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**Chapter 2, "The Measurement of Metropolitan
Performance: Singapore and Bangkok as
Pacemakers,"**

by Richard L. Meier

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CHAPTER 2

Richard L. Meier

THE MEASUREMENT OF METROPOLITAN PERFORMANCE: Singapore and Bangkok as Pacemakers

Two metropolises lead the way in the modernization and economic development of upwards of 250,000,000 people on the southeast fringes of Asia. They provide niches for the powerful technological concepts of our time, allowing them to activate a series of quiet revolutions in ways of life, philosophic outlook, and human relationships. Increasingly the bearers of the crucial capabilities are the multinational corporations that can swiftly build up regional headquarters, now that the telecommunications facilities allow continuous exchange of information with the other leading metropolises of the world.

Singapore and Bangkok have accumulated skilled multilingual personnel who can be recruited to management, intercontinental hotels for entertaining important visitors, comfortable homes, a good standard of security from violence, and suitable recreation. In them world markets are translated into bids and offers for smaller transactions within the region; world interests in health, education, and welfare are reworked into metropolitan-scale programs implemented by public agencies, and advanced by newly organized scientific research and scholarship. Metropolitan enterprises simultaneously subdivide the larger managerial concerns into local projects and field operations.

The primary function of the pacemaking metropolis in Asia is that of broker. One cannot understand the dynamism of Singapore and Bangkok without recognizing the variety of milieux for middlemen that they maintain. Dealing in commodities moving in international and regional trade is a traditional activity that remains important. More recently quasi-markets in human skills have come into being. Consulting groups have established themselves as knowledge distributors. Organizers of information acquisition systems have advanced far beyond simple journalistic endeavors. Tourism has become professionalized with hundreds of specialties evolving which buffer the visitor, so that he is usually kept from experiencing severe cultural shock. The wholesalers of popular

culture, whether American, Japanese, Chinese (from Hong Kong and Taiwan), or European, are also proliferating. When exchanges are effected with the hinterland, modern styles and cultural responses are very often adopted sooner in the boondocks than are the related technological improvements. Steps in the diffusion path can be traced back to locales in these metropolises where a small community of entrepreneurs, brokers, and agents have been learning how to distribute non-material modern outputs.

Singapore's brokerage transactions are much more open to view than those of other metropolises, because almost all are cross international boundaries and are counted in one way or another as exports or imports. Recent trading data show a rise in the importance of Japan and the United States, displacing Great Britain and Western Malaysia (Table 1).

Urbanists and planners find that the models and analyses offered by social scientists for such rapidly modernizing metropolises are necessarily obsolete. The accepted methods for promoting studies, collecting data, analyzing that data, propounding generalizations, and publishing in accredited media takes five to seven years if the investigators are fortunate. Only then is the information and the conceptualization available for public decision making and higher education. However, in cities like Singapore and Bangkok the level of economic activity is likely to be double what it was at the time the study was designed, the social communications in the modern sector at least treble, while both capital formation and institution building proceed at an equally high multiple of former rates. Totally new, often ultramodern, organizations and activities will have appeared on the scene in the interim. Thus conditions already in existence often

Table 1. Principal Trading Partners of Singapore (Percentage Share of All Singapore Exports and Imports)

	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
Import Sources					
Western Malaysia	23.2	23.2	19.3	15.9	17.5
Japan	11.1	11.4	12.4	13.6	16.3
United States -	5.1	5.2	5.6	6.8	7.9
Great Britain	10.9	10.0	8.0	7.8	6.7
China	5.9	6.7	8.5	9.1	6.7
Others	43.8	43.5	46.2	46.8	44.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Export Destinations					
Western Malaysia	31.2	26.9	23.6	19.4	16.4
United States	4.2	4.8	7.0	8.5	10.7
Vietnam	3.7	7.6	8.7	9.0	9.4
Japan	3.7	3.6	4.5	7.1	7.1
Great Britain	6.4	5.5	6.1	6.3	5.8
Others	50.5	51.6	50.1	49.7	50.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

contradict the preconceptions underlying the formulations of inquiries into the social system, the economic system, or the urban ecology now being published. Western social scientists take growth for granted, and are sometimes criticized for this underlying bias, but their methods and time scale do not fit the acceleration of growth now underway in Seoul, Singapore, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Taipei, and some of the lesser metropolises in that part of Asia.

A future-oriented, on-the-scene assessment of contemporary development applicable to such Asian metropolises was reported in 1971 by Meier.¹ This technique was applied to both Singapore and Bangkok in the period 1969-71, and then updated by review of current periodicals. The following report on the two metropolises is therefore designed to fit the needs of planners more than geographers, historians, and other urbanists; it is based upon future-oriented observation rather than documentation and analysis of what the metropolis has been.

Singapore's Takeoff

A review of the current literature on Singapore leads one through repetitious presentation of the same challenges, the same high points in achievements, and a virtually identical list of present difficulties. Whether one reads *Business Week*, *The Economist*, *Time*, the American Geographical Society's *Focus*, or the World Bank-IMF quarterly *Finance and Development*, the following points are encountered:

- Sir Stamford Raffles, founder (1819);
- Naval base and entrepôt;
- Japanese occupation in World War II;
- Battle against Communist guerrillas (Malaya);
- Housing Development Board (Queenstown);
- Malaysian independence;
- Separation from Malaysia (1965);
- Jurong Industrial Estate;
- Economic Development Board;
- Labor peace in Lee Kwan Yew's socialism;
- "Instant Asia" label for speedy building;
- Family planning progress, population levelling near 2,000,000;
- Overextension in hotel construction but more air flights;
- Per capita income, about U.S. \$900 (1971 dollars);
- Fourth harbor of the world and still expanding;
- Petroleum processor for Southeast Asia.

All this consensus in the published reports seems to mean that the city-state has a consistent self-image which is credibly transmitted to journalists, economic development specialists, and geographers. Elaboration on such themes by men with very different backgrounds but high levels of intelligence suggests that the facts are true, but probably not complete, because no adequate explanation is given for the dramatic upsurge of development they report (Table 2).

Table 2. Composition of the Gross Domestic Product of Singapore (in 1969 Singapore \$Million)

Year	GDP	Agriculture, Fishery (%)	Manufac- turing (%)	Construc- tion (%)	Trade	Tourism (%)	Military Needs, Services (%)	Others
1959	1,968.0	6.1	8.6	2.0	31.7	1.2	13.8	36.5
1963	2,683.8	5.5	11.0	3.5	32.0	2.0	12.0	33.9
1966	3,365.2	4.5	14.5	3.8	26.1	2.5	16.3	32.3
1968	4,257.0	3.5	15.9	4.2	31.7	3.4	10.7	30.6
1969	4,833.4	3.3	17.1	4.3	33.6	4.4	8.6	28.7

The most insightful theory explaining the accelerated growth is probably still unacceptable in Singapore. It is provided by W.L.C. Wheaton.² in a parable on regional planning where he presents some "outrageous hypotheses" about development in a hypothetical Asian metropolis:

Singkong divorced itself from its Mother Country in 1970. I will not go into the details, but the Mother Country was paralyzed by its fifth internal military revolution, and was powerless to resist the separation. Further there were marked ethnic and religious differences between Singkong and its hinterland. The people of Singkong were fundamentally of a vigorous and busy racial group, and they believed in a religion called economics. The dominant population of the Mother Country was not so hard-working. They believed in a religion called balanced regional growth. Clearly the separation was politically advantageous to both sides.

Singkong... announced itself as a free trade port on the gold standard. The leaders proclaimed that they would run their new state like a city-firm. They invited business investment, and proclaimed the conviction that nations did not need any resources other than people in the last quarter of the 20th century.

The leaders of the Mother Country scoffed at this outrageous notion. Cities, they said, were evil, corrupt, overcrowded, incapable of reproducing themselves, and dependent upon rural areas for food and raw materials. Singkong would soon starve. The rural constituencies of the Mother Country applauded these wise sentiments, and believed them, since they, too, were stalwart 19th century minds.

The first effects of independence were striking and unanticipated. Without thinking about it, the Government of Singkong had maintained the Mother Country's tax system and tax rates. These produced huge budgetary surpluses in the first year, since the city was no longer drained of tax funds to support farm subsidies, rural development, roads and schools for the backward and unproductive parts of the Mother Country.

Singkong historians later read the last National Regional Development plan of the Mother Country and discovered that, although the Singkong area had 30 percent of the population and produced 50 percent of the wealth of the Mother Country, it had only been receiving 5 percent of the development budget of the nation, 5 percent of transportation investments, 15 percent of power, 1 percent of community facilities and social welfare, 9 percent of public health and 6 percent of education expenditures. Accordingly Singkong was able to immediately increase its investments in these fields by three to 50 times the previous rates. This had startling effects upon both the contentment and the productivity of the people of Singkong.

Equally important, the city-state discovered that a large population of its employees were no longer needed. They had been engaged in protracted and futile negotiations with the central government of the Mother Country for grants-in-aid... Since government was momentarily embarrassed with

a huge revenue surplus... these services were quickly expanded to maintain the previous level of employment, but with substantially greater output.

Soon the government discovered that another form of efficiency was emerging. Decisions could be made promptly. Word began to spread that an industrialist who wanted to build a new plant could get roads, water and housing within a matter of months. More striking, he could get a final decision in a matter of days. Home builders learned that they could get government insurance of mortgages approved overnight, since cases were decided in the home office, rather referred to the former national capital. This reduced delay time 18 months, and costs by 12 percent.

The enthusiasm and optimism generated by these conditions, and the budgetary surplus, quickly convinced the leaders of Singkong that their economy would grow rapidly. They turned their energies to planning for economic development... the Singkong government agreed to provide all of the requisite services for industry promptly and efficiently, including transportation, sewer, water, housing and community facilities for employees, and all of the educational services required to make the employees efficient workers.

Orthodox 19th century economists, of which there are many, predicted the early bankruptcy of Singkong... Of course, Singkong prospered. It purchased raw materials on the world market, processed them and sold its products at great profit. It purchased food on the world market in exchange for a tiny fraction of its industrial output. Assured of sites at reasonable costs, and skilled and contented labor, industrialists flocked to Singkong, wages began to go up, migration from the Mother Country to Singkong began to soar. With prosperity, Singkong saw that it must soon inaugurate policies which would regulate industrial growth and migration.

Being convinced that a city must operate like a firm, the leaders of Singkong adopted some new rules. Preference was given only to those industries whose average return to the economy of Singkong exceeded marginal costs, and whose average return exceeded those of alternative industries. Similarly migration was permitted, but only by those prepared to invest an amount equal to the marginal investment per employee, or by those whose skills were such that their capitalized earnings would equal the average value of Singkongese by the same measure.

Time does not permit me to go into the subsequent history of Singkong. Suffice it to say the per capita income there doubled every seven years. Naturally, the people of the Mother Country resented its wealth and prosperity. Some even proposed a holy war to exterminate the heresy, and force Singkong to share its wealth. But Singkong cleverly offered to build Singkong II on the most barren desert island off the coast of the Mother Country, to demonstrate that anyone could do it all over again, if only they would be busy and energetic, and adopt Singkong's religion. Naturally the Mother Country refused this outrageous offer, for they still devoutly believed in agriculture and balanced regional development.

Further, they were not doing too badly, as Singkong's prosperity doubled their markets for food and raw materials every seven years, though per capita income continued at low levels . . .

Images of the Rugged Society in a Garden City

One exceedingly significant indicator of the place of a metropolis on the world scene is the image of itself that it presents to outsiders. This "face" appears in public statements by the Prime Minister, and is elaborated in detail by the output of the ministries wherever the leader strikes a chord of consensus and pride. Often the pictures speak louder than words; in the Singapore output they are very often glossy and in color, which indicates the priority level assigned to the maintenance of appearances. The imagery captured by the pictures raises questions of "Why?" and the explanations obtained from the residents are most often fragmentary accounts of recent history in the city-state. The items that follow are clearly important:

Singapore felt seriously threatened when the British announced that they were pulling out altogether. Was a city-state viable in a part of the world where guerrillas were attempting to take over two Asian countries to the north, and had just barely been beaten off in Malaya, when Singapore was the chief prize sought by the self-declared Communists? The government decided that it needed to become much more like the Israelis—rugged and quick to react. At an extraordinary high price they brought in Israeli military advisors. The period of military service for young men was raised to three years, which is even more than for South Korea.

Modern British military equipment is available at cut rate prices at the moment, but it must be replaced in a few years and the decisions have to be made shortly. Now that the American umbrella is being withdrawn in Vietnam, some soul-searching reappraisals are in order.

The rugged society has reached down into the schools. Physical fitness programs are emphasized, as well as parade ground exercises. This shows up in the self-image of Singapore as transmitted through the Ministry of Culture's booklet for tourists. There is a remarkable degree of unanimity among the people as evidenced by the rather trivial scale of the May Day bombs and demonstrations. The Chinese, who once resented the built-in Malay control of the Malaysian government and took pride in the achievements of Mao Tse-tung, now much prefer independence. Increasingly, Singapore is a nation worth fighting for. Business is very good, the schools are improving rapidly, and the government is sensitive to the needs of specialized groups.

The rest of the booklet for tourists transmits the theme of modernity—an excellent environment for conducting business. Another message that comes through is only understood if one compares photographs of Singapore with other cities dominated or strongly influenced by the Chinese—Hong Kong, Taipei, Bangkok, and Saigon. Singapore has a clean and tidy image.

The younger professionals say the clean-up from the conditions described in the novels about the Japanese occupation³ began with indoctrination in the post-War Chinese elementary schools. Cleanliness came next to proper behavior in the presence of superiors. The other standard was set by the great houses and the clubs of the British colonial civil servants and the expatriate business class. They put great store in their gardens. Now perhaps three-quarters of those houses with sweeping lawns and manicured plots of flowers have Chinese names (printed in English) at the driveway entrance. Dust and smoke are also rare. Thus the tourist is very much reassured upon entering Singapore because he feels he is likely to leave with a functioning gastrointestinal tract. The local illness rate is, as expected, extraordinarily low, as is infant mortality.

The traffic circles and places are kept blooming the year round. Yellow, red, and green colors predominate. Similarly, the fringes around the tall white slabs of housing are planted in relatively formal gardens. This is a place for the tourist to rest for a few days from the emotional upsets of Saigon, the classical treasures of Thailand, or the inaccessible marvels of Angkor Wat. There is nothing special for the tourist to do except eat alfresco on Bugis Street watching the transvestites who hang out there. The government has clamped down strongly on beggars and all the addictive vices from drugs to gambling. Hippies are shorn at the quarantine stations, and homosexuals are jailed if they become too visible.

On the other hand city life is relaxed and casual, so that coats seem never to be worn by men, and even neckties are extremely rare. Skirts can be mini, but not micro, as they often are in the centers and sub-centers of Tokyo. A straitlaced Honolulu has been a source of inspiration for the planners of tourism in Singapore; not surprisingly, their advisers are drawn from among the most respectable professionals in Hawaii.

The street scene in Singapore is primarily automotive, with a heavy proportion of buses at peak periods. The pedicabs are the smallest seen anywhere, and are relatively undecorated; they move around on the fringes of traffic, primarily in the more traditional areas dominated by shop-flat combinations (mostly three stories). Bicycles come into view more often in the early morning, before the nine o'clock rush, and in the evening at dusk. Light vans are common, trucks of two to five tons are concentrated around the harbor, while the heavier trucks are seen mostly around construction sites and industrial estates. The weird shapes and cadmium yellow skins of American heavy duty construction equipment are sometimes seen on the roads. Singaporeans who have had a tradition of leveling hills ever since the 19th century, have been quick to import this equipment.

If the image of proper Singapore in the past had been a Southhampton and Torquay in the tropics, it is now surely a Tel Aviv-Honolulu restyling. No mention is made as yet of the future, when a strong influence will be the Osaka pragmatist. Singaporeans have gotten so used to looking East and West for visitors, they are not yet used to the idea that Japanese from the North will make up the principal flow of tourists and make up perhaps a majority of the sojourners in the future.

Already over a thousand Japanese are living in Singapore, as compared to perhaps 7,000 Americans. The Japanese families come in the second year of the residence of the employee. Since their salaries are double what they would make at home, they pick up the modern contractor-built houses in the suburbs. They concentrate their children in the same private nursery schools, and party each other in much the same way that the English did before the war. The women rarely learn English because they manage to get by with the Chinese characters used in the Japanese language, writing rather than speaking. Because most of the ultramodern technology installed in the Jurong Industrial Estate will come from Japan, this Japanese colony is likely to multiply by ten within a decade. Its institutions will be reinforced by the funds expended by tourists and sojourners.

It will be interesting to see what happens when a contingent of the Japanese "goes native" in Singapore and begins to interact with its culture. The urban Japanese are the most difficult culture in Asia to hybridize. (It was accomplished in America and Hawaii because the immigrants were extremely poor, rural, and comparatively uneducated.) However, the Japanese tend to respect very highly a society that tries to be both "rugged" and "clean and green," so that a much greater degree of compatibility is to be anticipated than, say, with Bangkok or Saigon.

Readying for the Future

To what extent can a city-state be a modern nation? There are insufficient precedents for Singapore to follow. Therefore it will have to innovate as it goes. The government has enough dash and vigor to be willing to innovate, but what should it do? What policies and projects would a planner advise, beyond what is already being done, to make it possible for an isolated, independent metropolis to reconstruct itself and still maintain a viable form?

There comes to hand a quite new volume called *Modern Singapore*,⁴ very capably edited by professors Jin-bee Ooi and Hai Ding Chiang of the University of Singapore. It provides basic factual background before entering into some of the more sensitive social and political development analysis. The reader is introduced to an ethnically mixed society fused by an effective political party leadership but still containing disparate elements. Crucial decisions, such as the choice of English as the principal language of education, had been implemented. The task of the future is to apply scientific knowledge to modernize and build an Asian society. Most of that effort still lies ahead, with the warning that Westernization (of which English and science are two characteristic traits) involves a set of customs and taboos that may have little or nothing to do with modernization. Blatant examples of committing a Westernism are the presently accepted shaving and bathing customs, but the drinking of milk and the use of the private automobile comprise members of a large and expensive class of instances of Westernization that has yet to be critically analyzed locally. In the long run Singapore needs to select a resource-conserving set of customs because

additional resource-based commodities must all be imported under conditions that keep foreign exchange scarce.

One contribution could not be included in that volume. Koh and Lim⁵ very carefully reviewed the history of Singapore planning. They demonstrated that a plan derived from the philosophies of English intellectuals in the 1930s, greenbelt and all, and accepted as a statutory Master Plan in the 1950s, was becoming a straightjacket that would greatly reduce flexibility in the 1970s. The lack of variety in public housing, which constitutes 80-85 percent of all new housing, the difficulties put in the way of community formation in the relocated population, and the huge increase in traffic, were all unanticipated and are not yet provided for adequately. Somehow the government must move to a greater dependence upon market mechanisms in land use and land development, which means progressive de-control of rents. This would allow a more rapid response to opportunities in the business sphere, mostly existing in the world market.

The most fundamental policy problems, now that economic development is gaining momentum, are political. Thus far the principal actions have led to an homogenization of the vastly different ethnic and religious groups, first in unions, then in the vote and in party unification, followed by urban renewal and schools, and now the military. Recently even the Malays, who make up an element not too far different in outlook from that of the Spanish-speaking population in California, have been responding well to the incentives for integration in schools, housing, and labor force (but after two years they had yet to take up the first small business loan from the allocation set aside for them). In the future, Singapore will need to capitalize upon its diversity. Each of its ethnic and religious traditions should be encouraged to evolve a modern component. These include British, along with the Hokkien, Hakka, Cantonese and Chiu-Chow, Malabar Muslim and Tamil, Sikh and Malay. Almost certainly Sumatran, Japanese, and Vietnamese will have to be added over the next decade. Fortunately the restriction on immigration are relaxed for people who bring either a good education, a nest egg of capital, or a business opportunity. Therefore it seems likely that when the full force of the prospective labor shortage hits in mid-decade, the response will be more open than that exhibited by the Japanese, but more restrictive than that of the Western Europeans when they imported millions of peasants from Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey to man the machines in their factories. Singapore will probably accept immigrants as they are needed, but not before.

The city must evolve structural differentiation to become a home for all of these newcomers. The Japanese will probably want garden apartments, and the Vietnamese walk-up apartments, while the Sumatrans need aided self-help housing because they will be poorest of all. Many Malays might join them. Since the government cannot tell how many immigrants will be added, or how strong the brain drain to the West will be, land use allocations must be kept on a tentative year-to-year basis and be guided by a good data-gathering system. The government could remain agile by opening new land up for bids, with the

Housing and Development Board bidding against the open market, using its budget to best advantage.

This speed of adjustment will be made necessary by the fact that the way has already been cleared for the jobs to appear on the scene within a matter of months after a contract is signed. The Jurong Industrial Estate is fully serviced for all but the largest chemical plants and refineries, but even they can be installed at almost the same speed as in Japan.

Singapore's attention must remain fixed on the actions of the major actors on the world scene. During the year of 1971, for example, a multitude of adjustments had to be made to (1) postponement for a while of the pipeline from the Alaskan North Slope, (2) resumption of diplomacy between the United States and Communist China, (3) the inclusion of Great Britain in the European Common Market, and (4) the admission of Communist China into the United Nations. The first of these caused a quick transfer of oil well drilling capacity and all the ancillary service activities to the region served by Singapore. The second opened up a series of new entrepôt options for exploration by the respective communities of Chinese traders which would allow them to market the product from the cheapest labor in the world. The third represented a clear break in the trading arrangements left over from the days of the British Empire. The fourth resulted in a huge flow of funds from Hong Kong, and indirectly Taipei, to Singapore banks, which will be followed by a diligent search for opportunities to invest locally in land and short-to-middle term propositions. Since the respective trading groups often arrive at the same conclusions about the strategy for investment but operate under a cloak of secrecy, the supply of suitable land, or of specific skills and equipment, will sometimes become insufficient, and sharp price changes will be experienced. However these shifts present opportunities to other traders, who will bring in new sources of supply or substitutes from the outside, thus reducing the period of shortage to a matter of weeks or months.

On the whole then, a city-state appears to be as viable as Wheaton argues, but only if it bends its governmental efforts toward maximizing its freedom to jump, either to avoid the effects of disastrous tears in the fabric of world trade (e.g., the closing of the Suez Canal or the turn toward protectionism in America), or to take advantage of unusual new opportunities. Singapore should continue to have a strong developmental effect upon its suppliers because it could insist upon standards of accounting, quality, hygiene, and delivery that would raise the level of organization in its "hinterland" to a point approximating that of the rubber industry, and these improvements would feed back to support an organizing center in its own upgrading attempts. Telecommunications allow almost instantaneous adjustments to be initiated to keep the entrepôt in equilibrium with the other financial centers. Given a balanced and agile policy, the gross domestic product could grow more rapidly over the next decade than Japan has over the last, despite the greater proportionate costs of defense. It has already come close to matching the Japanese rate, so that the foregoing claim is not an extreme one.

MODERNIZING PEASANT CULTURE IN BANGKOK

The effects of growth in population, income, and organizational capability are everywhere evident in Bangkok. Most of the frustrations felt by the *farang* (the label applied to outsiders) with airport, telephone, transport, and governmental operations can be attributed to growth pains in the urban economy. Bangkok has reached a stage where the demand for such services is expected to grow much faster than the absolute dimensions of the residential population, which is about 3,000,000 and expanding by an estimated 5-7 percent per year, and more rapidly even than the gross regional product, which surely has been exceeding 10 percent per year prior to the levelling beginning in 1970. It is also one of the characteristics of Bangkok that the aggregate data are either not available or not trustworthy when reported.

Bangkok is different from Taipei, Singapore, and even Seoul, in that it has acted very much as a stopper that prevents further migration into the rest of the world. It contains many sojourners with the hope of finding a job. Formerly, most were carried in the boats that transported the rice, maize, jute, and minerals from the river ports upstream in the Chao Phraya basin. Now more common people arrive like the students and educated people on the buses and the trains. Most return home after a stay in the capital city, but quite a few do find reasonably steady employment and places to live in the *soi* (lanes) that invade the plantations surrounding the city. No real brain drain to the rest of the world has occurred because Thai students return, almost all of them, to Bangkok. There are no important foreign colonies which exchange personnel with the mother country. The Thai elite, made up of top military officers to a large extent, do get to the United States, but see little there to attract them for long periods of residence.

The physical installations and rolling stock needed to support a vastly increased circulation through the cities of Thailand have been largely completed. But this involves primarily the primate city, because Chiangmai, the second city, contains only about 100,000 population, and the other cities are proportionately smaller. The focus on Bangkok, at the head of navigation on the Chao Phraya, is due largely to physical geography, but centralism is reinforced by the politico-military system. What can be projected regarding the resulting flow and counter-flow? We are forced to depend heavily upon the performance of several key mobilizing institutions in the countryside.

Considerations of these questions strongly affecting the future of Bangkok were greatly aided by a recent review of the experience with community development and decentralization.⁶ In it the theory and practice are compared and a carefully annotated assessment of the academic literature is provided.

At present, the influence of the capital upon the peasant villagers (almost all of whom own their land and are not permitted by law to lose it to Chinese moneylenders) is felt most strongly through the Army. The Thai have a tradition

of being military conquerors in Southeast Asia so the Army is a service in which most families take pride. The soldiers and police are most onerous in territories that had been conquered in the 18th and 19th centuries and have not yet been fully assimilated, such as the Muslim South and the Lao Northeast. Although these features are apparently the most important contacts, one finds only a few indirect references to their influence in scholarly studies. The most revealing statements are the matter-of-fact pronouncements of top Thai officials such as "... a pattern of local administration with a high degree of participation by the people becomes an effective tool of counter-insurgency. At the same time it provides a basic foundation at the grass roots for a truly democratic system." It is the general belief locally that the Thai survived as the only people in Southeast Asia not subject to colonization by the Western Great Powers because they paid attention to self-defense very promptly as compared to other matters. They also trained some astute diplomats, but that is a story that depends solely upon the outcome of Bangkok intrigues.

Bangkok rules through a chain that leads through 71 provincial governments (changwats), 539 districts (amphoes), 5,089 sub-districts (tambons), and 45,610 villages (mubans). The top two levels are filled by permanent government officials, but the latter two are selected from the community at the designation of the officials, but with the acquiescence of the local peasants. The tambon supports a wat, the Buddhist temple-monastery-school-hospital-meeting place complex (or a mosque in the South).

The equilibrium-maintaining feature of peasant society is the tie to the land. Social status among the peasants in the muban derives from the amount of land ownership. The bigger land owners among them are more likely to innovate in agriculture, make more trips to town, and send their sons to school longer. Their opinions dominate in the village councils for the simple reason that they are also more likely to be influential in obtaining Bangkok's help in restoring or improving the vicinity. Peasants normally wait upon government action and are reluctant to help themselves.

The central government has been engaged in experiments aimed at improving its effectiveness at the local level. One of these (Developing Democracy Program, 1966) allowed greater independence to a tambon leader by giving him some staff college training and providing grants-in-aid. The newly initiated projects include a volunteer defense corps (that works with the police and military in areas threatened by terrorists), health stations and midwifery centers, potable water projects and electrification. U. S. AID helps in the North and Northeastern provinces. Community development programs exist, but have little influence, despite the mobile development units that have been created to help remote areas.

These programs have a history of repeated failures; nevertheless the capabilities of the peasants have been noticeably increasing. Improvements in transport, use of fertilizer, health, the control of water, electrification, education, and handicrafts are accumulating. They can only be attributed to indirect, but reinforcing influences emanating from Bangkok.

Buddhist monks in Thailand are not politicized, as in Vietnam, but are becoming increasingly influential in secular matters in the countryside. The most respected of these are the "permanent monks" who have served for more than ten years in the predominant Mahanikai Order.

Teachers are influential for many of the same reasons, particularly if they live in the village and if they are headmasters. They validate a great deal of the technical knowledge that villagers would not be able to distinguish from braggadocio or rumor, and they help write official reports.

Traders are appearing in villages now who are not Chinese. They appear to have acquired capital by working on construction projects, or in cities, and combine it with their expanded experience and contacts. Thus many village-based middlemen with ties to regional centers and to Bangkok have been created since World War II. It would not be surprising to discover (though it is not reported) that experience with organization and equipment during military service was exceedingly important.

Many Bangkok-based "politicians" (a term which includes higher military officers) maintain contacts with client villages to which they have an obligation, usually through possession of family estates. They may find means for installing new services in "their" villages earlier than the others and therefore serve as an "outside" entrepreneur.

These combined forces bring about change among the peasants in a very patchy sort of way. They also insure that the standard approaches to planning by government continue to be ineffective. An AID administrator, after many frustrations, came to the conclusion that the proper model for implementation should not be based upon communications in an hierarchical pyramid but upon a pancake, a shape which forces the funds and information to diffuse laterally away from the center, but hinders them from moving very far.

I have yet to see an adequate explanation for the way that Thailand outgrew its feudalism and transferred title of the land to the peasantry. At any rate, the laws were carefully constructed so as to maintain a peasant society at equilibrium with its resources, even in the face of three decades of unprecedented population growth. It is evident that the system was refurbished after World War II when the grain collection channels were taken from the black market operators and centralized by the government. The government was aided by the food shortages in rice-eating countries during the 1950s and 1960s, because the sales were made on a government-to-government basis. But now, due to the "miracle rice" that has come out of Rockefeller Institute research in the Philippines, almost all Asian nations are becoming self-sufficient. The price of rice has dropped spectacularly and is likely to be driven even lower, so that it will sell again at only a slight premium over wheat or maize when measured as food value. The Chinese will continue to import wheat and sell rice until that equilibrium point is reached. This price drop forces the Thailand grain collection organization to put up huge subsidies, which probably cannot be sustained for more than a year or two. Already it is said that two-thirds of the farmers are in

debt, almost all at usurious interest rates (say 3-7 percent per month) so the pressure on the peasant population will be extraordinarily severe, especially on the farmers living at a considerable distance from Bangkok.

This means that Bangkok and the regional centers are likely to receive an increasing flow of people who cannot make ends meet when living on their own land. A son or daughter will be sent to the city to get a job. They will find a way of squatting on governmental land and will search for work as servants or in construction. The government's control over Bangkok development is far too imperfect to stop them from staying, once they enter as visitors.

The Klong Toey Reception Center

Klong Toey is the name of the principal canal behind the large, modern port which serves Bangkok and all of Thailand. Ships from all over the world line up at quayside, drop off general cargo, and take on grain or logs for plywood. Their turnaround time is comparable with the best in Asia, and the port itself is well planned, clean, and commodious, but it is not big enough to cope with the future of a developing Thailand, so an expansion is planned to take care of the new containerized ships and the LASH ("lighter aboard ship") lighters.

Lying behind the harbor, in a patch of swampy land, is the Klong Toey community. It was founded just after World War II when the first stages of the harbor were constructed. To these inhabitants were added a number of squatters displaced by the road built to the harbor from the center of the city. Then, less than ten years ago, a series of disastrous droughts in the North and Northeast of Thailand added thousands of new families. By now it is believed that 25-30,000 people are in the path of the further modernization of the port of Bangkok. For years notices have been given to squatters to quit the location. However, when residents have been brought to court they have been able to obtain delays in putting eviction proceedings into effect, so that new notices no longer frighten the members of the community. This action indicates some kind of organization in the community, but none is admitted when first speaking to university investigators and higher government officials. The pattern suggests underworld control and organization.

Smuggling can be highly profitable in Thailand because the excise taxes are high, and the international authorities are doing their best to stop the flow of heroin. American cigarettes are highly prized also. Normally the contraband is dropped from the incoming ships at night to small boats so highly powered that they can escape from the police boats. The goods are taken to disguised godowns close to Klong Toey and distributed from there throughout the city by school age children who cannot get into schools because they live in unregistered residences. The children are not subject to severe penalties until the age of fourteen or more, so the risks are small. This mode of smuggling requires core organizations of thirty to a hundred men, and hundreds of contacts. Therefore,

one would expect that several gangs will have formed, each of them somewhat specialized but having in common musclemen to coerce individuals, knife-men to keep contacts in line, and gunmen to protect the bosses of the rackets. Local police will have learned to live with the situation and have accepted tea money (\$500 to release a smuggler if they catch him), but the special squads working with the international authorities remain a problem, and all other interferences to their operations must be blocked by higher up personages kept on retainer in the government.

Addicts to heroin and opium congregate in places like Klong Toey. The source of the drugs is advertised by a gray, weatherbeaten flag waving over a shack at the city dump. (Prostitutes are also available at a "hotel" in the log yard.) Users provide extensions of the underworld organizations. Therefore, if anything constructive goes ahead in the Klong Toey community, even a piece of research, the underworld needs to be assured that it will not "hurt business."

Nevertheless, changes can occur. For instance the solid waste of the city is being deposited as fill in low areas near the entrance to the community. Scores of residents go through the dumped loads for metal and unbroken bottles first. Later plastic trimmings are used to cover wet mud and allow people to walk over it the way that they might use a straw mat in the village, and waste paper may be collected and baled, although there was no direct evidence of that stage at the time of the visit (paper salvage depends upon access to a pulping plant). Similarly at the back of the community, in an area separating it from the fence of the Port Authority, a pipeline was delivering silt and sand dredged from the deep channel linking the port with the Gulf of Siam. The excess water would drain off to the river leaving a muck that resisted invasion by squatters, but would eventually make the community less and less livable due to a shift in the drainage system.

Already most of this community lives over water that is a few inches to several feet deep, varying according to the extent of the rain and, in the lowest places, the tides in the Chao Phraya and the klongs (canals). One gets to the doorway of a house by means of rickety boardwalks (usually one six-inch plank, supported by stakes). The houses have scrubbed wood floors, 2x4 framing on 4x4 posts, walls of lumber or woven nipa leaf strips, and roofs of rusting sheet iron, corrugated transite, or moldy canvas. Windows can be shuttered against the driving rain, but otherwise stand open. All sorts of lean-tos and extra rooms have been improvised so that no sense of order remains for the eye to grasp. Thin power lines extend in odd ways to connect up most houses and provide "street lighting" at crucial intersections of paths, thus supporting radios in most houses, television in about 10 percent and even hot plates for cooking instead of the more familiar buckets lined with fireclay and fed with charcoal. Provisions are obtained from a string of shops lining a recently constructed concrete road or by taking a bus up the road several miles. The bus terminal also appears to be a relatively recent addition. A few baht-buses (decorated light trucks that carry produce or up to twelve passengers at \$0.05 per trip) and samlors (scooter cabs

carrying up to three passengers) were standing nearby, but they could have been parked close to the residence of the entrepreneur-driver waiting for the noon traffic to build up. One loop of street was paved; it guaranteed access to the essential services.

Building a New Bangkok

Klong Toey lies within the oldest of the four corridors now building out and away from the original palace and the seat of government. Landings at the riverside are served by launches carrying workers from the dense inner city to factories downstream which are interspersed among the various port and naval installations. The more recently evolving corridors are based upon the original railway network, which moves out to the east, west, and south. Each of those lines was paralleled by one or two roads that bridged the klongs to dwindle away into the rice paddy, palm, and banana plantations interspersed with a few fruit trees.

Now tracts of middle class housing and squatter settlements are scattered along each corridor, separated by distribution centers, factories, private schools, and military specialization centers. All of these are remarkably automobile-oriented, as is the Don Muang Airport to the north. Round estimates suggest that as many as 50,000 households are living in the squatter settlements equivalent in most respects to Klong Toey. The number may well be an underestimate because it appears that neither the policy of registration of all members of the household nor the census can be assured of getting within 20 percent of the real figure.

How can the Thai Government promote housing and infrastructure that expands at least proportionately to population? It has had housing experience in the recent past at Ding Doeng with pukka apartments for the middle classes, but they cost about \$4,000 per unit. With a rent of \$10 per month such apartments require a considerable government subsidy, which it can afford less and less.

More promising by far is the "site and services" approach to housing, where the minimum requirements are made available through loans as needed and the householders produce their own housing. If all of squatter Bangkok is as poor as Klong Toey (Table 3) it appears that up to 75 percent can afford the rent levels implicit in the "site and services" schemes, allowing 10-20 percent of income to be applicable to shelter. The remainder may be able to achieve the minimum level after acquiring more experience and skill in the city or they may return defeated to the village, as many do, to be replaced by an even larger number of young and adventurous individuals.

One other feature inherent in such data is often ignored. Windfall sources of income, and ill-gotten gains of all sorts, are rarely reported to interviewers. The fact that quite sizable sums are obtained shows up in the number of television aeriels and motor scooters, but more is undoubtedly hoarded and would be invested in property with a clear title, should it become available.

Table 3. Income Distribution in a Bangkok Squatter Community—1970

<i>Monthly Income per Household</i>	<i>Percent of Households</i>	
Under \$ 20	5	(The median
20-40	23	figure in peasant
40-60	21	villages up country
60-80	16	is reported, by
80-100	13	newly returned
100-140	11	Peace Corpsmen,
140-220	7	to be in the \$30-40
Over \$220	5	monthly range.)

Source: Thammasat University, Survey of Klong Toey Slum, Bangkok, 1971.

Assessments of the cost of the "site and services" approach to housing reveal that a half to two-thirds must be allocated to land. The not inconsiderable development costs for filling and drainage are far overshadowed by the price of raw land. This finding causes one to investigate the land market in Bangkok.

Land price changes are an important indicator of confidence in the future of a metropolis if a land market is allowed to exist. Land price has not always been significant in Thailand because land was once almost totally in the hands of the Thai aristocracy, or the peasant farmer who was prevented from freely transferring his land. The government was the most common land developer, but it sold off plots to the private sector (after World War II reconstruction) at the same time that a demand for free standing houses began to appear due to a new and rapidly proliferating middle class. Thus a shadowy land market evolved. Everyone agreed that foreigners should be kept out of landholding, so the government enforces those laws even as it winks at other questionable transactions.

Over the past five years important amounts of official credit have flowed into real estate loans. Bank of Thailand figures show a 50 percent annual growth rate, resulting in an absolute total of \$324 million in loans in 1970. The first quarter of 1971 was up 22 percent despite many blows to the economy as a whole. At least two-thirds of this lending is concentrated in the Bangkok region. The uncertain nature of the land market is fostered by murky titles—the recording office is at least three years behind, and many holdings already built upon are merely shares in a scheme which does not make specific assignments of plots. It is amazing how much concrete and steel has gone up on such a flimsy legal base!

According to *The Investor* (August, 1971, pp. 677-82), Bangkok land prices as a whole are down somewhat from 1970, having retreated to the 1969 level. Such generalizations are banker's estimates, not the movement of an index figure such as is available in Japan and Korea. They are also based upon a turnover of a very restricted quantity of land released by the major land holding families, mostly aristocrats. The latter cannot very easily become "land poor," as has happened elsewhere in the world, because no tax has been laid upon land. What this means in Bangkok is that the values created by urban improvements in

roads, drainage, and water supply accrue largely to the speculators. Because the government cannot recoup its funds directly, the supply of such services must remain scarce, land price high, and congestion close to tolerable limits.

Perhaps the most troubling indicator that is relevant to the immediate physical development of Bangkok is the rapidity of growth of the population of motor vehicles. Roads are now predominantly asphalted, even in the interior of the country, so that movement of people and produce has been vastly speeded up. The most recent data provided by the Ministry of National Development allow us to follow growth in the decade 1959-1968, which show that the number of motor vehicles has been expanding about 20 percent per year, with the countryside keeping up with the metropolis in the latter half of the decade. Compare this with Singapore, where growth was 3-7 percent per year and accompanied by strong complaints concerning congestion. Bangkok has reached a stage where there is one four-wheel vehicle for every 7-8 residents in the region while Singapore is still around one for each 10-11 persons. In Bangkok the congestion greatly reduces the quality of service provided by the buses, so that people will pay more and take the jitney-type baht-bus that can sometimes maneuver itself through the jams, or acquire a car themselves in the hope of beating the traffic tie-ups.

It has been obvious for some time that something has to be done about the population explosion in autos. This is a moment when foreign exchange is becoming exceedingly scarce, so rumors about a sizable addition to the excise tax have been persistent, but the denials (up to September 1971) were equally persistent. More than three-quarters of the new models on the streets are of Japanese origin, so that birth control for vehicles will have a selective impact. The idea of making automobile production a local industry has occurred to many; therefore first Ford and then General Motors were invited to look over the market. However, the fraction of components imported will remain high unless Thai consumers are willing to discipline themselves and accept an extremely standard vehicle, a situation no one expects at the moment. One must imagine some kind of political and administrative crisis in Bangkok before activities based on *structures*, and land use, such as residence, retail sales, light manufacturing, and cinema attendance, and on *networks*, such as transport, water supply, electric power, and telephone, actually grind to a halt. The city can be directed to a path of steady development only with the aid of some new institutions that accumulate highly competent local talent and yet remain open to imported ideas that are carried into Bangkok from all parts of the world.

Cultural Values in the Modern Institutions

The new metropolitan institutions must be operated by middle class Thai, products of the local educational system. They will be directed by Thai that have gone overseas, about 40 percent to the United States and almost an equal proportion to other English-speaking countries. The basic technology is

transmitted either through the military, where the advisors are American, or through the multinational corporations where—out of 168 companies maintaining offices—68 were from the United States, 21 from the United Kingdom, and two apiece from Australia and India. However, the 28 Japanese firms operate much more often in the English language than in Chinese. Thus the remarkable openness of the Thai society is seen as being open only by those who use English; for the speakers of tongues other than Chinese it appears quite insulated. For the Chinese, if one gauges by the inscriptions on tombstones even in the villages peripheral to Bangkok where ancestor worship is still important, the absorption into Thai culture is largely completed, so the young people in particular think Thai, but learn English if they wish to rise in the world.

The Thai society is aware of the risks of alienation associated with the learning of English and therefore special care has been taken to counteract the evil to which the teenage youth are exposed. In Bangkok this is done by providing a "catechism" of Thai nationalism in the English language itself, so that fluency in English is reached by reviewing the dogma underlying one's own culture. This technique of teaching renders the subtle forms of English more understandable and therefore easier to learn. The textbook entitled *140 Essays and Letters for Advanced Students* was found in a state publishing house display window; it had just such an approach. A highly condensed treatment of Thai values to be transmitted to incompletely socialized adolescents is thus made available to the outsider in his own language. Imagine the following principles operating as part of the unspoken consensus in the modern sector of Thailand, much of it still in the early stages of institution-building, and compare it with the sophistication in content of parallel materials in South Korea (see footnote 1).

The first lesson asserts that Buddhism is the oldest of the great religions and based upon "Four Noble Truths" of "The Middle Way," one of which is the eightfold path. The message is laid out in twenty questions and answers with the following conclusion: "Under its good influence the Thais have become a peace-loving nation, with unrivalled tolerance and hospitality to people of different races and creeds. It is not too much to say that, in the past, this admirable characteristic of our nation helped a great deal in preserving our national independence while the neighboring countries all around us were losing theirs."

The second lesson continues this theme by describing the operation of the wat, the Buddhist monastery-school-temple establishment. It commits the citizen to assist the priests in obtaining food, clothes, medicine, and shelter so as to perpetuate Buddhism "in our beloved country." The third exhorts them to "Uphold the moral standard in this corrupted world" by observing the days of the waxing and waning of the moon called Wan Pra. The fourth takes up the ordination ritual for young men at age twenty-one, where they learn "how to curb their passions at an age when these passions are strongest." The fifth takes up a new holiday declared especially for the onset of the 26th century of

Buddhism. Asalaha Day commemorates the beginning of Buddha's teaching of the ascetics who became his disciples, a reminder of the "Triple Gems" principles.

Thereafter, the essays become more secular in character but no less serious. Essays cover nutrition, followed by traditional games, kite flying, and takraw—which uses a wicker ball. Then the famous Thai dramas, replete with dancing, are explained so that the popular version can be distinguished from the classical. The ritual of greeting, the wai, is justified on the bases that "it makes the Thai people look quite lovely and amiable..." Note the attention paid throughout to the image the Thai national presents to the outsider.

Lessons in government start with a brief history of the Thai precedents of constitutional monarchy, showing that for almost a thousand years the king and the Buddhist religion have been traditional symbols of the nation. On the tricolor flag of the country, the white strip represents Buddhism, the blue the king, and the red the nation. The election mechanics are reviewed so that Thais need not be "tempted or bribed to vote for a bad candidate."

Once the truly important lessons have been learned, the professor can relax somewhat and translate familiar aspects of life style into English: transport means, modes of communication, influences of weather, recreational opportunities (which draw upon the 4-H principles so familiar to American farm youth), etc. Then the role of education (which "makes a full man") and its two streams, intellectual and manual, is elaborated according to structure and function characteristics. That sets the stage for a discussion of the progress of science, which glorifies technological developments from James Watt's steam engine to the communication between earth satellites which should soon be realized. A hope is expressed that science will be used for the welfare of the people, and it leads to a special essay that attempts to define the welfare of the people. The latter is particularly important because the extent to which a state provides for human welfare is seen as an index "of the efficiency and stability of the government." One sees in the argument a genuine recognition that the future elite can be secure only if it is based within an environment that it is able to improve through the use of modern technology.

Newspapers and books are also given due attention. The journalist is exhorted to avoid any taint of exaggeration and prejudice—he is responsible to the Minister of the Interior. Books are dissected—title page, preface, table of contents, glossary, index, etc., with a homily added that books may be dull or exciting, good or evil, and faithful instructors.

The chief lessons about an automobile are that they cost more than a good house or two, so that few people can afford them, and many accidents are caused due to crazy driving.

Athletics are important in the life of the nation, so the student will maintain interest in learning English in order to read a piece on interscholastic competition at the Gymkhana in Bangkok. However, the subsequent essays which are more in conflict with traditional values may encounter resistance on

the part of the student. One is a piece on country life in which the authorities seem unable to defend that way of life except as it is necessary for the sustenance of the city. Another is a sermon on procrastination, "Life is a struggle against nature, against temptations, and against other human beings; only the fittest and the strongest will survive and prosper. Only a moment's delay will end in failure and defeat." The Thai educational administrators use these homilies as a common sense attempt to banish the traditional fatalism and apathy of the Orient. They anticipate creating a kind of society that might be called "urbane social Darwinism."

These arguments are followed by an essay on patriotism, another on SEATO, followed by a still longer one on the United Nations organization. The latter account clearly predicts that the Communists and the United States will engage in another great war which will set the whole world ablaze; yet I suspect that statement results more from clumsiness in the use of the English language because the authors are unable to use a kind of conditional phrasing not available in Thai grammar. Somewhat later the official history of the 20th October Revolution was taken up and then, without reference to chronology, the border incident with Cambodia where the United Nations "put things right," without a single mention that the contested Khmer hill fort was given to Cambodia.

Letter writing in English presents some real challenges. Naturally it begins with the letters of schooldays, but then introduces a father's letter to a schoolmaster with phrasings for the schoolmaster to employ for either a favorable or an unfavorable reply, excuses provided by a mother, or a clerk of an employer. How to borrow money, and how to decline politely, is included with a distinction being made as to whether it is inside the family or not. Letters of application for employment and recommendation naturally must be represented, as are orders for books or goods, paying under protest, getting service from the landlord, and complaining to the neighbors about a nuisance. The book finishes with a slightly sarcastic letter to the editor complaining about the inattention of the road repair administration to the sad state of the road in front of one's house. In such a manner are the proprieties of participation in urban and social affairs laid down. As yet there seems to be very little disenchantment with education in Bangkok, so the text would not normally be labeled as "preachy" or hypocritical by the students, but merely of use for conforming to modern ways of life in official circles, just as English is of use.

Thai views of popular culture in English-speaking countries can be obtained by going to the cinema. There the favorites seem to be war epics, Walt Disney, Westerns, and productions of literary classics. Melodramas are imported in Chinese from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, which makes them more understandable. The media do not transmit much of the rock and country music that has won the attention of the youth elsewhere in the world, and sales of recordings of these themes began to increase rapidly only after 1970. Much of the popular Thai culture comes through the advertisements in cinema, television,

and store fronts, so that consumerism is what is promoted in the loosely controlled, largely commercial institutions engaged in modernizing and internationalizing the Thais.

Building Ultramodern Organizations

Students steeped in these Thai traditions must become participants in the most modern institutions with the strongest technologies. When the Koreans faced the same problems they stressed the traditions and popular culture of the English-speaking peoples, and thus prepared their overseas students much better for the shock of cosmopolitan living in the West. Thus, the Koreans found it quite possible to adapt and transfer loyalties to the host country and suffered a considerable brain drain, while the Thai got homesick and accepted even the unrewarding posts back in Bangkok. Nevertheless, the social and economic development of Seoul is far more rapid than that of Singapore, and even further ahead of Bangkok, in large part because Koreans have learned to take advantage of opportunities in new technology that originate overseas.

An example of the means by which modern institutions are built in Bangkok is provided by the Telecommunication Training Centre and its spinoff, the Test and Development Centre, at Nonthaburi and Pathon Thani on the Chao Phraya River a few miles north of the city. It was founded upon a general recognition among the overseas-trained-members of the elite that telephones were an essential feature of the kind of modernization they thought appropriate for Thailand. Telecommunications increase the capacity to govern because they speed up the response of government to local emergencies and they permit a much higher degree of coordination between departments, agencies, offices, and enterprises in both government and the private sector. The government could no longer depend upon foreign concessionaires to develop such an essential utility once Thai engineers and technicians were available. The program was expedited by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the United Nations Development Program.

Telephones have lagged in Bangkok. Only about 100,000 lines could be used in September, 1969, but expansion is due to be accelerated over this decade. According to plan the network size would be trebled by 1975 and almost doubled again by 1980.

The Training Centre had to start from the very beginning with translation of the training manuals used elsewhere in the world, establishment of dormitories, the acquisition of equipment, and formulation of a recruiting program for the various levels of trainee. Nevertheless, since 1965 it has produced 5,000 trainees and now operates at about 1,200 a year, almost double the planned rate. The Test and Development Centre provides a place for checking out new and existing telecommunications equipment, and a base from which improved operating procedures can be worked out as well as the plans for developing a system that fits the country's needs for communication. The extra push that was needed to

overcome obstacles very often came from the Armed Forces of Thailand, but the military influence within the institution is difficult to isolate. The most effective technical assistance thus far has come from India, after a somewhat shaky beginning when the source of help originated in Australia.

From this base Bangkok is expected to link up the countries of Southeast Asia—Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Burma—tying them to the communications satellite already over the Indian Ocean. At present there is an impasse between the Telephone Organization of Thailand, which handles domestic telephones and the links across the boundaries, and the older Post and Telegraph Department which has the microwave relays transmitting television from Bangkok to the lesser cities of Thailand. Once the two systems are married to each other, the channels for modernization will be vastly amplified.

Ultramodern technology seems to be introduced into these societies much more rapidly and smoothly now than in the earlier era based upon the diesel engine, electric generator, and the printing press. The latter are now dependable, almost invisible mainstays in these metropolitan communities with mature, self-sustaining institutions to back them up.

The new contraceptives provide an opportunity for creating ultramodern organization aimed at achieving a greatly needed social adaptation.⁷ The rate of population growth in Thailand is now estimated at 3.3 percent per year, which is among the highest in the world. Thai women average about 6.5 births over the reproductive period of life. All the concomitants of such growth are everywhere evident—a very youthful society, a housing shortage, schools that bring the population up to literacy but can take only about 2.5 percent of the age class to higher levels, and an expressed desire on the part of women for smaller families. In 1968 surveys showed that suburban women, who comprise a relatively educated population, were succeeding in reducing births by 15 percent over those in a rural district used as a control. Among the contraceptors, Thai women are distinctly under-represented, while Chinese most frequently use the available services. At the government level, recognition at the policy level has been given to the forthcoming population crisis, but it has yet to be followed through with the provision of adequate funds. A "Family Health Project" began in 1968 and became official in 1970; about 5,000 workers have been trained and 3,500 clinics organized. About 5 percent of the population in need is presently served.

The number of acceptors has roughly doubled each year, reaching 225,000 in 1970. The method of contraceptive now favored by more than half of the early adopters is the use of pills, while female sterilization is preferred by about a fifth. Now a five year plan has been formulated with the aim of doubling the number of acceptors in that period and establishing an integrated family planning program capable of much more comprehensive services in the decades to come. The aims are still modest, particularly those for reaching 7.5 percent of the target population by 1976. The project received only \$500,000 from the Thai Government for 1972, a bit over a third of what was requested. However, four times that amount is expected from overseas sources, most of it in the form of pills and instruments with the major share of the aid coming from Germany.

Thus family planning is at an earlier stage of institution-building than telecommunications. The prospects of effecting a rapid demographic transition, the kind that has dramatically accelerated in South Korea and has gained great momentum in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, does not seem likely in the Thai culture, even for Bangkok. The prospects are for the overall population to double in size over the next 20-25 years, and for Bangkok and environs to quadruple. This population pressure will spin new urban settlements into the adjoining countryside at an increasing rate.

URBAN FAMILY LIFE COMPARED

Recently a totally new approach to the comparison of metropolises has been started, and both Bangkok and Singapore were among the urban centers to which it was first applied. The basic hypothesis is that living in a large metropolis is subject to a number of extraordinary stresses, and the residents are forced to cope with them as best they can. The coping behaviors are adjustments, or indicators of strain. Thus it is possible to get reports by the residents themselves on the adaptive processes in their family life and their feelings. From a representative sample one can discover what psychic costs and gains are attendant upon the respective drives toward development led by Singapore and Bangkok. Robert E. Mitchell initiated such studies in Hong Kong in 1967 and extended them to Bangkok, Singapore, Taipei, and the six major cities of Western Malaysia in 1968.⁸ Mitchell's study appears likely to become a major benchmark in sociology, although not yet published in full. It contains a multitude of comparisons, many of which show a mixed response of the residents to urban conditions. The findings are often not greatly different for the respective cities or the major ethnic groups living in them, nor are they strikingly new in the light of prior experience with urbanization. The surprises and major differences are worth noting, however, because they require explanation regarding the different histories of these metropolises, their expectations regarding the future, and the characteristics of the tools for data gathering and analysis employed. In the following discussion Hong Kong conditions are included for comparison because that city contains a population comparable in ethnic origin, and it serves as a major competitor for the two pacemaking metropolises reported upon here.

One significant indicator that allows direct comparison is the reported earnings per working individual in the families interviewed. They are calculated in U.S. dollars at a time when all currencies were freely convertible, so that the internal cost of living was not based by currency controls (Table 4).

The summary results suggest that Bangkok has 4 percent greater income per worker than Singapore and 10 percent greater income than Hong Kong. This observation is strongly in conflict with estimates of gross domestic product in Thailand versus those for Hong Kong and Singapore (which are approximately

Table 4. Mean Monthly Personal Income—1968 (U.S.\$)

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Bangkok: Thai	97	103	84
Chinese	75	87	44
Singapore: Indian	92	97	60
Chinese	85	98	56
Malay	68	70	48
Hong Kong: Chinese	79	96	43

equal to each other). The explanation seems to derive from the use of commercial surveys which, despite meeting tests for preventing bias, encounter the same difficulties as the census does in Bangkok. The latter seems to under-report by 30 percent or so, and many more low-income Thai seem to be missed than Chinese. Places such as the Klong Toey community described earlier would not have been represented in the sample. It appears to have been drawn from the accessible parts of Bangkok, the locales of the city the foreign visitor might be able to see under ordinary circumstances. On the other hand, virtually the whole of Singapore and 97 percent of Hong Kong is similarly accessible. Despite its limitations, the Bangkok sample shows much greater inequality of income than Singapore, while Hong Kong is in between them.

Employment among Bangkok Chinese is strongly within the family, usually in the family enterprise, or with that of a family connection. This is due to the fact that Thai are preferred in direct applications for jobs opening up in the various public and private organizations. In Singapore the family enterprise is more important by far for the Chinese than for Indian or Malay; nevertheless, friends rather than relatives are more likely to have provided the essential contact needed to obtain the current job regardless of ethnic origin. In Hong Kong friends are even more important for getting a job. The difference is between belonging to a minority population in the social system or the predominant one, even if the latter may not have political power, as in Hong Kong.

Singapore people are far more optimistic about life changes for the young than either the Bangkok or Hong Kong sample. However, within all the cities shared with significant numbers of other ethnic groups, the Chinese were significantly less optimistic than the other ethnic groups. (This question asked about the chances for a working class boy to become a medical doctor, and accepted "excellent" or "good" as indicators of optimism.) Hong Kong opinion may have been influenced by the uncertainty about whether the political turbulence of 1967—when the local Communist Party tried to deliver the Colony to Peking by means of a combination of strikes, street riots, and bombs—had not greatly weakened the long-term economic outlook for the metropolis. It was only a year or more later that the residents began to realize that the economy was seemingly unimpaired.

The reports regarding the high fraction of residents in these metropolises who

felt that they could not control the course of their life are similarly explainable. Bangkok Thai are least likely to feel that they are victims of fate, but Bangkok Chinese are nearly the same. Bangkok Chinese have also experienced relative stability in the social status of the family. So we encounter a peculiar difference in philosophy between the two cultures—Bangkok people do not feel that it is possible to achieve much in life, even with increased education, yet they are not fatalistic. Singapore people seem to think of education as a means of reaching the top in social status but their sample had acquired less schooling.

The Singapore sample contained the fewest migrants (32 percent versus Bangkok's 38 percent and Hong Kong's 70 percent), but those present had more rural backgrounds. Three dialects are almost equally represented among the Chinese of Singapore, these being Cantonese, Chiu Chow, and Hokkien, while in Bangkok more than four-fifths belonged to the Chiu Chow speakers, who come from very poor villages in the hinterland of Swatow. Although imported Confucianism seems to be declining, Bangkok families are actively religious, while Hong Kong seems not interested in religion, and Singapore people hold views that are very mixed.

Interchange of population between Singapore and Bangkok is very small; both are linked to Hong Kong much more closely than to each other. However, air traffic is building up 20-30 percent per year, and the staffs of multinational corporations and international government-oriented agencies are increasingly Asians, so it is anticipated that each will very soon establish a special enclave within the other where special services are more readily obtained. Then the Thai could get his peppery dishes, or even repair to a wat for meditation, while in Singapore; correspondingly, the Singaporeans and Hong Kong residents might find a new apartment in a high-rise building, handle legal work at a distance, and play mah jong in Bangkok. These districts are likely to combine tourism with business, and perhaps also a complete school system that meets the standards set at home, thus providing a compact set of services for those who stay for many months or some years. Such enclaves would constitute differentiated sectors in

Table 5. Backgrounds of Immigrants

	<i>Spent most of ages 5-12 in a farming village (percent of migrants)</i>		<i>Spent most of ages 5-12 in small or large city (percent of migrants)</i>	
Singapore: Malay	59		18	
Chinese	57		32	
Indian	23		64	
Total:	53		35	
Bangkok: Chinese	57		23	
Thai	37		42	
Total:	46		36	
Hong Kong: Chinese	40		42	

the cosmopolitan ward of the metropolis. In this part of the world the demands of the Malay-Indonesian, Tamil, French, and English speakers already generate the markets that bring about cultural exchange at the individual, household, and small neighborhood level.

Inter-metropolitan exchange is also beginning in the area of popular culture—athletics, dance, music, Sunday newspapers. Each inter-metropolitan institution will develop a public of its own among the new cohorts completing secondary school who become minor experts in following the action. As income rises further, and the cost of group travel continues to decline, the new cosmopolitans may be expected to mix freely, rising above the barriers of language in ways that are familiar to the youth of Europe today. Enrichment of each other's lives should provide a partial substitute for looking to New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, and Los Angeles for models of modern behavior.

Potentials for the Future

There seems to be no barrier in sight that would prevent a continuation of the pacemaking function by both Singapore and Bangkok. Indeed, the overview of specific constraints experienced in these metropolises suggests that the pace may very well be stepped up over the next several years. Singapore in particular appears to be in a position to profit from the shifts in the world politico-economic system.

Many of the institutions that Bangkok needs have already evolved in Singapore and elsewhere. Thus the management techniques for the refining and petrochemicals complex, the telecommunications establishment, public housing management, family planning organization, and dozens of others can be learned and borrowed from Singapore, the next stages in transport organization can be adapted from Hong Kong, and industrial organization in export garments, appliances, and electronics from Taipei, Kaohsiung, and Seoul.

Interesting for the socio-cultural analyst is the observation that each of the transfers of a technology, mode of management, institutional structure, or legal instrument needed for installing a given institution seems to require translation into the English language between the Japanese, Chinese, or Korean version and the Thai before decisions can be made or action taken. Therefore the review of the policy for English-language instruction provided earlier becomes exceedingly significant; the institutions for extending the standard training in reading and speaking, and the comprehensiveness of the English language periodicals, become important for future development involving regional inter-society transfer.

The institutional solutions that Singapore needs are most likely to be found in Tokyo or the United States. Due to Singapore's former colonial status the teaching of English has made much more progress there, and no longer represents the eye of the needle through which modernization must pass. The university, for example, must now set itself standards equivalent to those of the leaders, rather than "developing country" type compromises, for research as well as teaching.

Exchange of these complex organizational concepts for both these cities is increasingly expedited by the regional offices of the United Nations agencies clustered around the ECAFE (Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East) headquarters in Bangkok. A number of special projects associated with them have begun to spill over into the nearby hotels in their search for office space. The ECAFE-related activities needing economic research are assembling on or near the campus of Singapore University. Another kind of international institution, the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, is a graduate school drawing students from all of the Far East as a substitute for training in Western countries, but because textbooks and source materials are predominantly in English the language of instruction must also be English. The problems under investigation, however, are either contributions to theory or relevant to Asian development. The growth in these coordinating, promoting, and educating activities is far more rapid than the rates of economic growth experienced in these countries, but progress still seems to be proceeding at a snail's pace as compared to the modernization gap that becomes increasingly visible to the participants in the process. They are discouraged much of the time, and feel reinforced only occasionally. Yet any objective measurement of achievement seems certain to reveal that the groups with modern outlook indirectly affected by the coordinative work of the official and unofficial international institutions are rapidly expanding their influence. Moreover, careful questioning of some of the principals associated with a success reveals repeatedly a step or a stage in the ticklish process of promotion and reduction to practice that depended in a crucial manner upon the output of one of these international agencies or institutes. That kind of stimulus to development may be expected to increase as the colonial era recedes into history and more representative organizations struggle to be born.

NOTES

1. Richard L. Meier, "Exploring Development in Great Asian Cities: Seoul." *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, Vol. 36 (November 1970), pp. 378-392. The findings from an application of this technique to Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India, was reported earlier: "Kanpur: A Metropolis Without a Face." *Ekistics*, Vol. 29 (May 1970), pp. 334-338.

2. W.L.C. Wheaton, "Singkong—A Parable on Regional Planning." *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Regional Development*, Japan Center for Area Development Research, Tokyo, 1970, pp. 257-260. It was reported to me by the author of this paper that the Indonesian delegate to the Conference contributed in the course of the comment a competing parable that was unfortunately not recorded in the Proceedings. It portrayed the Asian intellectual view of the metropolis more or less as follows: "In my country there is a plant called singkong with somewhat unusual properties. It grows like a weed, extracting nutrients from the soil all around it. This enables it to grow large and overshadow the surrounding plants. They gradually wither and die while the singkong grows still larger. When the soil nutrients are exhausted the singkong dies, leaving a ghostly bare trunk in a patch of desert."

3. James Clavell, *King Rat*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1962; Nevil Shute, *The Legacy*. New York: Morrow, 1950.

4. Jin-bee Ooi and Hai Ding Chiang (eds.), *Modern Singapore*. Singapore: University of Singapore Press, 1969.

5. T.T.B. Koh and William S.W. Lim, "Planning Law and Processes in Singapore." *Malaya Law Review*, Vol. 11 (December 1969), pp. 315-344.

6. David A. Wilson, *The United States and the Future of Thailand*. New York: Praeger, 1970.

7. Allan G. Rosenfield, "Thailand: Family Planning Activities 1968 to 1970." *Studies in Family Planning*, Vol. 2 (September 1971), pp. 181-191.

8. Robert Edward Mitchell, "Levels of Emotional Strain in Southeast Asian Cities." *The Urban Family Life Survey*, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, July 1969, mimeo. A portion of the findings appeared as "Some Social Implications of High Density Housing." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 36 (February 1971), pp. 18-29.