- a "combination of economic, geographical, cultural and social factors that make a rapid recovery unlikely" (BT 13/10/83). In cyclical crises, external factors are the main contributors and the best solution is often to 'wait out' the problem rather than to overhaul existing policies. As the STPB (1984) notes, such problems lie "beyond our control" rather than with the local tourist product itself (*STPB Annual Report 1983/1984*, 4).

External factors were attributed to the falling growth rates in 1974-5, 1978-9 and 1990-1. In 1973 the annual tourist growth was an all time high of 28.9 per cent, declining to 8.7 per cent in 1974 and 7.3 per cent in 1975. This precipitous dip resulted from the Middle-East War in mid-1973 and the subsequent oil crisis, worldwide recession and airfare hikes. Crude oil prices rose from US$3.00 a barrel to US$12.00, and by 1980 it was at an all-time high of US$32.00 with profound effects on the global travel industry (see Turner & Ash 1975, chapter 17).

External political events were to blame for the 1991 decline. In August of that year, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait raised jet-fuel prices and travel cost as well as increased security concerns among travellers. This together with a stronger Singapore dollar *vis-à-vis* currencies of Western developed countries slowed tourist arrivals. To help the industry weather the crisis, the government reduced hotel 'cess collections' from four to three per cent and began a marketing strategy aimed at the economically vibrant markets of Asia[1] (*STPB Annual Report 1990/1991*, 3). In 1978, the slowdown was the result of regional problems such as the devaluation of the Indonesian *Rupiah* and the imposition of the International Civil Aviation Policy which temporarily curtailed Australia-bound

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[1] 'Cess collection' refers to the revenues earned by the government derived from taxes imposed on earnings in hotels, food and drink establishments, license fees of entertainment and retail outlets, as well as subscription and membership fees. A maximum of four per cent is taxable.

planes landing rights in Singapore. Both events adversely affected the industry since Indonesians and Australians constituted the largest and third largest markets in 1978 (STPB 1978, *Singapore Annual Report on Tourism Statistics 1978*, 7).

Cyclical crises are transitional episodes resulting from global economic and political situations. The 1991 slowdown, for example, was sandwiched between relatively healthy growth figures for 1990 and 1992 illustrating the short-term nature of such crises. Cyclical problems heal themselves with time and preventive measures include the temporary reduction in hotel taxes. Extraneous reasons are chiefly to blame whereas in structural crises, local factors are equally implicated.

The 1983 decline was an unprecedented downturn in Singapore's tourist industry. In 1982, visitor arrivals slowed to 4.5 per cent, down from 14.0 per cent in 1980 and 10.4 per cent in 1981. In 1983, it was a historic low of -3.5 per cent and modest rates persisted till 1987 (Table 4.2; Figure 4.1). In revenue terms, the industry suffered an across-the-board cut in tourist expenditures, cess collections, receipt contributions and hotel occupancy rates. More worrisome was the fact that Singapore's rate of growth was the lowest among ASEAN countries. In the Philippines, the growth rate was -3.4 per cent, while in Thailand it was -1.2 per cent and Malaysia 0.8 per cent. This is an important point because it suggests that the tourism downturn was not regionally shared and that local factors may be attributed to Singapore's problem.

A number of possible causes were identified. A Tourism Task Force was formed in August 1984 comprising permanent secretaries from four different government ministries and representatives from the public and private sectors. The task force was convinced of the severity of the problem and the need for changes:

> Was the poor performance of the tourist industry in 1982 and 1983 a cyclical phenomenon which would solve itself with the next economic upturn? Or could it suggest a deeper malaise which called for urgent action if the industry was to register a healthy growth again? The Task Force is of the view that the problem is a structural, not a cyclical one.
> (*Report of the Tourism Task Force*, MTI 1984, 13)

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A number of external and internal causes were highlighted. At the regional scale, the devaluation of foreign currencies and protectionistic policies by neighbouring countries retarded the allure of travel. Indonesia, Singapore's chief source of tourists, is a case in point. In November 1982, the Indonesian government raised its exit permit tax from S$75 to S$450 to stem the outflow of foreign exchange. In addition, a charge of S$1,000 levied for the issue of new passports and a 27.4 per cent devaluation of the *Rupiah* in March 1983 further diminished foreign travel. As a result, the Indonesian market grew by only 3.6 per cent in 1982 and -35 per cent the following year. Protectionistic policies in Thailand and Malaysia further accentuated the problem. In December 1983, the Thai government introduced a tax on outgoing visitors while in Malaysia, a duty of 50 per cent on the purchase price of goods was levied on returning tourists. As Waters comments, "no where else in the world has there been such a rash of beggar-thy-neighbour policies introduced to retard the growth of tourism" (1986, 103).

Two local factors escalated the severity of the problem. Firstly, Singapore had become increasingly expensive with the strengthening of its currency and secondly, it was perceived as an unexciting place. The latter, in particular, became an impetus in spearheading public criticism of the government's urban modernisation efforts and inciting public support for historic conservation. Much debate ensured over this problem since it was perceived to be self-inflicted and could have been avoided in the first place. A common refrain among writers to the press, journalists and politicians was that Singapore's urbanisation policies are responsible for the demise of its cultural heritage. An article in *The Business Times* synthesised public opinion when it said:

> Singapore lacks many of the attractions that appeal to the conventional tourist. Bluntly put, there is a dearth of scenery, history and cultural wealth....All this is made worse by the constant erosion of what is left of our cultural and architectural heritage in the name of modernization and advancement. This is inevitable, perhaps, but nevertheless a heavy price to pay. (BT 18/10/83)

Local distinctiveness and Asian charm have also been eroded by relentless modernisation

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as the Tourism Task Force stated:

> ...in our effort to build up a modern metropolis, we have removed aspects of our Oriental mystique and charm which are best symbolised in old buildings, traditional activities and bustling roadside activities such as the "pasar malam". There is a popular belief among our own travel agents that Chinatown, which is the most popular tourist attraction, will soon be torn down and replaced by modern high-rise office buildings and apartment blocks. (MTI 1984, 15)

These opinions were also buttressed by tourists' views. Between 1980 and 1986, the suggestion that Singapore should "preserve old buildings and stay Asian" consistently topped visitor surveys conducted by the STPB.

The search for local distinctiveness was galvanised by public criticism that Singapore's 'modernity' and 'clean-green/garden-city' image was not interesting enough to entice visitors. As an irate writer to the newspaper aptly put it, "we have perhaps put on the wrong face" in luring tourists (ST 29/10/83). Kent Potter, a writer with *Canadian Travel* captured this dilemma rather well:

> 'clean, green and orderly' is the usual term tourism promoters use to describe Singapore. A visitor might call it sterile....much of the mysterious East that a Western visitor is looking for in a trip to Asia is being destroyed....with Singapore's unquestioning quest for progress, even San Francisco will soon have a more interesting Chinatown. (cited in ST. 24/3/84)

This is not to say that Singapore's 'garden-city' image is inimical to tourism for much has been written about tourists' appreciation of it (see Teo 1982, 91; Ng 1985). Rather, this image is seen to be unexciting. As a *Business Times* journalist explains "cleanliness and greenness do not make for exciting travellers' tales. At most, modernity and good organisation, good shops and friendly people make a tourists' stay more comfortable once he or she is here" (BT 12/9/85).

Heritage conservation was thus recognised as a way to revamp the tourism product and create a more distinctive urban environment. The juxtaposition of Singapore's

multicultural districts with modern urban landscapes is thought to provide a claim to uniqueness and local identity. Singapore, therefore, provides an opportunity for tourists to enjoy the modern comforts of home and the exotic cultures of the East as the then STPB executive director Joseph Chew had said:

> Conservation and development are both very important,....there needs to be a balance between the old and the new; that is after all what people come to see. Singapore is endowed with a very rich Asian heritage and this must be maintained alongside our modern advances. (Travel Trade Gazette Asia 1989, 72)

A recent market survey on cultural tourism further indicates that "brand loyalty" among visitors is fostered through an emphasis on "exotic places of interest which are unique only to Singapore" (Low & Aw 1992, 19). A blend of history, culture and modernity best provides a way for the city to "come alive and assert its own unique characteristics" (Low & Ash 1992, 21).

The 1983-5 tourism downturn thus arose from a mix of external and internal factors. Unlike the other downturns in which regional and global causes were blamed, the structural crisis was the result of on-site conditions such as an increasingly powerful local currency and the country's lack of unique attractions. The latter provided an opportunity for rethinking government policies on tourism and urban development, ushering an awareness in heritage concerns. The 1983 episode thus marks a watershed in the tourism industry prompting new policies with a focus on urban heritage conservation.

4.2.3 Urban Conservation at the Local Scale

Although the urban conservation programme gained momentum in the aftermath of the 1983 tourism crisis, the needs of the local community were not forgotten. Government directives on urban redevelopment were aimed at both tourists and Singaporeans and this is seen in different ways. Here I will highlight three points for consideration: the

different reasons that gave rise to urban conservation; the 'division of labour' between the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB); and the importance of the local community in guiding conservation efforts.

To say tourism was the only reason which stimulated the conservation movement is incorrect. While section 4.2.2 discussed the tourism crisis as an impetus, this sudden interest in heritage must be viewed within the wider context of the country's social and cultural evolution. According to Liu (1990), public awareness in conservation was mainly the outcome of changing community perceptions towards the urban landscape. Three reasons underlying the conservation movement include the demand for a greater quality of life; reclamation works in the 1980s which provided ample land for urban expansion; and the "awakening" of Singaporeans to the need for history and the demand for "a greater variety of leisure outlets which modern architecture alone cannot offer" (Liu 1990, 7-8).

Local community needs were also emphasised in Lau's (1993) work on conservation in Tanjong Pagar, Chinatown. Here he identified four objectives. They include the need to create cohesion between the three races in Singapore and foster an appreciation of diversity; to provide a sense of historical continuity in a fast changing society; to create a sense of identity and belonging among Singaporeans; and to promote Singapore as a tourist destination (Lau 1993, 49-50). The 'tourism factor' is only one reason for urban redevelopment rather than a direct and singular cause of it. As Wood (1993, 67-8) puts it, "tourism's impact is always played out in an already dynamic and changing cultural context" and its role must be viewed within the wider picture of local community change.

Urban conservation is directed at both visitors and locals as evidenced by the 'division of labour' between two government ministries: the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB). Conflicts of interests are prevented because while the URA considers locals its main beneficiaries, the STPB is more concerned with the touristic dimension. Urban conservation is therefore undertaken

to provide equal opportunities for touristic enjoyment and the cultural/recreational pursuits of Singaporeans. This division of labour does not preclude collaboration between the two organisations. In the ongoing works along Singapore River, for example, the STPB's role is to implement and monitor boating activities while the URA co-ordinates the adaptive re-use of buildings (MTI 1986b, 28). Likewise in the redevelopment of the Civic District, the STPB's main role was to award tenders to the private sector while the URA provided the physical masterplan for land uses. In all collaborative efforts, therefore, different planning bodies are responsible for meeting the needs of different people. A clear division of labour exists between the URA and the STPB as well as other statutory boards as they work towards the mutual goal of urban redevelopment.

Despite the division of labour, the government is careful to ensure that the tourist-local balance is never tipped to privilege only visitors. Even the STPB whose main goal is to enhance tourism potential has publicly asserted the importance of conservation for future generations of Singaporeans. According to Pamelia Lee of the STPB,

> The STPB really wears two hats. As the body that promotes tourism, we have to come up with first-class attractions - such as Empress- Place - to match the first class support facilities for tourism, but we also have to protect our heritage for our future generations. If we don't preserve our past, our children and grandchildren will never know the long way that our people have come. (cited in Chiang 1988, 1)

The need to balance the interests of both groups is critical. Improving the quality of life of Singaporeans and attracting visitors are interrelated reasons in the STPB's support of heritage conservation. This point was brought across most emphatically in the STPB's 1988/9 Annual Report under the heading "tourism and the nation...reviving our heritage, broadening our attractions":

> Tourism has been one of the several important features in the revival and restoration of our rich multi-cultural heritage. It has also sparked the development of new attractions which will greatly enhance *recreational opportunities for all Singaporeans*. The rationale behind current efforts to conserve the past and develop new attractions is not simply rooted in the desire to encourage more visitors to Singapore. The restoration has as much to do with *improving the quality of life for all Singaporeans*....In the next few years, as more of old Singapore is restored and revitalised, as new and varied Western and Eastern-

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style attractions come to fruition, Singapore's aesthetic landscape, the environment in which Singaporeans work and play, will take on new dimensions. In short, Singapore will not only be a great city to visit; more importantly, it will be an *even better city in which to live.* (STPB 1989, 6-7 emphasis added)

Whether there exists a true congruence between 'government rhetoric' and 'community benefits' will be further explored in Section 4.4 and Chapter Five. Nevertheless, it is clear that the government makes an effort to balance the needs of tourists and residents when it comes to urban conservation and heritage enhancement.

4.3 Tourism Policies: Exploring Heritage Concerns and the Tourist-Local Nexus

Just as the needs of visitors featured significantly in the urban conservation movement, similarly the needs of Singaporeans exert a powerful influence in shaping tourism policies. In this section, I shall explore the policies and development plans formulated by the STPB in the aftermath of the 1983 crisis. Three masterplans (the Tourism Product Development Plan; the Strategic Plan 1993-1995; and the National Tourism Plan) and two government-commissioned reports are reviewed. My aim is not to describe the contents of each plan but to highlight two specific concerns: the role played by heritage in the tourism industry and the benefits Singaporeans stand to gain from this process.

4.3.1 Heritage Tourism Concerns Prior to the 1983 Crisis

To appreciate the extent to which tourism policies have been revised to incorporate heritage concerns, the pre-crisis years are examined. Prior to 1984, there was no official policy which guided Singapore's tourism development. Although the 'Instant Asia' image was proposed as a slogan for the industry in the 1960s, little was actually achieved by way of developing the country's heritage resources. Instead, the pressing goal in the 1960s/1970s was to establish the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB), market the

country abroad and develop new hotels and attractions.

It was not until 1969 that ethnic tourism was endorsed as a promotional strategy. In an attempt to reorganise the STPB, its director L.P. Lam proposed, *inter alia*, to capitalise on the varied cultures in Singapore as a means of attracting tourists from the West (Lam 1969, 23-4)[2]. Towards this end, he recommended the staging of festivals, dragon boat races, a Cultural Theatre for multiracial shows and the production of arts and crafts. In the absence of an overarching masterplan, however, these recommendations were executed as piecemeal projects and failed to create a collective sense of local heritage.

An example of an ill conceived heritage tourism plan was the 'Special Committee for Conversion of Selective Historic Sites into Tourist Attractions' established in 1970. As its unfortunate name implied, the scheme sought to create modern attractions in historic sites such as the statue of Stamford Raffles on Singapore River and the Merlion at the mouth of the river. The latter, a statue of a lion with the body of the fish used by the STPB as an emblem for the tourism industry, has been described by Jan Morris as a "hideous concrete chimera...[which] adequately symbolizes both the republic's self-image and its aesthetic standards" (1985, 314).

Heritage tourism was also promoted through other disparate schemes such as the Instant Asia Cultural Show featuring multiracial dances (1970), the Singapore Handicraft Centre (1976), and the Rasa Singapura Food Centre (1978). While the cultural show was later criticised for its "very low quality" dances and "contrived" ambience (MTI 1984, 32), the handicraft and food centres were demolished in 1988 and 1990 respectively because of poor patronage. Even the valiant first attempt at conservation in Murray Street and Cuppage Terrace (1977) was lambasted for not retaining the original land uses and

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[2] Lam's plan titled *Singapore Tourist Promotion Board. A Study in Reorganisation* (1969) was not so much a masterplan on tourism development but an evaluation of the STPB's organisational structure and recommendations for change. This document was also a personal statement and ideas suggested here were hence not necessarily taken up for implementation.

residents of the area (Lee & Dale 1980, 21).

It is no surprise, therefore, that visitors and government officials regarded Singapore as having little or no visible heritage. According to K.C. Fan, the Deputy General Manager of the URA, Singapore's main attractions in the 1970s included shopping, its clean-garden setting, modern landscapes and beach resorts (Fan 1980, 11-2). Similarly, the STPB's director Yuen cited hotels, friendly service, shops, restaurants and the national airline as the country's strongest assets (ST, 2/1/82). In many ways, therefore, Singapore embodied the image of an international business city lacking in charm and character. In the words of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI 1986a, 195):

> Singapore rates favourably in several important areas - shopping, good facilities, wide variety of food, clean and safe environment and a good place to do business. However, Singapore is not perceived as a place for an exciting, fun-filled holiday. We lack night life, cultural, historical and scenic attractions of impressive scales.

It was not until after the 1983 crisis with the publication of the *Report of the Tourism Task Force* that heritage was seriously envisioned as a tourist resource.

4.3.2 Spotlight on Heritage: *Report of the Tourism Task Force* (1984)

The Tourism Task Force (TTF hereafter) was formed in August 1984. Comprising representatives from the public and private sectors, one of its aims was to "identify what tourists from different regions want to see and do in Singapore and to develop and/or preserve the facilities to meet their peculiar needs and to attract them" (MTI 1984, 2). While the published report of the TTF is not a concept plan *per se*, it represents the first substantial government statement on the tourist industry and many of its suggestions later went on to shape the first tourism master plan (the Tourism Product Development Plan).

The *Report of the Tourism Task Force* perceived the 1983 crisis as a "deeper malaise

which called for urgent action" rather than a "cyclical phenomenon which would solve itself with the next economic upturn" (MTI 1984, 13). As part of the restructuring effort, the task force outlined seven areas of focus and these include the enhancement of existing attractions, the development of new attractions, the creation of better shopping/ entertainment/convention facilities, training of human resources and marketing. Heritage attractions constituted a major part of its recommendations. Of the thirteen attractions to be enhanced, five centred on cultural heritage (Chinatown, Singapore River, Fort Canning, Haw Par Villa, Colonial heritage). On the development of new attractions, two out of the seven suggestions focused on historic sites namely, Singapore River and Fort Canning Park. Justifying the heritage focus, *The Business Times* explained that "a country needs a heart and soul as well as a brain. As well as a future, Singapore has a past, and a heritage on which it is impossible to place a value, except to say that it is priceless" (BT 24/11/84).

The TTF focused an inordinate attention on tourist-oriented heritage and surprisingly little was mentioned of residents' interest in culture. In this regard, heritage enhancement may be described as "other directed" geared towards external demands rather than "self directed" aimed at local needs (Relph 1976, 93). The redevelopment of historic districts provides a case in point. The TTF recommended activities in "areas which provide the natural environment for 'cultural villages' that can be set up for tourists" and suggested Chinatown, Little India and Kampong Glam as possible venues (MTI 1984, 23). Emphasis was also placed on "reviv[ing]", "enlivening" and "regular staging" of cultural activities expressly for visitors (MTI 1984, 22). Even Singapore's public housing estates would be capitalised because

> Singapore's public housing programme has won international acclaim. Not only is it a showpiece, but it is the form of housing for the majority if the population. It should be of interest to overseas visitors. (MTI 1984, 25)

The only exception was the enhancement of Sentosa Island for the "enjoyment of citizens" as an "idyllic retreat and the 'lung' for Singaporeans" (MTI 1984, 24).

In much the same way that residents' needs are downplayed, the notion of a distinct local identity is also given short shrift. Although the TTF realised "[t]ravellers want to see something that is unique to a destination" (MTI 1984, 22), many of its suggestions indicate a preoccupation with success stories from around the world. Its recommendations include the redevelopment of Singapore River "along the lines of the 'Latin Quarter' on the left bank of River Seine in Paris" (1984, 28); the Christmas lightup in Orchard Road following "gaily-decorated Regent/Oxford Street in London" (1984, 31); the development of an ASEAN Cultural Village akin to the Polynesian Village in Hawaii (1984, 32); and the introduction of a Festival of the Arts on the scale of the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the Edinburgh Festival (1984, 33). The TTF also suggested a marketing identity with "regional variations" (1994, 18). While Asian tourists are sold "the image of Singapore as the 'Paris of Asia', the 'New York of the East' and 'A Shopper's Paradise'" (1984, 43), the "mystique of the Orient and the romance of a tropical isle" are the images portrayed to Westerners (1984, 18). Rather than a distinct local identity, therefore, Singapore's tourist attractions would follow the best of what other cities around the world had to offer.

The government's commitment to restructure the tourism industry was also marked by changes within the STPB. K.C. Wong who first mooted the idea of cultural-heritage tourism at a marketing seminar in 1984 and who later headed the task force took over the helm of the STPB in December 1984 a few weeks after announcing the recommendations. It was hoped this change would expedite the STPB's implementation of the TTF suggestions. As Tony Tan then Minister for Finance and Trade/Industry explained, "It is time for a new chairman. It is time for a fresh look at the tourism industry" (ST 24/11/84). In September of that year as well, the 'Product Development Division' was established within the STPB to implement the policies of the first tourism masterplan.

4.3.3 Putting Singaporeans First: Pannell Kerr Forster's
Tourism Development in Singapore (1986)

There are some similarities and one major difference between the report of the TTF and Pannell Kerr Forster's report *Tourism Development in Singapore* (hereafter Pannell Plan). As with the TTF, the Pannell Plan was commissioned by the STPB to provide recommendations for the formulation of Singapore's first tourism masterplan. According to the Product Development Division, the Pannell Plan serves as "an opinion study by foreign consultants and will be used as a guideline document for review and discussion" (Pannell Kerr Forster 1986, unpaged).

Like the TTF report too, heritage conservation constituted a major part of its recommendations. In the plan, a hierarchy of attractions was identified which included top priority projects of "historic significance" (Raffles Hotel, Singapore River and Chinatown in order of merit); other projects with some historic value (Empress Place, Heritage Link, ethnic areas and others); attractions with "significant appeal" (Sentosa and Botanic Gardens, for example); sites of "lesser appeal" (Bugis Street, Chinese Garden and others); and finally "opportunities" (museums at select sites). This hierarchy prioritises historic/cultural sites as the key to enhancing Singapore's appeal.

Unlike the TTF report, however, the Pannell Plan emphasised heritage conservation as a way to meet local needs and contribute to a Singaporean identity. In other words, the Pannell Plan swung the other end of the pendulum from the TTF report by asserting local considerations in heritage enhancement. The plan perceived conservation as far more than just a tourism tool:

> In its headlong rush into the 20th century, Singapore has improved the standard of living of its populace. However, the aspects of Singapore's heritage may have been given little attention. As important as conservation is to tourism, its major goals should *provide a sense of place to the local population*, a different and entertaining place that is socially clean....An added aspect of social as well as economic benefit is the opportunity to continue cultural pursuits in a historic environment, an opportunity to recreate endeavours and customs that may become lost within a modern city. (I-4 & 5 emphasis added)

The plan was also of the view that attractions catering to Singaporeans stand a better chance in succeeding because "local acceptance is vital to the tourism aspect as interchange among the local residents and visitors is necessary for its ultimate success" (1986, I-5). Hence, with regard to Singapore River it suggested the development of services aimed at residents because the river "could be a superb tourism asset...only to the degree that it succeeds as a locally used, active, domestic district and a bustling transportation segment" (IV-7). In ethnic sites, the plan also urged for the resident's needs to be prioritised over those of the tourist. Chinatown, for example, "should be conserved for residential uses and commercial activities, for the residents of Singapore first and as an attraction for its tourists" (IV-17-18) while for the Chinese Gardens, the report advised it was "primarily a local place and should be thought of as a local place. Tell the tourist about it, but let it be one of the discovery sites. Do not try to make it a destination" (V-29).

The need to put Singaporeans first was further underlined by the objective to create a unique local identity. Appropriately, the Pannell Plan's credo read:

> Accentuate what you are
> Do not try to invent or imitate others
> Refine what you have (Pannell Kerr Forster 1986, I-6)

The plan envisioned Singapore as "a modern city with a remarkable past" and warned against portraying the image of a tropical-resort or exotic-East as it would be "inaccurate and false" (III-3-4). The use of religious buildings clearly exemplified this stance. While the country's diverse religions provide a ready made attraction, care must be taken to prevent any artificial staging of customs which would offend devotees on the one hand and diminish their appeal to visitors on the other. Hence, while tourists "can join in and experience religious events, festivals, and look at their architecture...these kinds of 'attractions' should continue to be marketed as local things with little pretext of their being anything else" (1986, V-4).

The contrast between the *Report of the Tourism Task Force* and the Pannell Plan is even more stark when we consider the different backgrounds of the two committees. The TTF which opted for an "other directed" approach to heritage enhancement comprised resident-representatives from Singapore's public and private sectors whereas the Pannell group which endorsed a "self directed" policy is a foreign consultancy firm. Ironically, while local agencies were more concerned with meeting the needs of tourists, the international consultants were far more protective of resident interests. It is within these competing claims that the STPB had to mediate its first tourism masterplan.

4.3.4 Reconciling Tourist and Local Needs:
  the *Tourism Product Development Plan* (1986)

Singapore's first tourism masterplan (*Tourism Product Development Plan* 1986, hereafter TPDP), prepared by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) and the STPB with the collaboration of eleven other statutory boards provided the blueprint for tourism development between 1986 and 1991 (MTI 1986b). A total of S$1.0 billion[3] was pledged for tourism development according to five themes. These include 'Exotic East' (S$187 million for the redevelopment of ethnic-historic districts like Chinatown, Little India, Kampong Glam, as well as Singapore River, Bugis Street and Haw Par Villa); 'Colonial Heritage' (S$260 million; the Heritage Link/Civic District, Raffles Hotel); 'Tropical Island Resort' (S$470 million); 'Clean Green Garden City' (S$30 million); 'International Sporting Events' (S$1 million); and other contingent projects.

The TPDP trod a thin line between the contrasting focus of the TTF and Pannell Plan. Although a tourism plan essentially, the TPDP did not ignore local needs for heritage.

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[3] US$1.00 equalled S$2.2 at 1986 exchange rate.

Its guiding principle was based on the assumption that resident-tourist integration is essential to success:

> Generally, tourists are inclined to go where locals go, and enjoy what locals enjoy. Attractions built specially for tourists are not, by and large, of special interest to them. Therefore, while the projects outlined have the tourists in mind, they are likely to form a leisure and entertainment base, enjoyed and patronised also by Singaporeans. (MTI 1986b, 6)

A case in point is the development of the Heritage Link (today the Civic and Cultural District or Colonial hub) comprising museums, churches and buildings from the Colonial era. The TPDP's vision was to attract tourists while providing educationally enriching spaces in line with the government's vision of a cultured society for the 1990s. The Heritage Link would therefore ensure the "educational and development of cultural and historical awareness of our young people", fostering in them a "spirit of experimentation and creativity and a sense of fulfillment in non-materialistic pursuits" (MTI 1986b, 34).

As a collaborative effort between twelve statutory boards and government ministries, the TPDP's recommendations ensured that the multifarious concerns of Singaporeans were identified and addressed. While the STPB focused on the touristic potential in each project, other government departments such as the Ministry of Community Development and the Ministry of Home Affairs also contributed to the masterplan with the aim of ensuring local access to the attractions. In Chinatown, Little India and Kampong Glam, for example, the TPDP emphasised the importance of the "rich history" and "decades of human ingenuity" existing in each area, warning against their conversion into "theme parks or static museums" (MTI 1986b, 16). Towards this end, plazas and open spaces were to be created as venues for local festivals and social spaces for the people. Religious places were to be upgraded so that "Singapore does not lose the opportunity to create worthwhile tourist attractions" while protecting "vital educational link[s] to our past" (MTI 1986b, 16). In short, the TPDP was a tourism enhancement plan which also considered the needs of Singaporeans. STPB's then executive director Joseph Chew echoed this point when he said:

We are not conserving and preserving for the sake of it. We are not even doing it for ourselves. We are doing it for tourists, of course, but perhaps more importantly, for future generations of Singaporeans. (Travel Trade Gazette Asia 1989, 73)

In its quest for a Singaporean identity, the TPDP was conscious of the many contesting needs between tourists and residents, as well as between different tourists. Complying with the TTF view that Asian and Western markets have different interests, and Pannell's vision of a "modern city with a remarkable past", the TPDP judiciously opted for a 'multifaceted' identity which combines modernity with exoticity:

> As our tourist-generating markets are diversified, there is no single tourism image of Singapore which is applicable worldwide. We need therefore to project different facets of Singapore in each market if we wish to have appeal and motivate potential visitors. However, an appropriate definition of Singapore as a tourist destination may be as follows:- 'Singapore is a composite microcosm - a unique destination combining elements of modernity with Oriental mystique and cultural heritage. (MTI 1986b, 2)

Hence, an urban landscape with towering banks and hotels alongside historic Chinatown and Kampong Glam "affords Singapore the opportunity to have something unique, not easily duplicated in other countries of the world" (MTI 1986b, 7). Such an identity juxtaposes the old with the new while ensuring that tourist needs, local aspirations and business concerns are satisfied.

4.3.5 Heritage as Lifestyle: *Strategic Plan for Growth 1993-1995* (1993)

With the projects proposed under the first tourism masterplan nearing completion in the 1990s, a second masterplan (the Strategic Plan for Growth; Strategic Plan hereafter) was conceived in 1992 to provide guidelines on fine tuning the tourist product (STPB 1993a). While the TPDP called for the development of Singapore's tourism "hardware", the Strategic Plan focuses on its "software" or as Pamelia Lee senior director of development puts it, "touches that will refine the Singapore product and offer lifestyle, charm and culture" (cited in Cadiz 1993, 24).

The Strategic Plan likened Singapore to a multifaceted jewel and its goal for 1993-5 was to "perfect the jewel" through "smaller scale projects which will heighten Singapore's tropical Asian ambience and add new charm for visitors" (STPB 1993c, 15). The overall mission was to develop Singapore as a "premier destination with universal appeal" (STPB 1993a, 9). As Yeo Nai Meng, STPB's director of operations and planning explained:

> 'Premier destination' because we are targeting to be among the top 10 tourist destinations in the world in terms of tourism receipts, and 'universal appeal' because we want to attract tourists not just from all countries, but also people from different market segments in terms of ages, needs and gender. We at STPB compare our tourism product to a diamond - colourful, multifaceted and attractive. STPB's mission, with the industry, is to further craft and polish this diamond, until it becomes the most spectacular and brilliant of all diamonds. (cited in Cadiz 1993, 24)

Although heritage and culture were mentioned in the Strategic Plan, they did not occupy its central focus. Likewise, the urgency in creating a unique identity and the championing of local needs did not feature prominently. Under the plan, four focal zones and eleven themes were targeted. The zones include the Civic District, historic Singapore River, as well as Orchard Spring (a hotel/shopping/office complex) and the Southern Islands. Only the first two have a heritage component. Of the eleven themes, cultural considerations were featured under the two themes of "Nostalgic Singapore" which focuses on the installation of gas lamps in historic areas, the lighting of Singapore River bridges, the use of sculptures and the promotion of traditional trades in Chinatown, and "the Spice Route" which will promote Singapore's multicultural cuisines. Other non-heritage themes included the promotion of student-travel to the country, boosting a local souvenir industry and the hosting of world-class events in sports, convention and entertainment.

Instead of a heritage focus, the main thrust of the Strategic Plan echoed the government's call for greater export of services to surrounding countries. While the TPDP was concerned with developing heritage attractions, the Strategic Plan advocated a regional agenda which emphasises Singapore's role as Asia's tourist hub. As a means of

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overcoming its limited geography, solutions were sought through developing the country as a regional centre for conventions, cultural performances, sports tournaments and leisure cruises.

Although the role of heritage is secondary to the goal of regionalism, it is no less important. In Singapore's aim to be an Asian hub, heritage will contribute to an image of urban uniqueness and distinction. Through staging cultural performances, promoting the arts or simply by emphasising nostalgic touches in the cityscape, heritage lends a touch of sophistication and quality of life that is valued by tourists, residents and investors. As a global city, Singapore must be seen to be culturally vibrant and as a regional hub, its heritage must be perceived as a blend of Asian modernity and culture. Heritage serves as an important cultural capital in marketing the country. The tourism "software" of "lifestyle, charm and culture" thus supports Zukin's (1995, 3) notion of the "intertwining [nature] of cultural symbols and entrepreneurial capital."

4.3.6 Tourism and Heritage at the End of Millennium:
Tourism 21: Vision Of A Tourism Capital (1996)

In August 1996, a third tourism masterplan was released by the STPB in collaboration with the National Tourism Plan Committees (STPB 1996). Intended as a blueprint for the new millennium, *Tourism 21: Vision Of A Tourism Capital* is the most ambitious plan to date. Not only did it envision Singapore as Asia's tourism capital, a point earlier raised by the Strategic Plan, it provided concrete suggestions and time frames as to how/when this might be achieved.

In the plan, recommendations were made to develop Singapore not only as a "tourist destination" but a "tourism hub" and "tourism business centre" -- a location where tourism entrepreneurs and transnational leisure-related firms will be based. *Tourism 21* also outlined ways for Singaporean-owned companies to embark on regional projects,

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encouraged joint projects between Singapore and neighbouring countries, and suggested opportunities for revamping local landscapes. The emphasis of the masterplan, therefore, was on changing traditional ways of doing things by "redefining tourism", "reformulating the product" and "configuring new tourism space" (STPB 1996, 4). The plan even recommended that the name of the STPB be altered to Singapore Tourism Board (STB) to reflect its "enhanced role" and "new corporate identity" (STPB 1996, 57). A specific target of 10 million visitors and S$16 billion in tourist receipts was also set for the year 2000.

As part of the wide sweeping changes advocated by the plan, select local landscapes will also be redeveloped. The goal is to create a total of eleven "zones of thematic development" each with its own cluster of attractions and activities as well as a 'storyline' that gives visitors an "idea of how and why the area came about, its cultural and historical significance and how it is part of the overall Singaporean psyche and way of life" (STPB 1996, 29 & 27). Some of the themes include 'Nature Trail' which focuses on the country's nature reserves and 'Singapore Heartland' which promotes suburban residential zones. Of the eleven themes, five boast a specific heritage component. They are 'Ethnic Singapore' (focusing on ethnic historic areas); 'Rustic Charm' (offshore islands and suburban villages); 'Museum and Heritage Trail' (the Civic and Cultural District); 'The Night Zone' (the restored quays along Singapore River); and 'Entertainment District' (Bugis Street and outdoor night markets). In enhancing local heritage, it is hoped that Singapore will embody "vibrance and progressiveness, yet retain her Asian warmth and hospitality" (STPB 1996, 4).

The importance of heritage conservation is illustrated by the choice of Chinatown as the first project to be undertaken. In this 'experiment', an interpretive centre is to be built, a walking trail created, informative plaques installed and improved lighting and tour-guide services offered (STPB 1996, 28). The re-enchantment of Chinatown will be directed at both visitors and Singaporeans. Justifying why Chinatown was selected as the pioneer project, the STPB's chief executive officer reasoned: "Chinatown is part of our history,

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our culture. This is about restoring our heritage and bringing our history alive in a manner considered enjoyable for visitors and our children" (ST 25/7/96). Indeed, part of the agenda of the 'thematic zones' project is to improve existing tourist infrastructure in the hope that it will "translate into tangible spin-offs to Singaporeans in terms of the range and quality of lifestyle products they too can enjoy" (STPB 1996, 29).

The plan also stressed that Singaporeans must be made aware of the benefits of tourism so that a 'tourism culture' can be nurtured and an environment conducive to tourist-related firms created (STPB 1996, 54). *Tourism 21* is mindful of the "quantitative" benefits of tourism as well as its "qualitative" perspectives:

> The potential to derive greater GDP growth through tourism is clear. Perhaps more important but difficult to quantify is the contribution of tourism to the 'quality of life' in Singapore. After all, it is evident that without the critical mass our tourists have generated, many lifestyle developments in Singapore would not have been possible. The question is how to ensure that tourism continues to generate contributions to Singapore's economy and Singaporean's quality of life. (STPB 1996, 15)

The challenges of the masterplan are thus multi-layered. In addition to developing Singapore as a regional hub and international gateway to Asia, the challenge also includes enhancing local landscapes and fostering a pro-tourism attitude among the Singaporean community. Global, local, and regional concerns are thus embraced by the *Tourism 21* agenda.

4.4 Heritage Entrepreneuralism and the Negotiation of Tourist-Local Needs

Having looked at the conservation movement and policies regarding heritage tourism, let us turn our attention to the entrepreneurial responses to these phenomena. Focusing on the interface between urban conservation and tourism, I shall explore two case studies that illustrate the dual role of heritage as a 'tourist attraction' and 'local resource'. I begin with 'boutique hotels' and proceed to examine 'street activities' examining in each case the

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commodification of local heritage. These two case studies illustrate that commodification leads to different effects: an alienation of locals on the one hand, and an attempt at embracing the needs of the community on the other.

4.4.1 Heritage Conservation and Boutique Hotels

One of the trends emerging from the conservation movement is the establishment of 'boutique hotels' in the 1990s. A boutique hotel may be defined as a modest sized establishment usually with less than 100 guest rooms catering to corporate executives and travellers wishing for an alternative experience. They boast a cosy residential ambience, a high staff-guest ratio and "combine old world charm with modern luxury services" (ST 17/6/91). Currently there are seven boutique hotels in Singapore, four of them in Chinatown (Table 4.3; Figure 4.2). Apart from Raffles Hotel, the other hotels are the result of adaptive re-use of old shophouses/buildings and the gentrification of ethnic districts. Boutique hotels mark a radical departure from original land uses in the area, thereby exemplifying the tensions between the old and the new and the imposition of tourist-spaces in local landscapes. In this section, I shall identify these tensions and argue that Singaporeans are far from alienated from the boutique hotel phenomenon.

One alleged tension is the alienation of Singaporeans from what were once 'local areas and buildings'. Boutique hotels cater to the needs and comforts of travellers rather than the Singaporeans living in and around the conservation district. This is best exemplified by the Chinatown and Royal Peacock Hotels located in the midst of a crowded residential area in Keong Saik Road, surrounded by numerous activities still untouched by gentrification. The glossy facades of the hotels are a study in contrast from the helter-skelter environs of Chinatown (Plates 4.1 & 4.2). Although the managers/owners of the hotels are aware of this disparity, they defend the conservation exercise as an alternative to demolition, and adaptive re-use as preferable to the 'traditional' activities that once inhabited the buildings. This point is best put across by Renata Mowbray, general

Name of hotel	Size (no. of rooms)	Location	Price range	Theme or decor concept	Ownership pattern
Albert Court	136	fringe of Little India	S$170 - 280	Peranakan (Straits-Malayan)	Far East Organisation
Chancellor	34	Joo Chiat	$88 - 188	modern (conserved shophouse)	self-owned (Henry Neo)
Chinatown	42	Tanjong Pagar (Chinatown)	S$120 - 160	modern (conserved shophouse)	self-owned (Anita Tang)
The Duxton	49 suites	Tanjong Pagar (Chinatown)	S$280-450	British-Colonial (conserved shophouse)	self-owned (Esther Su & Margaret Wong)
Inn of Sixth Happiness	28 rooms	Telok Ayer (Chinatown)	S$130 - 500	period-Chinese (shophouse)	self-owned (Lin family)
The Raffles	108 suites	Colonial and Civic District	S$ 600 - 6,000	1930-colonial	Raffles Pte. Ltd. (subsidiary of DBS Land)
Royal Peacock	79 rooms	Tanjong Pagar (Chinatown)	S$125 - 200	art-deco (conserved shophouse)	privately owned (owner unknown)

note: all information effective July 1995

Table 4.3   Boutique hotels in Singapore: a classification

Figure 4.2 Boutique hotels in Singapore's Central Area

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**From brothels to boutique hotels: The Royal Peacock (Plate 4.1, above)
and the Chinatown Hotel (Plate 4.2, below)**

manager of the Royal Peacock:

> I would be the first to put forward this charge [that conservation robs the place of its original residents and activities] and say that such areas become over restored. But its either this or total demolition. Boutique hotels and souvenir shops are inevitable because they are tied to the property market where each shophouse fetches over a million dollars.... [besides,] Keong Saik Road has mainly dilapidated shophouses which were used as brothels and frequented by those visiting prostitutes. Many who bemoan the loss of Chinatown probably never visit the place anyway but gentrification would draw them back.

It is true that the Chinatown and Royal Peacock Hotel buildings were once used as brothels, and today continue to be surrounded by similar activities in what must surely be Singapore's foremost red-light district. The derelict structures and tawdry image of Keong Saik Road have become a disincentive for families continuing to stay there. At the same time, peculiarly, this image adds to the novelty and intrigue of the area. Guests find the history of the place charming, colourful and naughtily interesting. For this reason, Anita Tang general manager of the Chinatown Hotel sees very little conflict between the intrusions of the new upon the old, and between the image of a red-light district and a glitzy heritage inn:

> Conservation has done good to the area because previously the place was all dilapidated. As for Singaporeans having a sense of affiliation to Chinatown, its only the few old residents living here, and they are prepared to leave anyway....We feel Tanjong Pagar is rich in culture. This may be a red-light area but that adds colour to the place. The 'funny people' know we are a serious business so they don't come to interfere.

Adaptive re-use rids the conservation site of its unsavoury activities, improves the structure of buildings and regenerates what were previously 'zones of discard'. At the same time, history and collective memory are sanitised to attract visitors. Gentrification might have erased the original look and activities in the area but it has also according to Mowbray "encourage[ed] Singaporeans back to discover their roots".

Linked to the alleged isolation of locals is the notion of a 'tourist enclave'. This is a particular problem which the Raffles Hotel has had to overcome (Plate 4.3). When the

Raffles reopened in 1991 after a $160 million restoration project, the 104 suites-only hotel was proclaimed the most luxurious establishment in the city, and with rooms going between S$650-6,000 per night the most expensive as well. The Raffles is marketed as a world-famous historic landmark, targeting as its clientele the "top end of the corporate market, the upper end of the leisure-travel market" for whom "money is no object" (BT 17/9/91).

The exclusivity of the Raffles has been regarded by some as lacking a local identity -- a place which "does not seem to belong to the average class of Singaporeans" (Teo & Huang 1995, 610). In the words of an architect, the hotel exudes a "stiff and perfect-to-the-point-of-clinical atmosphere that makes one feel that one will probably be reprimanded for shifting the ashtray" (ST 28/2/92). What was once a colonial hangout is now perceived as a tourist-only enclave which "continues that grand old tradition of imperial hype" (ST 18/10/91). Criticisms surrounding this conservation effort thus focused on Raffles as a "trumped-up tourist attraction to make money" (ST 18/10/91) and an "overly glamourised figment of the Western imagination" (ST 15/3/89). As a journalist had asked before the commencement of restoration, "is the 102-year old hotel really Singaporean enough to be worth restoring?" (ST 15/3/89).

That the Raffles Hotel chose to target the upper end of the tourist audience is entirely a case of niche marketing. What is interesting, however, was that its developers had anticipated the problems of niche marketing and deliberately incorporated in its restoration plan a shopping gallery annexed to the back of the hotel. Simply known as 'Raffles', the architectural style of this new three-storey building is identical to the hotel and comprises a range of designer shops, cafeterias, a museum and a Victorian-style playhouse aimed at the general public. Outdoor dining areas and landscaped gardens are also open to everybody. This dual-market strategy — Raffles Hotel for upmarket tourists and Raffles for the commonfolk -- effectively draws the local crowd. According to S.L. Chandran of DBS Land, the hotel and its shopping complex "will basically cater for two conflicting crowds" with their architectural styles serving as an integral link (BT 25-26/3/89).

Plate 4.3 Raffles Hotel: a symbol of Singapore or a tourist enclave?

Referring to the shopping and dining facilities at Raffles, Jennie Chua general manager of the hotel further pointed out that while "Not everybody will be able to find a room here (at the Raffles Hotel)...almost everybody can have a Raffles experience" (BT 17/9/91). Towards this end, the food outlets are diversely priced to cater to different tastes and budgets. There is therefore a concerted attempt to embrace the general public rather than alienate it.

The dual-market strategy at the Raffles Hotel is also exemplified by the other inns. The Royal Peacock, Inn of the Sixth Happiness and Duxton depend heavily on a local clientele base to sustain their food/beverage outlets. Located in the Central Area, the hotels market aggressively to attract lunch and dinner crowds from adjacent Shenton Way, Singapore's business and financial district. The symbolic capital played by heritage is evidenced in the new-meets-old, East-meets-West ambience which these hotels purport as their selling point. The 'Philip Starck-meets-Chinatown' decor at the Royal Peacock, the traditional Oriental ambience in the Inn of the Sixth Happiness and the refined European elegance of the Duxton are marketing themes aimed at the yuppie clientele and Western tourists. Much like the trend of British 'townhouse hotels' (Brooke 1995) and small heritage inns in Europe (Barrett 1986), Singapore's 'shophouse hotels' symbolise a global trend which capitalises on local heritage as a niche marketing tool. Heritage functions as a marker of exclusivity and distinction, and a competitive tool in differentiating the hotels from others. Towards this end, different 'decor concepts' are selected by each establishment to convey authenticity and difference (Table 4.3). Following Silver's concept of "chic travel", boutique hotels offer a touch of luxury off the beaten track and are "sold to an elitist clientele who come to view their experiences as more authentic than those of mass tourists, while also more luxurious, and perhaps cleaner, than alternative travel" (Silver 1993, 315).

Finally, the power of the local is also evidenced by the ownership patterns in the hotels. Unlike large modern hotels established in the 1970s and 1980s, the trend towards boutique establishments marks a shift towards local ownership and family-based

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entrepreneuralism (see Table 4.3). The Inn of the Sixth Happiness and Chinatown Hotel are both run on a family basis while the Royal Peacock, Duxton and Chancellor Hotels are owned and operated by individual Singaporean entrepreneurs. The boutique inns are not franchises of a multinational hotel chain, and in some cases even represent the flagship establishment of a potential new chain of inns. The Lin family who owns the Inn of Sixth Happiness, for example, hopes to expand their concept of the Chinese-heritage hotel to Malaysia while the owner/manager of the Chinatown has plans for development in Vietnam and Indonesia. Small boutique hotels thus offer an opportunity for local entrepreneuralism to flourish in the tourism industry.

4.4.2 Heritage Reconstruction and the Transformation of Street Activities

Street activities have also been commodified as a form of local heritage. Over the course of time, street activities in Singapore have been banned, reintroduced and then transformed into tourist attractions. In the process, their form and function have been altered dramatically and the local community's affiliation to street activities has waned in the process.

As part of the drive towards modernisation in the 1960s, many squatter districts in Singapore's Central Area were demolished along with their 'street activities' which included bazaars, outdoor markets as well as informal dining and shopping places. This was because public hygiene and social regulation were considered essential in imparting an image of "urban planning, government control and modernity" (Savage 1992, 19). This image was necessary in enhancing Singapore's goal as a financial centre and a hub for MNCs. Political motives were also implicated in the urban renewal process. Ethnic exclusive areas such as Chinatown or Serangoon Road were perceived as potential seedbed for street riots, ethnic clashes and gang fights and demolishing large sections of the city and rehousing its inhabitants would help to stem communalism, communism, gangsterism and other unlawful activities (Tay 1991). By de-activating the urban

landscape of its "natural bustle of street life....vitality and organic interest", the government hoped that civic society would also become more "sober and orderly" (Tay 1991, 39).

The government's commitment to urban modernisation, however, was softened in part by the 1983 tourism crisis and the Tourism Task Force's view that Singapore was losing many urban historic areas of interest. The TTF mentioned that urban street life constituted an integral aspect of Singapore's charm, and the tourism crisis was brought about because

> ...in our effort to build a modern metropolis, we have removed aspects of out Oriental mystique and charm which are best symbolised in old buildings, traditional activities and bustling roadside activities like the 'pasar malams' (outdoor night markets). (MTI 1984, 15)

In an effort to augment the country's attractiveness, policies banning night markets and roadside hawking were relaxed. "Ironically, Singaporeans have come to accept the importance of street culture through the hard way: the loss of tourist dollar..." (Savage 1992, 20).

Reviving street activities posed certain challenges. On the one hand, the government realised the importance of the picturesque 'old' and on the other hand, the need to impart an image of modernity befitting a newly independent state. Hence, while tourists may be intrigued by the "surviving aspects of the antique, the ethnic and the primitive" these may also be the "traditional and regressive elements of indigenous culture which the national government is desperately trying to reform (or forget)" (Turner & Ash 1975, 140). The revival of street activities illustrates the dilemma of catering to tourists and locals. I shall illustrate this argument by looking at the *pasar malams* (outdoor night markets) and the revival of Bugis Street.

Night markets or *pasar malams* are best described as informal outdoor shopping and dining events which attract many itinerant hawkers, food stalls and Singaporeans.

Although tourists patronise the *pasar malams*, they are certainly not tourist attractions and make no pretence at being so. *Pasar malams* are usually set up on public roads and thoroughfares specially closed in the evenings for pedestrians. In 1975, the Ministry of Environment (MOE) began phasing out night markets and in 1978, banned them altogether. The government argued that night markets caused traffic congestion and pollution of public streets and posed a health hazard through their sale of outdoor food items. In Chinatown, 700 hawkers were shifted indoors into the new Chinatown Complex in 1983 marking a break from the spontaneous outdoor character of street markets. Similar attempts were undertaken in Little India where food stalls were shifted into the multi-storey, multi-use Zhu Jiao Centre (see Section 5.2).

With the onset of the tourism crisis in 1983 and the TTF's encouragement to revive urban street culture, policies banning night markets were gradually relaxed. In 1985 barely one and a half years after they were banned from Chinatown, the STPB together with the Kreta Ayer Citizen's Consultative Committee resurrected outdoor hawking as part of the Chinese New Year celebrations. A festival of lights was organised and food stalls selling traditional tidbits erected. The revival of outdoor activities, however, did not mean an endorsement of pollutive activities and their attendant problems. In an effort to uphold public hygiene, grassroots leaders proposed to the MOE certain limits they would voluntarily adhere to. These regulations included the banning of cars, participation of only 200 stall holders, sale of pre-cooked food, and the use of disposable plates and utensils (ST 7/1/86). The STPB also organised similar lightup celebrations and outdoor activities in Little India and Geylang Serai during the *Deeparvali* and *Hari Raya Puasa* festivities respectively.

While the resurrection of night markets was generally aimed at residents, there have been occasions when they were geared towards visitors alone. In 1985, for example, the STPB obtained clearance from the MOE to revive *pasar malams* in the compound of the Singapore Handicraft Centre. A number of compromises were made such as the sale of

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tourist souvenirs and a ban on food stalls. This was later criticised because the *raison d'être* of pasar malams was the sale of secondhand products and food items aimed at locals. Most uncharacteristically, therefore, the scene at the handicraft centre was sedate with no noisy haggling and a limited variety of stalls manned by well dressed vendors (ST 8/4/85). A spokesperson for the STPB justified this oversight by saying:

> We are not the People's Association, concerned with organising things for locals. We are the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board, so when organising something, we must have the tourist as the main objective. (ST 16/6/85)

In May 1986, however, the STPB changed its tune and began introducing food stalls and encouraging vendors to sell household goods and local items. When this proved popular with tourists *and* residents, more *pasar malams* were revived for specific tourist events such as the convention of the American Society of Travel Agents in September 1986 and the Miss Universe Pageant in May 1987 (ST 21/7/87). As Sharon Wong, STPB's divisional director of tourism services conceded, "we have found from our research that a place must be first popular with the local community before it begins attracting the tourists" (ST 23/5/86). What were once spontaneous street activities catering to locals have thus been transformed into government sanctioned events specially orchestrated in specific sites and for tourism-related purposes.

The return of the infamous Bugis Street was also the outcome of policy reversals targeted at tourists. Since the 1940s, Bugis Street was a well known nocturnal dining and shopping street reputed for its availability of cheap beer and Chinese food, and the added risque atmosphere provided by prostitutes, flamboyantly dressed transvestites and rowdy sailors (Lim 1979, 53-54). In particular, the parade of transvestites which began every midnight either soliciting for business or taking photos with visitors for five dollars a copy became Bugis Street's claim to uniqueness. Although it was never officially promoted by the STPB, Bugis Street was rated one of Asia's top ten attractions (ST 8/11/93). As S.K. Lee, project manager of Bugis Street Development revealed:

> ...flamboyant transvestites were a paradigm of a product we didn't know [what] to do
> with. While the phenomena lasted, it was something of an official embarrassment. For the
> tourists who thronged the area, part of the charm of Bugis Street came from it being a
> social pimple on clean, green and apparently straight-laced Singapore. (ST 13/7/86)

In a country which banned jukeboxes, long hair and later chewing gum, Bugis Street was an intriguing and unusual attraction, "a venue where the participants could engage, albeit fleetingly, in deviant behaviour in a highly structured and disciplined society" (Kuah 1994, 180).

In 1985, the government demolished Bugis Street to make way for the development of a Mass Rapid Transit Station, and also as part of the effort to rid what it perceived as a "blemish on the smooth cheek of a garden city" (ST 6/10/85). This move was widely condemned by many in the tourism industry. A year before Bugis Street was demolished, the Tourism Task Force had warned that Singapore was not perceived as "a place of fun, romance, mystique or excitement. We are a fairly dull place, lacking in an interesting nightlife, culture, history, warm, friendly people and scenic attractions" (MTI 1984, 18). To counter this image, the Pannell Plan had urged the revival of street activities in Bugis Street and Chinatown. The Tourism Product Development Plan also spoke of the need to encourage street life and visitors' participation in "impromtu, harmless fun and non-flagrant activities" (MTI 1986b, 32). It was surprising, therefore, that Bugis Street was torn down despite these recommendations.

The call to recreate Bugis Street was buttressed by representatives from the travel industry. In 1985, several hotels and travel agents pleaded with the STPB which in turn brought the matter up to the Ministry of National Development. In a "surprise change of mind" (ST 9/10/85), the ministry approved the plan to reconstruct Bugis Street because of its enormous tourism potential. Said a STPB spokesperson:

> Please tell the world that Bugis Street will not be lost and will be there when they [the
> tourists] visit Singapore in the future. The tourist board knows the value of Bugis Street
> -that it is well known, that it offers the unexpected, that it has colour and tourists love it.
> Once it was found that the original site could not be preserved, an alternative site was

Five new sites were considered and the final choice was settled on a plot of land on the opposite side of Victoria Street just 120 metres from the original (see Figure 4.2). Unlike its predecessor which comprised independent hawkers and shopkeepers, the new Bugis Street (renamed Bugis Square but still commonly referred to by its old name) was to be developed by a commercial enterprise called Bugis Street Development Pte Ltd and managed by Bugis Management Pte. Ltd.

Bugis Square which opened in December 1989 at a cost of S$15 million was an exact replica of the old street comprising six blocks of shophouses with an *al fresco* dining/market area located within its hollowed-out quadrangle (Plate 4.4). The buildings boast exact reproductions of the old façades furnished in "quaint colonial, neoclassical" styles but housing modern facilities like discos, pubs, karaoke bars, function rooms and a budget hotel (ST 8/11/93; *Interior Quarterly* 1991, 37-38). Street activities included fortune tellers, shoeshine boys, clog makers, snake charmers as well as food and drink operators from the original Bugis Street. Much emphasis was placed on "making the new place look old" (Kuah 1994, 179; see Figure 4.3).

While Bugis Square was meticulous in simulating the ambience of Bugis Street, there was to be no concession for dirty streets, poor sanitation and transvestites. For the first time, therefore, Bugis Street was promoted by the STPB in its annual guidebook as "a new version of Asia's most famous outdoor food and entertainment spot....an atmosphere that's even better than the old ....[with] a more serious attitude towards hygiene with modern kitchens" (STPB 1991b, 26-28). Transvestites were unwelcome because of the need to provide clean family entertainment and maintain a wholesome atmosphere. Hence, its developers tried to promote the place as a "'vibrant haunt, a street that never sleeps', where one can wine, dine and have street party fun and games without the transvestites" (ST 8/11/93). The new Bugis Street was very much, therefore, a compromise to "balance [the] need of attracting tourists and maintaining a wholesome

Plate 4.4 Bugis Street today: Bugis Square

source: *Interior Quarterly* June-August (1991)

Figure 4.3 Heritage reconstruction: "faithfully recreating" Bugis Street?

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atmosphere that will appeal to Singaporeans" (ST 18/4/92).

Since reopening, patronage of Bugis Square has been extremely poor and the transvestites were broached as a possible strategy in drawing back the crowds. The proponents argued that the transvestites are the star attractions and should be reinstated along with all the other accoutrements of the area. The government thought otherwise. When two spontaneous transvestite shows were staged in Bugis Square in January 1992, the law came down heavily on those responsible (ST 8/11/93). Yet, the STPB was not above organising a similar show during a luncheon it hosted for the 41st Annual Conference of the Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) in Hong Kong, and again at a Singapore Airlines' (SIA) party celebrating its inaugural flight to South Africa in 1992. Explained a STPB spokesperson:

> The whole idea was to draw the attention of those in the tourist trade to the fact that
> Bugis Street is back. It succeeded in creating publicity among the travel trade to promote
> Singapore as a fun and entertaining place. (ST 18/4/92)

In yet another surprising turn of events in April 1992, the Bugis Street Management with government endorsement, decided to hire four transsexuals as "customer relations officers" to explain the history and nightlife of Bugis Street to visitors (Figure 4.4). The transsexuals were to be employed on a month to month basis and watched by plainclothes police through close-circuit television (ST 20/4/92). However, following an avalanche of criticisms of the authorities' "crass commercialism" and its "coarse pandering to a kind of voyeurism" (BT 30-31/5/92), the policy was rescinded after only two weeks. Today, the only memory of the transvestites is evoked through the skits performed periodically in the cabaret 'Boom Boom Room'. As Leong appropriately puts it, "Bugis Street is an example of a tourist area that falls or rises according to shifting political and economic interests" (1989, 371).

The transvestite dilemma is far from over today. According to Ivan Tan, operations

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Bugis St gets transsexuals to be customer relations officers

Their job is to tell customers about former nightlife there

Maggie, a former Bugis Street habitue, is now one of four transsexual customer relations officers hired to explain the history of Bugis Street to customers. — Picture by Lim Seng Tiong.

Figure 4.4 The evolving roles of transvestites in Bugis Street: from tourist lures in the 1970s (left) to tour guides in the 1990s (right)

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manager of Bugis Street Management, plans are underway to reintroduce the transvestites as participants of "cultural dance troops" and to bring their performances out from the confines of 'Boom Boom Room' onto public stages. As cultural dancers, he hopes the government would close a blind eye and that tourists will be enticed back. Tan, however, concedes that Bugis Street is today more of a tourist attraction than a local place. Comparing it to Newton Food Centre, a government-built outdoor food centre, Tan told me: "Newton suffered for the first five years but after that, Singaporeans began to accept the place and saw it less as a tourist attraction. We hope that in time Singaporeans too will accept Bugis Street as their own" (personal interview 1995). Until that happens, Bugis Square's image remains that of a 'tourist trap'.

The transvestite dilemma underlines the radical changes that have occurred in Bugis Street, and demonstrates that no amount of reconstruction can ever duplicate the original character of the place. The residents who used to live in Bugis Street have relocated and many of the original hawkers have given up working. The spontaneous chaos of Old Bugis Street is now replaced by a bureaucratic set up geared entirely to attracting tourists and making a profit (Kuah 1994, 180). The local identity of Bugis Street has therefore been replaced by a synthetic sense of place as Kuah notes:

> The new Bugis Street, in the eyes of the local population, is reinvented for the tourists. Places and events invented for the tourists involve a sense of artificiality. Like so many socially constructed places, it represents, to the locals, an unauthentic manufactured heritage no matter how good the reproduction is. And this manufactured heritage does not belong to them. To many locals, the old represents the totality of life itself where the good and the bad came as a package deal. But the reinvented one lacks this sentiment and is an empty shell. It also serves to highlight the great divide between perceptions of what is Singaporean and what is not. In short, Bugis Street no longer belongs to the people; it has been appropriated by the STPB for the tourists. (1994, 181)

Singaporeans' attachment to place certainly "goes beyond the external facades of buildings and structures" and Bugis Street's superficial transformation has rendered it a tourist landscape (after Teo & Huang 1995, 611). As the Pannell Plan warned, Bugis Street had a "difficult-to-duplicate mix of surprise, mystery and naughtiness" and the lesson to be

learnt is that "people create their own people places, not planners or 'producers'" (Pannell Kerr Forster 1986, V26-27).

In closing, the changing status accorded to street activities illustrates the extent to which local heritage has been commodified by tourism. Both *pasar malams* and Bugis Street were originally frowned upon and banned but were later transformed and reintroduced as tourist attractions. Many limitations were imposed such as the prohibition of food stalls at night markets and the transvestites in Bugis Street. Today, *pasar malams* are staged in specified sites and for special functions while transvestite shows are organized cabaret style either for promotional purposes or under commercial license. What were once spontaneous street activities have thus become state sanctioned events organised under strictly regulated conditions. Local landscapes have thus been appropriated by tourism and drained of their special significance.

4.5 Conclusion

Often we think of tourist attractions and tourism policies as targeting the needs and interests of visitors. This is not an inaccurate assumption provided we also realise that the needs of the local community are considered as well. This latter perspective is usually overlooked and in this first data-analysis chapter, I have attempted to address the matter in three ways.

First, the role played by place factors was considered in the tourism crisis of 1983 and the subsequent emergence of the urban conservation movement in Singapore (section 4.2). Unlike 'cyclical crises' which were attributed to global economic or political problems, the 'structural problem' of 1983 was the outcome of a combination of global *and* local factors. At the local level, Singapore was perceived as expensive and lacking in Asian charm and culture. At the global level, heritage tourism was seen as providing an opportunity for Singapore to assert its uniqueness and differentiate itself from other cities.

At the same time, the cultural aspirations of Singaporeans and their interest in urban conservation were also taken into consideration.

The second issue explored in this chapter concerned tourism policies and masterplans (section 4.3). Different government policies strove to balance the goals of tourism promotion and local cultural change. In what has been termed "reconciliatory policies" (Burtenshaw *et al.* 1991, 218), the aim was to achieve some degree of "mutuality" between creating a "saleable tourism product" on the one hand and an "environment for living and working" on the other. It is argued that the STPB policies have, on the whole, attempted both goals. Attempts at bridging the tourist-local divide, however, have not always been successful as the case of heritage entrepreneurs indicate (section 4.4). In this third and final section, I looked at the commodification of heritage represented by boutique hotels and the transformation of street activities. While the needs of tourists and Singaporeans are skilfully balanced in the former, street activities are driven almost entirely by profit making and tourism. Local affiliation to street activities is therefore extremely low and these attractions are generally perceived as 'tourist traps' and visitor enclaves. The dynamic tension between tourism growth and community development introduced in this chapter will be interrogated at greater length in the case of Little India, and it is to this that I now turn.

Chapter Five

A Tourist Attraction As A Contested Landscape: The Case of Little India

> I feel that the shops have been upgraded and have lost their historic mood, the feeling is not the same as it used to be. Historic buildings always bring back memories to those who used to visit them. I find going back to old shops more pleasing than visiting new ones which are unapproachable and not entirely welcoming (Singaporean-Indian female in her 30s)

> The new shops are attractive for tourists and bring in money. I don't know if the locals appreciate them though (Swiss female tourist in her 20s)

5.1 Introduction

Having looked at the urban conservation movement and the reconstruction of Bugis Street, the discussion now turns to the Little India Historic District. Relph's insider-outsider distinction is used to frame my discussion of Little India as a contested site. Heritage conservation has introduced new visitors and land uses to Little India, while also encouraging a new urban aesthetics to evolve. The result is an interface between the new and old, tourist and local, the Indian and non-Indian all of which are occurring simultaneously with varying outcomes. As David Ley observed and my discussion will exemplify, the city is a "place of conflict" and its changing spatial form "the negotiated outcome" between diverse groups with asymmetrical access to power (1983, 280-1).

To set the context, this chapter begins with a brief history of Little India's evolution from a residential and commercial site to its present status as a conservation district and tourist attraction (section 5.2). Urban areas have popularly been depicted as 'sites of struggle' or 'contested landscapes' between groups of people with different claims on place. The insider-outsider relationship in Little India expands upon this idea along three

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axes. I begin with the 'tourist versus local' relationship which is usually considered the primary conflict (section 5.3) followed by a look at racial contestation (section 5.4). Finally, I shall investigate public reactions towards government policies of conservation in Little India (section 5.5). As we shall see, landscape contestation is a dynamic process comprising many insider/outsider factions and diverse insider/outsider relationships. The tourist-local interaction is only one component of a larger negotiation over place. At the same time, insider-outsider interactions are not always conflictual or combatory, nor are insider groups necessarily weak or passive in the face of external pressures.

5.2 From Serangoon Road to Little India: A Brief History

Little India, or Serangoon Road as it is originally known, was exceptional among the areas to be conserved in Singapore because unlike Chinatown, Kampong Glam and the Civic and Cultural District, it was never designated as an ethnically-exclusive residential enclave in the Raffles' Town Plan of 1823 (see Figure 5.1). In this plan, the various ethnic groups of the Chinese, Malays, Indians and Europeans who inhabited the island after it was colonised by Stamford Raffles in 1819 were segregated by a settlement pattern based on strict racial and functional division. The Indians were consigned to an area in High/Market/Chulia Streets near to Singapore River in the southern coast ('Chuliah Campong'). At this time, what was to become the 'new' Indian enclave of Serangoon Road was a peripheral road connecting the settlements in the south with Serangoon harbour in the north (see Figure 5.1).

The influx of Indians to Serangoon Road from the mid-19th Century onwards was stimulated by two factors: a burgeoning cattle industry in the area and an Indian-convict jail in adjacent Bras Basah Road. Both provided the Indian community employment opportunities and served as a magnet for new immigrants. By the late 19th Century, Serangoon Road's "reputation as a network of [Indian] community comfort, sustenance,

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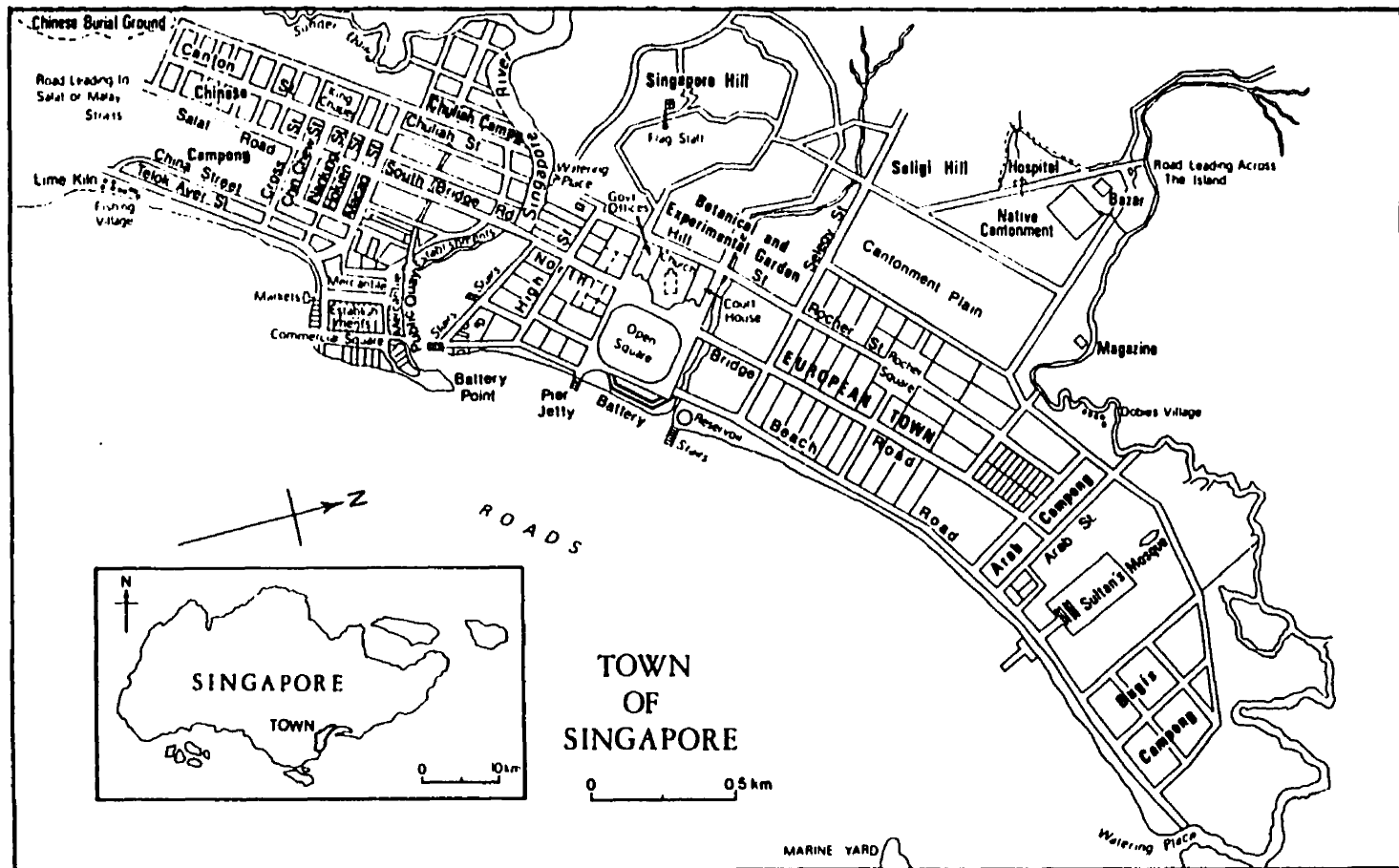
note: The present day Serangoon Road is marked out as the "road leading across the island" in the Raffles' Town Plan of 1823. The Chinese residential area is represented by the "Chinese Campong", the Indian area as "Chuliah Campg", the Malay enclave as "Bugis Campong" and "Arab Campong" and the Colonial area as "European Town". (Source: Jackson plan of the town 1823 taken from Teo & Savage 1991, 316)

Figure 5.1 Raffles' Town Plan of Singapore (1823)

and opportunity" was established and non-cattle related activities mainly in the commercial, retail and construction sectors were buoyed by the ever expanding Indian population (Siddique & Shotam 1990, 71). The changing focus from cattle to people reached a peak in the early 20th Century, and the diminution of the cattle trade in the 1930s ushered Serangoon Road's painless transition to a commercial and residential site. Many of the cattle stablings were thus converted to residences and shops more popularly referred to as 'shophouses'.

The relative stability of Serangoon Road as a commercial-residential area was disrupted by two events. Firstly by the onset of the Second World War and the consequent occupation of Singapore by the Japanese forces between 1941 and 1944. And secondly in the 1960-70s when many Indian residents moved out to public housing estates and private residences in newly established satellite towns in the country. While the first had the effect of forcing many merchants to return to India, the latter led to their dispersion within the country, the combined outcome of both saw a diminution in Serangoon Road's residential population and its consequent new-found status as a "commercial centre catering to Indians island-wide" (URA 1995, 12). From the 1970s onwards as well, the government's emphasis on urban renewal and slum clearance aided by the Land Acquisition Act (1966) also facilitated widespread changes in the Serangoon landscape. Dilapidated shophouses were demolished and public housing projects and modern carparks were built in designated areas such as Zhu Jiao Centre (1981) and Kerbau Road (late 1980s), the two sites where my resident survey was conducted (Figure 5.2).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Singapore's economic progress and Singaporeans' rising affluence meant that planning priorities could now shift to 'quality of life' issues expressed in demands for distinctive urban environments and cultural pursuits. Symptomatic of this shift was the rethinking of state policies on urban renewal and the call for conservation of historic areas and buildings as spelt out by the URA's Conservation Master Plan in 1986, and the publication of conservation manuals for

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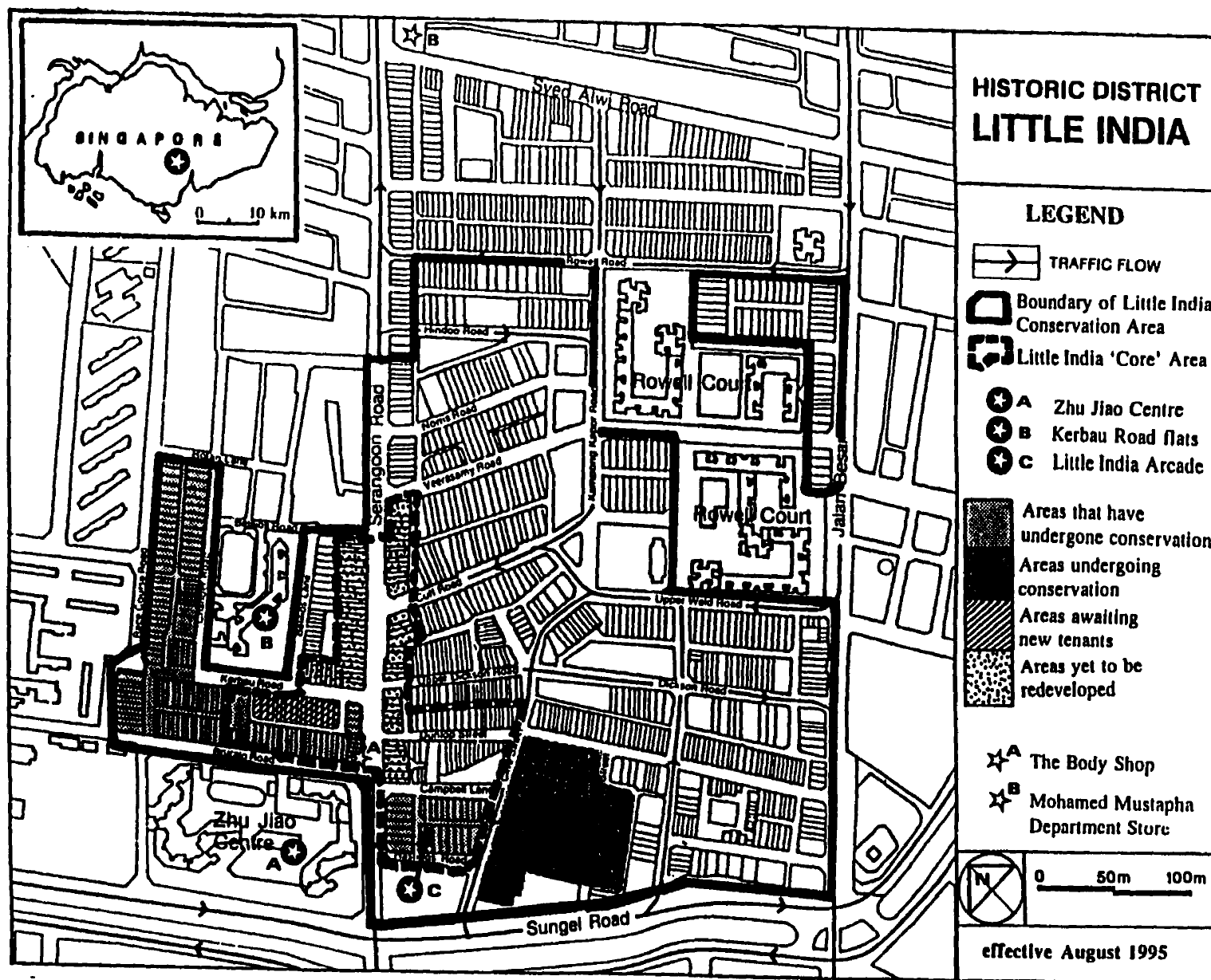
Figure 5.2 The Little India Historic District and conservation area

Chinatown, Kampong Glam and Little India in 1988. Under this new perspective, ethnic-historic sites were viewed as repositories of the nation's fast-disappearing heritage and cultural anchors that gave young Singaporeans a tangible link to their traditions. In the face of the 1983 tourism downturn, conserving multiethnic districts was also thought to impart a sense of local identity. As the first tourism masterplan explained, urban revitalisation will afford "Singapore the opportunity to have something unique, not easily duplicated in other countries of the world in such a diverse and condensed form" (MTI 1986b, 7). What were once ethnic residential sites have thus been "elevated to national importance" not only as civic assets but also as tourism resources (Yeoh & Kong 1994, 29).

On 7 July 1989, an area of thirteen hectares around Serangoon Road (encompassing 900 shophouses) was gazetted as the 'Little India Historic District' (Plate 5.1). The URA stipulated that any structure to be removed, renovated or built had to be granted prior approval. The government's vision was to develop Little India as a "distinct historic district within which dwells the heart of the Singaporean Indian heritage" (URA *A Future With A Past*, undated, unpaged), and in so doing contribute to a "future city of considerable character, charm, interest and livability" (Pannell Kerr Forster 1986, IV-24).

To realise the goals of urban redevelopment, a number of plans were implemented in Little India. First was the eradication of the Rent Control Act originally conceived by the colonial government to protect tenants from excessive rents charged by landlords. While this Act served the interests of inhabitants during the post-war period of severe housing shortage, it had become an anachronistic piece of legislation which impeded landlords of rent-controlled properties from upgrading their properties in the 1980s. Phasing out rent control occurred in four stages with the first targeted at conservation districts in March 1989. Owners of shophouses in Little India and elsewhere thus took the opportunity to either refurbish their properties and increase their rental charges, or sell them through the URA's 'sale of sites' tender system. Either way, many traditional merchants and original residents were evicted from the conservation districts because of their inability to afford

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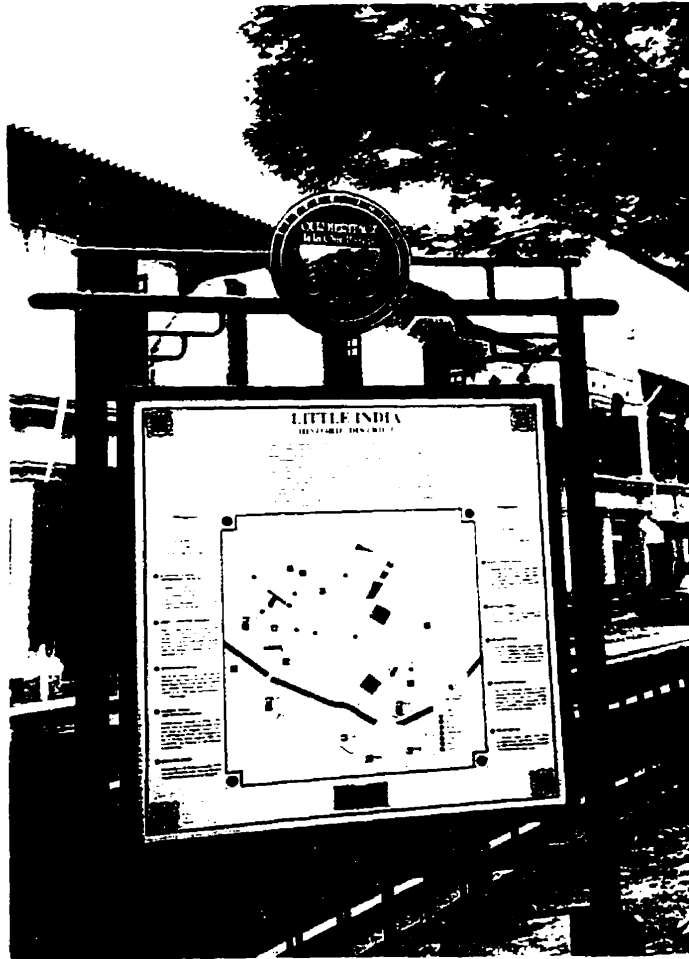
Little India is a state-designated Historic District (Plate 5.1, above). As with other historic districts in Singapore, conservation in Little India has occurred in stages resulting in a 'landscape of contrasts' (Plate 5.2, below). Plate 5.2 shows the Kerbau Road shophouses in the foreground and Zhu Jiao Centre flats in the right background

the new rent or bid for the newly expensive shophouses. Thus far in Little India, there have been three phases of conservation through this procedure of 'eviction/upgrading/and resale' at Buffalo/Kerbau/Serangoon Roads (phase 1) and Madras Street/Dalhousie Lane/Perak Road (phases 2 and 3)[1]. Figure 5.2 shows the various precincts which have undergone conservation as well as those undergoing conservation, awaiting sale and those yet to be redeveloped (Plate 5.2).

Little India's conservation was also spearheaded by the adaptive re-use of the Little India Arcade (LIA hereafter) which opened in April 1995. Located at the gateway to Little India (Figure 5.2, Plate 5.3), the LIA is co-owned by the Hindu Endowments Board (HEB, 60% share) and the Development Bank of Singapore Land (DBS Land, 40% share). The LIA project is developed, marketed and managed by Raffles International Pte. Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of DBS Land.

Comprising 59 shops, sixteen food stalls and offices, the LIA boasts an eclectic mix of Indian shops and services housed within a partially air-conditioned complex adapted from three blocks of 1913 shophouses. Sixteen traditional bazaar vendors (formerly itinerant stalls and street hawkers) are also permanently based in an outdoor atrium set up in the back alley of the shophouses. According to the HEB, 90 per cent of the tenants are Indians and 60 per cent were former occupants of the shophouses (ST 16/4/95). The aim of the LIA is to serve as a microcosm of all that is unique to Little India by retaining "the original flavour of Serangoon Road" while ensuring that strict standards of hygiene, public cleanliness and safety are maintained (ST 28/9/93). Like Bugis Street, the LIA represents a heritage project that is government-sanctioned (URA approved), privately-

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[1] In the acquisition process, evicted tenants are given compensations but no tax incentives or 'priority of placement' schemes are provided to attract them back. The sale of shophouses through the public tender system thus creates a 'level playing field' "ensur[ing] that members of the public have an equal opportunity in the development of the sites" (ST 22/9/90). Market forces thus determine the price of each shophouse and the rental level. According to a *Straits Times* report, the URA principle when it comes to economics reads as follows: "there is nothing wrong with making money out of old buildings" and "there is nothing wrong with having business mix determined by who can afford to pay the most" (29/7/90).

Little India Arcade (Plate 5.3): "with its strategic location and exciting concept, this development is poised to be the catalyst for the revitalisation of the Little India district" (Raffles International Ltd. *LIA Tenant Design Criteria Manual* undated, 2)

owned (by the HEB and DBS Land) and commercially-managed (Raffles International).

At this point, two qualifications must be made to set the context of Little India's conservation. First, while the whole of Little India has been designated a conservation area, only a select zone within it has undergone and will continue to undergo the intensive process of eviction/renovation/and resale. The URA has highlighted a 'core' in Little India which is "the area containing the greatest density of Indian trades" and where the "distinctive characteristics of Little India will be defined" (URA 1988, 28; see Figure 5.2). It is here too that most of the changes have taken place and where the trade mix is regulated by the URA[2]. While dramatic changes have taken place at the core, non-core areas which comprise mainly residences have mainly been spared.

A second point pertains to Little India within the wider scheme of the national conservation movement. Although the URA's conservation manuals for Chinatown, Little India and Kampong Glam were released at the same time (1988), the actual process of urban redevelopment has been staggered to allow for a 'trial and error' approach to the whole exercise. The 'Chinatown experiment' which began with the conservation of Tanjong Pagar (completed in 1989) was followed by Little India in the early 1990s and Kampong Glam in 1994. Refinements to and changes in conservation policies have thus been introduced at each stage.

The evolution of Serangoon Road has witnessed many incarnations in the landscape with the one constant being its Indian identity and community. In the 1990s, this identity has proven invaluable to Little India's coming of age as one of Singapore's foremost conservation districts and cultural sites. As a heritage area, the URA's vision is to enhance Little India's unique character in tandem with the changes in its retail land use.

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[2] Trade mix is regulated only in so far that the URA has drawn up a list of 'significant' and 'general' uses to be encouraged in Little India, and 'pollutive' or 'incompatible' uses to be prohibited (URA 1988, Appendix II). The regulation also insists that the first storey of each shophouse must be given to commercial use while the second could be for residential or office use. The final tenancy make-up, however, is entirely dependent on market forces and the merchants' ability to pay the rent.

In short, "to retain and enhance existing activities which are part of the historical and cultural heritage" of the site while simultaneously "consolidating the area with new [trades]....and introduc[ing] appropriate new features to further enhance the identity of the place" (URA 1988, 27). According to Liu. T.K., then URA chief executive officer, conservation entails changes because "lifestyles at the time of restoration and conservation are only a snapshot in historical progression...[and t]here is no earthly justification to say that you must freeze at the point of restoration, because lifestyles have been changing since the buildings were built" (ST 29/7/90). Urban conservation in Singapore is therefore not about preserving buildings "unaltered, embalmed, or made into museum pieces" (Burke 1976, 133) but a process whereby buildings are architecturally maintained and "functionally retouched to meet contemporary standards of living" (Vuconic & Tkalac 1984, 603).

The changes occurring in Little India today parallel the global urban redevelopment trend often termed the 'post-modernisation of cities' (see Dear 1986; Harvey 1987, 1989b; Mullins 1991; Knox 1992). The redevelopment of blighted areas for pleasure consumption, the emphasis on heritage-theme projects and the clash between traditional users and new enterprises characterise contemporary urban land use. How is this ideology of conservation viewed by the general public? To what extent has conservation succeeded in ensuring a mix of the old and new, and to what extent have there been conflicts between tourists and locals, and between Indians and non-Indians? The next three sections will explore these questions beginning with a look at the tourist-local relationship.

5.3 Little India: A Contested Site Between Tourists and Singaporeans

Apart from being a hub of Indian community life in Singapore, Little India is also Singapore's fifth most popular tourist attraction luring 19.5 per cent of visitors in 1993

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(STPB 1993b, 75). This section examines whether Little India's role as a 'tourist attraction' conflicts with its role as a 'place for local residents'. Two points are explored: whether the merchants in Little India are 'tourist-oriented' or 'Singaporean-geared' (section 5.3.1) and whether the benefits derived from conservation are equally shared by various groups in the area (section 5.3.2).

5.3.1 Little India's Merchants: Tourist-Geared or Singaporean-Oriented?

There is little evidence to support the argument that the retail outlets in Little India are targeted primarily towards 'outsider' tourists at the expense of 'insider' Singaporeans. This contention is supported by three sets of data gleaned from my questionnaire survey. In exploring the significance of tourism as a deciding factor for setting up business in Little India, only a minority of merchants felt it to be either 'very important' (24.4 per cent) or 'quite important' (14.6 per cent) (Table 5.1). By comparison, an overwhelming 43.9 per cent felt tourism to be of 'no importance at all' and another 14.6 per cent considered tourism 'not very important'. However, the argument that 'new merchants' are more tourist oriented than 'old merchants' holds some truth[3]. Indeed, 50.0 per cent of the new merchants cited tourism as either 'very important' or 'quite important' while 45.0 per cent felt otherwise. In contrast, only 28.6 per cent of the 'older' merchants considered tourism 'very important' or 'quite important' while 71.4 per cent had contrary opinions.

Among the specific reasons for setting up shop in Little India, tourism did not feature as a major factor (Table 5.2). Only 6.7 per cent of shop owners considered tourism the prime reason while the majority cited either the 'pull of the Indian' (53.3 per cent) or emotional attachment to site (22.2 per cent). More than just a tourist attraction, Little

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[3] In Tables 5.1 and 5.3, 'new merchants' refer to either those who have recently set up businesses and whose previous retail location is outside Little India (4.9 per cent), or those whose first site of business is in Little India (43.9 per cent). 'Old merchants' on the other hand refer to those whose retail outlet has always been in the same locale (17.1 per cent), or in another location but within the Little India conservation area (34.1 per cent).

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Importance of tourism as a decision to locate in Little India \ Original location of outlet	'Old' Retailers		'New' Retailers		Total (n) (% of total number of retailers)
	same site as previously	in Little India but at a different site	outside Little India	no previous site	
Very important	0	5	0	5	10 (24.4)
Quite important	1	0	0	5	6 (14.6)
Not very important	1	3	1	1	6 (14.6)
No importance at all	5	6	1	6	18 (43.9)
No opinion	0	0	0	1	1 (2.4)
Total (n) (% of total number of retailers)	7 (17.1)	14 (34.1)	2 (4.9)	18 (43.9)	41 (100.0)

note: please refer to footnote (3) on what is meant by 'new' and 'old' retailers in Little India

Table 5.1 The importance of tourism as a deciding factor for retailers locating their outlets in Little India

Reasons why merchants come to Little India:	Number	Percentage
1. Central location for things/people associated with being 'Indian':	23	51.1
(a) "we cater to Indian clients"	(11)	(24.4)
(b) "we sell Indian products"	(9)	(20.0)
(c) "we are Indians"	(3)	(6.7)
2. Emotional attachment to Little India eg. lived/worked here previously, family inheritance	10	22.2
3. Popular shopping site for everybody	4	8.9
4. Presence of tourists/popular tourist attraction	3	6.7
5. Trying out market potential of site	2	4.4
6. other reasons	3	6.7
Total	45[1]	100.0

1. The total number of responses (45) exceeds the total number of merchants polled (41) because of multiple responses.

Table 5.2 Main reasons merchants cite for locating their outlets in Little India

India is perceived by merchants as a shopping destination for Indians. The presence of Indian customers, the sale of Indian wares and the historical attachment of merchants to an 'Indian locale' are the overriding reasons why many have chosen to be there. It is sensible that many Indian tradespeople would want to be in Serangoon Road just as it is logically accepted that the core clientele would mainly be Indians:

> often reactions to questions pertaining to the rationale for placing such importance in Serangoon Road provoke jokes at the perceived ignorance inherent in such questions. It is considered common-sense knowledge that to sell and/or produce Indian wares/food, one has to set up shop in a recognised Indian community space. (Siddique & Shotam 1990, 129)

Clearly, therefore, 'Indian ambience' rather than 'tourism potential' is the *raison d'etre* for the conservation site. It is in this spirit that the merchant at 'Alarmkara' told me: "Orchard Road is Westernised but Serangoon Road is Indian. My goods are from India and shoppers know they can come to Little India to get Indian things."

In analysing the role of tourism further, the clientele profiles of the shops were investigated. Table 5.3 indicates that Singaporeans featured more prominently than tourists for the majority of shops. Singaporeans comprised at least half the clientele base for 65.9 per cent of shops of which 12.2 per cent claimed a 100 per cent Singaporean market. Even new merchants for whom tourism is an important factor concede the dominance of the local market. Marian Das of 'Yogams', for example, was attracted to LIA because of its tourism potential. Today, instead, she receives a 70-80 per cent share of Singaporeans and her shop now stocks handphones and pagers aimed at the local market. Similarly R. Murali of 'V.K.K. and Sons', a shop selling saris and household items told me, "we should not depend only on tourists because their purchasing power will decrease with a stronger Singaporean dollar -- so, we are now trying to stock products for Singaporeans as well." Although tourism remains an important lure for new merchants, the local market is ignored at their own peril.

The need to strike a balance between tourists and Singaporeans constitutes a key

Original location of outlet / Market share of Singaporean patrons	'Old' Retailers		'New' Retailers		Total (n) (% of total number of retailers)
	same site as previously	in Little India but at a different site	outside Little India	no previous site	
less than or equal to 25 %	1	0	0	3	4 (9.8)
26 - 50 %	1	4	1	4	10 (24.4)
51 - 75 %	0	3	0	2	5 (12.2)
75 - 99 %	3	5	1	8	17 (41.5)
100 %	2	2	0	1	5 (12.2)
Total (n) (% of total number of retailers)	7 (17.1)	14 (34.1)	2 (4.9)	18 (43.9)	41 (100.0)

Table 5.3 The proportion of Singaporean clients in the shops of Little India

element in the development of the LIA. Although interviewees expressed differing opinions on their desired market profile, there is consensus that both groups should be catered to and are equally essential to the economic and cultural well being of the area. According to the LIA Pte. Ltd., the aim is to attract a daily crowd of 20,000 visitors with a 70/30 split between locals and tourists (*LIA Tenant Design Criteria Manual* undated, 3). Rajahkumar Chandra of 'Jothi Store and Flower Shop' argued that the optimal mix should be in the region of 80 per cent Singaporeans and 20 per cent tourists. Speaking on behalf of Raffles International, LIA's marketing and managing agent James Ong concurred that heritage projects must be 'tourist-directed' but Singaporeans remain an important consideration:

> We [Raffles International] are committed to developing Singapore's tourism potential. But there is more to our goal than just financial output. We also embark on projects that develop our national pride....The premise for all our developments is to cater to 60 per cent tourists and 40 per cent locals. The very fact that we are dealing with heritage, we know tourists would be interested because that's something uniquely Singaporean. But we must not only have tourist shops but also cater to Singaporeans. We will never develop a tourist trap....[for t]ourists like to go where locals go, they want to see local people, sample local food, and enjoy local culture. If they go to a tourist trap, they know its not going to be value for money. They prefer to shop where Singaporeans go shopping. (personal interview 1995)

All of the above opinions thus echo Smith's view that "contrived and artificial places" do not appeal to locals and tourists and "today's travellers expect to experience real historical places with natural, local life" (Smith 1988, 252). Little India and LIA's success thus depends on their ability to court both market groups.

Rather than a site of conflict, therefore, the data suggests that Little India plays a dual role as tourist attraction *and* a local retail centre. These roles are not mutually exclusive since tourists are attracted by the "cultural exoticism of the local population and its artifacts" (Van den Berge & Keyes 1984, 345) whereas locals go there to Little India to shop and eat. According to my survey, 72.2 per cent of tourists came to sightsee and 26.6 per cent for shopping/eating. In contrast, 62.0 per cent of Singaporean visitors came to shop/dine, 15.5 per cent went sightseeing while others were just passing through. Little

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India's multiplicity of functions illustrates what Ashworth and Tunbridge have referred to as a "multifunctional urban space" catering to a "multimotivated user" (1990, 90). Insider needs are therefore not necessarily sacrificed because of outsider interests.

5.3.2 Social Benefits and Costs

Although conflicts between tourists and Singaporeans appear minimal, this is not to say that everybody benefits equally from the conservation programme in Little India. As Jackson (1992, 58) asks: "Who gains and who loses from contemporary urban change? What aspects of the 'inner-city problem' are 'solved' by gentrification and what new problems are created?" This section sheds light on the above questions by examining the social costs and benefits brought about by conservation and how these are shared between tourists, local visitors and residents in Little India. Comparable data on Chinatown (Lau 1993; Kong & Yeoh 1994; Yeoh & Lau 1995) and the Civic and Cultural District (Teo & Huang 1995) are also used to support my arguments.

Table 5.4 summarises the survey findings. An immediate observation must be made of the divergence between visitors *to* Little India (that is, Singaporeans visiting the place but who reside elsewhere, as well as foreign tourists) and residents *of* Little India pertaining to statement number one. While 56.3 per cent of local visitors and 45.6 per cent of tourists either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "shops/restaurants in the conservation area cater to my needs and interests", only 26.4 per cent of residents concurred. Conversely, 31.5 per cent of residents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the above statement compared with only 15.2 per cent of tourists and 8.5 per cent of local visitors.

It is my opinion that conservation has turned Little India's core area into a visitor-oriented retail district with shops and restaurants catering to a 'culture of consumption'. The URA maintains that tenancy and rental charges in conserved shophouses must be

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Statement A: tourists (41) B: local visitor (71) C: resident (76) (all figures in %)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
1. "The shops and restaurants in Little India's conservation area cater to my needs and interests"	A: 8.9 B: 16.9 C: 5.3	A: 36.7 B: 39.4 C: 21.1	A: 35.4 B: 35.2 C: 40.2	A: 12.7 B: 8.5 C: 28.9	A: 2.5 B: 0.0 C: 2.6	A: 3.8 B: 0.0 C: 1.3
2. "The prices of food and goods in Little India's conservation area are reasonable and not too expensive"	A: 12.7 B: 14.1 C: 7.9	A: 57.0 B: 43.7 C: 55.2	A: 15.2 B: 28.2 C: 26.3	A: 7.6 B: 11.3 C: 6.6	A: 0.0 B: 1.4 C: 0.0	A: 7.6 B: 1.4 C: 3.9
3. "Because of conservation, Little India has become a tourist attraction rather than a place for Singaporeans"	A: 20.3 B: 11.3 C: 17.1	A: 48.1 B: 46.5 C: 38.2	A: 17.7 B: 19.7 C: 11.8	A: 7.6 B: 19.7 C: 27.6	A: 1.3 B: 1.4 C: 6.6	A: 5.1 B: 1.4 C: 1.3

Table 5.4 A cross comparison of respondents' attitudes towards various issues in Little India

determined by free-market forces and any financially able enterprise is welcome. This ruling has in turn attracted merchants specialising in high turnover goods such as Indian handicrafts, curios and clothing rather than shops selling household items, groceries and sundry goods. The LIA in particular suffers from this problem because tenancy make-up is based entirely on the developer's perception of what visitors would want to see rather than a spontaneous outcome of market forces. Complaining of the small number of residents patronising the arcade, the merchant at 'K.S. Mohamed Hanifa and Company' explained:

> The government is moving in the right direction but conservation makes the place sanitised, new and totally dead. Singaporeans are not interested in visiting the place more than once. The trade mix [in LIA] is pushed upon us whereas in the past it evolved based on free enterprise, a natural selection. Now the mix is pre-chosen and continuity with the past is lost.

When asked of her response to the new shops, a British tourist simply replied: "[they] are attractive for tourists and it brings in money [but] I don't know if the locals appreciate them though." An Indian Singaporean further adds that "Everything looks so new and westernised that the 'flavour' of India seems to be missing....efforts must be taken to preserve the Indian touch and cater to the local population." Conservation in Little India, therefore, is not unlike what some have observed as a global trend in urban rejuvenation where "elegant tourist encampments" are created (Lynch 1976, 12) to promote "shallow commercialism and consumerism" (Urry 1990b, 110). The needs of residents are marginalised because they do not sufficiently sustain the high earnings of merchants.

Another point to be made is the divergence in opinion between Singaporean visitors and local residents of Little India. Although both groups are Singaporeans, their needs are different. Residents visit the shops mainly for everyday needs such as household goods and groceries, as opposed to local visitors who flock to the area for specialty items like saris, religious paraphernalia and Indian spices (Siddique & Shotam 1990; personal interviews). The conservation programme has introduced many new shops to Little India and while these may not be tourist-geared, they certainly benefit 'outsider' visitors more

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than they do 'insider' residents. The LIA epitomises this problem. Singaporean visitors and tourists marvel at the aesthetic improvements in the area whereas residents are repelled by the high prices and loss of shops that once catered to their needs. As an Indian resident complained,

> All this upgrading benefits tourists and only a few Singaporeans. Conservation creates a pleasant place to visit and look at, but behind the scene we are the ones paying for high rents and expensive goods. Tourists only come once and buy just a few things - they don't suffer like us.

This problem in Little India is similar to the ones witnessed in Tanjong Pagar (Chinatown) and the Civic and Cultural District. In the latter, Teo and Huang describe its conservation programme as "'elitist' and removed from the lived experiences of the locals" (Teo & Huang 1995, 593). As for Chinatown, data findings confirm that 60.2 per cent of Singaporeans believe that conservation is targeted at tourists, and this sentiment is strongest for residents who once lived there and have since been evicted as a result of redevelopment (Lau 1993, 87). As Lau explains, ex-residents are wary of the alleged benefits of conservation compared to other locals visiting or working in the area because "many of the residents have lost what was formerly their community, and the special relationship they had with the place. The benefits of conservation does (sic) not seem to 'compensate' them for this loss" (1993, 87). In Little India as well, it appears that "preservation of the physical remnants of the historical city has superseded attention to the human ecologies that produced and inhabit them" (Sorkin 1992, xiv).

It is for the above reasons that most respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with statement number three, that is, "because of conservation, Little India has become a tourist attraction rather than a place for Singaporeans". Overwhelmingly, 68.4 per cent of tourists concurred with the statement followed by 57.8 per cent of local visitors and 55.3 per cent of residents (Table 5.4). While it is more accurate to describe Little India as geared towards 'visitors' rather than 'foreign tourists', the fact remains that respondents

are sceptical of the local benefits of conservation.

Little India is perceived as a 'themed retail centre' rather than an 'everyday landscape for its people'. Although most agree that prices have remained reasonable and not too expensive (Table 5.4), they point to the souvenir shops, the modern touches in LIA and the 'Heritage Storyboards' (for example, Plate 5.1) as indicators of 'touristification' (after Young 1983). Hence, while one tourist viewed the LIA as "artificial and contrived....cynically maintained as a tourist attraction", another remarked about its "bright modern colours and products that reflect more of what tourists want to buy than what Indians themselves need." In short, every evidence of structural change is construed as a government ploy aimed at profit maximisation, and respondents are unconvinced that 'tourism promotion' and 'heritage for the people' are compatible goals. This view parallels Yeoh and Kong's (1994, 32) work on Kreta Ayer (Chinatown) in which they argue that although Singaporeans appreciate the government's efforts, they nonetheless perceive the conserved landscape as "another promotional effort for the tourists, far removed from the practicalities of their own daily lives." Like Little India, Chinatown is an anachronism - "distinctively charming but impractical and unaffordable" (Yeoh & Kong 1994, 32).

In closing, Section 5.3 reveals that merchants in Little India cater to both tourists and Singaporeans, and the conservation area is at once a tourist sightseeing spot and a shopping/dining area for locals. Data findings do not suggest any conflict between the 'outsider tourist' and the 'insider local'. However, a case can be made to argue that the shops and restaurants in Little India do cater to the needs of outsiders visiting the area rather than insiders living there. This echoes the work of Shaw (1992) who explored the alleged local benefits derived from cultural tourism in Manchester. According to him, the development of cultural projects only benefitted the upper-middle classes and the boom in employment advantaged mainly non-residents (Shaw 1992, 208-10). In Little India too, conservation benefits many Singaporeans but not necessarily those living in the area. While prices have remained reasonable, prioritising the needs of visitors above those of residents has transformed Little India into a "stage set" (Lynch 1972, 12) where the

struggle between Singaporean-visitors and site-residents are enacted.

5.4 Little India as a Racially Contested Landscape

The insider-outsider distinction has thus far framed our discussion of tourist-local interaction. This section explores another axis along which the contestation process may be dissected along racial lines. Extending the inside-outside concept further, this section explores the tensions between insider groups who feel an inherent sense of belonging to the Indian locale, and outsider groups whose relationship with the place is more ephemeral. Employing a qualitative analysis of respondent opinions, three areas of racial tensions are examined: between Indian and non-Indian merchants (section 5.4.1), between Indian tourists and Western visitors (section 5.4.2) and between Indian migrant workers and Chinese residents (section 5.4.3).

5.4.1 Little India as an 'Indian-Only' Site: Anti-Chinese Sentiments

There exists a strong feeling among the Indians in Little India that non-Indian businesses should be kept to a minimum. This pro-Indian sentiment arises from fears that urban redevelopment would introduce alien enterprises into the area. As one tourist succinctly put it, "the new shops must have at least some connection with India, the Indians and their culture." The notion of 'Little India for the Indians' is anchored around one main theme: a strong anti-Chinese feeling.

By name and historical association, Little India is a place of Indian community but increasingly businesses owned by Chinese merchants have emerged. The block of conserved shophouses along Serangoon Road between Buffalo and Kerbau Roads, for example, is occupied by a Chinese owned jewellery outlet, a Chinese fashion accessories shop and the Western outlet 'The Body Shop'. Only one out of the nine units here is

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Indian-owned. Likewise, of the thirteen jewellery outlets in the core, five are Chinese managed. Although Indians dominate the pre-conservation shophouses, many Chinese occupy the newly conserved units presaging a trend of increased non-Indian participation in the future. An example is Kerbau Hotel, a 31 room establishment owned by a Chinese and sprawled across five shophouses formerly occupied by Indian groceries and sundry shops (Plates 5.4 and 5.5). K.T. Ang the manager told me the hotel is a "definite improvement" over the previous uses because of structural improvements to the buildings and increased economic viability. Liu T.K. of the URA agrees that new uses should be encouraged because "lifestyle in these old areas is undesirable. The residents are old and poor, the trades are dying and many of the buildings are fire hazards" (ST 29/7/90).

Many Indians, however, believe Indian merchants have a natural 'insider' right to the conservation area. V. Nathaji of 'Vishnu Music Centre' said: "more than half the new shops are owned by Chinese because so long as they can do business here, they are welcomed. Indians can't afford to stay here but we should [ideally] have only Indian merchants." The owner of 'Yogams' went further to say that local Indian identity would be jeopardised by the 'outsider' Chinese presence:

> Refurbishment has led to the loss of the old flavour. Well arranged shops are not a reflection of [old] Little India....All shops must be Indian owned, and the goods should have an Indian flavour. There are just too many Chinese goldsmiths - a taxi driver described it as Little China instead. We must insist on having only Indians here.

Chinese and Malay owned shops in the LIA, according to the manager of 'Selmor Restaurant', would only "spoil the character of the place." Little India's unique identity is best preserved by retaining its Indian merchants and businesses rather than allowing market forces to facilitate the entry of non-Indian enterprises. The crux of the matter it appears, therefore, is not whether merchants are 'new or old' or whether they cater to 'tourists or locals', but hinges around the delicate issues of ethnicity and race.

- The disdain towards Chinese merchants also extends to what some interviewees

The invasion of Chinese merchants in Little India has begun as exemplified by the Kerbau Hotel (Plate 5.4, above), and is expected to continue as new businesses flood the shophouses slated for opening soon (Plate 5.5, below)
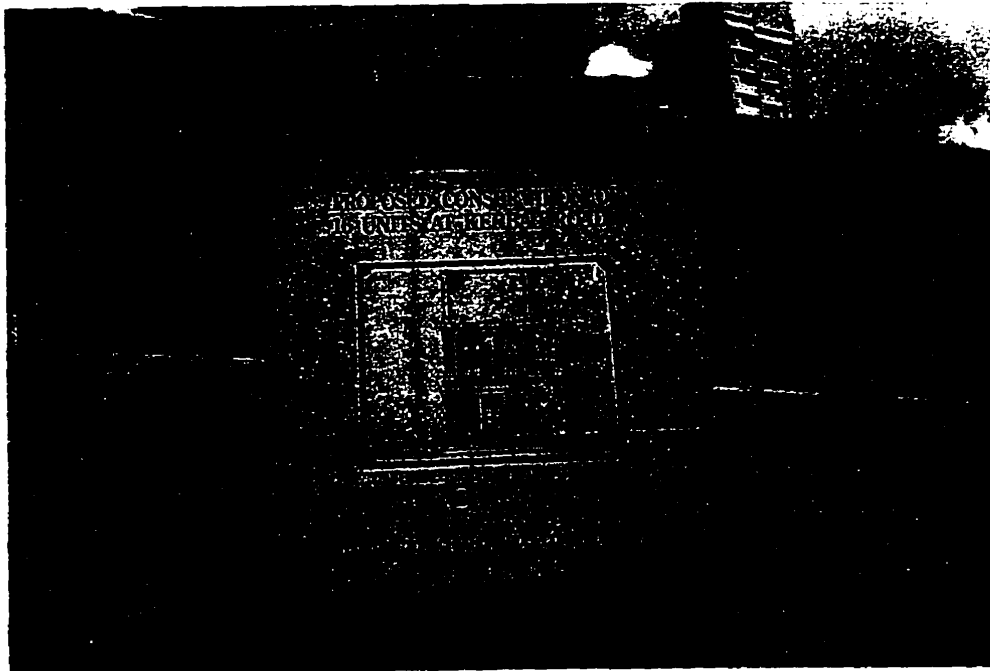
perceive as a Chinese-mindset in government policies. The stereotypical attributes of the industrious and profit-making Chinese are conflated with the state policy of selling shophouses through tender, and conservation is suspiciously regarded as one way by the government to benefit the majority Chinese at the expense of the minority Indian population. Consigning parts of Little India to the bulldozer in the early 1980s, and the dispossession of merchants by redevelopment in the nineties thus reflect a "double bias" (Tunbridge 1984, 172) towards the economically disadvantaged Indians. The government is perceived as unsympathetic towards the Indian community as the following two responses illustrate. Govindasamy, an ex-resident of Little India said:

> Conservation is a government policy, it's not by the Indian people. We didn't ask for it. Singapore is too modern and the government has the forethought (sic) to conserve. Its not a people's decision, its the government's decision and we are all obedient to the law.

Echoing a similar view was a resident who argued:

> If you want Little India to be 'old Singapore', don't change anything at all! Once the government takes over, it becomes a failure. Indians should be allowed to do anything they want but within a framework of development.

When reminded that the Chinese community of Chinatown was similarly affected by conservation efforts in Tanjong Pagar and Kreta Ayer, respondents targeted the fact that Singapore is essentially a Chinese city whereas Little India represents an exclusive Indian area. As one merchant appropriately put it, "when you're a minority in a country, the ethnic area becomes significant to you. Chinatown in Singapore isn't significant but Little India is." The presence of Chinese and Western outlets is thus viewed as inappropriate use of land since they can easily be located anywhere else in the city. In this vein, Chandrani Mallick a fashion designer in LIA said:

> As long as its an Indian shop, no problem. But if its a Chinese restaurant, that's already all over the place, and Little India should be for Indians. 'The Body Shop' can go everywhere, so why must they come here?

Conservation is thus politicised pitting the Indians against the Chinese and a pro-Chinese government, and ethnicity has become a primary axis of tension. These latent tensions which range from a sense of resignation to outrage is potentially dangerous in multicultural Singapore. As Tunbridge noted, "[i]t is in the truly plural societies that our question of 'whose heritage' comes to a head....urban heritage conservation becomes a political exercise, frequently with sinister overtones for those groups out of power" (1984, 174).

Wariness towards the Chinese presence is also reflected through the various calls by Indian informants to regulate the inflow of non-Indian businesses so as not to 'tip the balance'. Unlike previous opinions that called for only Indian businesses, there is a feeling here as one visitor puts it that "a little deviation is ok, but not too much." Chinese and fast-food outlets *do* have a right to Little India but there should be a limit to their involvement so as not to "dilute" or "spoil" the local Indian identity. As the manager of 'Gokulan Jewels and Crafts' said:

> We don't mind if 'Burger King' exists at the fringe but we don't want them to overtake Indian shops. We don't want them to be prominent but we don't mind their being here at all.

Alternatively, some have suggested that Indian merchants should be prioritised in their bids for shop units failing which non-Indian businesses may be welcomed. Accompanying the entry of non-Indian businesses, efforts must also be taken to 'shore up' the visible and symbolic aspects of Indian identity so as to remind people that the area *is* Indian after all. This could be done by staging cultural shows, installing a museum, creating ornate architectural styles and pedestrianising the streets for authentic bazaars. Suggestions have also been made to install Indian signs and rename Zhu Jiao Centre (a Chinese name). In essence, while there is no ideological opposition to the presence of Chinese or Western businesses, there are very real concerns that the number of non-Indian businesses should be capped and Indian identity re-emphasised.

In response to the criticisms, Chinese merchants justified their presence by drawing upon the practicalities of business concerns. They reason that Little India is a place of business and any financially able enterprise is welcome. The Chinese owner of 'Merlin Goldsmith and Jewellery' argued: "who can afford the rent can come anytime. It's not a matter of whether it is a good idea or bad, and that's a healthy point of view, because its not true to say only Indians can come in." While the Indians tended to view state policies as anti-Indian, Chinese merchants were more prone to endorse the government's pro-business stance. Hence, although the proprietor of 'Three Rifles Boutique' conceded that "nine out of ten shoppers and shopkeepers are Indians, so you feel this place belongs to them", she explained the strategic purpose of her coming to LIA: "we want to try out an Indian place. Most of our other shops have Chinese or Malay customers, so coming here is an experimental project for us."

Clearly, Indian merchants are tied to Little India through affective bonds forged by ethnicity whereas the Chinese entrepreneurs are linked through pragmatic business concerns. In Relph's terminology, the Indian merchants experience a sense of 'existential insideness' where "deep and complete identity with a place" is forged through "knowing implicitly that *this* place is where you belong" (1976, 55 original emphasis) while the Chinese possess a sense of 'existential outsideness' or a feeling of "not belonging", where the environment becomes merely "backgrounds to activities" (1976, 51).

Today, an uneasy truce is reached whereby Indian merchants are given priority in the LIA while non-Indian enterprises continue to infiltrate other core areas in the conservation district. The dominance of Indian merchants in the LIA is assured because of the Raffles International's policy of attracting only "traditional Indian retail outlets for the Indian community" (personal interview 1995). Outside the LIA, free competition and market forces play a determining role in tenancy make-up with the inevitability of racial tension, and the emergence of non-Indian enterprises.

5.4.2 Indian Tourists and Western Visitors

Although the Indians claim an 'local' insider belonging to Little India, the racial contestation process takes on two surprising twists when we explore the Indian/non-Indian issue further with regard to two groups. Here, I shall focus on Indian and Western tourists and then proceed in the next section to look at Chinese residents and Indian migrant workers.

The tourists visiting Little India are not a monolithic group and the needs of Indian visitors and Westerners are quite different. Although there are no official figures on the total number of tourists visiting Little India, survey findings indicate that the largest numbers are from India and certain Western countries. According to the STPB's 1993 survey of 10,053 tourists, the top visitor groups were from India (12.6 per cent), Germany (12.4 per cent), the ASEAN countries (11.3 per cent), the U.K. (10.9 per cent) and the U.S.A. (10.6 per cent) (STPB 1993b, 3 & 75).

An interesting inside-outside distinction is evidenced by the retail patterns of Indian and Western visitors. While the Indians come mainly to shop for modern goods, Westerners are the main buyers and patrons of Indian exotica (Siddique & Shotam 1990; personal interviews with merchants). A situation thus develops in which the Indians, claiming an insider sense of belonging, are the ones responsible for the boom in modern shops as opposed to the outsider Westerner whose patronage helps sustain the traditional activities. The proliferation of goldsmiths and jewellery outlets as well as shops specialising in "made in Japan" electronics and nylon saris are thus attributed to the Indian presence whereas Westerners and Singaporeans are the main patrons of stores selling "little ethnic things" (Siddique & Shotam 1990, 91-3)[4].

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[4] Siddique and Shotam's (1990) analysis was based on participant observation and talking with merchants and local Indian shoppers. No questionnaire survey was conducted and no quantitative data was presented.

It is really not too surprising that Indian visitors choose *not* to buy what is 'common' or 'familiar' to them. According to Murali of 'V.K.K. and Sons', the bulk of Indian tourists are themselves dealers in electronic goods and modern clothing which they buy in bulk to be later sold in India at inflated prices. It is this particular Indian presence he adds rather than the 'token' Western presence which sustains the tourism trade in Little India. The combined effect of increasing numbers of Indian tourists to Singapore and the boom in modern shops will in time translate into a situation where Little India is geared paradoxically towards an insider-Indian clientele replete with outsider-Chinese owned shops.

The spatial pattern of retail patronage also varied between tourists. While the LIA is more popular with Westerners, Indians visitors often go shopping outside the LIA and beyond the core area. As one shopkeeper told me, Indian tourists were more likely to be repeat visitors and therefore more adept at negotiating their way through the conservation site. Westerners and non-Indians, a large proportion of whom visit little India on 'Heritage City Tours', are invariably directed through the LIA rather than allowed to 'roam free' (Plate 5.6). The merchants I spoke with also revealed that Indian tourists tended to gravitate towards 'Mohamed Mustapha' an Indian-owned department store along Serangoon Road/Syed Alwi Road located a distance from the core (Figure 5.2). Many other shops and businesses geared towards Indian tourists have also nucleated themselves here. In time it is possible to see separate shopping zones develop within Little India targeting the Westerners in the core, and Indians tourists outside the core. Conflicts of interests may be averted as each area specialises in different types of shops and services.

5.4.3 Indian Migrant Workers and Chinese Residents in Little India

A final arena of tension exists between Chinese residents in Little India and foreign migrant workers from the Indian subcontinent. The inside-outside discourse is rendered a novel twist because the conflict focuses on the Chinese insiders living in Little India

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Plate 5.6 Coach bus loads of non-Indian tourists visit Little India viz. a walkabout through the LIA

and the Indian outsiders working in Singapore but who come from other countries. Each Sunday from late afternoon till evening, Indian labourers mainly employed in construction sites and other manual jobs in the country gather on their only free day in Little India to meet with friends, shop for consumer durables, visit the temples or just congregate with 'people of their own'. Although no official figure is given, a modest estimate would place the total migrant crowd at three to five thousand spread throughout Little India but concentrated mainly in open spaces and at the foot of the public housing flats at Zhu Jiao Centre and Kerbau Road.

Some of the Chinese residents surveyed complained that the Indian workers present a major problem. Like the Indians whose resentment towards Chinese enterprises took on racist overtones, Chinese residents also harboured racist notions regarding the Indian presence. A recurrent theme was that of an 'Indian threat'. One respondent complained of fears for personal safety and security for her home although there has been no documented evidence of burglary related to the workers as far as I know of. Another informant complained that the Indians blocked public passage ways, car parks and contributed to crowded buses. One even went further to say she "can't stand the smell of too many Indians." Such feelings of annoyance sprang mainly from the residents' belief that Zhu Jiao Centre and the Kerbau Road flats, while in Little India, are essentially private properties belonging to residents. While the Indians are free to congregate in 'Indian spaces' such as the temples, LIA and on open grounds, they should not intrude upon the 'common spaces' of local residence. The noise and litter from the migrant crowd further enhance the perception of the 'Indian nuisance'.

Indignation towards the migrant crowd was not shared by the Indian merchants I surveyed. Although many LIA merchants do not benefit directly from the migrant presence, there is nonetheless a general sympathy towards their 'plight' as foreign workers. Little India is a site for Indians and this embraces Singaporean Indians, Indian tourists as well as labourers from the Indian subcontinent. Some even reasoned that their frenzied presence contributes greatly to the mood and ambience of Serangoon Road. Velle of

'Ayurvedic Remedies' told me:

> The fact that they come here is proof of Indian identity in the area. Little India gives them a place to congregate, just like the Thais like to go to Beach Street. We need their expertise here in Singapore, so we have to give them this convenience of a place to gather. So long they don't interfere with public safety, its O.K.

None of the Indian residents at Zhu Jiao Centre complained of the migrant workers as well. Three British tourists I spoke with at the airport also agreed that the buzz of human activity on Sundays gave Little India its much needed excitement and an authentic 'feel of India'. As a counterpoint to the neat and sanitised LIA, the migrants provide a spontaneous character and human dimension to the place.

5.5 Urban Heritage Conservation: State Policies and Popular Attitudes

While the previous two sections looked at interactions at the micro level of race and market characteristics, here I turn my attention to the macro level of users and planners of the Little India landscape. Differences exist between these two groups who embody divergent ideologies on the way urban space ought to be used. On the one hand, planners, architects and policy makers relate to the landscape in a functionalist perspective as outsiders. Relph described this as a sense of "objective outsideness" in which planners "separate themselves emotionally" from the places they are planning and work according to "the principles of logic, reason, and efficiency" (Relph 1976, 52). This is contrasted on the other hand to the general public or users of the landscape who typically have far more localised concerns for their home, community and neighbourhood.

This section investigates the planner-user nexus with regard to several urban conservation issues. While many respondents were not ideologically opposed to government policies in Little India, this general state of contentment was not applicable across all groups and regarding all matters. Where divergence existed between planners

and users, respondents have devised various strategies of resistance to either cope with or deflect the policies that affect them. Insider agencies, therefore, were certainly not defenceless against outsider influences. I shall begin by looking at respondents' attitudes towards the new shops/merchants in Little India (section 5.5.1), and the mix of old and new activities (section 5.5.2). Proceeding from here, broader concerns are addressed with respect to the Little India Arcade (section 5.5.3) and the Indian character and identity of the area (section 5.5.4).

5.5.1 New Merchants in Historic Shophouses

The existence of new merchants and retail activities in historic shophouses constitutes an integral element in the government's vision of conservation. 'Adaptive re-use' has been defended as necessary to the maintenance of historic structures and an inevitable part of social and economic progress. According to the URA, successful purchasers and tenants of shophouses must generate sufficient economic returns to ensure that the buildings are continually maintained. Given this imperative, the URA has argued that "it is not feasible to dictate that old trades and lifestyles in the conservation areas be retained....[hence w]hilst we cannot preserve lifestyles, we can at least preserve the buildings which convey a sense of the time, without being a drain on the taxpayer" (ST 23/10/91).

A large proportion of respondents from the questionnaire survey endorsed the government policy of accommodating new retail activities in historically conserved shophouses (Table 5.5). This is particularly so for 56.6 per cent of residents in Little India, 56.1 per cent of retailers and 45.1 per cent of Singaporeans visiting the site. Only 34.2 per cent of tourists, however, endorsed this policy.

Although the reasons for advocating the above position are varied, a number of broad factors may be cited (Table 5.6). First, the mix of new shops and restaurants in historic buildings was seen as providing a novel charm and character to Little India. While most

Do you think it is a good idea for new shops and activities to occupy conserved shophouses and historic buildings? (all figures in %)	Retailers	Residents	Tourists	Local Visitors	Average (%)
Yes	56.1	56.6	34.2	45.1	48.0
No	36.6	26.3	51.9	39.4	38.6
Mixed Opinions	2.4	3.9	3.8	0.0	2.5
No Opinion	4.9	13.2	10.1	15.5	10.9
Total (%) Total (n)	100.0 41	100.0 76	100.0 79	100.0 71	100.0 (-)

Table 5.5 New retail outlets occupying conserved shophouses and historic buildings

Retailers (%) (n = 23)	Residents (%) (n = 43)	Tourists (%) (n = 27)	Local Visitors (%) (n = 32)
1. Adds novelty to the site (34.6)	1. Convenience (40.8)	1. Improves business in the area (33.3)	1. Improves business in the area (45.1)
2. Inevitable part of progress (19.2)	2. Improves business in the area (18.4)	2. Puts old buildings to good use (25.9)	2. Convenience (18.2)
3. Improves business in the area (15.4)	2. Adds novelty to the site (18.4)	3. Inevitable part of progress (11.1)	3. Adds novelty to the site (15.2)
4. Attract Tourists (11.5)	4. Inevitable part of progress (8.2)	3. Convenience (11.1)	4. Inevitable part of progress (12.1)

Table 5.6 Top four reasons as to why it is a good idea for new retail outlets to occupy conserved shophouses

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respondents spoke of the interesting blend of Western sophistication and Asian charm, others pointed to the fact that this blend is a reflection of Singapore's multiracial heritage and modern urban environment. According to Vasu Appu who works at 'Kuna's' a shop selling Indian furniture, "old buildings are so antique looking that they give an unusual shopping experience" (Plate 5.7).

The novelty also extends to what many residents of Little India perceived as a new twist to a familiar environment. Considering that many residents have been staying in Little India since the early 1980s, the presence of new outlets like 'The Body Shop' provides a welcome addition to the neighbourhood (Plate 5.8). It was in this vein that respondents praised Little India's "international flavour", "new appeal" and "modern touch". Such a perspective is entirely in line with the URA's stated goal of ensuring a "creative mix" of new and old activities that would "bring back the gaiety and richness of old Little India" (ST 28/3/91).

Many of the respondents were also in accord with the government's pragmatic stance towards new merchants. Two key reasons were that new activities would improve the business opportunities in Little India, and the presence of the new was an inevitable part of progress and change (see Table 5.6). This is especially true for some merchants who perceived Little India above all else as a "place of business", and therefore felt that historic sentimentality should not stand in the way of progress. According to the marketing manager of 'Batu Pahat Goldsmith':

> Its not a matter of whether its a good idea or bad. There is just no choice at all! Provision shops can't afford the high rents. After spending so much on renovation, how can the small Indian provision shops afford to stay here? So, while the facade of the buildings may be Indian, the inside is all changed.

The owner of 'GGS Publications, Books and Stationery' made a similar observation:

> Singapore is moving all the time, we can't go back to the past....Our Indian identity cannot be lost just because of changes in building styles; infrastructure doesn't affect our identity, and places don't give us our identity. If Isetan [a Japanese department store] comes to Little India, why not? Little India is after all a place of business.

New shops which occupy old buildings add charm and novelty to Little India as exemplified by 'Kuna's' (Plate 5.7, above) and 'The Body Shop' (Plate 5.8, below)

The views reflected above do not conflict with those in section 5.4 on racial tension. This is because many Indian merchants, in welcoming new activities, also considered this an opportunity for increased Indian participation. Heritage conservation is thus perceived favourably as preserving the historic shell of buildings while encouraging new Indian enterprises to emerge.

In contradiction to the above, tourists were opposed to the presence of new merchants because of the 'inauthenticity' and contrived atmosphere they encourage (60 per cent), and the fears that Little India would become 'just another modern shopping centre' (20 per cent). Little India's allure and image as portrayed in tourism guidebooks promised a cultural site of uniqueness and tradition. To be confronted with modern shops was thus a rude shock and tremendous letdown. Said a British tourist: "the Body Shop looks out of place, and it was the first shop we noticed. We were expecting something with an Indian theme." Tourists were also disappointed that Little India was somehow not as 'unusual' or 'different' from other shopping areas. Further infiltration of modern/Western outlets, they reasoned, would only run the danger of erasing any uniqueness the area has left to offer. This fear was expressed by an Australian visitor:

> The whole island is full of new shops, [so] some areas should be preserved to retain the history of Singapore and to teach the younger generations about the different cultures. With the way Singapore is developing at the moment, the whole island is going to be one big McDonald's drive-through.

Unlike many locals, therefore, outsider tourists have a romanticised image of Little India, and are fearful that urban redevelopment would lessen its exotic appeal.

'The Body Shop' provides an apposite rallying point in illustrating the divergence in respondent attitude. Those in support of new outlets point to the convenience and 'glamour' that 'The Body Shop' brings to Little India. Those opposed felt it exemplified a classic case of the commercialising influence of tourism and big businesses and the resultant loss of Indian identity. This accords with Relph's view that "the landscape[s]

of tourism...are consequences of the activities of big business, for they are invariably made up of products and reflect the needs dictated by such business even when they have not been constructed directly by them" (1976, 109).

However, there lies an interesting irony. Of the tourists and Singaporeans who spoke disparagingly of new enterprises, many nonetheless approved of 'The Body Shop'. Some reasoned that an 'ecologically-correct' cosmetic shop is far less intrusive than McDonalds or Burger King while others pointed to the fact that the shop employs Indian workers (actually Malay assistants) or that it sells Indian cosmetics and beauty products, which it certainly does not. In the opinion of one respondent, the trademark green colour of 'The Body Shop' also blends well with the green hues of the surrounding shophouses. Rocky Selvarajoo of 'Alamkara' even went so far as to tell me: "for 'The Body Shop' to come here, it's proof that Indians have become more sophisticated. This is a historic milestone for Little India to have such a famous shop."

In short, the respondents who largely disapproved of new shops nonetheless accepted 'The Body Shop' as a welcome addition and a symbolic 'coming of age' for Little India. Through this strategy of appropriation, the respondents have in effect mitigated the sting that a 'modern non-Indian big business' would otherwise have wrought on the local cultural identity of the area. Even if their views were based on factual error or misinformation, such a strategy serves as a means for individuals to cope with state policies and adapt to the inevitability of urban change. Once appropriated, 'The Body Shop' takes on a new, less threatening meaning.

In closing, while there was a general endorsement of the URA objective of attracting new merchants to Little India there also existed a vocal group of tourists and some locals who were opposed to this policy. This supports Kong and Yeoh's conclusion in their survey of Singaporeans visiting Chinatown, Kampong Glam and Little India when they argued that public perception and government rhetoric intersect at multiple points of convergence and divergence and "[a] situation emerges where there is no one voice in

public opinion and state policy will always meet with opposition and dissatisfaction from some quarters" (1994, 261).

Such divergences are explained by the varied interests insider and outsider groups invest in the landscape. Residents welcomed the presence of new activities because this would convenience them and make living in Little India more comfortable. Retailers who were far more concerned with business opportunities welcomed the move in the hope of increasing their clientele base. On the other hand, outsider tourists came to Little India mainly to sightsee, and were attracted by the cultural exoticism of the place and the desire to make contact with "a different reality" (Van den Berge & Keyes 1984, 345). Modernity and Western-styled shops are therefore inimical to the whole experience of cultural voyeurism and the make-believe journey into the heart of exotic India.

5.5.2 A Harmony of Old and New Activities

New merchants and retail activities are an essential part of conservation but so too are traditional retailers who provide a historic link to the area. According to the URA, one of the aims in conservation is to "enhance the character of each area by introducing new activities while sustaining the old traditional activities of tourist value" (URA, *A Future With A Past*, undated, unpaged). This section looks at respondents' attitudes towards the mix of old and new activities in Little India. Before the discussion progresses, a qualification is made. In interrogating respondents' attitudes, I am not seeking their views as to whether there is an equal mix of old and new outlets in a strict quantitative sense. Rather, I am interested in exploring whether there is a pleasant balance of shops and restaurants that cater to public demand for modern comforts on the one hand while satisfying its yearning for heritage on the other.

The majority of respondents felt that conservation has given rise to a harmonious blend of new and traditional activities. Residents, tourists and Singaporeans visiting Little

India registered very positive responses whereas retailers were more ambivalent (Table 5.7). According to some, the presence of traditional merchants such as the 'parrot fortune teller' and the flower-garland stalls is indicative that the old has survived inspite of intrusions by the new (Plates 5.9 & 5.10). Many also pointed to the bazaar stores selling Indian compact discs and handicrafts in the LIA as proof of the success of this strategy. At the same time, however, some respondents warned that the present harmony of old and new activities could be a transitory situation. As Little India has only embarked on half of its conservation programme, such fears are not without merit.

By contrast, the merchants I interviewed had more negative opinions with only a marginal majority agreeing on the success of the retail mix (Table 5.7). The prime bone of contention for this group revolved around the loss of the non-material and intangible aspects of life in Little India. Hence, while there may exist visible manifestations of old lifestyles, these are nothing but "contrived depthlessness" (Jameson 1984 cited in Harvey 1987) fashioned for tourist and leisure consumption. The bazaar stalls offer a good example because they do not traditionally stock items like compact discs, music cassettes, souvenirs and handicrafts. The true hawkers of old Little India are the traditional yoghurt seller, fortune teller and betel-nut merchant squatting along the roadside in their mobile huts all of which are absent from the arcade. The spontaneous nature of outdoor activities have now been replaced by a bureaucratic set up characterised by a well regulated bazaar with neatly organised items, where immobile stalls are rented out monthly to tenants (Plates 5.11 & 5.12). Mr. Said of 'K.S. Mohamed Hanifa and Company' a grocery shop in Little India since 1954 argued that the entire bazaar concept is anachronistic and geared towards tourism:

> This idea of having something on-the-wall[5] is typically Indian, a 1950s answer to our present day 'Seven-Eleven'. They make us reminisce the past but today they are more of an amusement for tourists. In days gone, they serve as convenience shops for

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[5] The bazaar stalls are popularly referred to as 'hole in the wall' shops because traditionally, they occupy just a space on the wall with all the wares displayed flanked against the wall. Ther merchant either sits beside his/her wares or in an enclosed space 'carved out' in the wall.

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Do you think conservation has brought about a pleasant mix of old and new activities in Little India? (all figures in %)	Retailers	Residents	Tourists	Local Visitors	Average(%)
Yes	51.2	71.1	58.2	67.6	62.0
No	46.3	22.4	21.5	16.9	26.8
No Opinion	2.4	6.6	20.2	15.5	11.2
Total (%) Total (n)	100.0 41	100.0 76	100.0 79	100.0 71	100.0 (-)

Table 5.7 Conservation and a balanced mix of old and new activities in Little India

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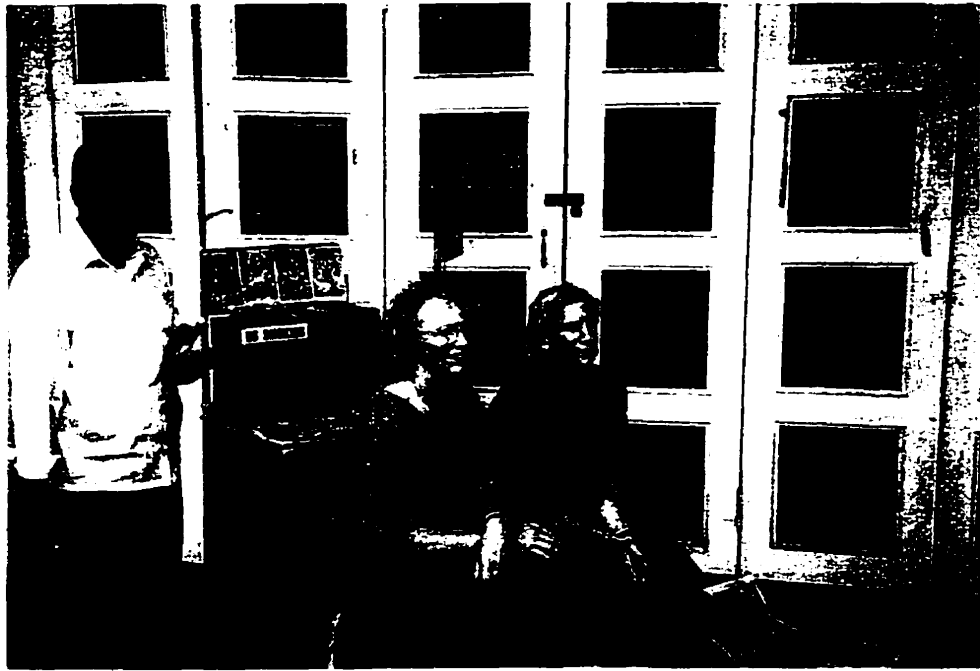
A legacy worth preserving: itinerant fortune tellers in Little India serve as tourist attractions and provide a service to the local Indian community (Plates 5.9 & 5.10)
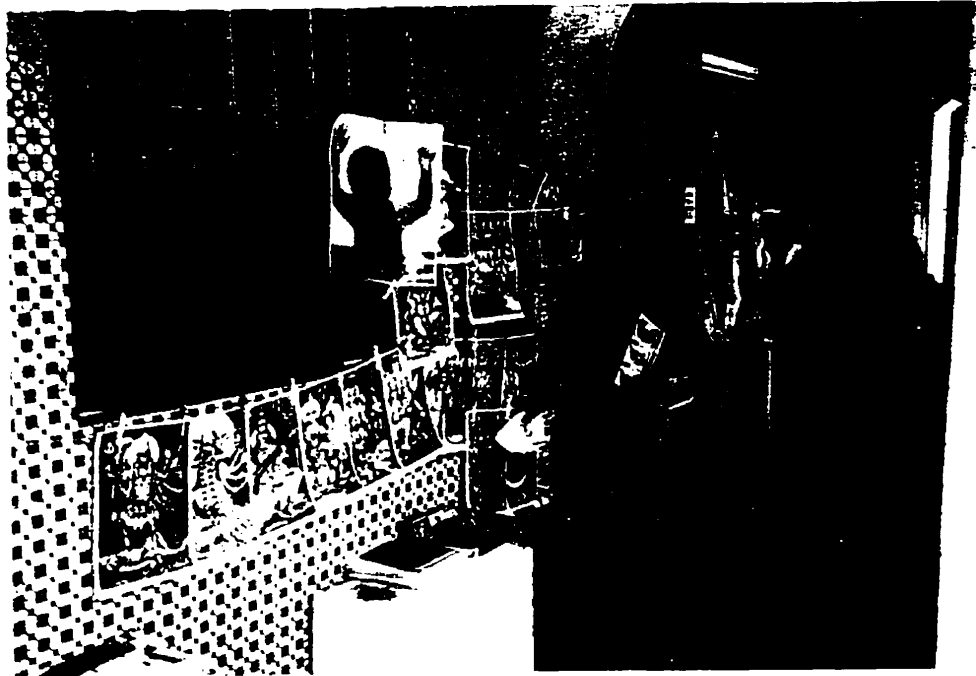
A world of difference: traditional merchants with their wares spilling onto public footpaths (Plate 5.11, above) have been replicated in the LIA bazaar with little success (Plate 5.12, below)

The difference in opinion between the merchants and other respondents may be explained by their respective association with the area. Unlike tourists, local visitors and residents, the merchants in Little India may be said to possess a true insider knowledge of the working conditions in the area. To this group, bazaar stalls and 'hole in the wall' shops are poor substitutes for the 'intangibles' that have been sacrificed in the conservation process. The loss of spontaneity and the change in social practices in no way compensate for the 'make believe' bazaar. The introduction of 'traditional' lifestyles are thus dismissed as contrived and tourist-geared or as David Ley puts it "an optional gift wrapping to the surface of the built environment....[which] titillates and teases, but risks dismissal as inauthetical froth..." (Ley 1989, 55).

Conversely, 'outsiders' with no working experience in Little India possess an inexpert understanding of the place and its retail activities. Their views were often impressionistic and shaped by the tangible and material aspects they saw around them. The appeal of Little India was thus "shaped by general interest, novelty, uniqueness and the time span taken to experience the place rather than by a full understanding of its historical and cultural significance" (Smith 1988, 246). For this reason, the outdoor bazaar was considered 'authentically old' testifying to Little India's success as a heritage site with a contemporary flavour.

The onslaught of new activities has not rendered traditional Indian merchants powerless in the face of change. An emerging trend which serves as a counter strategy to new non-Indian businesses is offered by Indian-owned big enterprises. Indeed, Little India has become a testing ground for homebred entrepreneurs hoping to make a mark in the commercial scene. The renewed interest in Little India as a conservation area has lured many 'old' enterprises to expand and become key players. Unlike the pioneering merchants before the Second World War who "invested what money they made in

Serangoon Road in land and cattle in India....[t]oday, a generation with greater roots here is sinking its investments here" (ST 14/5/95).

The LIA in particular has become the seedbed for this new retail phenomenon. For example, 'Jothi Store and Flower Shop' which began as a roadside flower-garland stall in 1960 has expanded its wares to include household items, souvenirs, religious paraphernalia among other things. The shop also owns a four storey building, two units in LIA and has further plans for extension (Plate 5.13). Similarly, Sahul who once owned a 'hole in the wall' stall now runs three units in the arcade selling Indian tapestries and fabrics. Mr. Said of 'K.S. Mohamed Hanifa and Company' one of the original merchants from the old LIA site has returned with three shophouse units compared to only one when he began. He explained to me: "you need to keep up with the times. Nothing is stagnant. Otherwise you'll be a white elephant."

New Indian merchants have also emerged, capitalising on their cultural heritage as a selling point. Rather than sell modern goods in a non-Indian setting, the focus is on Indian products with a modern twist. Unlike Tanjong Pagar in Chinatown which has become a pub haven (Lau 1993, 86), Little India's retail image has remained faithful to its Indian roots. A good example is offered by 'Kuna's'. Located in the site of a former bungalow house (Plate 5.7), the shop sells an eclectic range of traditional and contemporary Indian items like furniture, carvings, souvenirs, tapestries, as well as mangoes, spices and Indian compact discs. Ilango Bhanu of 'Kuna's' told me that unlike old merchants who were "not enterprising", new Indian entrepreneurs are investing large sums of money in upgrading shophouses and embracing Western techniques of marketing. This is exemplified by 'Kavi's Music Pub 'n' Cafe' which offers Indian entertainment played 'karaoke style' in a Western pub setting. Explaining this ingenuous concept, the operations manager said: "music is international, yet there is no such thing as an Indian music club. Since Little India Arcade belongs to the Indians, the pub specially caters to them." The traditional and the modern are thus combined.

From a humble outdoor shed to a multi-storey building, and still expanding, 'Jothi Store and Flower Shop' (Plate 5.13) symbolises a new breed of enterprising Indian businesses in Serangoon Road

In the older shops of Little India, the first generation entrepreneurs have also stepped aside to allow the next generation to take over. Some of these 'new' merchants hold business degrees from Western universities and have come home to the helm of their family businesses incorporating modern marketing techniques within their traditional customs. Mr. Said of 'K.S. Mohamed Haniffa and Company', for example, holds a Masters degree in Business from Boston University while Rajakumar Chandra of 'Jothi' has a degree from the University of Manitoba. Both men inherited their shops and today they sell a wide range of Indian paraphernalia in Western styled 'boutique' environments. Rather than a retail "flatscape" (Norberg-Schulz 1969 cited in Relph 1976, 79) dominated by non-Indian businesses, Little India has evolved as a retail centre blending local businesses with Western touches. The retail expansion process thus marks a symbolic way Indians have re-appropriated Little India by asserting an Indian form of entrepreneuralism which combines local needs with modern advancement.

As we can see, not everybody agrees that conservation has brought about a harmonious blend of the old and new. Insider-merchants were ambivalent towards the URA's success whereas outsiders were more optimistic. Traditional Indian merchants, however, are not powerless in negotiating the onslaught of new activities in the historic site. Through the process of retail expansion, many merchants have successfully blended elements of the old and new exemplified by the presence of Indian big businesses and their skilful assimilation of modern marketing techniques. Clearly, therefore, Little India's modernisation is as much the outcome of the proactive role of insider-Indian entrepreneurs as it is that of non-Indian enterprises and government planning.

5.5.3 Little India Arcade as a Successful Conservation Project

The most dramatic change in Little India takes the form of the Little India Arcade (LIA, Plate 5.3) where three blocks of 1913 shophouses were consolidated to create a new retail/food centre and outdoor bazaar. In exploring the relationship between planners and users of Little India, let me focus here on public response to the adaptive re-use of LIA. Two areas of divergence are witnessed: between the different user groups pertaining to their views on LIA, and conflicts between the merchants and management of the LIA. Like Bugis Street and boutique hotels, the LIA exemplifies a classic case of heritage entrepreneuralism and cultural commodification.

Firstly, respondents were divided in their endorsement of LIA as a 'successful conservation project'. While 65.9 per cent of retailers and 44.7 per cent of residents considered the LIA a failure, 57.0 per cent of tourists and 50.7 per cent of Singaporean visitors deemed it a success (Table 5.8). In the questionnaire survey, 'success' was broadly defined in terms of whether the objectives of the HEB and DBS Land have been achieved. These objectives include creating a retail centre comprising traditional and modern Indian outlets set in a culturally authentic environment and serving as a tourist attraction, a thriving business centre and an "important focal point and gathering place for the Indian community" (*LIA. Tenant Design Criteria Manual*, undated, 2). The detractors and supporters of LIA provided different reasons for their opinions (Table 5.9).

The LIA's success is attributed to two interrelated reasons. According to tourists and local visitors, the LIA offers a combination of old and new, and boasts a quaint yet clean environment (Table 5.9). As a compact retail centre sprawling 30,000 square feet, LIA was envisioned as an 'all in one' complex consolidating the colour and exoticism of Serangoon Road in a convenient and partially air-conditioned retail centre. V.R. Nathan, chair of the Hindu Endowments Board summed up its appeal: "LIA is a one-stop tourist attraction. In the past, visitors had to walk the whole length of Serangoon Road, now they can see everything here" (personal interview 1995). Visitors commended the attempt at

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Is the conservation of Little India Arcade a success? (all figures in %)	Retailers	Resident	Tourists	Local Visitor	Average(%)
Yes	17.1	34.0	57.0	50.7	39.7
No	65.9	44.7	24.1	26.8	40.3
Mixed Opinion	7.3	0.0	0.0	2.8	2.5
No Opinion	9.8	21.3	19.0	19.7	17.5
Total (%) Total (n)	100.0 41	100.0 47[1]	100.0 79	100.0 71	100.0 (-)

1. Only 47 out of the total 76 residents surveyed have visited LIA. and this represents the total sample for table 5.8

Table 5.8 Successful conservation of the Little India Arcade

LIA's conservation has been a success: Retailers (%) (n = 7)	Residents (%) (n = 16)	Tourists (%) (n = 45)	Local Visitors (%) (n = 36)
1. Combination of old and new (50.0)	1. Cultural authenticity (36.8)	1. Quaint ambience, cleanliness (20.0)	1. Combination of old and new (21.6)
2. Good sightseeing spot (20.0)	2. Combination of old and new (26.3)	2. Combination of old and new (15.6)	2. Fast pace of business (19.6)
3. Food Court (10.0)	3. Good sightseeing spot (10.5)	3. Fast pace of business (13.3)	3. Quaint ambience, cleanliness (17.6)
LIA's conservation has not been a success: Retailers (%) (n = 27)	Residents (%) (n = 21)	Tourists (%) (n = 19)	Local Visitors (%) (n = 19)
1. Too modern; loss of old shops and merchants (19.0)	1. Slow pace of business (28.6)	1. Too modern; loss of old shops and merchants (61.9)	1. Too Modern; loss of old shops and merchants (58.3)
1. Loss of architectural integrity (19.0)	2. Too modern; loss of old shops and merchants (14.3)	2. Slow pace of business (14.3)	2. Slow pace of business (16.7)
1. Slow pace of business (19.0)	3. Compound is too small (14.3)	3. Boring shops (9.5)	3. High rents and prices (12.5)

Table 5.9 Top three reasons as to why the LIA's conservation is considered a success/failure

providing a glimpse of Indian heritage from a clean and secure vantage point. Hence, while an Australian visitor wrote that "the arcade provides a sanitised view of another culture for those too timid to experience the real thing", another referred to the centre as a "pleasant environment in which to enjoy traditional food/crafts/arts with the comfort of modern amenities."

On the other side of the coin, the LIA was deemed a failure by retailers and residents on the basis of two reasons: its overly modern ambience and loss of old activities, and the slow pace of economic business (Table 5.9). For these groups, the point of contention was not whether the buildings had been successfully refurbished or beautifully restored; on this count there was little cause for complaint. Rather, the LIA's transformation had been too radical and social practices have been uprooted repelling the many people who used to shop there. According to a long-time resident of Little India:

> The conservation of Little India Arcade in no way brings back past memories of how the
> place used to look, except for the face of a few familiar shopkeepers. It looks modernised
> and Westernised but unfortunately not Indianised.

Although the Hindu Endowments Board (HEB) claimed that 60 per cent of the merchants were originally from the site, I only encountered four out of the 31 I interviewed there. High rents, a competitive retail environment and the demise of original community life mitigated against all the aesthetic and structural improvements in LIA. As one merchant confided "new tenants are too modern, traditional customs have changed....The scruffy appearance of the past was more appealing."

The difference in opinion between the two groups -- merchants and residents on the one hand, and tourists and visitors on the other -- reinforces the point made earlier in section 5.5.2. Merchants and residents have an insider affiliation to LIA whereas visitors possess an outsider relationship to the place. Having daily contact with the arcade either because they work there or live in close proximity to it, the first group felt that conservation is a failure because only the façades have been maintained while the

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intangible and non-material aspects of life have been sacrificed. As P. Sarojah of 'Bhavani Ladies House' told me, the arcade has become a "showpiece rather than a place to shop." As for tourists and Singaporean visitors, their association with the arcade was far more ephemeral, and the tangible and material aspects of conservation were emphasised instead. The preservation of architectural styles, the presence of bazaar stalls and the dominance of Indian merchants were thus indications of successful conservation for this group.

A second area of conflict exists between the merchants and the LIA management centred around what the former perceived as the latter's non-Indian customs and ways of control. The LIA is co-owned by the HEB and DBS Land, and managed by Raffles International. Many Indian retailers expressed dismay that the HEB which was formerly the sole-owner of the LIA site has entered into a commercial venture with DBS Land[6]. Whereas in the past the merchants paid a voluntary sum to the HEB for rents, the eradication of the Rent Control Act and the co-partnership with DBS Land has changed the entire tenancy system. The HEB's new economic role has cast the LIA as a money-making venture rather than a cultural and community project. For this reason, the HEB's moral authority has been eroded and its 'insider status' has been replaced by an 'outsider position'. Rents have escalated as dramatically as seventy times. C. Minapan who used to pay S$30 for a corner shop now pays S$300 for a bazaar stall while 'R.N.N. Samy Trading' which previously paid S$100 a month now pays S$7,000.

As a commercial venture, Raffles International stipulated many conditions that the LIA merchants must adhere to. These included the proper arrangement of goods for outdoor

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[6] The Hindu Endowments Act was amended in 1993 to allow the Board to undertake commercial ventures and capitalise on its investment opportunities in the LIA. Following the URA's call to convert the site into a conservation project with a commercial potential, the Board approached DBS Land to help finance and redevelop the site. Together, both the Board and DBS Land set up the 'Little India Arcade Private Limited' of which 60 per cent of its equity stake is owned by the Board and 40 per cent by DBS Land. Raffles International, a wholly owned subsidiary of DBS Land has been contracted as LIA's managing and marketing agent.

display, the types of signs merchants were allowed to use and the prohibition of certain items such as telephones in the bazaar for fear of spoiling its festive look (see *LIA. Tenant Design Criteria Manual.* undated). The merchants, however, are not passive in allowing what they consider a 'non-Indian management company' to dictate to them ways of conducting business. As we saw in Table 5.8, an overwhelming 65.9 per cent of shopkeepers felt the LIA is a failure and some have taken proactive measures to ensure a better and more authentic working environment.

A variety of strategies have been devised by the merchants aimed at enhancing their economic lot, improving their quality of life, or just deflecting the hegemony of the authorities. These range from simple requests for structural changes to blatant disregard for regulations. The demand for an extra table and stool by some bazaar stall owners, the call for extra fans in the shopping mall and requests for improved directional signs leading to the second floor of the Hastings-Block have all been met by Raffles International. On the other hand, requests for the mall to be air conditioned, telephones to be installed and for a retractable[7] roof over the bazaar have thus far been rejected.

Tensions brought about by the slow pace in business have also led some merchants to modify their marketing strategies. The authorities are strict in ensuring that the bazaar is neatly organised, and that goods and items are not strewn about (see Plates 5.14 & 5.15). However, some merchants deliberately flout this regulation as a means of asserting their 'Indian way of life'. The merchant at 'K.B. Handicrafts', for example, complained "Raffles International won't allow me to have my wares spilling outside onto the pavements. This is the typical Indian way of selling things but what do they know about Indian customs?". The owner of 'Niki Tasha' who also faced a similar situation explained that the authorities do not realise that Indian merchants are "spontaneous people". V. Nathaji of 'Vishnu Music Centre' further added that "the management has no idea how

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[7] Upon returning to Singapore briefly in August 1996, I visited the LIA and discovered that a new retractable awning has been installed over the bazaar. This followed complaints by bazaar tenants of excessive heat during the day, and monsoon rains that destroyed sale items and food products.

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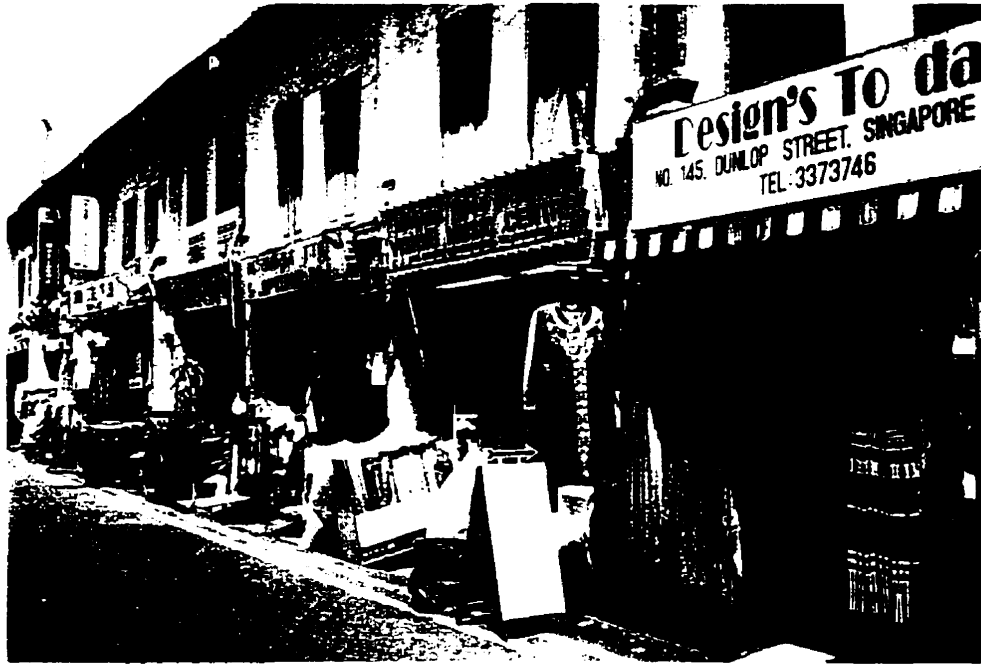
Spontaneous display of Indian fabric the traditional way on Dunlop
Street (Plate 5.14, above) contrasted to the quaint indoor displays at
the LIA (Plate 5.15, below)
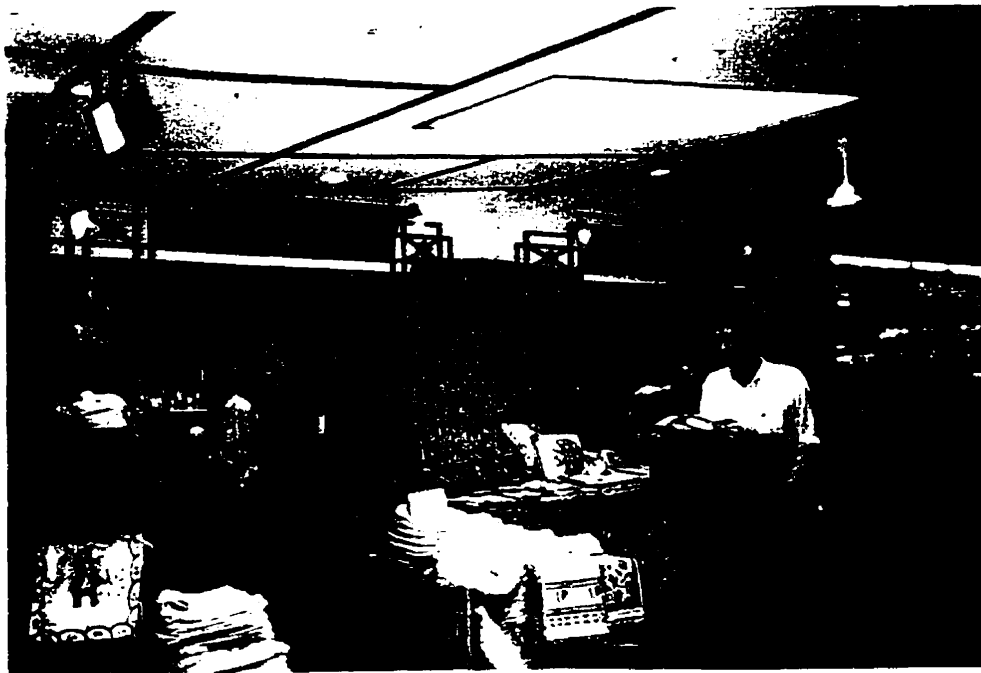
to run the place - they are not Indians, and they only know how to manage places like Orchard Road or Clarke Quay." When reminded that the HEB has 60 per cent ownership of the arcade, he retorted that its members were professionals and out of touch with the Indian commonfolk.

Like Nathaji in the case above, many merchants in the LIA were similarly sceptical of the "marriage of convenience" between the HEB and DBS Land, and considered the former as having "sold its soul" and become a "puppet" of the latter. Excessive demands and non-compliance were thus justified means of ensuring that authentic lifestyles and social customs were maintained. Leaving the LIA to 'professional' management and 'outsider' planning, the merchants felt, would only jeopardise the cultural identity and integrity of the area.

To sum up, the LIA presents a example of a contested site. On one level, respondents were clearly divided in their opinions regarding LIA's conservation. While tourists and Singaporean visitors considered the LIA to be a success, retailers and residents had contrary opinions. At a second level, we witness tensions between the merchants and the owners/managers of the arcade centred around ways of conducting business. Both sets of divergence illustrate that conflicts and negotiation are inevitable between insider and outsider groups. Outsider concerns with the visible or tangible elements in LIA stand in marked contrast to insider concerns with the immaterial and non-tangible aspects of Indian customs. The LIA is thus a meeting place for different factions with differing interests and claims on the landscape.

5.5.4 Little India's Cultural Identity

The LIA's adaptive re-use and the infiltration of new merchants raises concerns on the cultural identity of Little India. The URA warns that "with renewed interest in the charms of Little India, caution and vigilance must be exercised to ensure that these

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charms will not be eroded but instead, enhanced by the flow of new development interest and funds into the area" (1988, 52). In this final section, I shall briefly explore whether, despite the changes that have taken place, Little India has managed to retain its unique 'Indian charm and identity'.

In the opinion of most respondents, conservation has helped to retain Little India's character and identity (Table 5.10). This general state of endorsement ranged from a high of 71.1 per cent for residents to a low of 53.2 per cent for tourists, with the chief reasons listed in Table 5.11. Overwhelmingly, respondents pointed to the obvious 'Indianness' of the area exemplified by the availability of Indian products/food for sale (average of 20.7 per cent across all four groups), its Indian clientele base (20.6 per cent) and presence of Indian merchants (12.7 per cent) (Table 5.11). The predominance of Indian goods/food is tangible manifestation of culture and the most immediate affirmation of identity as Siddique and Shotam argue:

> ...one finds in Serangoon Road all the necessary artifacts and implements - ornaments, deities, saris, and so forth - without which one cannot fully/better participate in being Indian. Simultaneously, these artifacts themselves are reflective of Indian culture. Most significantly, Little India and the Indian things one can purchase there are used for the most part as necessary aspects of one's culture by most Singaporean Indians. Non-Indians use/consume the same in appreciation of what they also identify as Indian culture. (Siddique & Shotam 1990, 82)

The URA affirms this point by describing Little India as "the fountainhead of things Indian in Singapore" (1988, 22). My land use mapping supports this contention by revealing that of 104 shop units presently in Little India's core, 63.5 per cent offer Indian goods or services[8]. Drawing on this materialist conception of culture, therefore, it may be argued that Little India's conservation has indeed been a success because it has

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[8] The total number of shop units enumerated includes all the retail units for rent in the designated 'core area' of Little India including the LIA. It does not include vacant units, shophouses undergoing renovation as well as bazaar/food stalls and office units in the LIA. There is no previous work which enumerates the proportion of shops selling Indian goods in the past. As such, it is not possible to say whether the number has increased or declined over time.

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Has conservation helped to preserve the Indian identity and character of Little India? (all figures in %)	Retailers (%)	Residents (%)	Tourists (%)	Local Visitors (%)	Average (%)
Yes	63.4	71.1	53.2	60.6	62.1
No	36.6	17.1	13.9	25.4	23.3
Mixed Opinion	0.0	1.3	2.5	0.0	1.0
No Opinion	0.0	10.5	30.4	14.1	13.8
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (n)	41	76	79	71	(-)

Table 5.10 Conservation in Little India and the preservation of Indian character and identity

Retailers (%) (n = 26)	Residents (%) (n = 54)	Tourists (%) (n = 42)	Local Visitors (%) (n = 43)
1. Availability of Indian goods (28.6)	1. Presence of Indian clientele (32.8)	1. Indian ambience or mood (23.8)	1. Indian architecture (23.5)
2. Presence of Indian clientele (17.1)	2. Availability of Indian goods (15.6)	2. Availability of Indian goods (19.0)	2. Availability of Indian goods (19.6)
3. Presence of Indian merchants (14.3)	3. Presence of Indian merchants (9.4)	3. Indian architecture (16.7)	3. Presence of Indian clientele (11.8)
4. Indian architecture (11.4)	3. Indian architecture (9.4)	4. Presence of Indian merchants (14.3)	4. Indian ambience or mood (9.8)

Table 5.11 Top four evidences of the preservation of Indian identity/character in Little India

retained retail outlets specialising in Indian services and merchandise.

An equally important contributor to identity is the 'peopling' of Little India as exemplified by the presence of Indian merchants and customers. For some respondents, it was the people rather than the buildings and architectural styles that distinguish the site as Indian. Ilango Bhanu of 'Kuna's' made such a point when he observed that "Little India has more Indians than anywhere else in Singapore [and]....conservation hasn't made the place inauthentic because Indians were here before and are still here today." Agreeing with this sentiment was Tamil Selvie of 'Sri Murugan Fancy Centre' who told me that "the new buildings are systematic and orderly, but we have all the Indian goods here, and the Indians are still here; buildings change but people still come." My fieldwork certainly reveals that the majority of merchants/retailers in Little India are Indians. This includes 76.9 per cent of Indian merchants in the core and 85.7 per cent within LIA. As Siddique and Shotam explain, the "cultural meaningfulness" of Little India is derived primarily from its very "force of life" that comes from its people and their lifestyles (1990, 83).

The preservation of Indian identity suggests that the various strategies of insider resistance have been successful. The merchants' struggles against Raffles International, the symbolic appropriation of 'The Body Shop' and the retail expansion process spearheaded by Indian merchants demonstrate that insider agencies are not powerless in the face of modernising influences represented by the state or non-Indian businesses. Little India is thus a meeting place for both old and new enterprises, as well as Indian and non-Indian businesses. As Hitchcock *et al.* have argued in the context of cultural change in Southeast Asia, "it would appear that local traditions have not been supplanted by modified or invented ones, but have been adapted in subtle ways. All these traditions co-exist in the same ordinary time-space..." (1993, 11). The urban conservation process in Little India similarly involves different insider and outsider agencies and its resultant landscape is a "negotiated and socially constructed reality, neither haphazard nor inevitable in its form" (Ley 1983, 282).

In drawing this section on planner-user dynamics to a close, we can conclude that both conflicts and complementarities exist in Little India. Popular attitudes and state policies intersect at multiple points. For example, the majority of respondents endorsed the government's policy of introducing new activities in the area while others agreed that Little India's cultural identity has been preserved. With the exception of some merchants, respondents also agreed that Little India is a harmonious blend of the new and old. These positive attitudes suggest that the public has indeed been persuaded by the government on the necessity of urban and cultural change. Such a view is consistent with Kong and Yeoh's survey which indicate that 49.1 per cent of Singaporeans believe that the state should have the largest say in conservation as opposed to 25.2 per cent who feel this to be the responsibility of the general public (1994, 253). As the authors assert, most Singaporeans believe heritage to be a "communal resource to be conserved, even though the land on which it sits may be private or corporate possession, and as such, would be best managed by an enlightened government who would be best placed to steer a course through conflicting interests" (Kong & Yeoh 1994, 253).

This general sense of acceptance, however, is not entirely applicable across all issues and for all groups of people. The LIA, for example, provided opportunities for conflicts between the merchants and the management body. Unlike the other scenarios where the public was faced with an all-powerful state to which it felt has the right of governance, the LIA pitted merchants with a private-development corporation. Raffles International and the HEB were perceived with much suspicion as 'non-Indian' and 'out of touch' with the Indian community, thereby setting the stage for conflicts between the 'insider' merchant and the 'outsider' management. Other areas of tension include merchants' scepticism regarding retail mix, and tourists' dismay with new retail activities.

5.6 Conclusion

Employing Relph's concept of insideness and outsideness, this chapter focused on the

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conflicts and negotiation among three different groups in Little India. They include the tourists and locals (section 5.3), Indians and non-Indians (section 5.4) and users and planners of the urban landscape (section 5.5). The discussion revealed that landscape contestation is a dynamic process comprising many insider/outsider factions and diverse insider/outsider relationships. It is never very clear from the outset who constitutes an 'insider' and who is an 'outsider' because these positions are constantly being challenged and negotiated.

A number of surprising twists in the inside-outside discourse were revealed. The 'tourist versus local' distinction so common in tourism studies was dismissed and instead I argued that tensions lay between the residents living in Little India and the Singaporeans visiting the place. It was also demonstrated that the insider status was not confined to Indians alone as the case of Chinese residents proved. Furthermore, we saw that insider-Indian forces were not passive and unwilling agents in the urbanisation process, but were responsible for much of the modernisation of Little India as exemplified by Indian tourists and Indian-owned modern enterprises.

The insider-outsider relationship is not always conflictual and this was illustrated by the endorsement of the LIA by tourists and visitors, and Little India's simultaneous role as a tourist attraction and local retail centre. When conflicts occurred, insider agents have devised various strategies of resistance, appropriation and expansion to cope with the changes. The case study of Little India illustrates that tourism landscapes are indeed sites of conflicts *and* negotiation between many groups of people, and the tourist-local relationship is only one component of this larger process. Little India is a meeting ground for visitors and locals, the old and new, and people of diverse races and interests. For this reason, tourism development must be viewed as a negotiated outcome among multiple actors with multiple agendas.

Chapter Six

From 'Instant Asia' to 'Multi-Faceted Jewel':
Singapore's Evolving Tourism Image

> Just near the Equator is a small tropical island so unusual that it is known by many
> names. The geographers call it Singapore. Visitors call it "Surprising Singapore", "Garden
> City" and even "Instant Asia". All these descriptions are true. Singapore is a surprising
> city, combining a truly international atmosphere with the warmth and friendliness of Asia.
> It is small - just under 640 square kilometres. Yet within this space are all the attractions
> a visitor could wish to find. (STPB 1993d, *A Handy Guide to Singapore*, 3)

6.1 Introduction

Increasing competition in the global tourism industry has encouraged many countries and
cities to specialise in forms of development that give them the greatest chance of 'standing
out' in the marketplace. A way to achieve this is by creating marketing images that
depict the destination area as unique, distinctive, a one-of-a-kind 'must see' for the
globetrotting traveller. The touristic image of a place is the outcome of conscious efforts
in promotion, advertising and publicity (Gunn 1972, 111) and sustained over time, such
an image takes on the imprimatur of a place identity easily recognised around the world.
Hence, rightly or wrongly, Thailand has come to be associated with an exotic/erotic
holiday in the sun while New Zealand's image is that of a sporting paradise for outdoor
enthusiasts. For a tourism image to be truly successful, however, it must simultaneously
attract visitors and be accepted and endorsed by local residents. In other words, tourism
images must be predicated on the interests and desires of visitors on the one hand and the
needs of the resident population on the other.

This chapter will address Singapore's tourism imaging strategies from the 1960s till the

present. Throughout this period, the STPB has capitalised on the country's multiethnic heritage as proof of its uniqueness. Yet, this image is dynamic and fluid evolving as a consequence of global and local influences at different points in time. Singapore's tourism identity reflects both what outsiders find interesting and unusual about the country and what insiders think and feel about their homeland. The economic imperative of a viable tourism industry is thus balanced by the socio-political needs of the local community and the challenge for the STPB lies in straddling this global-local divide.

The discussion begins with a look at Singapore's evolving tourism image as I explain this to be the outcome of changing economic, social and political circumstances at the global-local scale (section 6.2). The ideological role of tourism is amplified as I argue that political considerations are crucial in tourism marketing during the early years of independence. In the 1990s, however, marketing strategies have taken on a new 'regional' perspective aimed at the burgeoning Asian market. Section 6.3 demonstrates that regionalist policies are also political in nature and are shaped by local site constraints. These policies are aimed at overcoming Singapore's lack of land and natural resources while maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring countries. Tourism and regionalism are therefore entrenched in what Wood terms "local cultural politics" (1993, 61). The final section of the chapter explores the effects state-endorsed images have on the intended audience. Section 6.4 applies the concept of 'multiple place identities' and argues that local residents and tourists actively construct images of the country which may differ significantly from state portrayals.

6.2 Singapore's Evolving Tourism Image: A Global-Local Dialogue

In Chapter Four, I looked at government policies concerning heritage tourism. An important part of policy making depends on how Singapore is marketed and promoted through advertising images. Here, I shall explore the dynamics in Singapore's tourism imagery focusing on two related themes: the evolution of marketing images over time and

their outcome from global-local factors at different points in time. The country's image as 'Instant Asia' in the 1960s and 1970s was replaced by the 'Surprising Singapore' tagline in the 1980s. Today in the 1990s, it has been re-imaged once again as a 'Multi-Faceted Jewel' and 'New-Asia Singapore'

6.2.1 'Instant Asia': The Politics and Economics of Survival

The conscious use of imaging strategies by the government began in 1964 with the establishment of the STPB. From the 1960s till the late 1970s, the STPB portrayed Singapore as an exotic land of many cultures and ethnic groups living together in harmony. In publicity brochures and media advertisements, Singapore's image as Instant Asia alluded to its wide array of Asian cultures, people, festivals and cuisines conveniently telescoped onto a single destination (Plates 6.1 & 6.2). Implicit in this image was the idea that Singapore was both symbolic of Asia and an ideal destination for Western travellers with neither the time nor money for extensive travel (Figure 6.1). The STPB's publication *VIP - The Prestige Magazine* defined Instant Asia in the following manner:

> Singapore has been described as Instant Asia. A look at Singapore is a kaleidoscope of Asia with one big concentration and happy co-existence of different cultural manifestations in peoples' dress, food, traditions, customs, languages, religions, architecture and attitudes. A visit to Singapore, therefore, is an insight into the land mass and people of Asia, and with its other attractions, it provides an ideal holiday for the discriminating tourist from the West or distant countries who have neither the time nor money for extended travel. The traveller comes to Singapore and participates in its life and activities and goes home with the justifiable feeling that he had met the people and experienced the cultures of Asia, while in addition, enjoying the living comforts of a modern and progressive city. (June 1966, 24)

While the Instant Asia image was alluring to visitors, a case can certainly be made to argue that such an image was also the outcome of local needs and considerations. Indeed, socio-political considerations of nation building and economic survival featured critically in the theme of multicultural tourism.

A TRAVELLER'S GUIDE
TO SOME GREAT TASTES
OF THE EAST
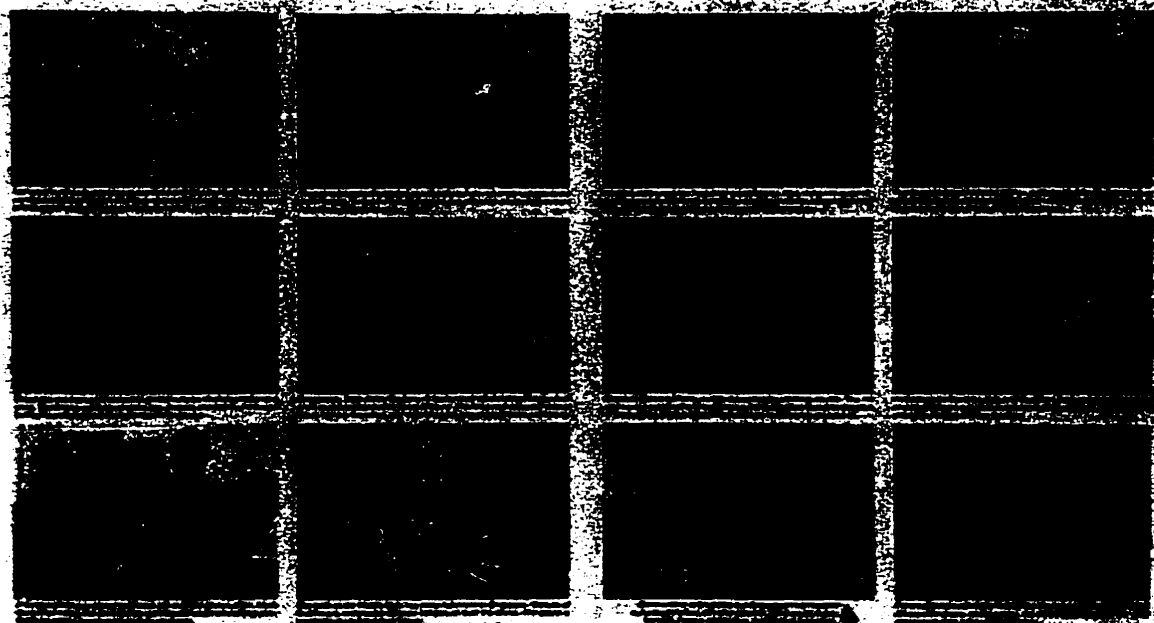
Plates 6.1 and 6.2 Singapore as 'Instant Asia': a symbol of the contrasting cultures and cuisines of the East (courtesy of STPB, publicity brochures 1978)

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Glimpses of the past await you when you come here

BY JULIET DAVID

["...ing in the background is the "bride" calmly watching the boat..."]

COME WHERE THE UNUSUAL IS AN EVERYDAY FEATURE

THE colorful and cosmopolitan city of Singapore lies at the tip of the Asian

This wonderful mixture of cultures also produces a rich variety of dances

A Continent of Cultures

Hundreds of years of culture confront you in fascinating array in cosmopolitan Singapore. Ours is a special blend of cultures — a meeting of Indian, Malay and Chinese customs, festivals, costumes, trades and ways of life. You'll find the colour and variety of a continent of cultures scattered all over the island or highly

AN IDEAL HOLIDAY

THE Republic of Singapore with a dynamic and progressive government and people, is an island of 224 square miles, conveniently situated at the convergence of sea and air routes of South-East Asia and closely linked to mainland Malaya and Thailand by a modern railway system and roads.

TOURISM

Experiencing the cultures of Asia in Singapore

LEFT:

e Tourist Promotion Board is always ready to assist overseas in their quest for information. Here we see optionist dressed in national costume, advising two h on the best shopping quarters in the city.

Figure 6.1 'Instant Asia': Singapore's tourism image in the 1960s and 1970s

With self-government in 1959 and independence in 1965, one of the most pressing political goals was to create a national identity and sense of belonging among t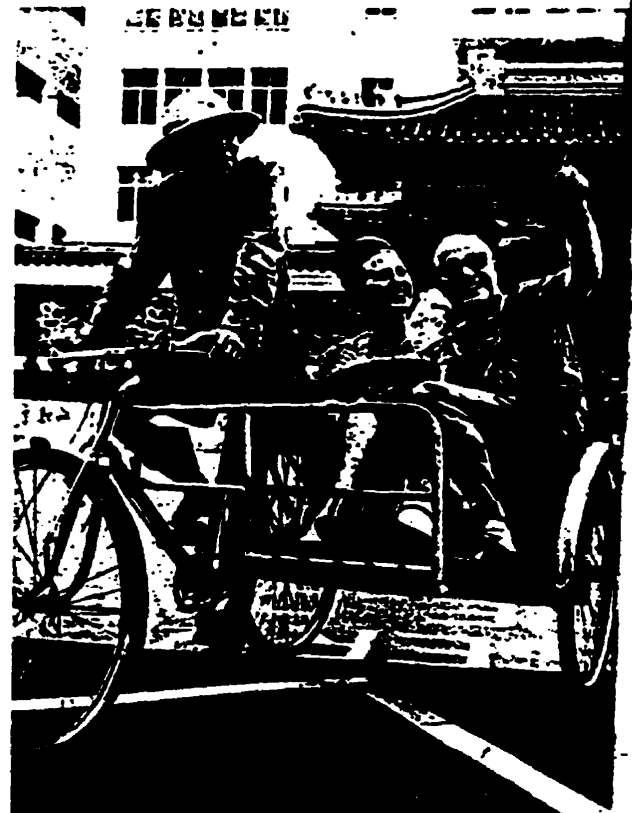he multiracial residents in the new state of Singapore. The challenge lay in uniting a multiethnic but potentially divisive population who until independence, lived largely in isolation from each other, with each ethnic group having its own system of education, economic functions, myths, legends, heroes and history (Vasil 1992, 98). To ensure social harmony, political stability and economic survival, the principles of multiracialism, multiculturalism, and multiethnicity were endorsed.

Singapore's diverse population of Chinese, Malays, Indians and 'Others' came to symbolise the country's national identity and its "system of cultural representation which gave meaning to Singaporeanness..." (Ang & Stratton, 1995: 74)[1]. The multiracial theme, popularly referred to as the 'CMIO model', was enshrined in all spheres of Singaporean society as exemplified by the educational policy of bilingualism, freedom of religion, political representation, allocation of housing units, the principle of meritocracy and tourism. Although the Chinese was the dominant ethnic group, the exercise of multiculturalism judiciously sought to de-emphasise the Chineseness of the country, thereby assuaging the long standing suspicion of the Chinese by the neighbouring Malay-Muslim countries (Visual 1992, 94), and securing a sense of belonging by all its citizens. Multiculturalism was thus part of the government's "ideology of pragmatism" and a tool in Singapore's politics and economics of survival (Hill & Lian 1995, 189).

Tourism's contribution to multiculturalism in the form of the Instant Asia marketing image served equally as part of the nation-building apparatus. Tourism provided an

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[1] Before self government, the 1957 census tract indicated that Singapore's population comprised 75 per cent Chinese, 14 per cent Malay, 9 per cent Indians, and 2 per cent 'others' usually of European or Eurasian descent (Mutalib 1992, 71). This proportion has changed little in the 1990s. According to Chan and Evers, multiracialism and multiculturalism in the Singapore context may be defined as the practice of "cultural tolerance towards the various communities, the acceptance of differences in religious practices and customs and traditions of the different communities without discrimination for any particular community and to accord each community equality before the law and the equal opportunity for advancement" (1978, 123).

invaluable opportunity to advance the CMIO ideology, manifestations of which include the celebration of festivals and culinary delights of the various ethnic groups, and the equal representation of the races in the urban landscape. The tourist attractions of Chinatown, Serangoon Road, Kampong Glam, and the Colonial District, in particular, helped to amplify the country's ethnic and racial diversity in material forms reinforcing the government's vision of a social/political reality without politics itself being the major focus of attention. As Yeoh and Kong remarked in reference to historic places in Singapore, it is by "objectifying heritage in concrete, visual form [that] values and ideologies are reified and fixed, and made much less transparent" (1994, 17).

Besides its allure to tourists, Instant Asia also reinforced in Singaporeans the vision of their country as egalitarian and harmonious. When socially constructed categories are inscribed in the urban landscape, celebrated in the annual calendar of events/festivities, and embodied in the smorgasbord of cuisines "they become more readily accepted as natural and unquestionable" (Yeoh & Kong 1994, 18). When successfully portrayed as a selling point to visitors and a *cause celebre* for the country's burgeoning tourism industry, the image gains legitimacy in the eyes of both tourists and residents. In this way, "tourism colours our belief system" by "socialising certain values in individuals and reinforcing dominant ideologies" (C.M.Hall 1995, 188 & 176).

Towards this end, the Instant Asia image in STPB's publicity literature has been all-encompassing. Not for a moment is the tourist or Singaporean allowed to forget or take for granted that multiculturalism is an integral element in the country's national psyche. A brief perusal of *Singapore Travel News*, a monthly newsletter distributed to tourists, travel agents, hotels and residents, indicates the predominance of the Instant Asia theme. Between 1969 and 1978, multiculturalism was featured a total of 44 times in its colourful centrespread in various ways ranging from the more predictable aspects of ethnic festivals

and cuisines to arcane images on multicultural fashion and wedding customs[2]. A consistent theme running through these images was that of ethnic harmony. The following quotations include some typical descriptions culled from the newsletter's centrespread:

> At the crossroads of Asia, Singapore has become the home of the three main races of the area - Malay, Chinese, Indians - and the home of their culture and traditions. Today they live together in harmony participating in and enjoying the many festivals. (July 1964, 2)

> The cultural heritage of the many races that live in harmony in Singapore provides the visitors with a kaleidoscope of the life of the people living in Asia. For the tourists it is an adventure in sound, sight and taste the moment they land in 'Instant Asia' (April 1969, 6)

> The people of Singapore may come from different ethnic backgrounds but they are united in one identity as Singaporeans, knowing no ethnic divisions, only that this exciting clean, green and progressive city of Singapore is their country and home. (June 1973, 6)

> Singapore is a world within a world. Where so many ethnic groups have come together to make it one of the world's great melting pots of different races. Its a place where one can see a Malay wedding, a Chinese opera and an Indian dance all in a day. Where one can eat Chinese noodles, Malay 'satay' (barbecue) and Indian 'murtabak' (pancake) in a coffee-shop and hear a dozen languages and dialects spoken just walking in the city. One may see Eurasian, Chinese and Indian people walking together or enjoying a meal at the food-stalls and it will be no rare sight in Singapore. (March 1976, 6)

Instant Asia thus served as the 'tourism arm' of the government's CMIO policy, and multicultural tourism supported the cause of multicultural nationalism. For this reason, there is much truth in Simpson's assertion that tourism is "creative of culture" (1993, 171) because "[w]hat is successfully presented for consumption by outsiders also redefines the parameters of legitimacy and authenticity for indigenous audiences....[t]his is what tourists are looking at and, therefore, that must be what we are and what we do" (1993, 170-1).

The power of ideology and the role of tourism becomes all the more apparent when the Instant Asia image is openly perceived as a myth yet unproblematically endorsed as a

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[2] The colour centrespread in each issue of the *Singapore Travel News* is designed as a poster and publicity tool for the country. In some of the issues between 1969 and 1978, the use of the centrespread is occasionally omitted.

marketing strategy for selling Singapore. This does not debunk the fact that Singapore *is* multicultural or that the various ethnic groups do in fact coexist in the country. Rather, the point to emphasise is that Singapore is visibly a Chinese city but one that has successfully donned the multicultural garb as a nation-building tool and a strategy in tourist promotion (see section 6.4.1). In her assessment of tourism marketing in Singapore, Teo argued that "[w]here promotional campaigns are done on a massive scale, the image of that destination is formed eventually on those themes. Even erroneous portrayals are accepted, especially amongst those tourists who have never been to the attraction before" (1982, 65-6).

The myth of Instant Asia exists mainly at the level of ideology. Vasil, for example, points to Singapore's potential as a 'Third China' because of the "predominance of Chinese in its population and their unmatched contribution to the island's progress and prosperity" (1992, 94). Yet multiculturalism downplays the country's Chineseness in a way suited to its geopolitical setting and its desire for rapid economic growth. The numerical and economic strength of the Chinese, the uneasy but stable alliance of different races, and the absence of a distinctive Singaporean identity all belie the rosy Instant Asia image. McKie makes the following observation:

> The brochures will tell you that Singapore is multi-racial and cosmopolitan, and within the limitations of those words, both are true. But its cosmopolitanism is superficial and multi-racialism is so diluted that three of every four people you pass is Chinese. More important, the power and influence of those three people is much greater than even their numbers imply....Singapore is a Chinese city and every time I return it seems more and more Chinese. Yet it has always been a synthesis of Asia and Europe, where all the streams of race and religion have passed and met; and where - if they have not yet merged into something recognizably Singaporean because of language and religion, food taboos and dress, pride and prejudice - they have at least achieved an uneasy but astonishing harmony. (1972, 5-6).

The Instant Asia ideology thus subordinated factual and emotional reality for an ideological notion that is more amenable to tourism marketing on the one hand and nation building on the other. It is for this reason that Clammer identifies various levels of ideology in Singapore and described the Instant Asia/multiracial theme as operating at a

"mythic level of providing an image, model or self-image of how the society is or should be" (1985, 159). The ideology laden multicultural theme thus served in Graham's words, used in the context of Ireland, as an "essential component of the foundation myth of a nation state, a 'dreamland', part and parcel of the need to give people a dramatized sense that they belong to the state" (Graham 1994, 135).

A further exemplification of the Instant Asia myth, and proof that tourism serves the national interest, is offered by the blurring of the finer distinctions existing in the CMIO categories. Among the Chinese in Singapore, there exist as many as sixteen different sub-ethnic groups which vary in language, food, festivals, customary practices, socio-behavioural traits, and province of origin in China. The same applies to the Malay community which comprises seven groupings and the Indians with at least 21 subgroups (Leong 1989, 364). The CMIO model affords the government a strategy in uniting these disparate ethnic subgroups within a larger community while advancing the multicultural ethos as a national identity. Deliberately blurring the ethnic divisions would go a long way in reducing the individual's cultural orientation to a 'homeland' be it China, India or the Malay archipelago, replacing it with an allegiance to the new state of Singapore (Chua & Kuo 1991, 1).

The Instant Asia image also provided a means of showcasing Singapore's CMIO model of multiculturalism without recourse to the finer ethnic divisions constituting each category. Hence, in early tourism brochures, Chinatown was presented unproblematically as a residential site of 'early Chinese merchants' while the Chinese Gardens was said to reflect the grandeur of the Sung Dynasty. With the exception of the cuisines of each subgroup, it was inconceivable for the tourism authorities to develop themed attractions that drew attention to specific ethnic subgroups which might prove divisive to the CMIO model, and create tensions within each racial category. Hence, while multiculturalism accords equal status and treatment to the various cultural groups, "[i]n practice, it selectively draws on the traditions of some ethnic groups and blurs other finer distinctions" (Leong 1989, 373). This, then, is an example of what Hill and Lian refer

to as the "rationalization" of cultural systems "consciously pursued with the aim of shaping an ideology consonant with the nation building process" (1995, 204).

Promoting multicultural tourism thus provides a novel twist to the discourse on the global-local nexus. The proposition goes like this: by projecting Singapore as a multiethnic destination to the world, the government was inadvertently making a public statement on local society and culture whilst fulfilling the political goal of nation building and economic growth. Tourists' fascination in the country's ethnic composition fostered a sense of civic pride which in turn helped to knit the ethnically diverse people together. In short, while local needs and political interests may have influenced the country's global orientation, the latter also helped to reinforce local self-image and civic identity.

Aside from the exigencies of local politics, the Instant Asia theme was also inspired by site factors. It could be argued that the Instant Asia image was engendered by pragmatic considerations of locality and place resources. Multicultural tourism in the 1960s provided Singapore an opportunity to develop its tourism potential without incurring high capital costs. After the STPB was established, there was little by way of natural and human-built resources that could be immediately put to use as attractions. A large part of its appeal lay in its already existing shopping facilities, entrepôt status and multiracial composition and it is the last point that the Instant Asia image capitalised. In 1969, STPB's first director Lam Peng Loon spoke of the need to exploit the country's multiracial composition and...

> To make positive use of the varied cultures and traditions that we have in our multi-racial society. The cultural traditions and customs are definitely new to the tourists from Western countries and I believe this is a rich 'oilfield' which we can tap (1969, 56)

Development in the 1960s was thus confined to "tourist attractions which could be created almost overnight requiring relatively small financial outlay" (Lim 1979, 56) and this included ethnic residential areas, festivities and cuisines. It was not until Sentosa and other human-built areas of interest were developed in the 1970s that Singapore's Instant
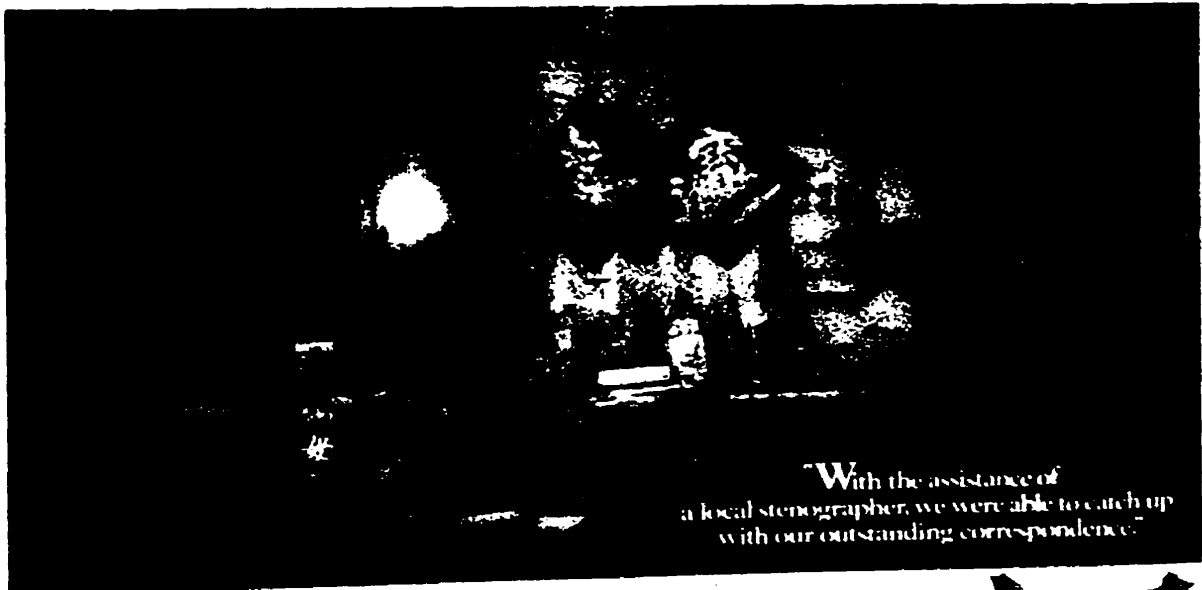
Asia image could be augmented by other aspects of touristic appeal.

The Instant Asia strategy thus reflects a highly localised and pragmatic perspective in planning, embodying on the one hand a nationalistic policy based on the politics and economics of survival, and on the other a least-cost strategy based on local resource endowment. This parallels Graham's (1994) observation of Irish heritage as a dual outcome of 'revisionism' based on an inward-looking Gaelic nationalism and 'pragmatism' based on an outward orientation towards European linkages. As with Irish heritage, the Instant Asia model of multiculturalism can therefore be described as a "pragmatic resources-oriented, tourism-driven, location-specified heritage" (Graham 1994, 153) balancing the political needs of community and the economic imperatives of tourism.

6.2.2 'Surprising Singapore': Urban Redevelopment and Tourism Boosterism

The alliterative slogan of 'Surprising Singapore' was coined in 1977 and actively used from 1984 onwards. With this new slogan, Singapore was depicted as 'the most surprising tropical island on earth' and a 'magic place of many worlds'. While Instant Asia portrayed the country as mythical, Asian and romantic, Surprising Singapore emphasised the nation's economic progress and attempted to blend contrasting images of modernity and heritage, familiarity and exoticism. Publicity brochures thus depicted Singapore as "an island with a fascinating blend of east and west, old and new" combining the charms of Instant Asia with the modern comforts of a Western city (Plates 6.3 and 6.4). Singapore's first tourism masterplan *The Tourist Product Development Plan* (MTI 1986b) thus endorsed the country as a 'Modern City With A Remarkable Past' while the Tourism Task Force described it as possessing "the mystique of the Orient and the romance of a tropical isle....[combined with the] modernity and the fun and excitement of a 'New York of the East'" (MTI 1984, 18).

Unlike the Instant Asia image, the Surprising Singapore campaign was motivated

"With the assistance of a local stenographer, we were able to catch up with our outstanding correspondence."

SURPRISING SINGAPORE!

"In order to see more of Singapore we availed ourselves of the delights of public transportation..."

SURPRISING SINGAPORE!

Plates 6.3 and 6.4 'Surprising Singapore': a meeting place of East and West, modernity and exoticity (courtesy of STPB, publicity brochures 1985)

primarily by the desire to attract tourists. Ever since the oil crisis in the early 1970s and culminating in the 1983 decline, Singapore's tourist arrival growth rates have gradually tapered. While the average increase in tourist numbers was 44.2 per cent in the 1966-70 period, it declined to 18.4 per cent in 1971-5, 14.1 per cent in 1976-80, and 3.5 per cent in 1981-5. Since this decline was accompanied by a rapidly transforming urban landscape, a cause-effect link was made between Singapore's modernisation and its diminishing appeal to visitors. Surprising Singapore was therefore a self-conscious attempt at marketing the country as a combination of Instant Asia and a bustling modern city:

> Behind the facade of a well-groomed and orderly metropolis, Singapore remains an Asian city to its very core. Its Instant Asia. And More. As if by some grand design, much of what's rich in Asia thrives here - the customs, the traditions, even the buildings. At first glance, Singapore may look like some bustling American city transplanted along the equator. But beneath the towering skyscrapers the visitor will find much of Singapore as it has been the last 100 years or more. (*Singapore Travel News* uncited month 1983, 22)

Like the Instant Asia ideology, the mythic power of imagery was invoked but this time the image was aimed at travellers rather than residents. Economic considerations of selling Singapore thus overrode political rhetoric. It was in this spirit that Joseph Chew, then STPB's director spoke about the 'marketing myth':

> You have to build a myth around what you are promoting....We can never match European cities like Rome or London with their centuries of history but we have our own culture and tradition and we should make the best of what we have. We must choose the image that will sell. (ST 25/3/85)

This view confirms Krippendorf's (1984) assessment of promotional brochures and advertising images as works of fiction in which the "persuasive role is usually more important than their informative one" (Goodall & Bergsma 1990, 175). Surprising Singapore was therefore an explicitly commercial undertaking with the aim of boosting the tourism industry, and relatively devoid of ideological posturing on the part of the state.

The Surprising Singapore campaign was also sustained by the urban conservation movement in the 1980s which supplied a steady stream of historic districts and buildings essential to the heritage tourism industry. The perception that conservation benefits tourists, or is undertaken primarily with them in mind, further underlined the global orientation of this image (Figure 6.2). As we saw in Chapter Four, the government has been at pains to point out that while tourism may have been an important reason, conservation benefits Singaporeans as well. Locals, however, remain sceptical of this claim. Case studies of the Civic and Cultural District (Huang *et al.* 1995; Teo and Huang 1995) and Tanjong Pagar in Chinatown (Lau 1993; Yeoh & Lau 1995) have shown overwhelmingly that Singaporeans regard conservation as a tourist-attracting device rather than a cultural enrichment scheme. In the Civic District, for example, Teo and Huang (1995) argued that it is tourists' concerns that guide the state because they are viewed as integral to the revival of the area. The issue, therefore, is not whether Singapore possesses a 'remarkable past'; rather the bone of contention is that conservation is perceived as having an economic slant geared towards visitors.

The image of a 'Magical Place of Many Worlds' also took cognizance of the multiple groups comprising the tourism market each with disparate interests and motivations. Its depiction of Singapore as a land of contrasts was not so much a statement on local diversity but an explicit assertion that the city had something to offer everybody. 'Surprising Singapore' addresses the needs of Asian visitors attracted by Singapore's modernity whereas 'Instant Asia' catered largely to the Western imagination. According to Pearl Sequerah, assistant manager at STPB's Strategic Marketing department,

[With Instant Asia,] the main attribute was our multiracial makeup, and the Westerners were the people we were targeting. Instant Asia seemed very appropriate in the seventies when the Western market was large. Since the eighties the Asian proportion has increased, and they don't come to Singapore to see what they already have back home. The time came for us to review our positioning statement. (personal interview 1995)

Rick Blackhall, managing director of Batey Ads which is responsible for the promotional

Figure 6.2 Re-creating Old Singapore in the 1980s: a tourist-attracting strategy

pamphlets of STPB and Singapore Airlines, further explained that the main emphasis of the campaign was to highlight Singapore's multi-dimensional appeal. Hence, while the Japanese were attracted by the country's clean-green image and its colonial heritage, and other Asians favoured shopping facilities, Westerners continued to be charmed by the mix of the four ethnic groups (ST 22/9/86). The Surprising Singapore image is thus a consciously planned, tourist-oriented campaign aimed at a wide segment of the visitor market.

6.2.3 'Multi-faceted Jewel' and 'New Asia-Singapore': the Emerging Importance of Regionalism

In the 1990s, Singapore's tourism focus is best captured by the metaphor 'Multi-faceted Jewel'. In its *Strategic Plan for Growth 1993-1995* the STPB likened the tourism product to a jewel with multidimensional appeal (STPB 1993a), or as the Annual Report puts it, Singapore has the "qualities of a multi-faceted jewel, able to appeal to visitors from both East and West with equal ease" (1993c, 7). This is not unlike the 'Magic Place of Many Worlds' image except for two distinguishing features. First, the heritage element occupies a less central focus, and second, the Asian market is emphasised. This is not to say heritage development or Western visitors are unimportant. On the contrary, they remain crucial, but the goal today is to develop the tourism product in ways it has never been developed before. Hence, earlier images and development priorities are overlain with new ones and the Jewel motif is a conflation of multiple perspectives. Like a jewel, Singapore is "colourful, multifaceted and attractive" (cited in Cadiz 1993, 24) capable of being "multi-interpreted" and "multi-sold" as "different products to different users" (Ashworth 1994, 23). As the STPB's Annual Report for 1992/3 best explains, "Singapore's message is that variety is not only the spice of life, but also the destination's greatest strength" (STPB 1993c, 7).

Notwithstanding its multi-faceted appeal, the Strategic Plan targets regional tourists as

its main catchment. After years of courting the Western traveller, the expanding Asian market represents a 'last frontier' whose potential has yet to be exploited. Developing Singapore as an Asian hub is timely. In 1964, Asians comprised 26.7 per cent of the market share; the proportion increased to 50.9 per cent in 1974, 65.5 per cent in 1984 and 73.3 per cent in 1995 (STPB 1995, 23). Supported by the booming economies in Asia-Pacific and increasing propensity for intra-regional travel, the Asian market is expected to play a major role in Singapore's tourism future. Justifying the new focus, STPB's then executive director H.T. Pek asserted that "[t]he continued growth in Asian arrivals reflect[s] the board's marketing strategy which was revised in 1992 to place greater emphasis on Asia" (1993b, 4). An increasing Asian presence necessitates a new marketing strategy. Since Asians do not come to Singapore to imbibe its Instant Asia ambience, it is imperative to 're-image' the country to suit new market demands. A logical way forward is to develop Singapore as a regional centre for regional travellers, an Asian hub for Asian visitors (Figure 6.3).

In 1996, the multi-faceted jewel theme was subsumed under a larger tourism plan which had the marketing tagline 'New Asia-Singapore - So Easy to Enjoy, So Hard to Forget' (STPB 1996). The global-local discourse here now takes on a regional focus. In the past while Singapore was marketed as a 'substitute' for the Asian continent, today it is the "capital" of a newly dynamic Asia. As the STPB chief executive Tan Chin Nam explained, Singapore is "a place where tradition and modernity, East and West meet and intermingle comfortably...In many ways, Singapore's progressiveness, sophistication and unique multi-cultural Asian character epitomises modern Asian dynamism" (STWE 6/1/96). New Asia-Singapore thus encapsulates the STPB's new goals of developing the country not only as a destination area but Asia's pre-eminent "tourism hub" and "tourism business centre" (STPB 1996, 4).

As opposed to the policy of self sufficiency in the 1960s, the geo-political and economic circumstances in the 1990s demand a greater appreciation of Singapore's 'place' within Asia. The Strategic Plan acknowledged that "[o]ur links with the outside world

SINGAPORE TOURISM - 1990 AND BEYOND

Perfecting the Jewel
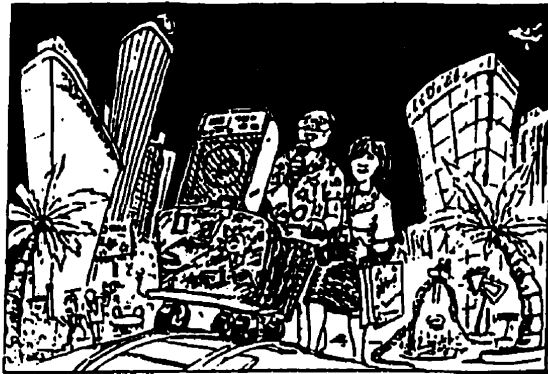
Asia goes on holiday

ATT PROBE : SINGAPORE

Multi-faceted Jewel ...

Dangling a carat

STPB changes sales pitch after 11 years

"NEW Asia-Singapore — so easy to enjoy, so hard to forget" is the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board's new sales pitch for Singapore, after 11 years of using the Surprising Singapore tagline.

Now the island is to be sold as a "must-see, hassle-free" destination with a multi-cultural Asian identity

TOURISM UNLIMITED
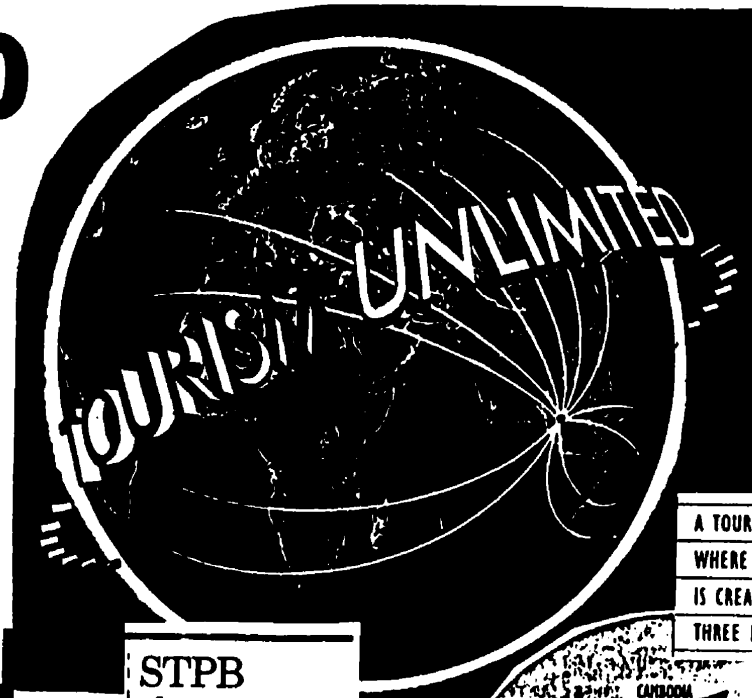
A TOURISM HUB,
WHERE WEALTH
IS CREATED
THREE ROUNDS

CAMBODIA
THAILAND
MYANMAR
INDIA
CHINA
VIETNAM
PHILIPPINES
MALAYSIA
INDONESIA
NEW ZEALAND
AUSTRALIA
SINGAPORE

THEN TO THE REGION
FIRST TO SINGAPORE
AND BACK TO SINGAPORE
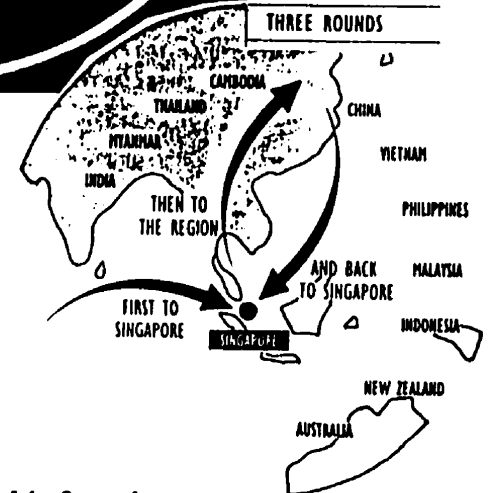
Figure 6.3 Singapore as a 'Multi-faceted Jewel' and 'Regional Hub': focusing on Asian tourists in the 1990s

will continue to shape our future. Singapore is at the heart of a region set to become a focus of tourism growth in the next decade" (STPB 1993a, 11). The *Tourism 21* plan went further by stressing that contemporary Asia boasts an interesting past and exciting future, a blend that is well captured in Singapore (Plates 6.5 & 6.6). 'New Asia-Singapore' therefore suggests "a Singapore that has managed to preserve and nurture its Asian heritage, even as it embraces and harnesses the marvels of high technology" (STPB 1996, 25). Singapore's "local sense of place" which was constructed from an "introverted, inward-looking" perspective has thus evolved into a "global sense of place" today, incorporating a "consciousness of its links with the wider world" (Massey 1993, 64 & 66). Tourism marketing and policy development have therefore embraced regionalism in the 1990s.

6.3 Tourism, Regionalism and Localism In the Nineties

In the 1990s, regionalism (or 'regionalisation' as it is more popularly termed in Singapore) has emerged as the cornerstone in the country's economic and tourism policies. Although the 'regional turn' was inspired primarily by the growth in Asian economies, local factors and political considerations were also instrumental to its implementation. Here, I shall explore regionalism as a tourism strategy and explain this as the outcome of local conditions. This argument will be substantiated by first exploring regionalism in the wider context of the national economy (section 6.3.1) and the interconnections which exist between regionalism and tourism (section 6.3.2).

6.3.1 Regionalism in the Singapore Context

'Regionalism' or 'regionalisation' may be defined as a process of integration whereby a region is created through the linking together of different locales, cities and countries. The result is a supranational entity which transcends political boundaries tying localities

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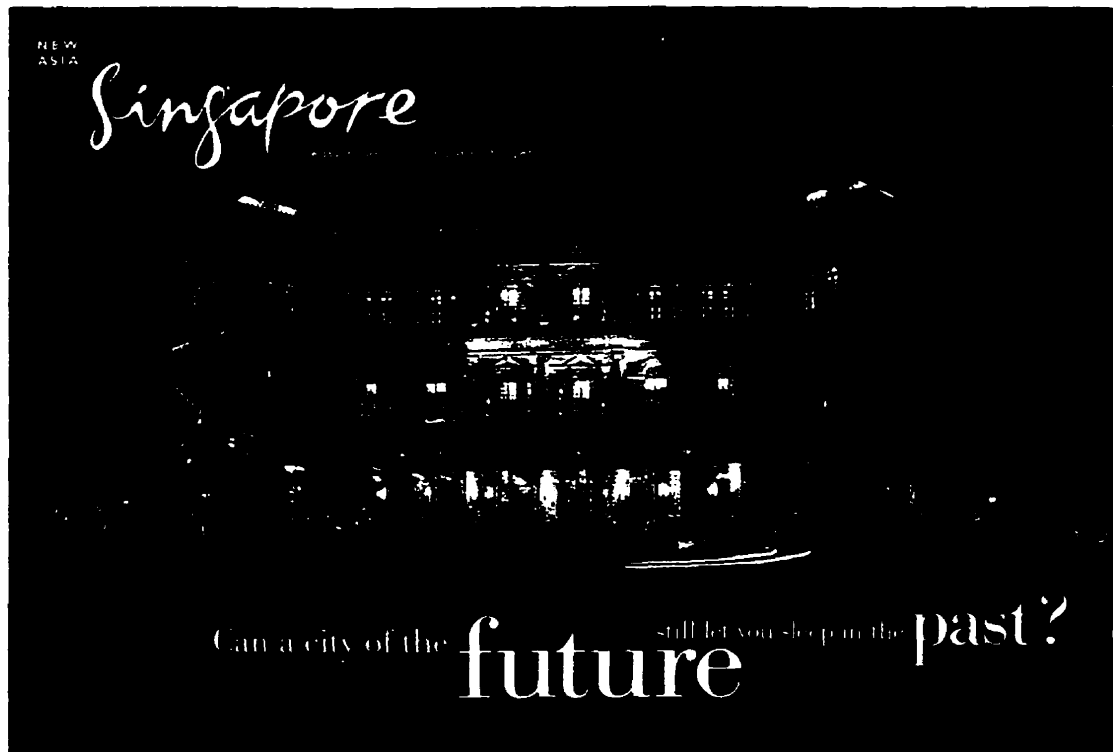
Plates 6.5 and 6.6   Marketing images in the 1990s: 'New Asia-Singapore' - combining the future with the past (courtesy of STPB, publicity postcards 1996)

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together under a new geographic and economic alliance. Kenichi Ohmae described this spatial arrangement as a "region state" or a borderless area developed around a regional economic centre (1995, 80 & 143). This "new regionalism" can also take the form of a trans-border development corridor comprising numerous cities (Rimmer 1994) or a "transactional space" with a "regional division of economic activities regulated by hub centres" (Rodrigue 1994, 57).

In a stock taking account of the Singapore economy, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) recommended a focus on regional policies because "[i]nternally we have finished doing all the easy things which can be done to foster growth. Externally, international trade is no longer expanding exuberantly as it used to..." (MTI 1986a, 4). Participation in regional development provides the country with an opportunity to partake in Asia's economic boom while transcending its own size and resource limitations. In a Regionalisation Forum in 1993, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong spoke of the rationale of "going regional":

> Our economy has always been outward-looking....Our external wing was in fact our first wing....Going regional is part of our economic evolution, from an entrepot for raw produce and simple machineries and consumer goods, to a manufacturing base serving MNCs, to a financial and communications hub, to OHQs [overseas headquarters], and to be part of what Kenichi Ohmae calls a region state, a borderless natural economic zone 'drawn by the deft but invisible hand of the global market for goods and services', joining Singapore to other economic areas. Going regional is, therefore, about investing our expertise and capabilities in other growth areas in the region, interlocking them with our domestic economy. It is to strengthen our domestic economy, expand our natural economic zone, and ratchet up our standard of living. This is the mission of our regionalisation drive. (STWE 29/5/93)

By providing a 'second arm' or 'external wing' to the country's industrialisation programme, new heights of economic growth can be scaled.

A slogan was created to encapsulate the goals of the regionalisation mission. It reads: 'Singapore Unlimited: Bringing the World to Singapore, Bringing Singapore to the World'. Regionalisation involves the dual goal of 'bringing Singapore worldwide' and 'bringing the

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world home to Singapore'. The first calls for a diversification in Singapore's export trade away from the emphasis on goods to the export of local skills and services. These services include expertise in hotel management, air/sea port management, town planning, industrial development, engineering consultancy and tourism (MTI 1986a, 142). The aim is to involve local entrepreneurs, companies and government ministries in overseas investment opportunities thereby broadening the national economic base, achieving economies of scale and securing further growth. As the MTI had warned "[i]f we restrict our investments only to within the Singapore economy, the scope will ultimately be limited....the longer term solution [therefore] is for us to invest abroad, and to exploit opportunities overseas" (MTI 1986a, 84). Hiebert puts it more simply: "At home, the nation has virtually run out of room to grow.... Further growth for Singapore's companies will depend on a successful overseas push" (1996, 58).

Two strategies are involved in 'bringing Singapore to the world'. The first is territorial regionalism which involves Singapore's participation with neighbouring countries based purely on physical and geographic proximity. This is exemplified by the 'Growth Triangle' scheme in which Singapore and its immediate neighbours Malaysia and Indonesia are involved in joint development projects.

The second strategy is selective regionalism which involves projects in select countries in the larger Asian region. An example is the Singapore government's involvement in creating a new industrial town in the Suzhou province of China. The Suzhou Industrial Township Project, sometimes nicknamed 'Singapore II', comprises Singapore-owned consortiums and government ministries involved in infrastructural aid and personnel training in industrial management, town planning and housing development. The scheme spanning 70 square kilometres and costing an estimated S$30 billion is expected to be completed in 20 years. The Suzhou project is one of six industrial zones being built by Singaporean companies. The others are in Wuxi (China), Bintan and Batam islands (Indonesia) and recently, agreements have been signed for similar projects in Bangalore (India) and Ho Chih Min City (Vietnam) (Hiebert 1996, 61). Both territorial and

selective regionalism substitute for Singapore's smallness of size by capitalising on the vast Asian hinterland and marketplace. As journalist Han F.K. best put it:

> Singaporeans need no longer be constrained by the size and limited geography of the island. They need have no fear that there are limits to what they can do because there are no roads, housing and industrial estates, or shopping complexes to build in Singapore as they have all been done. As long as they have skills which are in demand - in this case in planning and administering a city - they can literally move the earth. (STWE 22/5/93)

It is in the same spirit that Brigadier General George Yeo, Minister for Information and the Arts asserted that "the progress of Singapore depends on our having a purpose much larger than ourselves" (STWE 6/8/94).

Regionalism also involves 'bringing the world to Singapore'. The aim here is to develop Singapore as a regional hub for all kinds of activities thereby ensuring the continuous inflow of global capital, technology, expertise and people. Since the mid-1980s, the MTI has encouraged the development of Singapore as an "international total business centre" and a hub for operational headquarters with subsidiaries in Asia (MTI 1986a, 12). In the 1990s, similar plans have been envisioned for the country to serve as an "art and entertainment centre of the region" (STWE 23/4/94), an air/sea port hub as well as a regional core for international publishing houses, media and entertainment corporations and conventions. The go-regional drive has therefore two dimensions -- "in addition to taking Singapore into the region, the region could also be brought into Singapore" (STWE 26/6/93).

To return to the country's preoccupation with imagery, one notices in the local media various depictions of regionalism in which a vegetative metaphor is used (Figure 6.4). This is an instructive analogy in some ways. The metaphor illustrates the territorial confines faced by Singapore and the need to explore new pastures in order to ensure further growth. Viewed in this manner, the Southeast Asian region and China are depicted as 'uncharted territories' which provide opportunities for bringing Singapore's investments to the world. The metaphor also suggests integral links between donor and

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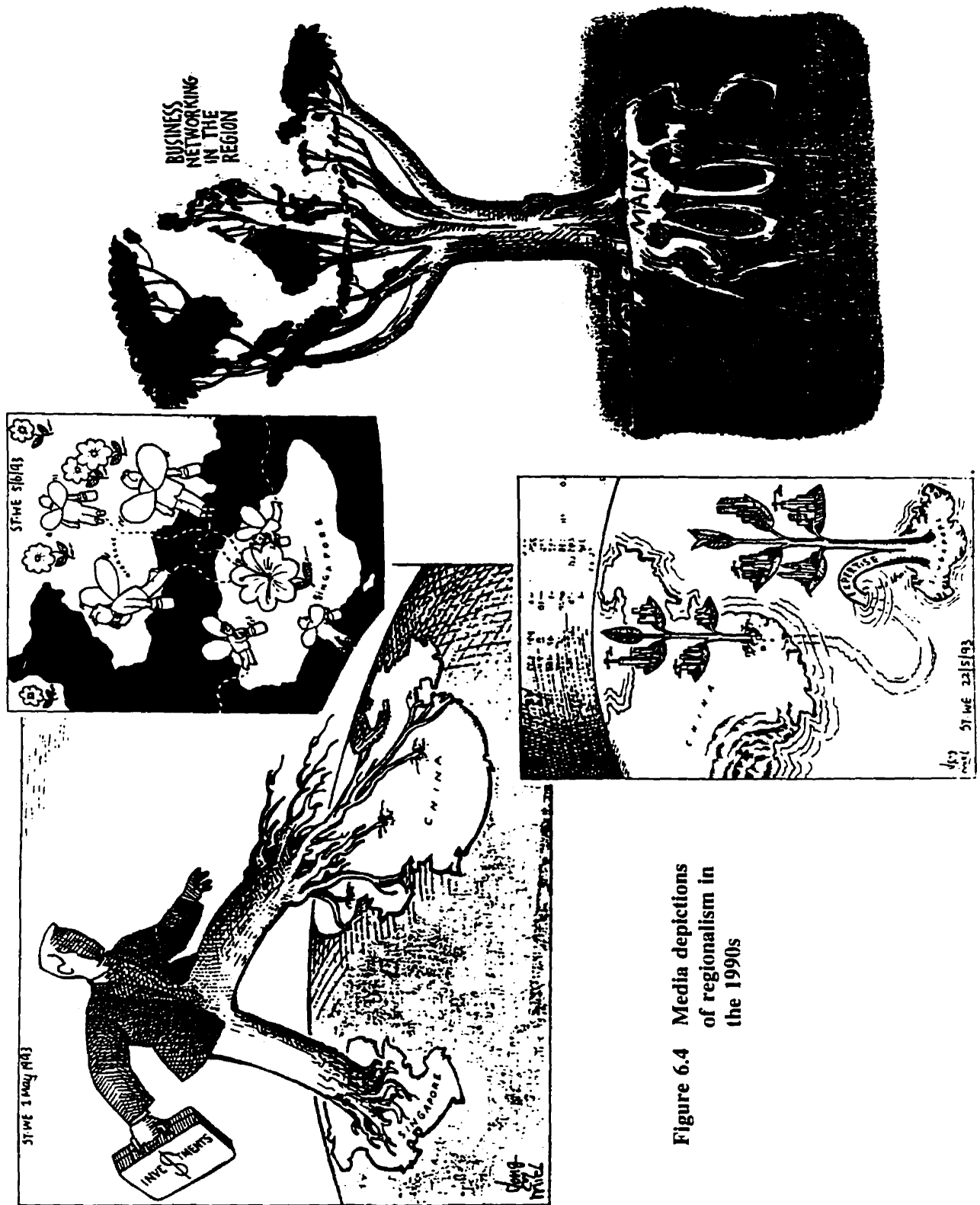
Figure 6.4 Media depictions of regionalism in the 1990s

recipient countries. Hence, these links facilitate a free flow of goods, services, people and capital back into Singapore illustrating a case of 'bringing the world to Singapore'. According to George Yeo, therefore, regionalism is not only about "look[ing] outwards" but also involves "constantly bring[ing] in fresh minds and fresh talent, and be[ing] of service to others" (STWE 6/8/94). In this way, regionalisation will help to broaden Singapore's economy, overcome size and resource limitations while securing harmonious ties with neighbouring countries.

6.3.2 Tourism and Regionalism: A Working Relationship

The relationship between tourism and regionalism is a two way process. While tourism provides an avenue for fulfilling the regionalisation mission, simultaneously regionalism also creates opportunities for sustaining tourism growth. In this discussion, I will explicate the dual relationship between tourism and regionalism by arguing that local factors and political considerations also play significant roles. Regionalism and tourism are interconnected in four ways: (a) at the policy level; (b) in Singapore's role as the source of tourism expertise; (c) in its goal as a regional hub; and (d) through strategic alliances with other countries.

(a) Tourism Policy as a Reflection of National Policy

The *Tourism 21* vision is a mirror image of the country's larger regionalisation strategy. At the Global Tourism Conference held in Singapore in March 1995, the STPB unveiled its mission statement which reads 'Tourism Unlimited: Bringing the World to Singapore, Bringing Singapore to the World'. The basic goal here is to urge the STPB to go beyond its present role of attracting visitors to encouraging tourism investments overseas and luring leisure related firms to the country. According to the STPB's chief executive, "Singapore has to reassess its traditional role of destination marketing" (STWE 18/2/95)

and one of the new challenges is for the STPB to serve as a "tourism business architect". This means it has to identify innovative services which can be "repackaged, tested and fine-tuned here [in Singapore] before replicated as value-added products in the region" (ST date unknown). The STPB's new challenge thus parallels the MTI's own goals. Tourism Unlimited is a "specific articulation of Singapore Unlimited", urging the STPB to tap "the attractiveness of the region and [integrate] them with Singapore's in the area of tourism development and growth" (STPB 1996, 16).

Lest one thinks the Tourism Unlimited plan is primarily altruistic in purpose, it helps to keep in mind the local pressures which necessitated the plan in the first place. One pressure has been brought about by improvements in transportation. With collapsing spatial barriers due to improved aircraft technology, liberal air regulations and the reduction in flying costs, global travel has increased phenomenally. This expansion is greatest in Asia because of increased affluence and intra-regional air links (Harrison 1992). As a result of 'space-time compression', the isolationist policies of Instant Asia and Surprising Singapore now appear anachronistic. It is naive to continue presenting Singapore as an all-in-one Asian destination aimed at the cash-poor/time-strapped Westerner when the majority of visitors to the country are neither from the West nor poor (Pandya 1995). Regionalism now replaces isolationism because of changing market profiles and increased accessibility. As Featherstone concurs, globalisation draws nations closer together by increasing our awareness "that the globe has been compressed into a locality, [and] that others are neighbours with which we must necessarily interact, relate and listen" (1993, 172).

A second pressure is the changing landscape within the locality. While Singapore may be considered 'quaint' or 'undeveloped' in the 1960s, the same is not true today. Economic development, urbanisation and social progress have transformed the country into a modern city state which the *New York Times* (9/10/94) once described as a "very safe, very clean nation that looks like nothing so much as a prosperous Californian suburb." The STPB concedes this 'problem' as well. According to its *Survey of Overseas*

Tourists to Singapore, while 23.3 per cent of tourists in 1993 were impressed by Singapore's "clean and green environment", only 1.8 per cent perceived the country as having an "exotic, multicultural and Eastern background" (STPB 1993b, 78). In a list of nineteen impressions, the former was ranked first and the latter thirteenth. Because of these changes, the image of Instant Asia has been replaced by the more fitting one of New Asia which projects Singapore as a modern thriving metropolis.

The Tourism Unlimited strategy mirrors the objectives and promises of the national regionalisation policy. Both seek to develop Singapore as a regional hub and both outline ways for local industries and entrepreneurs to 'go into the region'. Like the Singapore Unlimited policy, the Tourism Unlimited campaign mitigates local problems such as the country's lack of land and natural resources. Regionalism allows Singapore to "enlarge its tourism space" (STPB 1996, 48) by encouraging entrepreneurs to "break free of their traditional geographical boundaries and boldly expand their tourism activities beyond the shores of Singapore" (STPB 1996, 6). At the national and sectoral level, therefore, regionalism is both a goal and a means for further economic development.

(b) Exporting Tourism Expertise to the Region: 'Bringing Singapore to the World'

Tourism and regionalism are intertwined in a second way through the export of tourism expertise to countries in Asia. Such services include hotel management skills and training of staff, consultancy, setting up and managing national air carriers and the implementation of tourism masterplans. Although the government maintains that "Singapore can afford to assume th[is] responsibility for it has achieved enough to spare struggling economies a helping hand" (ST 16/8/94), the local benefits and political advantages derived by helping others should also be realised. The export of tourism services provides a way for Singapore to broaden its tourist economy and augment its revenue base. Participating in other countries' tourism growth creates growth opportunities for local entrepreneurs, companies and government ministries while generating political goodwill with fellow

Asians.

To date, Singapore has made much progress in overseas ventures. In 1994, the government signed a memorandum of understanding on tourism co-operation with Vietnam and Myanmar. For Vietnam, the government pledged US$10 million to be used over a three year period for the training of tourism manpower in tour guiding, front-line services and the management of resorts and attractions (ST 26/7/95). In the case of Myanmar, a private consortium has been formed with the goal of channeling Singapore's expertise in hotel development, airport management and construction of tourist infrastructure to the country (Ministry of Information and the Arts 1995, 109). Also in 1994, the STPB and MTI won a contract to develop the 'India Tourism Plan' which outlines private sector participation in the country. All these examples illustrate a case of 'bringing Singapore to the world'. It also demonstrates, as the *Tourism 21* plan puts it. "a shift in our paradigm from one of 'Singapore is too small' to that of 'There are no real limits or constraints in this new borderless world'" (STPB 1996, 16).

Singapore's involvement in overseas ventures brings many benefits to the local economy as well. The proposed India Tourism Plan, for example, outlines a number of recommendations such as the creation of an "air bridge" funnelling tourists between Singapore and India, the development of domestic airlines, the creation of coach tours and the restoration of old buildings (STWE 3/9/94). For each of these proposals, the Singapore government recommended the participation of Singaporean businesses and entrepreneurs. Singapore Airlines (SIA), for example, recently embarked on a joint venture with India's Tata Industries Ltd. to co-own and co-manage a domestic airline (STWE 1/4/95). As a result of this alliance and the proposed air bridge, SIA's landing rights in various Indian cities will no doubt increase. The masterplan also recommended many other ways for Singapore owned companies to be involved in India's tourism development. Recently, for example, a local consortium won a contract to build a new international airport in Bangalore, while Changi Airport Enterprises Pte. Ltd. has just completed a masterplan for the same airport (STWE 6/1/96). Proposals have also been

made for Singaporean firms to set up tour circuits in India and restore architecturally grand buildings. In Colombo (Sri Lanka), Raffles International Limited has commenced restoration of the 129-year old Galle Face Hotel (ST 5/8/93). This venture is the first overseas project for the organisation following its success with Singapore's Raffles Hotel.

It is the government's desire to encourage economic expansion through regional integration. As Prime Minister Goh had urged: "Spread out our investments. Do not put all our eggs in our basket. This makes not only good economic sense but also sound politics. The region is vast and abounds with opportunities" (STWE 29/5/93). Towards this end, the government provides incentives and assistance to entrepreneurs with a "clear, direct, and positive link to the home economy and [which] helped to strengthen it" (STWE 29/5/93). Overseas ventures benefitting individual entrepreneurs in the short run while hollowing the local economy in the long are discouraged. To monitor regionalisation efforts, the government established the 'Committee to Promote Enterprise Overseas' in 1993 and introduced the 'Most Entrepreneurial Member Award' in 1994 to recognise tourism firms with "the skill, confidence and innovative spirit to enhance Singapore's position as a tourism hub, including expanding our tourism economy beyond our borders" (STWE 27/3/93). Regionalism and economic expansion are thus intertwined in a strategy of tourism growth.

(c) Singapore As A Regional Tourist Hub: 'Bringing the World To Singapore'

Another aim of regionalism is to develop Singapore as a tourist hub. The goal is to establish the city as a cruise and air hub of Southeast Asia, a pre-eminent Asian convention centre, an education hub, a medical centre and a global city for the arts and entertainment. In short, Singapore would serve as an entry/exit for international travellers and a 'must visit' for regional tourists. Implicit in this centripetal inflow of people and services is also the desire to cultivate a more cosmopolitan and global outlook among Singaporeans.

Let me illustrate the benefits of hubbing by taking the case of Singapore as an entertainment centre. In line with the goal of developing a "regional centre for serious Western cultural performances" (MTI 1984, 20), a number of world-class musical events have been staged. The staging of Broadway spectacles like 'Cats' (in 1992), 'Les Miserables' (1994) and 'Phantom of the Opera' (1995) as well as concerts by Luciano Pavarotti and Placido Domingo in 1992 have all brought "a piece of the world to Singapore" while also attracting Asian visitors and creating economic spinoffs for the tourism industry (STWE 26/6/93). Michael Jackson's two-day concert in Singapore as part of his two-stop Asian tour in 1993, for example, generated an estimated S$1 million in a single weekend for the tourist industry, with the money derived principally from the influx of Malaysians and Indonesians (ST 1/9/93). There is an enormous tourism potential, therefore, in cultivating Singapore as an entertainment hub.

The development of an entertainment industry also benefits the local community. Aside from economic gains, renowned musical acts also "add more life and excitement in the city" (STPB 1993a, 50). The Michael Jackson concert, for example, was described as "the beginning of a permanent change in the entertainment lifestyle in Singapore" because it ushered the birth of mega-scale musical acts that fulfil Singaporeans' desire for international big names while serving at the same time as attractions (ST 1/9/93). As Tommy Koh chair of the National Arts Council concurs, tourists and locals benefit equally from Singapore's development as an arts and cultural centre. This vision Koh adds will help "to enrich Singaporeans as people; to enhance their quality of life; to help in nation building; and to contribute to the economy" (cited in Stewart 1993, 11).

Other permutations of the hubbing concept include Singapore as a medical and educational centre. The former was broached by the STPB because over the years, sophisticated medical services in the country have increasingly attracted ASEAN visitors seeking physical examinations as well as eye and gynaecological treatments. In 1987, the medical expenditure of tourists alone was S$23.3 million while in 1991 it increased to S$97.9 million (STPB 1993a, 46-7). The tourism industry reaps many economic spinoffs

and the expansion of medical facilities would also potentially cater to the needs of an ageing population in Singapore. As George Yeo put it figuratively: "[l]iving close to the well...brings certain advantages in terms of our own thirst being slaked" (ST 17/7/95).

Developing Singapore as an educational hub will likewise generate benefits. This scheme, targeted at Asians on English-learning camps and Western M.BA. visitors studying Singapore's 'NIE miracle', hopes to enhance the country's reputation worldwide, foster a sense of civic pride and create a favourable impression with students. As the STPB explained "the youth traveller of today has the potential of returning as a high-spending repeat visitor of the future..." (STPB 1993a, 45). The student traffic increased from 3.9 per cent of total arrivals in 1987 to 9.3 per cent in 1991 (STPB 1993a, 45).

(d) Strategic Alliances with Neighbouring Countries: 'Bringing Singapore and the World Together'

While all the schemes discussed above exemplify the practice of selective regionalism, territorial regionalism is also an important component in tourism. An example of the latter is strategic alliances forged between Singapore and its neighbouring countries at various levels: between governments and national tourism organisations, as well as between private sectors and entrepreneurs. Unlike the previous example of Singapore providing aid to developing countries in the larger Asian region, strategic alliances are usually established with one's immediate neighbours and interaction is a two-way process offering mutual benefits and synergistic growth.

Strategic alliances have been forged between Singapore and its closest neighbours Malaysia and Indonesia. Regional integration provides Singapore with an opportunity to overcome its lack of natural and cultural attractions by partnering others abundantly blessed with both. What better way then to beat the competition.than by joining forces with it? The *Tourism 21* plan argues that as neighbouring countries develop their tourism

attractions, Singapore should "tap the tremendous potential of the region and complement her own city resort attractions with select destinations elsewhere" (STPB 1996, 6). This can be done by "twinning" itself with particular locales through joint marketing and development projects in the hope of enhancing the "collective attractiveness and collective competitiveness" of the region (STPB 1996, 17).

Surrounded by countries with greater natural and cultural appeal, Singapore will no doubt reap many benefits. Adopting the Japanese landscaping technique of *"Shakkei"* or "borrowed scenery" (STPB 1996, 16), Malaysia and Indonesia could serve as Singapore's tourism hinterland just as Singapore might serve as their air and seaport hub. Borrowing each other's strengths will help in "creating new economic space for everyone through leveraging resources regionally and globally to overcome each individual country's natural limitations" (STPB 1996, 16). As the Minster for Trade and Industry Yeo Cheow Tong had said, tourism competition

> ...need not be a negative process and a zero-sum game. Our neighbours are countries with
> abundant beach resorts, scenic landscapes and exotic native cultures. By partnering them,
> we can create a new, more attractive and mutually beneficial collective tourism product.
> (STWE 22/4/95).

In an era of global interdependence, the "collective good" of the region is best enhanced when resources are pooled and "'win-win' partnerships" forged between countries (STPB 1996, 17).

The example of the 'Growth Triangle', a development scheme between Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia illustrates the benefits of regional integration. Originally conceived in 1988, the triangle links the Johor state of Malaysia, the Riau Islands of Indonesia and Singapore in joint development of manufacturing industries, leisure and tourism facilities, water treatment plants and construction projects (Figure 6.5). In tourism, the Growth Triangle emphasises the development of beach/golf/hotel resorts and marinas in Indonesia and Malaysia with Singapore serving as the gateway for embarking

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and disembarking visitors. By promoting the triangle as a single-holiday destination, specialisation is afforded in each country and the whole region prospers through synergistic growth. As the STPB's chief executive said "[w]hile we make Singapore attractive for visitors, we could become more effective by borrowing other countries' attractiveness. They can also borrow our attractiveness" (STWE 18/2/95).

The Growth Triangle also allows the involvement of Singaporean companies in Malaysian and Indonesia resort projects. The largest scheme under construction is the Bintan Beach International Resort (BBIR on Bintan Island, Indonesia) which spans 22,000 hectares and comprises 20 hotels, ten condominiums and ten golf courses (see Figure 6.5). The BBRI is owned by Bintan Resort Corporation, a joint consortium of Singapore and Indonesian firms (STWE 17/10/92). Justifying this project, the Indonesian Junior Minister for Industry had said that "[g]lobal competition among countries for investments, whether in manufacturing, services [or] tourism is intensifying. Singapore and Indonesia have adopted a strategy of collaboration to maximise comparative advantage so that together we can be more competitive than each can on its own" (STWE 17/10/92).

Yet another form of territorial regionalism involves inter-government alliances forged between national tourism organisations. These include the establishment of the Malaysia-Singapore Tourism Council in 1982, the signing of an Agreement on Tourism Cooperation between Indonesia and Singapore in 1994, and the agreement with fellow ASEAN members to establish the ASEAN Tourism Centre in 1995. Under the Malaysia-Singapore partnership, for example, joint marketing projects for 'Surprising Singapore - Fascinating Malaysia' were implemented in the 1980s (Chua 1991, 55). Under this scheme, partnership between the STPB and the Malacca State Development Corporation was forged between the two cities. The aim was to combine the strengths of both places as it was felt that Singapore "does not offer enough on its own" and "the two destinations could be promoted as different experiences for the tourist - Malacca as the old world and Singapore the new" (ST 14/3/85).
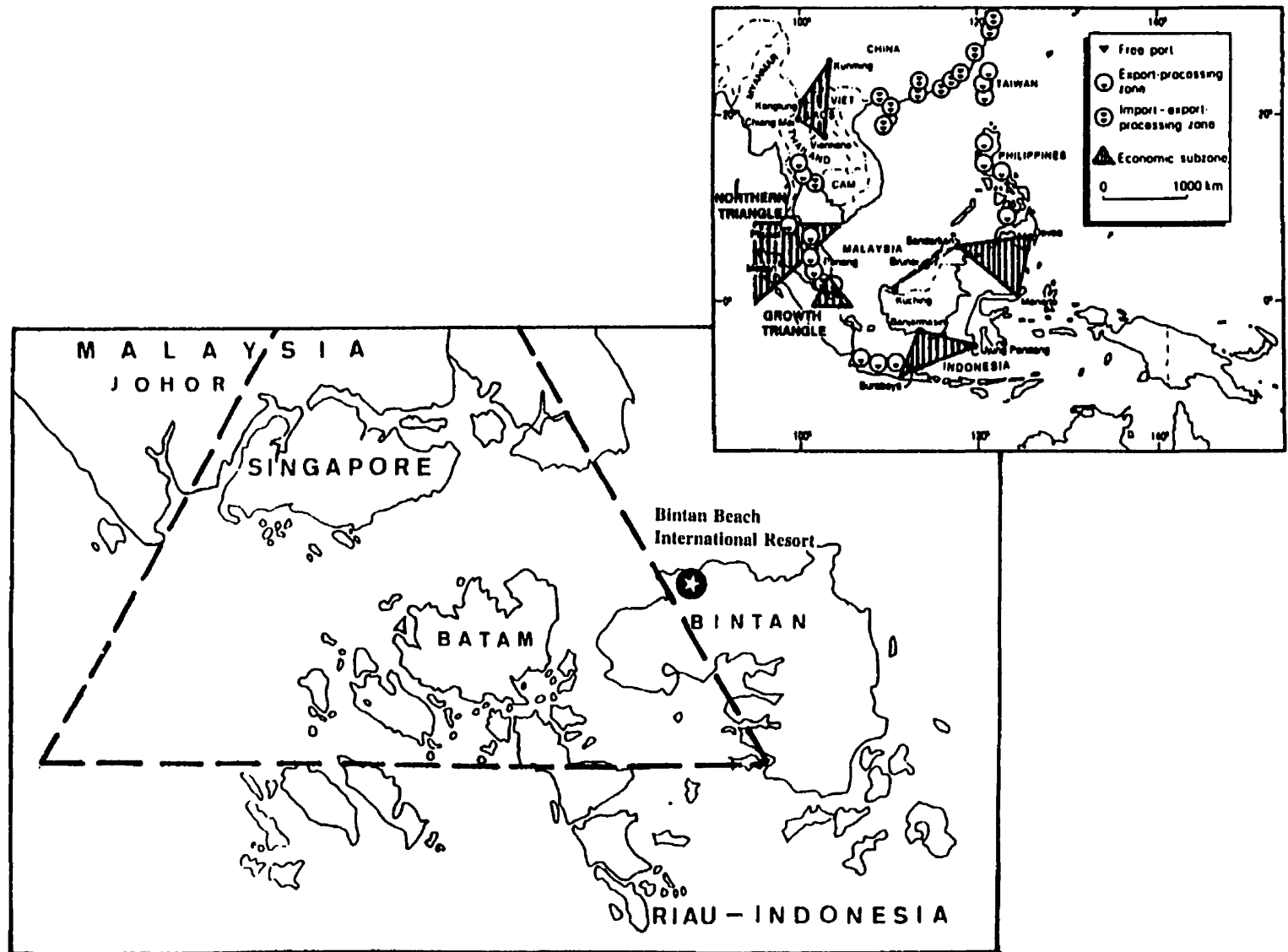
Figure 6.5 The Growth Triangle: linking Singapore, Johor State (Malaysia)
and the Riau Islands (Indonesia). Inset: other growth triangles in Southeast Asia
(source: Rimmer 1994, 1744)

Political goodwill is also generated as testified by the Singapore-Indonesia relationship. In September 1994, an agreement on cooperation was signed by both countries to develop tourism in Indonesia in four specific zones beyond the Riau islands (STWE 23/7/94). According to Prime Minister Goh, the tourism agreement represents a "historic milestone in relations between the two countries" because it provides a "new dimension" and creates "another layer to our bilateral relations" (STWE 1/10/94). With the fallout between the countries during the Indonesian Confrontation of 1963[3], the tourism pact builds on the amicable relationship forged since the 1960s. As Michael Leifer of the London School of Economics observed, "if you can lock regional neighbours in the wider Asia-Pacific into a constructive network of cooperative relationships, then the nexus of economic advantage will hopefully have the effect of countries [acting as] good regional citizens and unlikely to engage in adventurist policies" (STWE 31/12/94). In this way, political goodwill and regionalist policies are inextricably linked.

To conclude, regionalism has been embraced by the Singapore tourism industry and creates opportunities for overcoming geographic constraints while providing avenues for economic growth and political welfare. The imagistic shift from 'Instant Asia' in the sixties to 'Asian hub' represents local adjustments to global and regional trends. Nationalistic policies of self sufficiency have been supplanted by regionalist strategies of cooperation and integration. At the same time, the 'power of the local' is exemplified through the way site conditions, community needs and political factors give shape and form to regionalism. Tourism and regionalism are therefore interconnected and their relationship may be expressed in three geographic patterns (Figure 6.6). The 'centrifugal outflow of tourism services', the 'centripetal inflow of people' and the 'integrative relationship between Singapore and the rest of Asia' illustrate the global-local-regional nexus and the emerging geography of Asian tourism development.

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[3] In September 1963, Singapore's decision to merge with the Federation of Malaya, Sarawak and North Borneo (now Sabah) to form Malaysia was vociferously opposed by Indonesia. For three years during the Indonesian Confrontation (1963-5), President Sukarno worked actively against Malaysia.

Selective Regionalism I: Centrifugal Outflow of Tourism Related
Services into the Asian Region

The Asian
Region

S'PORE

"Bringing Singapore
to the World"

Selective Regionalism II: Centripetal Inflow of Tourists from the
Asian Region

The Asian
Region

S'PORE

"Bringing the World
to Singapore"

Territorial Regionalism: Spatial Integration and Economic Co-operation
Between Singapore and Neighbouring Countries

S'PORE

Immediate Asian
Neighbours
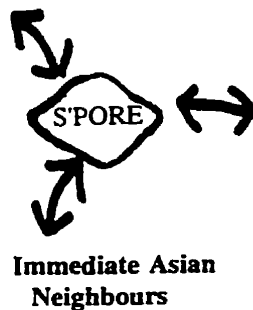
"Bringing Singapore and
the World Closer
Together"

Figure 6.6 Regionalism and tourism in Singapore:
A typology of geographic processes and patterns

6.4 Images of Singapore: Official Representations and Popular Perceptions

According to Massey, "places do not have single, unique 'identities'; they are full of internal differences and conflicts" (Massey 1993, 67). As we have seen from the preceding discussion, Singapore's image as a tourist destination has not been static but has changed dramatically over time. In this section, I shall explore a second way of looking at this concept of 'multiple place identities'.

Drawing attention to official and popular representations of Singapore, I shall show that Singapore's multiple place identities include the official images constructed by the STPB *as well as* the popular impressions held by tourists and residents. As Shurmer-Smith and Hannam concur, places do not have fixed identities because people construct different images all the time: "the places that people construct are polysemous and are experienced in a multitude of ways, sometimes complimentary, sometimes conflicting, sometimes just differently" (1994, 16). Three areas of concern are discussed using quantitative data derived from a questionnaire survey of Western tourists, Asian visitors and local residents. Rather than a detailed analysis of the data *per se*, my discussion will extrapolate select findings in order to shed light on the political implications of multiple identities.

6.4.1 Social Representations and The Marketing Myth

Table 6.1 indicates the respondents' views towards various government-endorsed slogans. Two conclusions are drawn from the data. The first is that respondents were not necessarily persuaded by official touristic representations of Singapore, and the second is that different groups of people had contrary impressions of the country.

The divergence between state representation and popular perception is best highlighted by the large proportion of respondents who described Singapore as a 'business and

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financial centre[4]. Such a description is seldom emphasised in the local tourism literature. In brochures and guidebooks, Singapore's economic achievements are only mentioned in the context of the country's coming of age and never celebrated in the form of slogans or memorable campaigns. The only caption I can think of, though seldomly used and certainly not very catchy, is the description of Singapore as 'Zurich of the East'. Although modernity and economic progress are inimical images for a holiday destination, surprisingly it featured as the most prominent view respondents have of the country. By contrast, images of multiculturalism and Singapore's heritage scored very low rates of endorsement. While the caption 'Modern City with a Remarkable Past' was ranked fourth overall, 'Instant Asia' was last (Table 6.1).

The state-public disparity is also exemplified by what I call the 'Instant Asia myth'. While there is little ideological disagreement that Singapore is a multiethnic and multicultural country as indicated by the high level of endorsement in Figure 6.7, I shall nonetheless suggest that the Instant Asia theme is not an immediately recognisable 'image' or 'identity' for the country.

Table 6.1 shows that Westerners and Singaporeans considered Instant Asia the least relevant epithet. This is because many Western visitors expected the four races to be equally represented in the built and human landscape and are surprised to discover a predominantly Chinese society with modern buildings and infrastructure. Singapore, therefore, is not as 'distinctively Asian' or multicultural as they had anticipated. For Singaporeans, Instant Asia represents a government ideology and an ingenious "mask of local affiliation" (Featherstone 1993, 182). Since it was designed as a marketing and nation-building tool, Instant Asia blatantly disregards the sub-ethnic divisions that exist behind the CMIO categories. Indeed, "Singapore has a richer, more complex heritage than its leaders have encouraged the people to exploit, the vision being narrowed in order

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[4] Unlike the other terms listed in Table 6.1, 'business and financial centre' is not a government-endorsed slogan used to promote Singapore. Rather, I inserted this phrase to 'test' respondents' attitude towards this description.

Which slogan best describes Singapore in your opinion? (all figures in percentage)	Western Tourists (N = 236)	Asian Visitors (N = 260)	Singaporeans (N = 344)
(a) 'Instant Asia'	2.9	13.5	5.8
(b) 'Clean-Green Garden City'	17.5	29.6	27.6
(c) 'Shopping and Food Paradise'	25.4	12.0	24.1
(d) 'Modern City with a Remarkable Past'	17.9	8.8	9.6
(e) 'Business and Financial Centre'	35.0	24.8	31.1
(f) no reply	1.3	11.3	1.7
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6.1 Descriptive slogans of Singapore: respondents' perceptions

Figure 6.7 Respondents' attitudes towards 'descriptive slogans' about Singapore
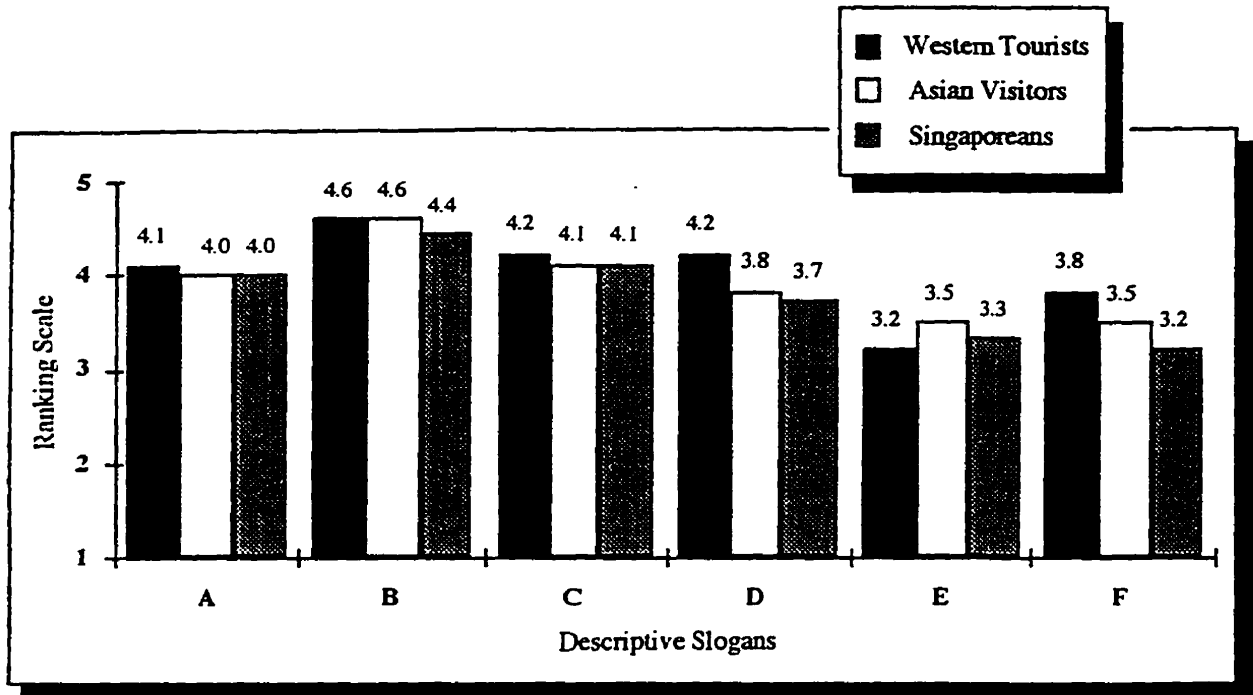
note: the figures above indicate the arithmetic mean derived from the total responses
of 240 Western tourists, 274 Asian visitors and 344 Singaporeans.

Ranking Scale:

(5) Strongly agree
(4) Agree
(3) Neither agree nor disagree
(2) Disagree
(1) Strongly disagree

Descriptive Slogans for Singapore:

question: to what extent would you agree/disagree
with the following descriptions about Singapore:

(A) 'Instant Asia' (multicultural/multiethnic)
(B) 'Clean-Green Garden City'
(C) 'Shopping and Food Paradise'
(D) 'Modern City with a Remarkable Past'
(E) 'Distinctively Asian City'
(F) 'Westernised City'

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perhaps, to self-consciously contrive and define an artificial, distinctively 'Asian' identity, contrary to a multifaceted social reality" (Koh 1980, 299). While most agree that Singapore is a form of Instant Asia, it does not necessarily follow this is the most appropriate description for the country. The significance of Instant Asia is thus lost on most locals because of the "alienating effect of constant exhortations to view one's life as if it were part of some colossal 'cultural show'" (Benjamin 1976, 128).

Attitudinal discrepancies are also witnessed between respondent groups. For instance, Western tourists more readily agreed that Singapore is a 'Modern City with a Remarkable Past' and a 'Westernised City', whereas Asians and locals were less convinced that this is the case (Figure 6.7). This difference could be explained by the fact that Singapore occupies an unusual position in Western imagination, as a place more Westernised than other Asian cities yet possessing a multicultural identity which sets it apart from the West. Singapore, therefore, is neither 'distinctively Asian' nor 'of the West'. As Ang and Stratten asserted "here we see, in a nutshell, the quandary of Singapore's place on the Western-dominated international stage: it finds itself positioned between two competing systems of representation - neither in the West, nor properly in the Asia constructed by the West" (1995, 71). For the Western visitors, 'Modern City with a Remarkable Past' is therefore a fitting expression because the country is seen to be a meeting place of the old and new, Western and Asian (Plate 6.7).

By contrast, Asian visitors and local residents were less convinced that Singapore is Westernised (Figure 6.7). Although they perceived the country to be 'modern', it could be argued that 'modernity' and 'Westernisation' do not necessarily mean the same thing for them. This is the general view I derived from visitors who told me that their home cities — Bangkok, Hong Kong or New Delhi for example — are also undergoing similar processes of urbanisation and modernisation. However, this does not mean that the cities and their people are any less "distinctively Asian". As Naibitt observed, "The modernization of Asia must not be thought of as the *Westernization* of Asia, but the modernization of Asia in the 'Asian way'" (1996, 12 original emphasis).

'A Modern City with a Remarkable Past': soaring skyscrapers of the financial district overlooking Chinatown (Plate 6.7, above). A HDB residential estate: 'local space' as a tourist attraction (Plate 6.8, below, source: Ministry of Information and the Arts 1993)
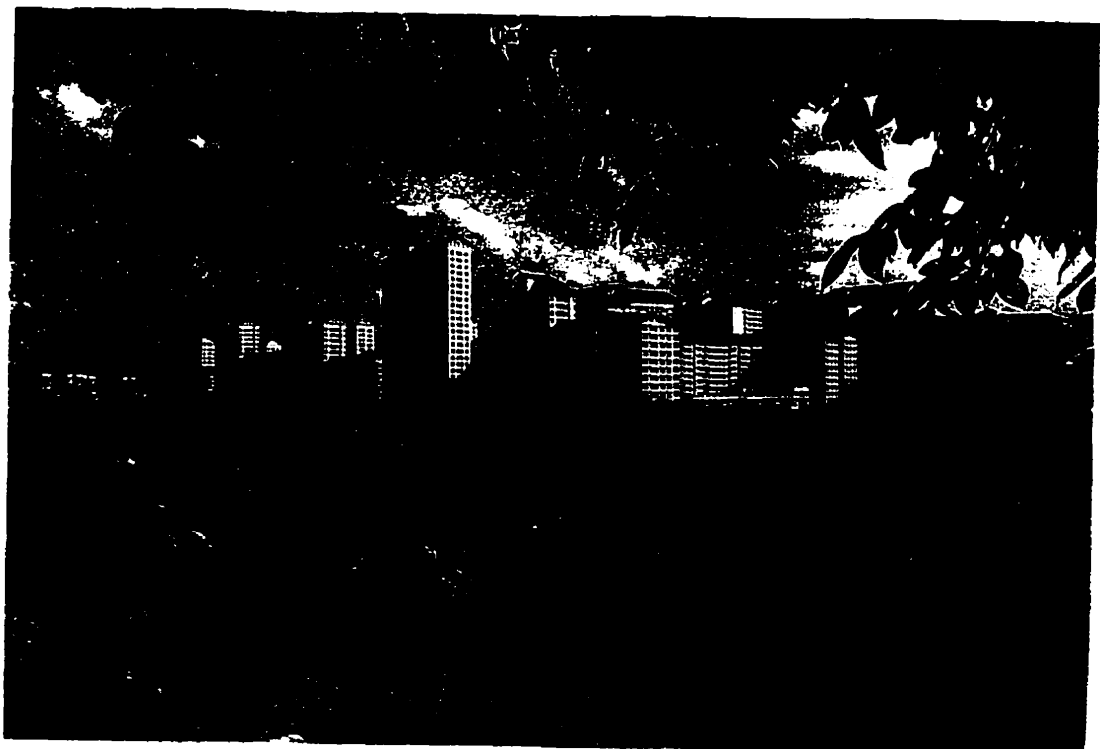
Socially constructed images of Singapore vary between the state and general public, and also between different groups of respondents. Apart from the 'Clean Green Garden City' and 'Food and Shopping Paradise' images, there appears to be little consensus on what Singapore's 'true' identity is. Although the government and the STPB have placed much emphasis on marketing and imaging the country, there is no guarantee that visitors and locals are persuaded towards accepting the state's version of 'reality'. The endorsement of Singapore as a 'Business and Financial Centre' and the dismissal of the 'Instant Asia' and 'Modern City with a Remarkable Past' slogans (in Table 6.1) indicate that tourism strategies are not always effective. These slogans illustrate what Relph calls "mass images of places" which are assigned by "'opinion-makers', provided ready-made for the people, disseminated through the mass-media and especially by advertising" (Relph 1976, 58). They contrast with the "consensus images of place" that are forged independently by the public and which represent the true, unmediated experience people have with the landscape.

6.4.2 Spatial Representations and Singapore's Place Identity

If people conceive of Singapore in different ways, it logically follows that different local places will stand out in the minds of the respondents. In other words, different places evoke for different people a distinct 'Singaporean identity'. To ascertain this, six categories of places were presented to respondents and they were asked which they considered as 'uniquely or distinctively Singaporean'. Figure 6.8 presents the results.

There appears to be agreement among all groups that shopping attractions, and parks and gardens both evoke a high degree of 'Singaporean identity'. It is really no surprise that shopping constituted the most prominent image for two reasons. The first is that at the time my survey was conducted, the annual 'Great Singapore Sale' was underway and the whole city was being promoted as a shopper's paradise (July-August 1995). The second reason is that Orchard Road, Singapore's main retail street, is the most popular

Figure 6.8 Respondents' attitudes towards places bearing a 'distinctive Singaporean Identity'
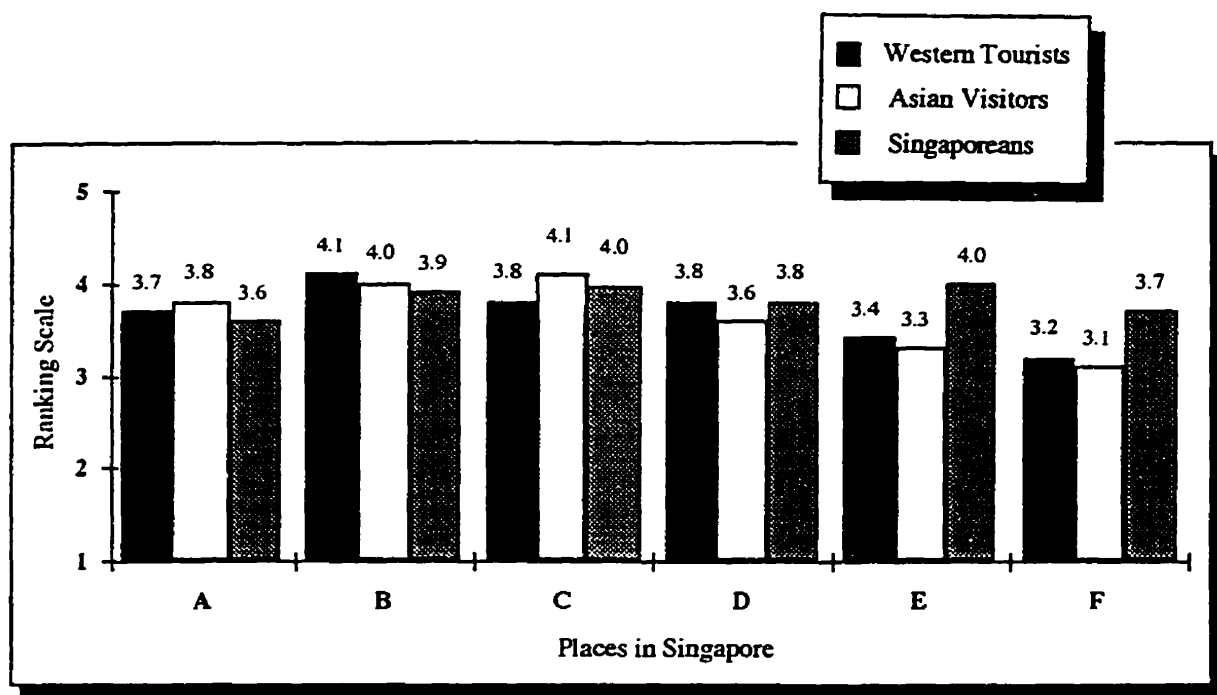
Legend:
- Western Tourists
- Asian Visitors
- Singaporeans

note: the figures above indicate the arithmetic mean derived from the total responses of 240 Western tourists, 274 Asian visitors and 344 Singaporeans.

Places in Singapore:

Ranking Scale:

(5) Strongly agree
(4) Agree
(3) Neither agree nor disagree
(2) Disagree
(1) Strongly disagree

question: to what extent would you agree/disagree that the following places are unique and distinctive about Singapore

(A) 'Ethnic Conservation Sites'
    (eg. Chinatown, Little India)
(B) 'Shopping Areas'
    (eg. Orchard Road, Marina Square)
(C) 'Parks and Gardens'
    (eg. Botanic Gardens, Sentosa)
(D) 'The Financial & Business District"
    (eg. Shenton Way)
(E) 'Public Housing Estates'
    (eg. Toa Payoh, Bedok)
(F) 'Singapore River'
    (eg. Clarke Quay, Boat Quay)

tourist attraction according to annual STPB surveys. Shopping and Orchard Road occupy a large proportion of tourist/local activities, and thus figure prominently in their mental image of the country. As for parks and gardens, tourists and locals were generally impressed by the country's cleanliness and greenery. Compared to other urban destinations they might have visited, Singapore's 'Garden City' image is therefore highly distinctive.

On the other side of the coin, there exists marked disparity between tourists and locals pertaining to 'public housing estates' and 'Singapore River'. Let me focus on the first point. While public housing estates ranked second lowest in visitors' mental image of the country, local residents ranked it second only to parks/gardens. This disparity is not surprising since only a few tourists might have visited residential estates where the majority of Singaporeans live.

According to an earlier survey I had conducted on tourists' shopping patterns outside of Orchard Road[5], it was discovered that the majority focused on tourist areas like Chinatown (37.5 per cent) and Little India (18.6 per cent) and only less than two per cent visited housing estates like Toa Payoh or Ang Mo Kio (Chang 1993, 162-4). While residential estates remain essentially non-tourist sites, they constitute the everyday environment for Singaporeans. As part of the government's rehousing scheme for the Central Area in the 1960s, numerous satellite towns have been established by the Housing and Development Board (HDB) comprising low cost government-subsidised apartments. With over 87 per cent of Singaporeans residing in these estates comprising nearly 700,000 apartment units to date (Ministry of Information and the Arts 1993, 210-1)[6], the HDB towns are undoubtedly the most pervasive 'spatial environment' in Singapore (Plate 6.8).

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[5] This survey, which examined Orchard Road as Singapore's 'Central Tourist District' was conducted in 1991 and covered a total of 745 visitors (Chang 1993).

[6] The Housing and Development Board (HDB) which is the national public housing authority of Singapore was established on February 1, 1960. At that time, only nine per cent of the population lived in public housing (Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1993, 210).

This divergence in tourist-resident opinion throws light on larger issues dealing with tourism politics. While Chinatown and Arab Street have long been promoted as exotic sites, HDB estates were only officially recognised in 1990 as 'suburban shopping attractions'. This is most surprising since housing estates, in my opinion, capture the Singaporean image of multiculturalism far better and more uniquely than ethnic districts.

Ethnic conservation sites exist today as a legacy of Colonialism and as historic attractions. Only a small proportion of people actually live there because of the government's rehousing schemes. Instead, the HDB estates are the new 'residential heartlands' housing a cultural mix of people that is uniquely Instant Asia. Compared to ethnic districts which are anachronistic in multicultural Singapore, residential estates are true exemplars of cultural coexistence enforced through the HDB's Ethnic Integration Policy. Under this policy, maximum proportions for each ethnic group are pegged according to the country's population profile for each 'neighbourhood' and 'individual block' and freedom to sell one's apartment is constrained to selling it to a household from the ethnic group which is not already over represented. In this way, multicultural integration is enforced to "increase inter-ethnic understanding and avoid potential race-riots" (Chua & Kuo 1991, 20).

Although the public housing estates symbolise all that is distinct and bizarrely unique about Singapore, they have not enjoyed the same publicity accorded to conservation areas. One reason for this oversight may be that residential estates are perceived as simply too drab and boring to serve as tourist attractions. Housing estates hardly compare with ethnic districts in colour, heritage and centrality of location. Conservation districts are better suited to the touristic image of exotica because global travellers have been weaned on quaint architecture and reconstructed heritage as true markers of 'authenticity' and 'local uniqueness' (after Robins 1991, 30). Furthermore, ethnic districts are familiar tourist attractions the world over as evidenced by the ubiquitous Chinatown in major cities. Singapore's ethnic historic sites thus stand out as 'global' attractions.

The reappraisal of housing estates in the 1990s represents an interesting turn of events. Today, HDB estates are recognised as a testimony to Singapore's 'local identity'. Taking its cue from the Tourism Task Force's recommendations that the HDB programme be presented as a "showpiece" to the world (MTI 1984, 25), the STPB hopes to impress visitors with the government's unique achievements in public housing and maintenance of ethnic harmony (STPB, *Singapore Travel News* June 1990, 5). HDB estates also provide added opportunities for visitors to "experience the depth and diversity of [the] island's multi-cultural heritage" (ST 1/4/90). While historic districts are the products of Colonialism, the public housing concept is the brainchild of the independent government serving, therefore, as a symbol of modernisation, a model of ethnic integration and a unique testimony to the "only non-communist country which provides public housing to the majority of its citizens" (Chen & Tai 1976, 29).

Promoting HDB estates as tourist sites thus presents a new opportunity to portray Singapore as multicultural, distinctive and progressive. HDB attractions will also help to fulfil political goals since they are visible symbols to the 'outside' world of the country's economic achievements, social cohesion and cultural diversity. In the quest to satisfy tourists' desire for alternative experiences, residential estates provide an avenue to enhance the country's identity. At the same time, they offer an insider's view of "casual Singaporean lifestyle" and provide budget facilities and services for 'shoestring' visitors (STPB 1996, 31).

6.4.3 Tourism Futures: The Politics of 'New Heritage'

As the preceding sections suggest, different groups of people have varying conceptions about Singapore. Therefore, it is not surprising that respondents also have differing opinions concerning the types of future projects they would most like to see be developed in the country (Figure 6.9). While Asian tourists were interested in 'modern attractions' like theme parks and shopping centres, Westerners would like to see increased

conservation of historic districts. The findings here concur with Lew's tourism survey in which he concluded that Asians were "primarily interested in experiencing the modernity of the country....[since] traditional ethnic attractions are either a common sight in their home countries or readily accessible within the region" (Lew 1987, 44).

The Western/Asian disparity is also borne out by Figure 6.10. Respondents were generally ambivalent when they were asked whether the attractions in Singapore were "unique", or whether Singapore's history and culture were "interesting". However, when it came to matters concerning the conservation of urban districts and historic buildings, Western tourists were more strongly in favour of it. Westerners agreed more readily that ethnic/historic districts "contributed to Singapore's appeal" and heritage conservation would make for a "more attractive city". History and culture are therefore important lures to the Westerner because these are what make the country distinctive and memorable. For Asian tourists, appreciation of modernity and sophistication is a strong reason for coming to Singapore. Glitzy shopping malls, high-tech theme parks and soaring skyscrapers distinguish Singapore as an attractive place.

In light of these differences, one might ask what lies ahead for Singapore's tourism development in the future. Would the government create modern attractions to attract Asian visitors or would it continue with its urban conservation programme? What I would like to do in this concluding section of the thesis is to speculate on the type of developments most likely to be implemented.

As land becomes scarcer and as tourists and residents demand improved facilities, the best way forward is to develop attractions which are multi-faceted and that cater to different needs. Future attractions in Singapore will be neither strictly 'modern' nor 'historic', but will combine elements of both. New forms of heritage will be developed to suit the different needs of Westerners, Asians and Singaporeans. Rather than narrowly conceiving 'heritage' in terms of multiracial attributes and historic landscapes, a new interpretation of 'Singaporean heritage' will inevitably emerge.

Figure 6.9 Respondents' attitudes towards 'future developments in Singapore'
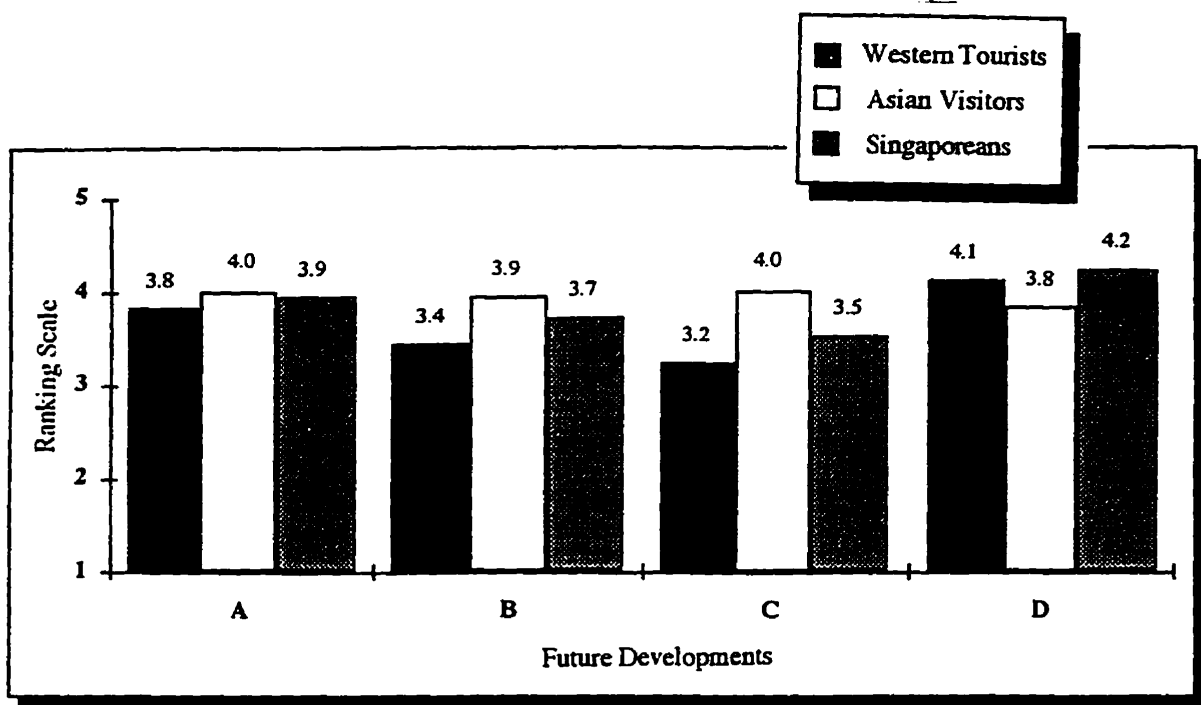
note: the figures above indicate the arithmetic mean derived from the total responses
of 240 Western tourists, 274 Asian visitors and 344 Singaporeans.

Ranking Scale:

(5) Strongly agree
(4) Agree
(3) Neither agree nor disagree
(2) Disagree
(1) Strongly disagree

Future Developments in Singapore:

question: to what extent would you agree/disagree
that the following types of attractions should be
further developed in the future?

(A) 'Parks and Gardens' (eg. Sentosa)
(B) 'Theme Parks' (eg. Haw Par Villa)
(C) 'Shopping Centres & Attractions'
   (eg. Ngee Ann City, Great S'pore Sale)
(D) 'Conserved Historic Districts'
   (eg. Chinatown)
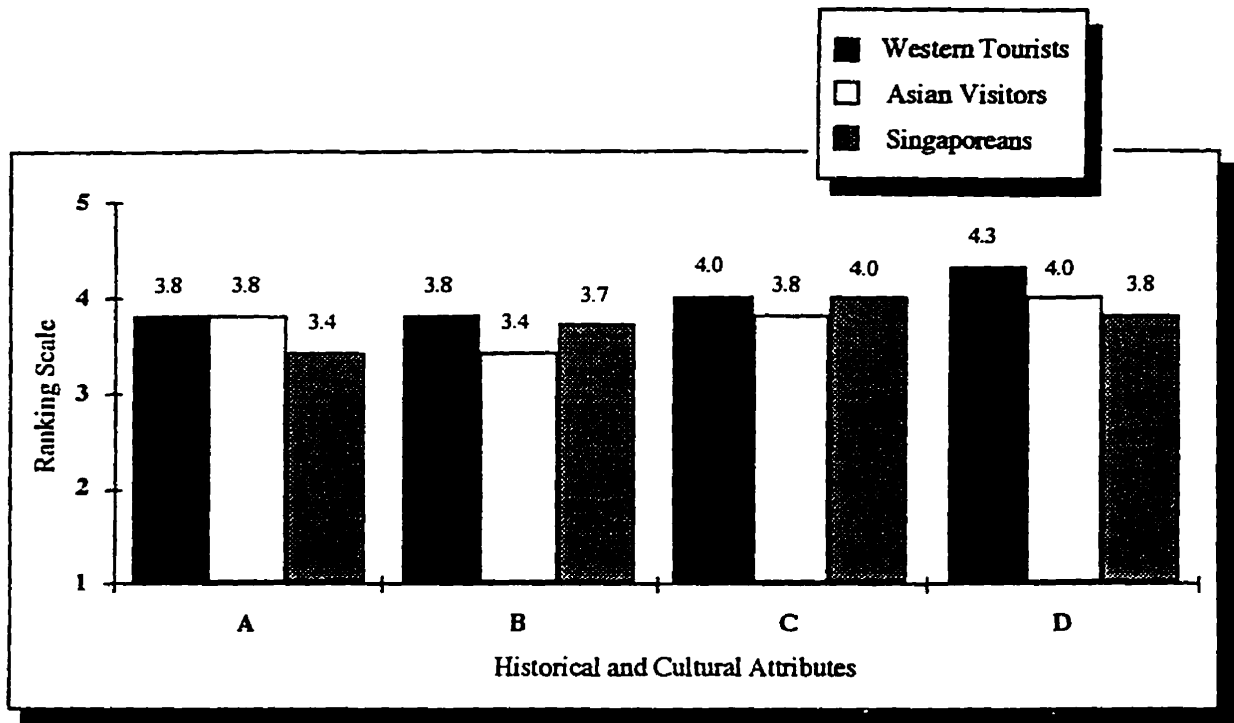
note: the figures above indicate the arithmetic mean derived from the total responses
of 240 Western tourists, 274 Asian visitors and 344 Singaporeans

Ranking Scale

(5) Strongly agree
(4) Agree
(3) Neither agree nor disagree
(2) Disagree
(1) Strongly disagree

Historical and Cultural Attributes:

question: to what extent would you agree/disagree
with the following statements regarding the
historical & cultural sights of Singapore?

(A) "Singapore offers unique sights and
    attractions"
(B) "Singapore's culture and history are
    interesting to me"
(C) "Chinatown, Little India and Kampong
    Glam contribute to Singapore's appeal
    as a tourist destination"
(D) "The conservation of historic buildings
    and districts makes Singapore a more
    attractive city"

The concept of a 'new heritage' is not a novel one. In an edited collection of essays titled *Building a New Heritage - Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe* (Ashworth & Larkham 1994a), various writers have argued for the need to create a "new European heritage" that will provide a supranational glue for the disparate nations within the European Community (see Ashworth & Larkham 1994b; Masser *et al.* 1994; Tunbridge 1994; Larkham 1994). Creating a 'new' European identity is a political process because it involves questions as to whose heritage to protect, what new ideologies to promote and which new audiences to serve. "[H]eritage cannot be regarded as a static concept" (Masser *et al.* 1994, 42) because it changes according to political and economic circumstances over time.

In Singapore, new forms of heritage will attempt to merge 'modernity' with 'exoticity' while marrying the interests of global, local and regional audiences. Already, we witness the rise of boutique hotels, the adaptive re-use of the Little India Arcade and the re-construction of Bugis Street. Other 'new heritage' includes theme-amusement parks with a 'historic' or 'cultural' flavour as exemplified by Haw Par Villa Dragon World, Asian Village, Malay Village and Tang Dynasty City. Also, the conservation of non-ethnic urban sites as witnessed in Clarke Quay Festival Marketplace and the Museum Precinct. In all these cases, tourism promotion is stressed but local needs for cultural enrichment and leisure pursuits are not ignored.

The notion of 'cultural tourism' will also be expanded to include non-traditional, non-historic attractions such as art/jewellery fairs and Western cultural performances. Tresors 1993, Singapore's first international art fair featuring works by Picasso, Dali and Hockney among others, was targetted at affluent locals as well as visitors from Malaysia, Hong Kong and Taiwan (STWE 19/6/93). Today, Tresors has become an annual tourism event and an important boost to the local arts industry. Alternative forms of 'heritage tourism' are also emerging with a focus on natural heritage, for example, Singapore's many offshore islands, equatorial forests and bird sanctuaries. *Tourism 21* recognises the potential novelty of 'urban eco-tourism' and has proposed plans for the development of

eco-tours and nature trails (STPB 1996, 31).

The challenge of 'new heritage' is therefore to ensure that the needs of diverse groups of people will be met through the development of tourism projects. Questions dealing with 'authenticity' are bound to arise from time to time but it is errorneous to assume that what is targetted at tourists will automatically alienate locals. Urban landscapes and heritage attractions will be created with a 'global sense of place' blending local identities with a global sensibility. As Massey asks: "Certainly, any identity is based on differentiation from others. But must it necessarily be a differentiation which takes the form of opposition, of drawing a hard *boundary* between 'us' and 'them', in other words the geography of rejection, the geography of separate spheres for antagonistic communities which each in themselves remain pure?" (Massey 1995, 67 original emphasis). It is possible for Singapore's 'new heritage' to be multi-dimensional and multifunctional. As a tourist hub of Southeast Asia, the development of modern facilities is to be expected; as a maturing global city, historical areas must continually be conserved and new attractions with a 'cultural flavour' created. Only then will the goals of regionalism and tourism be integrated.

6.5 Conclusion

Tourism imaging strategies are dynamic because they are directed at different groups of people and are shaped by conditions emanating from global, local and regional scales at different points in time. Tourism images are also conceived of in different ways by diverse market segments. Imaging strategies are most successful when the tourist-local distinction is blurred, and when tourism development and local cultural changes are intertwined. The themes of multiculturalism and social cohesion in the 1960s and 1970s, therefore, amplify government ideology without politics being seen as the focus of attention. On the other hand, promotional images are less successful when they are perceived to be tourist-oriented and regarded as inauthentic and a falsification of place

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and identity. Current attempts at reconciling visitor needs and community interests, and striking a balance between economic and socio-political objectives thus provide the best way forward for tourism development.

Singapore's tourism image has evolved dramatically from the 1960s to the present, and each image reflects the different political needs, economic agendas and socio-cultural conditions of the times. Tourism marketing images are the outcomes of the changing power relations between global forces, local influences and regional factors. How the country projects itself to the world must not be trivialised as merely a marketing ploy. Rather, it is a strategy aimed at visitors as much as it is a statement on local society, culture and politics. While the 'Instant Asia' theme underlined Singapore's economics and politics of survival in the early and precarious years of independence, 'Surprising Singapore' reflected the country's coming of age as a modern Asian city with a concern for conservation. The present focus on a tourism hub reveals Singapore's economic diversification, its growing maturity as a global city and its responsibilities to the Asian region. 'Instant Asia', 'Surprising Singapore', 'Multi-faceted Jewel' -- while these may conjure images of fun and uniqueness to tourists, more importantly they also tell Singaporeans who they are, where they come from and where they are headed.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion: Globalism-Localism and the Heritage Tourism Experience

"I do not find foreign countries foreign" (Alfred Zein, Chairman of Gillette, cited in Barber 1996, 23)

7.1 Synthesis

In his book *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Benjamin Barber (1996) argues that two competing forces are at work in the world, shaping society, politics and economics and the way we view the world. On the one hand, the universalising forces of McWorld have been brought about by international markets, commercialism, mass media and the information technology giving rise to a global village replete with McDonalds, MTV and Macintosh. On the other hand in direct confrontation against McWorld, are the forces of Jihad in search of local identity and self determination, and mediated through channels like nationalism, religion and even violent wars of ethnic cleansing. While Jihad is a "rabid response to colonialism and imperialism and their economic children, capitalism and modernity", by contrast McWorld is the "product of popular culture driven by expansionist commerce" (Barber 1996, 11 & 17). Both operate in different directions with equal strength, giving rise to a world which is globalising in one direction yet localising in another.

While Barber's thesis was applied in the context of politics and democracy, his arguments are relevant to our debate on globalism-localism and tourism development. The tourism industry and the individual tourist are often viewed as agents of globalisation, bringing in their wake mass products, big businesses and homogeneity. The development of tourist attractions, the marketing of destination areas and the formulation of tourism policies are often dictated by their needs and desires. However, this does not mean that

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local voices and local identity are sacrificed, drowned by the "numbing and neutering uniformities of industrial modernization and the colonizing culture of McWorld" (Barber 1996, 9). 'Locality effects' such as place constraints, the peculiarities of site, the needs of the host population and the political goals of nation-building are equally significant and must be considered as well. Towards this end, my thesis is devoted to looking at the ways local *and* non-local factors are responsible for shaping the form and function of tourism development. Specifically, I focused on the dynamic relationship between global and local forces in Singapore's heritage tourism experience. My analysis also concentrated on four key areas: government policies, heritage entrepreneurs, urban conservation and tourism marketing strategies.

To conceptualise the global-local nexus, this thesis draws upon the locality debate and writings on localism and globalism. While the locality concept asserts that 'geography matters' and that all forms of social processes are spatially contingent, the writings on globalism-localism reveal that the relationship between global and local forces is dynamic, interactive and a two-way process. Together, both bodies of theory contribute to a wider appreciation of the global-local dialectics and inform my discussion of Singapore's heritage tourism experience.

Three agencies operate within the tourism development scenario: foreign tourists, local residents and 'intermediaries' such as entrepreneurs and the government. The global-local dialectic is bridged in different ways and in Chapter Four, I looked at various attempts by policy makers and heritage entrepreneurs in achieving this goal. A study of government policies and documents indicates that historical areas were conserved for visitors and Singaporeans. The 1983 tourism crisis was also discussed and I argued that the downturn was the outcome of internal and external problems. One local problem was the perception that Singapore was dull and uninteresting. To combat this, the restructuring of the tourism industry and the focus on heritage enhancement were aimed at accentuating Singapore's identity and asserting its uniqueness. Urban conservation also provided the local community with opportunities for cultural enrichment and leisure

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pursuits.

The global-local intersection is also demonstrated by the case of tourism entrepreneurs. In their attempts at catering to different market groups, entrepreneurs strive to create a product which is attractive to visitors and meaningful for locals. Different levels of success were achieved as the case of boutique hotels, street activities and Little India Arcade testify (Chapters Four and Five). It is noted, for example, that the conservation of old buildings and the infiltration of hotels in historic districts were not geared only towards tourists. In Serangoon Road, merchants and shopkeepers looked out for the needs of both groups and Little India is a tourist attraction as well as a local retail centre. On the other side of the coin, however, certain forms of heritage were promoted predominantly for tourists and therefore of little interest to Singaporeans. In this regard, the staging of street activities and the reconstruction of Bugis Street are considered failures at reconciling the tourist-local divide.

A third area of enquiry in my thesis dealt with urban conservation in Little India (Chapter Five). Here, the historic district was depicted as a meeting place for two sets of contending forces, those representing local 'insider' agencies and those representing global 'outsider' forces. The insider-outsider relationship is dynamic and landscape contestation involves different factions interacting with each other in various ways. Globalising forces do not necessarily 'steamroll' over local agencies and there is room to explore the resistance and counter strategies erected against colonising influences. Insiders thus actively engage outsider forces in a negotiation process and Little India is a "place of conflict" and "the negotiated outcome" between diverse groups with asymmetrical access to power (Ley 1983, 280-1).

Finally in Chapter Six, the political and economic goals of tourism marketing were discussed. It is argued that different promotional images were devised over the years to suit the prevailing political and economic circumstances of the times. In the 1960/70s, Singapore's image as Instant Asia was aimed at attracting Western tourists and building

a national identity for Singaporeans. In the 1980s, the Surprising Singapore tagline was a promotional tool aimed at increasing tourist numbers and revenues. Although conservation also fulfilled cultural and leisure needs, Singaporeans and visitors are unconvinced of local benefits. Today in the 1990s, the focus on regionalism and the New Asia-Singapore image integrates both political and economic goals. Apart from encouraging the tourism industry to diversify, regionalism also creates an opportunity for Singapore to overcome its limited geography, partake in Asia's economic renaissance while maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring countries.

From the findings presented, a number of general conclusions may be drawn. We can conclude firstly that 'heritage' is simultaneously a local-communal resource and a global-tourism resource. Heritage is necessarily local because it is embedded in a particular place and time, reflecting the historical and political achievements of a group of people. At the same time, it is also shaped by the forces of economics and tourism, fashioned according to the desires of visitors and the need to keep up with rival destination sites. The concept of 'heritage', therefore, is never "settled, enclosed or internally coherent" because as Stuart Hall points out, "culture, like place, is a meeting point where different influences, traditions and forces intersect" (S.Hall 1995, 187).

The global-local nexus also has a spatial dimension. Places, cities and countries are not spatially bounded entities but points of convergence for different processes emanating from different scales (Massey 1993). All localities lie at the crossroads of global and local flows and are influenced dually by the forces of McWorld and Jihad. Hence even though heritage tourism may be inspired by similar economic trends in cities as diverse as Montreal and Singapore, its local effects are nonetheless unique because of differences in the cities' resource endowments, community needs and political ideologies (Chang et al. 1996). We should therefore avoid the traditional notion of viewing places as having "fixed boundaries and exclusive communities" and think instead of localities as possessing "a permeability of boundaries and an openness to influences from elsewhere, an openness which is multidirectional" (Massey & Jess 1995b, 216).

Aside from 'heritage' and 'place', the third global-local meeting ground is 'tourism'. This thesis demonstrates that tourism development is a transactionary process involving local and non-local agencies (Nash 1977; 1989). This is a rather different point of view from preceding notions of tourism as a form of imperialism, and development as a 'one sided' option determined by external forces and outsider interests. Instead, I have tried to show that both local and global factors are involved and it is through the "ebb and flow of power" between these forces that tourism development occurs. The needs of the host community, the socio-political goals of governments and the role of local entrepreneurs and place constraints must therefore be considered in future accounts of development (C.M.Hall 1995).

An interesting twist to the global/local, tourist/resident dialectic has been offered by MacCannell (1992). While my thesis has advanced the notion of the tourist as an agent of globalism and the resident as a proponent of localism, MacCannell proffers an additional argument. According to him, tourists are agents of both globalism *and* localism as are local residents themselves. This is because in every destinations area, tourists undertake pilgrimages in search of local uniqueness, native lifestyles and alternative experiences. In short, a search for a different world from which the tourist is accustomed. At the same time that tourists are 'going native', a counter movement is also occurring in which locals are 'going global' either figuratively (as in becoming more cosmopolitan in their lifestyles) or physically (as in undertaking journeys to the 'modern' world as migrants and tourists). The result therefore is a metaphorical "empty meeting ground" wherever tourists and locals converge -- a meeting place for global-local influences and an inter-mixing of cultures, practices and lifestyles. As MacCannell points out, this meeting ground is "not really empty" but "vibrant with people and potential", a setting in which we will see the emergence of new cultures and people (1992, 2-3).

In the tourism context, all destination sites may similarly be considered "empty meeting grounds" where global-local forces intersect. It is simplistic to generalise that tourism is always 'global' and community is only 'local'. Although this was the starting

point for my research, data findings necessitate a more nuanced perspective on the issue. As we have seen in the case of Little India, 'insider' Indian forces were responsible for much of the modernisation in the area. By incorporating new marketing and retail techniques, Indian merchants have created a retail landscape which blends cultural identity with Western touches. Likewise, in the discussion of 'new heritage', it is the local resident and Asian visitor who were most in favour of modern developments like theme parks and shopping malls, whereas Western tourists preferred the conservation of historic and cultural sites. The tourist/resident, Western/Eastern boundaries are thus flexible and fluid reflecting the global/local dynamics in tourism.

7.2 Implications and Contributions

While my study is anchored around the theme of globalism-localism and draws upon Singapore's heritage tourism experience as a case study, broader principles can certainly be derived. To return, therefore, to the research objectives outlined in Chapter One, one might ask "what are the implications of the findings to current debates on localism and globalism, and how has the research advanced the status of the geography of tourism?" To draw the thesis to a close, let me reflect on the conceptual and disciplinary contributions of my work.

One of the criticisms most often made against the locality concept concerns the 'loose' definition of and multiple meanings for the word 'local' (Urry 1995, chapter 4). Rather than seeing this as a shortcoming, my study focused on the strengths of conducting research which embraces 'the local' in its multifold dimension. 'Local' takes many meanings and I focused on a few here: geographic constraints, resource endowments, the needs of the community, cultural identity and place uniqueness, and the politics of nation-building. The specific case of Singapore necessitates an emphasis on these particular factors because they are unique to the country and its tourism experience. The thesis thus illustrates the flexibility of the locality concept as it is applied to a particular research

need and the geographic realities of a specific place. As Warf explained, "theory must acknowledge not only that knowledge is historically specific, but geographically specific as well" and for this reason, "explanation must be tailored to the unique characteristics of places" (Warf 1993, 166).

The 'local' also assumes numerous spatial scales in the research. In the locality debate, 'locales' were defined as settings of interaction and this thesis demonstrates that multiple settings exist. In the thesis, the city state of Singapore serves as a locale, but so too does Bugis Street, Little India and even the Little India Arcade and boutique hotels. Giddens observed that "locales may range from a room in a house, a street corner, the shop floor of a factory, towns and cities, to the territorially demarcated areas occupied by nation-states" (Giddens 1984 cited in Smith 1992b, 73). Locales are therefore the geographic planes upon which global-local interactions occur and where insider-outsider alliances lie. My research shows that the 'local' comprises numerous locales and the geography of tourism is a nested hierarchy of spatial settings.

The quest for uniqueness and specificity, however, leaves unanswered the "equally gripping question as to how to explain the commonalities among places" (Warf 1993, 167). Although places are 'unique', this does not mean that general processes do not leave imprints which are found in other 'unique sites' as well. After all at the micro level, everything *is* unique but this does not tell us much. As Neil Smith has ably pointed out, the goal in any intellectual enterprise is to draw a line between generalities and uniqueness so that we can "construct sustainable generalizations and...judge when these generalizations are no longer sustainable" (Smith 1987, 67).

The global-local approach proposed here suggests that tourism geographies are combinations of local distinctiveness *and* global homogeneity. The geographic study of tourism must not and cannot be a geography of uniqueness alone. In appreciating the unique spatial manifestations of tourism, one cannot but also recognise the commonalities which exist between places. In arguing the case of local uniqueness in Singapore,

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therefore, it would be an injustice to leave the study as a unique idiographic place study without generalising and projecting the tourism experience onto a more global plane.

Singapore's tourism experience demonstrates the challenges facing multifunctional and multiethnic cities. Heritage seldom serves as only a tourist attraction but also a communal resource fulfilling different needs and interests (Tunbridge 1984). The Singapore case testifies that conflicts can occur at different levels not only between tourists and locals, but also among different ethnic groups within the country, and between visitors *to* a site and residents *of* the site. "Reconciliatory policies" must therefore be implemented to cater to a cross section of the population (Burtenshaw *et al.* 1991, 218). With limited land, Singapore's tourist attractions double as leisure sites and recreational areas and this provides a way of avoiding 'tourist traps' and 'inauthentic' spaces. Of course, exceptions do occur too as the case of Bugis Street testifies.

The Singapore experience also reveals that there is no fixed way in which the global-local dynamics is played out, nor is there a predictable outcome or result. The urban geographies of tourism comprise variable outcomes because global-local interactions vary over place and time. In Little India, for example, 'transculturation' takes place as outsider forces intermingle with insider agencies in a process of conflict and negotiation. On the other hand, the tourism imaging strategies illustrate a case of temporal flux between global economic goals and local political objectives. Simply put, there is no one way in which the global-local dynamics is played out, and the geography of tourism is thus spatially and temporally contingent. As Massey and Jess suggest, "the local and the global constitute each other" (1995b, 226) in diverse ways according to the specificities of place.

The study of heritage tourism in Singapore affirms that 'local uniqueness in the global village' is not an oxymoron. Too often, tourism geographers criticise places as inauthentic, or alternatively describe them as unique and 'one of a kind'. Such studies tend to be either 'structuralist' in perspective focusing on global 'top down' processes or

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'empiricist' in nature dealing with specific sites and local examples. My study demonstrates that both perspectives can be brought together and their strengths integrated. The global-local approach maintains that Singapore's tourism industry and its urban landscape are shaped concurrently by global economics as well as local cultural politics. Both 'geography' and 'tourism' are a mix of wider processes and local trends, and the geography of tourism is an interrogation of 'place' as a locus for global-local interaction.

Local geographies are not sacrificed in the global village but have become more prominent. John Naisbitt (1994) calls this phenomena the "global paradox". According to him, "although people want to come together to *trade* much more freely, they want to be *independent* politically and culturally....The more people are bound together economically, the more they want to otherwise be free to assert their own distinctiveness" (Naisbitt 1994, 10 original emphasis). The 'global paradox' thesis offers a significant view on global-local relations because it stresses that localities and local agencies are not meek recipients of forces imposed from above but are entirely capable in asserting their autonomy. In the global age of travel, heritage tourism provides a way for destination sites to be distinctive and local enterprises to become involved in the industry. Globalisation and localism are therefore relational forces and "the elaboration of place-bound identities has become more rather than less important in a world of diminishing spatial barriers to exchange, movement and communication" (Harvey 1993, 4).

One of the critiques often levelled against tourism geography is its disengagement from social, cultural and political issues. Tourism and recreational topics have traditionally been subsumed within economic geography (Wolfe 1964), and a legacy of this has been the emphasis on economic topics at the expense of non-economic matters. Squire (1994) has written about the potential of tourism studies in contributing to cultural geography and postmodern philosophy if only emphasis is shifted to qualitative methods and cultural/political debates. The global-local approach provides one way of achieving this goal. It demonstrates that places are more than just a function of economic processes, and tourism development is fuelled by non-economic concerns as well. As we

saw in the case of Singapore, physical geography, cultural politics, community needs and diplomatic ties with neighbouring countries have also been crucial to tourism development. A 'critical geography of tourism' must therefore be sensitive to the social, cultural and political dimensions of place and bring together these different issues for discussion. Only then can we truly hope to "contribute to relocating the geography of tourism within the mainstreams of economic, social, political and cultural geography, thereby rescuing it from the methodological and theoretical isolationism of recent decades" (Shaw & Williams 1994, 243).

'Local uniqueness in the global village' is not a contradiction in terms. This study has revealed that the 'power of the global' and 'assertions of the local' intersect with interesting implications for the urban geography of tourism in Singapore. Adopting the global-local approach situates tourism writers at the crossfire of conceptual debates and provides an opportunity to integrate economic and non-economic issues of discussion. It is a step I have tried to take in this thesis and a collective challenge geographers are trying to meet. Only by pursuing and achieving this goal will a more critical perspective on the geography of tourism develop.

Appendix 1

Questions Asked During Informant Interviews

The following questions were asked during the interviews with STPB officials, boutique hoteliers as well as the owners/managers of Little India Arcade and Bugis Street. The names and affiliations of the informants are listed at the end.

1. Interviews with officials at the STPB

(a) Would you say that 'heritage tourism' exists in Singapore? If so, what do you understand by this term as it is often used in STPB literature?

(b) What has been the STPB's focus in promoting the culture and history of Singapore to visitors? In what ways does the STPB promote Singapore's multiculturalism?

(c) What are the various heritage attractions in Singapore? Since when did heritage tourism become a trend in the development and promotion of Singapore?

(d) How does the STPB ensure that tourism policies and tourist attractions cater to the needs and interests of the local community?

(e) The STPB has a 'Tourism Culture' and 'Tourism Marketing' department. What objectives do these departments serve?

(f) What are the various promotional strategies devised by the STPB in marketing Singapore? Why have these changed over time?

(g) What is meant by 'Instant Asia', 'Surprising Singapore' and 'Multi-faceted Jewel'? Are these merely marketing slogans or do they tell tourists a little more of the country?

(h) Are the various promotional slogans aimed at Singaporeans as well? For example, does the 'Tourism Culture' department try to 'sell' the marketing images to locals? If so, how is this done?

(i) As a result of conservation, urban districts like Little India, Chinatown and Bugis Street have been enhanced as tourist attractions. Do these urban areas also cater to the needs of local residents and Singaporeans? And if so, how?

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2. Interviews with boutique hoteliers

(a) The hotel owned/managed by yourself has been described by the press as a 'boutique hotel'. How would you personally define a boutique hotel?

(b) What information about the hotel can you provide regarding: number of rooms; price range; date of establishment; number of food and beverage outlets; clientele profile; ownership pattern etc.

(c) How did the idea/concept of a boutique hotel take root? Did the government/URA support the concept in any way? Do you feel this is a growing trend in the hotel industry in Singapore?

(d) Who are the tourists that patronise boutique hotels? Are they mainly Westerners or Asians? What about Singaporeans - do they in any way figure in your clientele profile and marketing strategies?

(e) Presently, the hotel is located in a historic district which is still occupied by many residences and traditional activities. Do you feel that urban conservation and the creation of new activities rob the historic district of its 'old world' ambience?

(f) Are there future plans to diversify the boutique hotel concept to other parts of the country or the Asian region?

(g) Is there a 'theme' or 'concept' your boutique hotel is trying to sell to its visitors? For example, many boutique hotels in London promote a 'country manor' concept while others in Manhattan boast of a 'art deco' or 'minimalist' theme.

3. Interviews with owners, developer and manager of Little India Arcade (LIA)

(a) How did the idea of a 'modern Indian retail centre' with traditional bazaar stalls take root in the Little India Arcade? Did the URA prompt the idea or was it a private sector initiative?

(b) The LIA is co-owned by the Hindu Endowments Board and Raffles International Pte. Ltd. How did the two bodies first come together in a collaborative project? What is the present division of labour between the two when it comes to marketing and managing the LIA?

(c) What basic goals and objectives do the HEB and RIL fulfil? What are the specific goals pertaining to the Little India Arcade?

(d) The land use pattern and tenancy profile at the LIA has changed tremendously between the time it was gazetted for conservation (1989) and when it opened for business (1995). How would you justify the retail changes that have taken place and the charge that conservation has erased the old ambience and character of Little India?

(e) How many of the tenants were originally from the LIA compound? Was compensation given to those who decided to leave? What criteria were used in selecting the new tenants for LIA?

(f) What is the profile of customers that the LIA is hoping to attract - for example, tourist/Singaporean breakdown? Do you anticipate the LIA becoming a popular tourist attraction rather than a place for the locals?

4. Interview with manager of Bugis Street Management Pte. Ltd.

(a) What are the roles and functions of Bugis Street Management?

(b) Why was the original Bugis Street demolished in 1985? Why was there a reversal in government policy in bringing back Bugis Street? In what ways is the new Bugis Square different from the old?

(c) Can you tell me more about the history of the transvestites in Bugis Street? Why have they disappeared today? Are there plans to being them back?

(d) What types of food stores and shops are present in Bugis Street? How many of these merchants are from the former Bugis Street?

(e) How did Bugis Street Management go about trying to attract back the old merchants? How much more rent are they paying today as compared to the past?

(f) Who are the people who dine in Bugis Street each night? Why are there so few Singaporeans here?

(g) What are the future plans to redevelop Bugis Square in order to bring back more tourists and locals?

Name of Interviewee	Position/Department	Organisation
(1) STPB Officials:		
(a) Peter Hardstone (Dr.)	Education Specialist, Tourism Culture Dept.	Singapore Tourist Promotion Board
(b) Pearl Sequerah	Assistant Manager, Strategic Marketing Dept.	Singapore Tourist Promotion Board
(2) Boutique Hotel Operators:		
(a) Azman Jaffar	Assistant front office manager	Inn of the Sixth Happiness
(b) Mindy Lin and C.M. Lin	Proprietor/Owner	Inn of the Sixth Happiness
(c) Renata Mowbray	General manager	The Royal Peacock
(d) Joleena Seah	Public relations assistant	Albert Court Hotel
(e) Anita Tang	Owner/Manager	The Chinatown Hotel
(3) Heritage Projects:		
(a) V.R. Nathan	Chairperson	Hindu Endowments Board
(b) M.K. Narayanan	Publicity Officer	Hindu Endowments Board
(c) James Ong	Assistant Marketing Manager	Raffles International Pte. Ltd.
(d) Ivan Tan	Operations Manager	Bugis Street Management Pte. Ltd.

(4) Tour Operators:		
(a) Rita Cheok	General Manager	Singapore Sightseeing-Tour East Pte. Ltd.
(b) Leslie Chowdhury	Vice-President, Marketing & Business Development	Franco-Asian Travel Pte. Ltd.
(c) Mustapa Othman	Tour Manager	Malaysia & Singapore Travel Centre Pte. Ltd.
(d) Jeanne Ong	Marketing Services Executive	Singapore Sightseeing Pte. Ltd.
(5) Theme Park Operators:		
(a) Fatimah Gous	Managing Director	Link Communications Pte. Ltd. (Public Relations Consultant for Malay Village)

Note: all information correct at the time of the interviews
(August-December 1993; August-September 1995)

Appendix 2

Little India Survey Questionnaire I:
(for Tourists, Singaporean Visitors, Residents)

**Questionnaire for Tourists and Singaporeans Visiting Little India
and Residents Living in the Little India District**

Dear respondent,

I am undertaking a research survey for my Ph.D. dissertation in the Department of Geography at McGill University (Montreal, Canada). Part of my research focuses on urban heritage conservation and tourism in Little India, and I would be most grateful if you could spare a moment to fill in this questionnaire. The data collected will be used only for research purposes. Thank you.
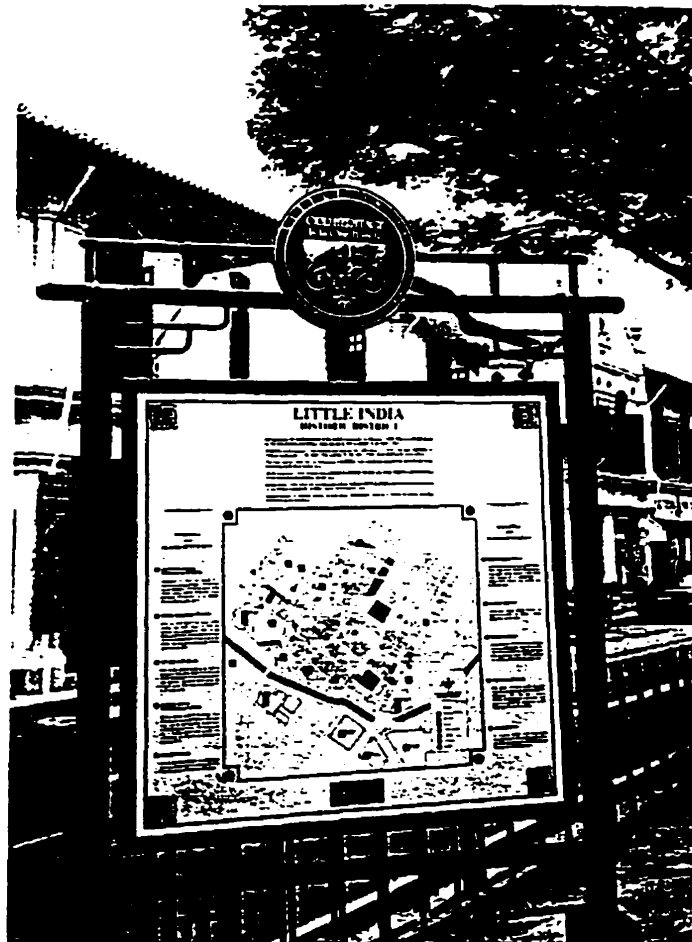
please tick your answer (✔) or fill in the blank _____ as required (if you cannot answer a question, please leave it blank and move on to the next):

1. If you are visiting Little India, what is the main reason for coming here? (residents living in Little India may skip this question)

    a. sightseeing --( )
    b. passing through the area -------------------------------( )
    c. shopping/eating ---------------------------------------( )
    d. living around the Little India district -----------------( )
    e. working around the Little India district ------------- ( )
    f. other reasons (please specify)_____

2. In your opinion, do you think conservation in Little India has helped to preserve the Indian character and identity of Serangoon Road?

    a. yes [go 2i] --- ( )
    b. no [go to 2ii] -------------------------------------- ( )
    c. have no idea -- ( )

(2i) in what ways has conservation retained the Indian character and identity of the area?

_____

(2ii) why has conservation failed to retain the Indian character and identity of the area?

_____

3. Do you think it is a good idea for new shops and restaurants to occupy historic buildings and conserved shophouses in Little India? (for example, The Body Shop which occupies a conserved shophouse along Serangoon Road)

    a. yes, it is a good idea [go to 3i] --------------------------- ( )
    b. no, it is not a good idea [go to 3ii] ---------------------- ( )
    c. no opinion --- ( )

(3i) Why is it a good idea for new shops/restaurants to occupy historic buildings?

_____

(3ii) Why is it not a good idea for new shops/restaurants to occupy historic buildings?

_____

4. One of the government's aims in conservation is to provide a mix of old and new activities in Little India (for example, traditional shops and modern outlets). Do you think conservation has been successful in bringing about this mix of activities?

a. yes, there has been a mix of old and new activities ----------( )
b. no, there has not been a mix of old and new
   activities [go to 4i]--- ( )
c. no opinion -- ( )

(4i) in what ways has the balance not been achieved?

a. there are too many new shops and activities --------------- ( )
b. there are still many old shops and activities -------------- ( )
c. other reasons _____

5. In your opinion, would you say the conservation of Little India Arcade has been successful? (that is, the Arcade is aesthetically pleasing, culturally authentic economically viable or any combination of the above)

a. yes [go to 5i] ----------------------------- ( )
b. no [go to 5ii] ----------------------------- ( )
c. no opinion --------------------------------- ( )
d. have not visited it ------------------------ ( )

(5i) in what ways is Little India Arcade a success?

_____

(5ii) in what ways has Little India Arcade not been successful?

_____

6. For the following statements, please tick the box most relevant to you:

(6i) The various shops in Little India appeal to my needs and interests:

     a. strongly agree ---------------------- (   )
     b. agree ---------------------------------- (   )
     c. neutral -------------------------------- (   )
     d. disagree ------------------------------ (   )
     e. strongly disagree -------------------- (   )

(6ii) The prices of goods/food in Little India are reasonable and
     not too expensive:

     a. strongly agree ---------------------- (   )
     b. agree ---------------------------------- (   )
     c. neutral -------------------------------- (   )
     d. disagree ------------------------------ (   )
     e. strongly disagree -------------------- (   )

(6iii) Because of conservation, Little India has become a tourist attraction
     rather than a place for Singaporeans:

     a. strongly agree ---------------------- (   )
     b. agree ---------------------------------- (   )
     c. neutral -------------------------------- (   )
     d. disagree ------------------------------ (   )
     e. strongly agree ---------------------- (   )

7. Do you have any other comments about the ongoing conservation efforts in Little India?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Bio-Data of Respondent: (please tick/fill in the blank as it applies to you)

a. country of origin (for tourist only): _____

b. ethnic affiliation (for all Singaporeans):

     Chinese ---------------------- (   )
     Malay ------------------------ (   )
     Indian ----------------------- (   )
     Eurasian --------------------- (   )
     Others ----------------------- (   )

c. sex:
     female ------------- (   )
     male -------------- (   )

d. age group:

     below 20 years ------- (   )
     21-30 years ----------- (   )
     31-40 years ----------- (   )
     41-50 years ----------- (   )
     51-60 years ----------- (   )
     over 61 years -------- (   )

e. how often do you visit Little India? (for Singaporeans other than those living in the Little India district):

daily -- ( )
several times a week ----------------------------- ( )
several times a month ---------------------------- ( )
less than once a month --------------------------- ( )

f. how often do you visit Little India Arcade (for Singaporeans living in the Little India district):

everyday -- ( )
several times a week ----------------------------- ( )
several times a month ---------------------------- ( )
never visited it before --------------------------- ( )

Please return the completed questionnaire in the self-addressed/pre-stamped envelope. Thank you for your kind participation and have a most pleasant day.

Appendix 3

Little India Survey Questionnaire II:
(for Merchants and Retailers)

Questionnaire for Retailers and Merchants Working in Little India

Dear respondent,

I am undertaking a research survey for my Ph.D. dissertation in the Department of Geography at McGill University, Montreal (Canada). Part of my research focuses on <u>urban heritage conservation and tourism in Little India</u>, and I would be most grateful if you could spare a moment to fill in this questionnaire. The data collected will be confidential and used only for research purposes. Thank you for your time and effort.

Please tick your answer (✔) or fill in the blanks _____ as required (if you cannot or choose not to answer a question, please leave it blank and move on):

1. In your opinion, do you think conservation in Little India has helped to preserve the <u>Indian character and identity</u> of the area?

        a. yes [go to 1i] --- ( )
        b. no [go to 1ii] --- ( )
        c. have no idea --- ( )

(1i) how do you think conservation has preserved the Indian character and identity of the area?

_____

(1ii) why do you think conservation has not preserved the Indian character and identity of the area?

_____

2. Do you think it is a good idea for new shops and restaurants to occupy historically conserved buildings and shophouses in Little India? (for example, The Body Shop which occupies a conserved shophouse along Serangoon Road)

    a. yes, it is a good idea [go to 2i] ------------------------------- ( )
    b. no, it is not a good idea [go to 2ii] --------------------------- ( )
    c. no opinion --- ( )

(2i) Why is it a good idea for new shops and restaurants to occupy historic buildings?

_____

(2ii) Why is it not a good idea for new shops and restaurants to occupy historic buildings?

_____

3. One of the government's aims in conservation is to provide a mix of old and new activities in Little India (eg. traditional shops and modern outlets). Do you think conservation has been successful in bringing about this mix of activities?

    a. yes, there has been a mix of the old and new ---------------- ( )
    b. no, there has not been a mix of the old and
        new [go to 3i] -- ( )
    c. no opinion --- ( )

(3i) why do you feel that the mix of old and new activities has not been achieved?

    a. there are too many new shops and activities ----------------- ( )
    b. there are still many old shops and activities ----------------- ( )
    c. other reasons

_____

4. In your opinion, would you say that the conservation of Little India Arcade has been _successful_? (that is, the Arcade is aesthetically pleasing, culturally authentic, economically viable or any combination of the above)

a. yes [go to 4i] ------------------ (   )
b. no. [go to 4ii] ---------------- (   )
c. no opinion --------------------- (   )

(4i) in what ways has Little India Arcade been successful?

_____

(4ii) in what ways has Little India Arcade not been successful?

_____

5. What _proportion_ of your customers are Singaporeans as opposed to tourists?

Singaporean clientele: _____(%)

(5i) of the tourists patronising your outlet, what proportion are Asian visitors as opposed to Westerners? _____ (%)

6. What is the _main reason for locating_ your shop/restaurant in the Little India conservation district?

_____

_____

(6i) How important is tourism as a factor in the decision to locate your shop/restaurant here in Little India?

(a) very important ------------------------------------- (   )
(b) quite important ------------------------------------ (   )
(c) not very important --------------------------------- (   )
(d) no importance at all ------------------------------- (   )

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7. Where was your shop/restaurant <u>originally located</u>?

     a. exact location as today -- ( )
     b. in Little India, but at a different site -------------------------- ( )
     c. outside Little India --- ( )
     d. no previous location -- ( )

8. Retailer Profile (Background Information):

a. name of outlet (request for a name card):

_____

b. type of retail outlet (shop, restaurant, service etc)

_____

c. name of retailer I interviewed: _____

d. year in which outlet was established _____

e. contact number and address: _____

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire survey and have a pleasant day.

Appendix 4

Little India Questionnaire Survey: Bio-Data of Respondents

In the Little India Questionnaire Survey, four groups of respondents were surveyed. They included 79 tourists, 71 local visitors (Singaporeans visiting Little India but who reside outside the conservation area), 76 residents (Singaporeans residing within the Little India district) as well as 41 merchants/retailers working in the area. The tables below provide details of the bio-data for the first three groups.

(a) Sex Composition (Tourists, Local Visitors and Residents)

Sex	Tourists No. (%)	Local Visitors No. (%)	Residents No. (%)
Male	48 (60.8)	27 (35.1)	42 (55.3)
Female	31 (39.2)	44 (62.0)	34 (44.7)
Total	79 (100.0)	71 (100.0)	76 (100.0)

(b) Age Composition (Tourists, Local Visitors and Residents)

Age Group	Tourists No. (%)	Local Visitors No. (%)	Residents No. (%)
less than 21	7 (8.9)	13 (18.3)	26 (34.2)
21 - 30 years	19 (24.1)	22 (31.0)	17 (22.3)
31 - 40 years	20 (25.3)	24 (33.8)	21 (27.6)
41 - 50 years	16 (20.3)	11 (15.5)	10 (13.2)
51 - 60 years	9 (11.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.3)
more than 60	6 (7.5)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.3)
unspecified	2 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Total	79 (100.0)	71 (100.0)	76 (100.0)

(c) Ethnic Affiliation (Local Visitors and Residents)

Ethnic Classification	Local visitors No. (%)	Residents No. (%)
(a) Chinese	22 (31.0)	61 (80.3)
(b) Malay	6 (8.4)	1 (1.3)
(c) Indian	36 (50.7)	14 (18.4)
(d) others	7 (9.9)	0 (0.0)
Total	71 (100.0)	76 (100.0)

(d) Purpose of Visiting Singapore (Tourists)

Purpose of Visiting Singapore	No.	Per cent
(a) holiday/sightseeing	46	58.2
(b) visiting friends/relatives	17	21.5
(c) business and convention	9	11.4
(d) others	4	5.1
(e) no reply	3	3.8
Total	79	100.0

(e) Country of Origin (Tourists)

Region and Country of Origin	No.	Per cent
Asia: * India (6) * Japan (3) * Sri Lanka (2) * Thailand (1) * Malaysia (1)	13	16.5
Europe: * U.K. (23) * Holland (5) * Germany (3) * Switzerland (2) * France (1) * Norway (1) * Scotland (1)	36	45.6

Region and Country of Origin	No.	Per cent
Oceania: * Australia (11) * New Zealand (4)	15	19.0
Africa & Middle East: * South Africa (2) * Turkey (1)	3	3.8
South/North America: * U.S.A. (6) * Canada (3) * Colombia (1)	10	12.7
No response	2	2.5
Total	79	100.0

(f) Frequency of Visits to Little India (local visitors) and the Little India Arcade (residents)

Frequency of local visitors visiting the Little India historic district	Number (%)
(a) daily	2 (2.8)
(b) several times a week	22 (31.0)
(c) several times a month	19 (26.8)
(d) less than once a month	25 (35.2)
(e) no reply	3 (4.2)
Total	71 (100.0)
Frequency of residents visiting the Little India Arcade	**Number (%)**
(a) everyday	8 (10.5)
(b) several times a week	10 (13.2)
(c) several times a month	23 (30.3)
(d) never visited	34 (44.7)
(e) no reply	1 (1.3)
Total	76 (100.0)

Appendix 5

Changi Airport Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaire on Tourists and Residents' Impressions of Singapore

Dear respondent,

I am undertaking a survey for my Ph.D. research in the Department of Geography at McGill University (Montreal, Canada). Part of my research focuses on the impressions people have of Singapore as a tourist destination, and I would be most grateful if you could take a few moments to fill in this questionnaire. Thank you for your help and participation.

Please fill in the blank (✔) as directed. If you do not have an opinion for a particular question, just leave it blank and move on to the next.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent would you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the historical and cultural sights of Singapore?

Please rate each statement according to this scale:

5 = strongly agree
4 = agree
3 = neither agree nor disagree
2 = disagree
1 = strongly disagree

(a) Singapore offers unique sights and attractions --------------------------------------- (   )

(b) Singapore's culture and history are of interest to me ------------------------------- (   )

(c) Chinatown, Little India, and Kampong Glam contribute to
Singapore's appeal as a tourist destination ------------------------------------- (   )

(d) The Conservation of historic buildings makes Singapore a
more attractive city -- (   )

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent would you agree/disagree with the following descriptions about Singapore?

Please rate each description according to this scale:

5 = strongly agree
4 = agree
3 = neither agree nor disagree
2 = disagree
1 = strongly disagree

(a) Singapore is 'Instant Asia' (multiracial and multiethnic) ----------- (   )

(b) Singapore is a 'clean/green garden-city' ---------------------------- (   )

(c) Singapore is a 'shopping and food paradise' ----------------------- (   )

(d) Singapore is a 'modern city with an interesting past' -------------- (   )

(e) Singapore is a 'distinctively Asian city' ---------------------------- (   )

(f) Singapore is a 'Westernised City' ----------------------------------- (   )

If you had to choose only ONE of the following descriptions, which one in your opinion best describes Singapore? Please tick the most appropriate box (✔):

(a) Singapore is an 'Instant Asia' ---------------------------------- (   )
(b) Singapore is a 'Garden City' ------------------------------------- (   )
(c) Singapore is a 'Shopping and Food Paradise' ----------------- (   )
(d) Singapore is a 'Modern City with a Remarkable Past' ------ (   )
(e) Singapore is a 'Business and Financial Centre' -------------- (   )

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3. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent would you agree/disagree that the following places feature prominently in your overall image and impression of Singapore? (in other words, do you agree/disagree that the following types of places reflect all which is 'distinctive' and 'unique' about Singapore?)

Please rate each attraction according to this scale:

5 = strongly agree
4 = agree
3 = neither agree nor disagree
2 = disagree
1 = strongly disagree

(a) Ethnic conservation sites (eg. Chinatown, Little India) ----------------------------- (   )

(b) Shopping areas (eg. Orchard Road, Marina Square) ----------------------------- (   )

(c) Parks and gardens (eg. Sentosa, Botanic Gardens) ----------------------------- (   )

(d) Financial/Business district (eg. Shenton Way) ----------------------------- (   )

(e) Public housing estates (eg. Toa Payoh, Bedok) ----------------------------- (   )

(f) Singapore River (eg. Boat Quay, Clarke Quay) ----------------------------- (   )

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent would you agree/disagree that the following 'types of attractions' should be further developed to make Singapore a more appealing place in the future?

Please rate each 'type of attraction' according to this scale:

5 = strongly agree
4 = agree
3 = neither agree nor disagree
2 = disagree
1 = strongly disagree

(a) parks and gardens (eg. Sentosa, Chinese Garden) ----------------------------- (   )

(b) theme parks (eg. Haw Par Villa, Sentosa's Water World) ----------------------------- (   )

(c) shopping centres and attractions
(eg. Ngee Ann City, The Great Singapore Shopping Sale) -------------------- (   )

(d) the conservation of historic districts (eg. Chinatown) ----------------------------- (   )

5. Respondent Profile:

(a) Country of residence (for tourists only):

_____

(b) Ethnic affiliation (for all Singaporeans only):

     Chinese ---------------- ( )
     Malay ------------------ ( )
     Indian ------------------ ( )
     Eurasian --------------- ( )
     others (please specify)

_____

(c) Sex:

     female ---------- ( )
     male ------------- ( )

(d) age group:

     below 20 years ------------ ( )
     21-30 years ---------------- ( )
     31-40 years ---------------- ( )
     41-50 years ---------------- ( )
     51-60 years ---------------- ( )
     over 60 years -------------- ( )

(e) Number of times you have visited Singapore: (for tourists only)

     first time -------------------- ( )
     second time ----------------- ( )
     three or more times -------- ( )

(g) what was the main purpose for visiting Singapore? (for tourists only)

     holiday/sightseeing ---------------- ( )
     business/work ---------------------- ( )
     convention ------------------------- ( )
     visiting relatives/friends ---------- ( )
     other reasons (please specify)

_____

Thank you for your kind participation, and have a most pleasant day.

Appendix 6

Changi Airport Questionnaire Survey: Bio-Data of Respondents

The Changi Airport Questionnaire Survey comprised both tourists and Singaporeans. In all, 240 Western tourists, 274 Asian visitors and 344 Singaporeans were polled. Table 3.1 shows the breakdown of the tourist samples by 'country of origin' while Table 3.2 shows the breakdown of the Singaporean sample by 'ethnic grouping' (see Chapter Three). Other bio-data pertaining to the respondents are presented below. Where available, actual 1994 figures are furnished for comparative purposes.

(a) Age Composition (Western Tourists, Asian Visitors, Singaporeans)

Age Composition (all figures in percentages)	Western Tourists (N = 240)		Asian Visitors (N = 274)		Singaporeans (N = 344)	
	sample size	(1994 figure)	sample size	(1994 figure)	sample size	(1994 figure)
(a) below 21 years	8.3	(n.a.)	8.8	(n.a.)	6.4	(29.9)
(b) 21-30 years	33.3	(n.a.)	38.7	(n.a.)	38.1	(17.2)
(c) 31-40 years	18.8	(n.a.)	23.0	(n.a.)	35.5	(20.4)
(d) 41-50 years	24.6	(n.a.)	21.5	(n.a.)	12.2	(14.6)
(e) 51-60 years	12.1	(n.a.)	6.6	(n.a.)	5.8	(8.2)
(f) over 60 years	2.9	(n.a.)	1.1	(n.a.)	2.0	(9.7)

(b) Visitation Characteristics (Western Tourists, Asian Visitors)

Frequency of Visit to Singapore (all figures in percentages)	Western Tourists (n = 240)		Asian Visitors (n = 274)	
	sample size	(1994 figure)	sample size	(1994 figure)
(a) first time	45.8	(44.7)	32.5	(48.4)
(b) repeat visit	54.2	(55.3)	67.2	(51.6)
(c) no reply	0.0	(1.1)	0.3	(0.0)
Purpose of Visit to Singapore (all figures in percentages)	sample size	(1994 figure)	sample size	(1994 figure)
(a) holiday/sightseeing	63.8	(54.4)	39.4	(59.9)
(b) business/work	17.9	(19.7)	35.0	(15.1)
(c) convention	1.7	(1.0)	2.2	(1.1)
(d) visiting friends/ relatives	6.7	(4.2)	6.9	(4.8)
(e) other reasons	9.6	(17.1)	15.7	(12.3)
(f) no reply	0.4	(3.6)	0.7	(7.0)

note: the total number of tourists visiting Singapore in 1994 was 6.898,951 of which Asian tourists numbered 4,918,838 or 71.3 per cent and Western visitors (from Europe, Oceania, America and Africa) numbered 1,979,729 or 28.7 per cent (STPB 1994, 12).

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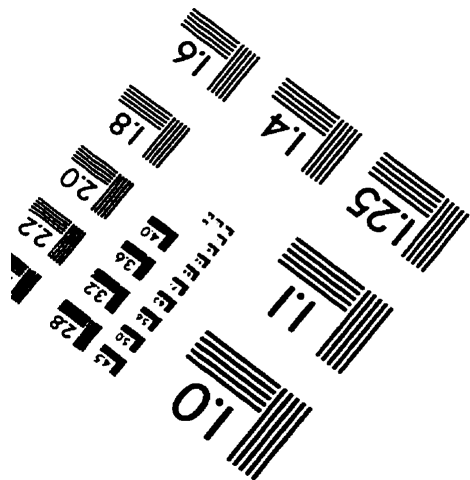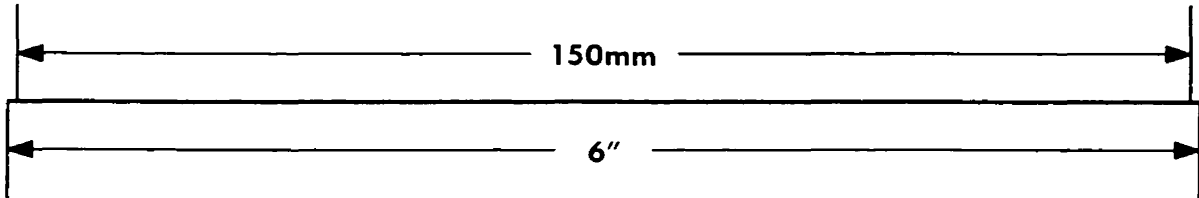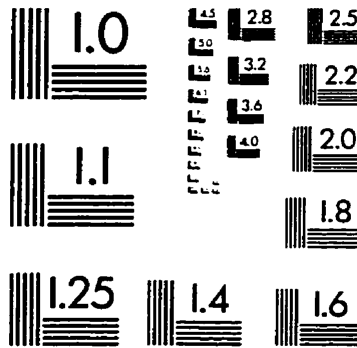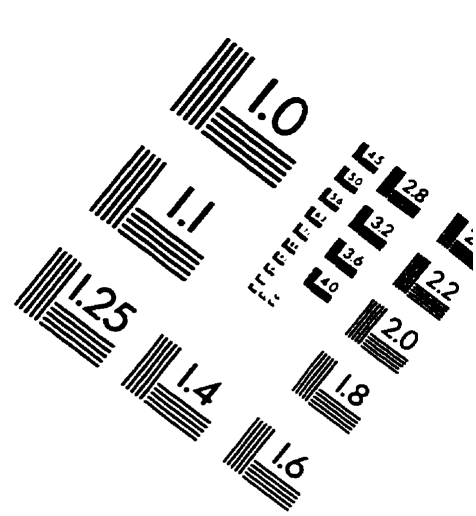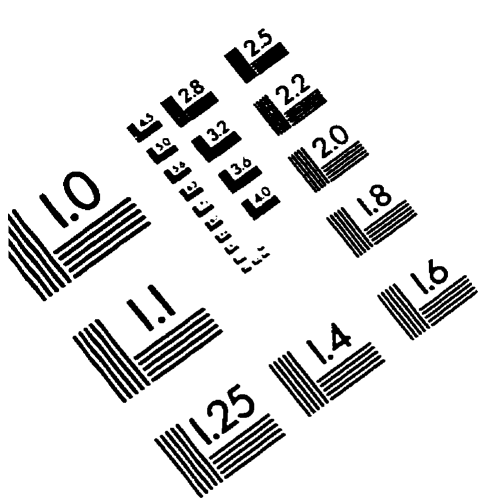
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