



## Managing Heterochronous Socio-economic Development: Investigating the Concurrent duo Discourses of Singapore's "Total Fertility Rate (TFR)" and "Singapore Incorporated"

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### Abstract

The past decade has seen an increasing number of calls within the field of organization science to study the dynamics of organization developments against both historical and multiple social dimensions that influence organization evolution. While the structures and governance of future organizations can only be hypothesized, there remains a need for a trajectorial understanding in how organizations might function in future, given the current complexities of differential organizational developments within the same organization, due to the processes of globalization. The concept of heterochrony and the managing of heterochronous complexities in organization is the broad focus of this study. In particular, the study focuses on the country of Singapore and two of its national discourses, (I) Singapore's Total Fertility Rate (TFR), the government's "Baby Bonus Scheme" and (II) "Singapore Incorporated", discussing how the "Baby Bonus Scheme" straddles the two seemingly differential time development of state ideologies and the extent of its success in relation to its own projected economic goals, as a means of managing heterochrony in Singapore.

**Keywords:** Organization Evolution, Darwin, Organization Management, State Governance, Heterochrony, Singapore, Discourse Analysis.

### Introduction

Over the past decade, there has been an increasing number of calls within the field of organization science and international business, to study the dynamics of the evolution of organizations set not only within the multiple social dimensions of their contexts (Friedland & Alford 1991, Scott 2001, Stern & Barley 1996, Stinchcombe 1997), but also in relation to their historical contexts (Dagnino & Quattrone 2006, Whiteley 2006, van Fleet 2008, Cafferata 2010,

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Cummings & Bridgman 2011) under varying socio-political circumstances (Abatecola, Cafferata, Poggesi 2012).

While the structures and governance of future organizations can only be hypothesized, there remains a need for a trajectorial understanding in how organizations might function in future due to the Internet and advancing information and communication technologies that both creates and sustains a way of life with greater mobility. The broadening of the perspective of organization theory from a purely economic standpoint based on transactions, began in the mid-1900s with sociologists charting a more social constructivist approach to organizations that placed the workings of an organization in relation to its socio-cultural context, a key work being Stinchcombe's (1965) early essay, "Social structure and organizations". His essay foregrounded a more politically oriented organizational theory set in a context of broader societal processes as a vector towards new knowledge of organizations influenced by a broader spectrum of the "relation of society outside organizations to the internal life of organizations" (Stinchcombe 1965:142), and where organizational dynamics is centrally connected to societal values, power structures and related forms of socio-cultural stratification in political realms (Merton 1987; Lounsbury & Ventresca 2002). His agenda had been to use eclectic methods drawn from various fields in order to contribute to further theoretical understanding of the links between social structure and organization via strategic empirical examples. His perspective on organization evolution pertaining to its conception, development and demise has been conceptually placed in relation to Darwin's (1859) theory of species evolution but applied to organization evolution and management science are (Cafferata 2010, Abatecola, Cafferata & Poggesi 2012).

As the complexities of organization evolution continue to be debated (Hodgson 2009, Breslin 2010, Hodgson & Knudsen 2010), this study contributes both theoretically and empirically to the field, with a parallel perspective borrowed from the natural science of biology, which is the concept of heterochrony and heterochronous development, applied likewise to social structures and organization science. It is the dynamics of organizational evolution, on the managing of heterochronous complexities that is the broad focus of this study. In particular, the study focuses on how governmental institutions / organizations, taking the state of Singapore and two of its national discourses as example, manage and address the various social stratifications and differential developments of the organization via state policies, in relation to its own projected economic goals.

## Heterochrony from Biology to Organization Science and International Business

The concept of heterochrony was first defined by Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) in zoology (see Heberer 1968: 15-22 and Richardson & Keuck 2002 for a list of Haeckel's publications) that influenced many disciplines in science (Uschmann 1985), where he drove to integrate the different disciplines of taxonomy and embryology into Darwinian framework and to use the data for phylogeny reconstruction (Haeckel 1866, 1894, 1896a, 1986b). His fundamental Biogenetic Law described parallels between individual development or 'ontogeny', and evolutionary history or 'phylogeny'. Although his work has been critiqued regarding conceptual definitions of heterochronic changes (Gould 1977, Alberch et. al 1979, Alberch 1985, Rieppel 1988), his work continues to be cited and deemed relevant in today's context of biological science (Richardson & Keuck 2002).

In practice, heterochrony is almost always studied as change in the relative timing of events in two related taxa (in biology) or events / entities (when applied to socio-cultural context). In the field of biology, heterochrony began to acquire its modern definition in the work of de Beer (1930, 1940, 1951, 1958) who brought the concept into the evolutionary synthesis. He also argued in his works that the differences in timing and the changes observed could not only produce evolutionary change but that these evolutionary change could occur at any stage in an organism's life history. It was de Beer's work that broadened the context for heterochrony and heterochronous developments, moving from static description to a means to link developmental and evolutionary mechanisms (Ridley 1985). De Beer's definition is distinct from what today is biology's defining authority on heterochrony from Gould's (1977), who conceived a streamlined terminology for various kinds of heterochrony with narrower definitions of the concept (Smith 2001).

In this study, the borrowing of the concept of heterochrony is defined in its broadest sense, referring to the differential timing of development and change of one socio-political event relative to another, that in turn affect organizational development / evolution.

### **Research Focus: The Management of Heterochronous developments in the city-state of the Republic of Singapore**

In this study, the perspective of heterochrony and its management is applied to the context of state governance in the country of Singapore, focusing on two of the country's concurrent

running discourses that at one level, seem to support differing strategic state (organization) goals. Discourse (I) Singapore's overall low Total Fertility Rate (TFR) and that of Discourse (II) "Singapore Incorporated". Straddling these two discourses is the government led child financial incentive scheme, Singapore's "Baby Bonus Scheme", that can be viewed as a socio-cultural and political measure implemented by the government in order to manage the heterochronous development between the local / national collective social desires of the people of the country in relation to the international and individualistic long-term goal of the country of being a 'global player' i.e. Singapore Incorporated.

Conceptually, this study aims to contribute to the theory of organization evolution by identifying and contextualising organization evolution in relation to heterochronous developments in society. I postulate that heterochrony, which is a natural phenomenon in biological sciences is also a naturally occurring phenomena in organization evolution when organizations are placed against the backdrop of larger socio-political contexts within society. This postulation will be discussed / illustrated with an empirical case study of Singapore's corporatist state governance, with the following research questions addressed:

- i. to what extent does Singapore's "Baby Bonus Scheme" support Discourse (I), Singapore's overall low TFR?
- ii. to what extent does it support Discourse (II), the ideology of "Singapore Incorporated"?

The goal of addressing the questions above would be to critically uncover state government policies as a means of organization strategy, in managing the heterochronous development of the country's reproductive capacity versus its productive / global economic capacity that seem to have developed at different speeds and perhaps also from different historical contexts, the former relying more on socio-cultural contexts that is heavily eastern Confucius based whilst the latter dependent upon processes as a result of western industrial urbanization since its founding in the early 1800s.

### **Why Singapore as a Country of Study?**

The reasons for Singapore being an apt and interesting country of study are several, beginning perhaps with its natural geopolitical position at the southern tip of the Malayan Peninsula between Malaysia and Indonesia. This advantage meant a deep calm harbour and an excellent focal position as a global trading hub, which the country has been since its founding in the early 1800s by the British East India Company. Singapore's location has contributed to a large extent

to its current situation as a highly urbanized city-state that is today part of the fabric of the polycentric, partially globalized world. Given its historical colonial past, having been founded as a free port of trade without much natural resources of its own (no oil, no gas, no natural minerals, no forests and no fresh water supply of its own), Singapore can be argued to be an unnatural country, born in 1965 out of conflict with a neighbouring state (Chan 2012). It is today one of the 20 smallest states in the world.

The country's immigrant history continues to fashion its social fabric today, where a strong 75% Chinese majority with a Confucius based value system is found in a region of Muslim states and where identity politics continues to influence much of the country's socio-political debates. With a total land area of just about 715 square kilometres with a targeted 6 million inhabitants today, Singapore is a country highly susceptible and influenced by global processes. It is ranked third most global city after Hong Kong and Ireland (Ernst & Young's *Globalization Index 2010*). Although the index is an indication of Singapore's level of global engagement and not necessarily the impact the country has on global commerce or the global economy. From my perspective, the index possibly indicates to what extent Singapore has managed to engage itself at international level as single / individual global player, whilst managing at national level, the effects of these global processes in terms of socio-cultural and political policies.

Concurrent with Ruggie's (1984) observation that smaller states and trading nations tended to go for a corporatist style of government, where he cited Scandinavian countries as examples of governance that adopted such a model in order to react more efficiently to external conditions, so is the case with Singapore with the metaphor from Discourse (ii), "Singapore Incorporated". Economically, Singapore finds itself is in strong competition with Hong Kong as one of Asia-Pacific's important regional hubs (Langdale 1989) and is currently already a base for many international organizations (Mutalib 2002, Teofilo & Le 2003), so that the corporate governance style of Singapore with its policies that can be argued to be both a subject and object of study for heterochronous developments, is apt.

In terms of data collection, in contrast with other Asian and Southeast-Asian countries, while Singapore has four official languages, English remains as the main administrative language. This means that obtaining data for this study would be consistent in terms of access to language, thereby enabling a more systematic corpus driven qualitative data analysis. Information collected is made more manageable too by less need of translation of data between languages.

## Using Discourse Analysis in the Study of Organizational Heterochrony

The way in which people make sense of the world is therefore dialogically and discursively mediated. Numerous studies in the field of discourse analysis and multimodal analysis (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001, Jewitt & Kress 2003) indicate that language, instead of drawing meanings passively from pre-existing knowledge of the world, plays an active role in classifying the phenomena and experiences through which individuals construct, understand and represent reality. As such, language needs to be viewed as more than a representative process of communication. It rather belongs to the wider spectrum of ideological and organizational processes of representation and construction of meanings that potentially lead to a consequential action. Language is active rather than passive in the processes of the discourse of organization evolution, shaping, supporting and creating new structures.

The concept of ideology is important for the study of heterochronous developments in society and how that is managed in state governance, where political organizational discourse is most prominently ideological. An uncovering, mapping and tracking of ideologies will lend a macro perspective on evolution trends in society and organizations. Ideologies, defined as belief systems, have cognitive and social functions that ground the social representations shared by the members of the group. They form the basis of discourses and other social practices so that there exists a feeling of group membership and allow for the coordination / management of joint actions (via rules, regulations, policies) and interactions of group interest and goal (Van Dijk 2006). As such, cognitive structures of ideologies are tailored to their societal functions for the members of the group, where dominant ideologies can sometimes define relations of power where 'guidelines' of professional behaviour or desired behaviour can be stipulated.

The breadth of scope of discourse analysis (DA) as both theory and a framework of tools towards a systematic qualitative content analysis across various disciplines, covers multiple levels. According to Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton (2001), definitions generally tend to fall into the three categories of 'discourse' being, (i) anything beyond the sentence (Benveniste 1971, Stubbs 1983, Foucault 1972), (ii) language use (Fasold 1990, Fairclough 1992, Candlin 1997) and (iii) a broader range of social practice that includes non-linguistic and non-specific instances of language (Fowler 1981, Brown & Yule 1983, Fairclough 1992). Discourse constitutes the social dimensions of knowledge, social relations and social identity. It "is shaped by relations of power invested with ideologies." (Fairclough 1992:8), structuring areas of knowledge and the social and institutional practices associated with them. For purposes of this study and in order

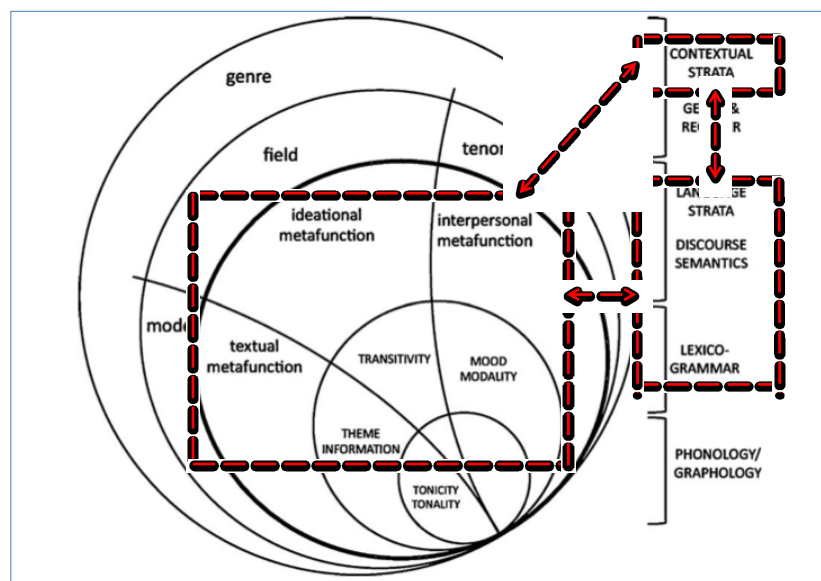
to apply a framework of discourse analysis to the study of organization evolution and management studies, I will use the broader definition of the terms 'discourse' and 'discourse analysis' that refers to 'anything beyond a sentence' and 'the analysis of language in use'.

To the extent that language plays an active role in shaping discourses, this perspective follows a Hallidayan functional view of language, where, "A language is interpreted as a system of meanings, accompanied by forms through which the meanings can be realized and answers the question, "how are these meanings expressed?" This puts the forms of a language in a different perspective: as means to an end, rather than as an end in themselves."

Figure 1 shows a stratification model of language and context, adapted from Gentil (2011:14, originally from Martin & Rose 2008:10) that shows the multi-layered, interlocking systems of meaning making that in turn help people organize and coordinate their activities. This stratified model of language in context, allows for the conceptualization of each level relatively independent of the other in a heterarchous structure. The model can also be seen as to reflect the various juxtaposed discourses within an organization that 'floats' as that particular discourse develops, thus reflecting too, the possibility of differential rates of organizational evolution, within the same system.

When it comes to the use of the model in content and discourse analysis, the systems most relevant and applied to this study are outlined in dotted lines in Figure 1. These include the "Contextual strata", that allows for the situating of ideology in general that contribute to the overall organization visioning and choice of strategy; the strata of "Discourse semantics" which is the body of communicative documents realized by language (visual, verbal, written) that characterises, perpetuates and supports the general ideology; the strata of "Lexicogrammar" that is the choice of words, visuals and its grammar used to in the body of discourse; the three layers of "metafunctions" of meaning that come through with the choice of lexicogrammar.

Figure 1: Stratification model of language and context adapted from Gentil 2011:14. This model allow for the situating of socio-political ideology and tracing heterochronous organization developments via a situation of discourse. The area's most applicable to this study are outlined in dotted lines.



## Data and Method

Data to this study are texts and documents that are secondary in nature. These documents come from various online and print media sources. Due to that the study is based on an investigation and analysis of state governance, management and policies as reflected in governmental discourse, the most prominent source of data come from are from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) of Singapore's website ([www.pmo.gov.sg](http://www.pmo.gov.sg)), with a total of 1300 documents in the form of official news releases, government transcripts of speeches, interviews and print articles. These are available for download online from their Media archive from 2008 till 2012. The next prominent source of data comes from online news media that report from their own perspectives government press releases, speeches and interviews.

### *Method of data coding*

Due to the large amount of data, the examples used in this study are only exemplary in nature and those deemed most relevant to the study in terms of topic salience orientation, the two topics being that of Singapore's total fertility rate where included in this is the government's child incentives scheme, and of "Singapore Incorporated" that includes talk of Singapore's global position and globalisation in and of the country.

As a way to manage the data and bring out salient topics from the discourse, Strauss & Corbin's



(1998) method for coding of data was used. There are two ways in which salient themes can be highlighted, the first is explicit (in-vivo) coding where the topic is found as words in the document or implicit (non in-vivo) topics, meaning to say that a topic is assigned to a group of recurring semantically linked words, that are subsequently grouped into a larger topic. An example of the coding procedure is found below in Text Examples 1a and 1b, are short extracts of the Keynote Address Speech by Singapore's Prime Minister (PM), Lee Hsien Loong at the APEC CEO Summit on 13 November 2009. The text had an overall 13 occurrences of the word "global", that showed itself to be one of the key topics of the text.

The coded topics are in bold, where it could be argued that most of the topics coded in the Text Example 1 support the metaphor and discourse of "Singapore Incorporated", up to and including how Singapore as an individual entity is a member of APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation).

Text Example 1: A short coding example for data management and sorting based on Strauss and Corbin (1998). Explicit in-vivo codes appear in bold. Implicit non in-vivo codes appear in bold square bracketed.

And most important of all, the result of all these is **economic growth**, which in this region has undisputedly outpaced global growth rates [**economic growth; globalisation**]. And in some member economies, there has been an astonishing rise in prosperity within 20 years, more than doubling or even tripling of their per capita GDPs [**economic growth**]. So these are all clear evidence of the benefits of **free trade [globalisation]** and **globalization** and the good work directly or indirectly which APEC has done.

This last year has been a difficult one. APEC members have been affected by the global **financial crisis [economic growth; globalisation]** like all other countries. Trade volumes [**economic growth**] have come down sharply. At one time, we thought they would collapse [**economic growth; financial crisis**] but fortunately they have now stabilized. Financing dried up [**financial crisis**] and some observers feared with reason that the world was in danger of entering another depression [**financial crisis**]. Fortunately, Governments and countries took drastic steps to tackle the crisis [**financial crisis**].

### *Framework of analysis*

In order to uncover the differing ideologies of the two discourses, details in choice of words used in the data that reflect the institution's point of view will be analysed. An SFL framework (Halliday & Matthiesson 2004) gives a systematic and structured manner in which texts / discourses can be analysed, language conveys at the same time, three layers of meanings reflected in three metafunctions - the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual metafunctions, defined as:

a. *Ideational metafunction*, reflects our perception and experience of the outer and inner world. It describes events, states and the entities involved, where such relations are coded in language that reveals the relation between the individual / entity and those around him / her / it. Specific tools of analysis include transitivity processes that reveal who are the active / passive participants in the message.

b. *Interpersonal metafunction*, reflects how we use language to interact with others in maintaining social relations. Appraisal, judgements and emotions are what are conveyed in this metafunction. Specific tools of analysis include modality - probability, usability, obligation and willingness indicated by the use of *must, shall, need, should, perhaps* etc, and polarity adjuncts indicated by *yes / no, always, never* etc. that indicate positive or negative attitudes towards an actor or entity.

c. *Textual metafunction*, reflects how language is used as a coherent system to manage old and new information. How language is structured so that viewers / readers might understand the wider context of the message. Specific tools include a theme / rheme analysis as information units in a clause structure. The theme ('new' information) always precedes the rheme ('old' information). Looking at the thematic structure of clauses will give an indication of what is given priority (what is important) and what is considered 'new' or 'old' information in the discourse.

Text Example 2 shows from a broad perspective, how the tools belonging to an SFL framework can be used to analyse textual content for ideology, and the three types of meanings via its metafunctions. The analysis appears in italics and bold in square brackets.

Text Example 2: Example of SFL analysis of an abstract of 9 major clauses of text from the Keynote Address of Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loon at the APEC CEO Summit on 13 November 2009. Major clauses are numbered.

1. This last year has been a *difficult* [Interpersonal: judgement, negative] one.
2. *APEC members* [Ideational: passive recipient; Textual: theme] *have been affected by the global financial crisis* [Ideational: actor; Textual: rheme] like all other countries.
3. *Trade volumes* [Ideational: actor; Textual: theme] *have come down sharply* [Interpersonal: amplification, negative; Textual: rheme].
4. At one time, *we* [Ideational: passive recipient] thought they would *collapse* [Interpersonal: affect, negative] but *fortunately* [Interpersonal: judgement, affect, positive] *they* [Ideational: actor; Textual: theme] have now *stabilized* [Interpersonal: judgement, affect, positive; Textual, rheme].
5. *Financing* [Ideational: actor] *dried up* [Ideational: material; Interpersonal: affect, negative] and some observers *feared with reason* [Interpersonal: affect, negative, judgement] that the world was *in danger* [Interpersonal: affect, negative, judgement] of entering another *depression* [Ideational: existential; Interpersonal: negative].
6. *Fortunately* [Interpersonal: modality, judgement, positive], *Governments and countries* [Ideational: actor; Textual: theme] *took drastic steps to tackle the crisis* [Ideational: 'the crisis' passive recipient; Interpersonal: 'drastic', affect, amplification; Textual: rheme].
7. *They restarted* [Ideational: actor; Textual: theme] *their* [Interpersonal: possession] financial systems, *slashed* interest rates to virtually zero, recapitalized their banks, *undertook* [Ideational: actor] *unconventional* [Interpersonal: affect, judgement] *policies* [Textual: rheme] such as quantitative easing.
8. *Central Banks* [Ideational: actor; Textual: theme] are doing things *never envisioned* [Interpersonal: affect, high modality and polarity] in their *Charters* [Textual: rheme] in order to come up from *unanticipated, unprecedented situation* [Interpersonal: high modality, affect, judgement].
9. *Governments implemented* [Ideational: actor; Textual: theme] fiscal stimulus measures --- discretionary spending on a large scale; deep tax cuts; [Interpersonal: affect, amplification] direct transfers to households; all kinds of vouchers, hand-outs, cash for clunkers [Textual: rheme]; schemes to encourage people to buy, to spend, to keep confidence up and to prevent going into [Ideational: "governments", actor] a self-fulfilling trough [Interpersonal: affect]

Prominent and perhaps typical of the genre of political discourse in Text Example 2 above is how active participants are no longer individuals but rather de-personalized entities such as “APEC members”, “trade volumes”, “Governments and countries”, “Central Banks”. The effect of which is that there is no single institutional body to hold responsible for economic downturns or for the global financial crisis but rather, entities seemed to work ‘of their own accord’ in symbiotic relation to other likewise entities. Ideologically, governments are also not just topically important and highlighted in the theme / rheme structures, but are often portrayed as ‘heroic’, doing their best to ‘save the situation’, being innovative in their measures and taking on difficult decisions and policy implementations in order to do general good, i.e. “Governments implemented fiscal stimulus measures --- discretionary spending on a large scale; deep tax cuts; direct transfers to households; all kinds of vouchers, hand-outs, cash for clunkers; schemes to encourage people to buy, to spend, to keep confidence up and to prevent going into a self-fulfilling trough.”

It is in similar vein that the most relevant data to this study have been analysed. What are shown in this paper are examples of such analysis in abstract form.

## Results and Discussion of Analysis

*Data sorting: keyword salience / prominence*

The table below shows the number of documents retrieved from the PMO online website, using the keywords most relevant to the two discourses of (a) Singapore’s TFR and the “Baby Bonus Scheme” as an incentive policy measure to address the country’s overall low and declining TFR and (b) the discourse of “Singapore Incorporated” where the country views itself as a global player and as an individual on the global scene. Keywords such as “baby”, “children”, “child”, “fertility” and “birth rate” were prominent for the discourse of Singapore’s TRF and the “Baby Bonus Scheme”, whilst keywords such as “global”, “globalisation”, “corporate”, “corporation”, “company” and “companies” were prominent for the discourse of “Singapore Incorporated”.

Table 1 shows the sum total of documents retrieved for each keyword that indicates the overall ideological developments. Out of a total of 1300 official documents retrieved between 2008 and 2012 from the Prime Minister’s Office of Singapore, 519 (ca .40%) documents pertained to the overall discourse of (a) Singapore’s TFR and 925 (ca. 71%) documents pertained to the discourse of (b) “Singapore Incorporated”, thereby indicating that while fertility rates are important to the country, the overall economic and organizational strengths of the country on the international

scene are still prioritized over the status of the 'family'. A year by year analysis of how often these keywords showed up in documents would indicate the micro-wave of trends and priority of topic for the Singapore government through the years, but this is not reflected in Table 1. Instead Table 1 shows the heterochronous developments of the two discourses by the fact that one is given more salience over the other, indicating too that the discourse of "Singapore Incorporated" hypothetically encompasses a long term strategic vision for the country, that at the same time, encompasses the discourse of Singapore's TFR.

Table 1. Keyword salience comparison from 1300 documents obtained from the Prime Minister's Office Singapore's website, reflecting the discourse prominence between that of (a) Singapore's TFR and (b) "Singapore Incorporated", numbered (i) and (ii) in the table.

i. Keywords to the discourse of Singapore's TFR	No. of documents: News articles (2008 - 2012)	No. of documents: Speech and Interviews (2008 - 2012)
Baby	11	10
Children	157	91
Child	30	27
Fertility	19	155
Birth rate	14	8
Total	231	288
<b>Total combined</b>	<b>519 (ca. 40% of total documents)</b>	
ii. Keywords to the discourse of "Singapore Incorporated"	No. of documents: News articles (2008 - 2012)	No. of documents: Speech and Interviews (2008 - 2012)
Global	277	130
Globalisation	11	10
Corporate	29	24
Corporation	38	12
Company	75	37
Companies	168	114
Total	598	327
<b>Total combined</b>	<b>925 (ca. 71% of total documents)</b>	

The sections below give an outline of each discourse, followed by an analysis of the success / effectiveness of the "Baby Bonus Scheme", a government led child incentive scheme implemented to encourage Singaporeans to have more babies.

It is with respect to the sustainability of working populations that fertility declines and its associated trends around the world prompt governments in general to implement policies that encourage procreation. And while it could be argued that this trend is not unique as countries develop and experience a shift in the manner of economic production, what has been noted is

that the declining fertility trend that began during the 1930s in Japan, followed by China, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, generally in East and Southeast Asia from the 1960s, where fertility is below population replacement level, is occurring at greater speed, in shorter periods than what had happened in the West (Chan and Yeoh 2002). Between 1950 and 2000 alone, total fertility rates more than halved, dropping from 5.89 to 2.49 (Westley 2002).

Text Example 3 from the Singapore Straits Times (2 Feb. 2011) shows an analysis sample of the first ten clauses of the article. It lends insight into part of what characterises the discourse of Singapore's TFR that is targeted at 'national' level with a clean emphasis on Asian collectivistic values. Entitled "Hold on to core values amid changes" (Li 2011), Singapore's PM Lee encourages family togetherness, to "hold fast to core attributes" and "preserve a Singaporean core in our society". In high modality and obligation, PM Lee stressed that Singapore "*must maintain a clear majority of local-born Singaporeans who set the tone of our society and uphold our core values and ethos.*"

Text Example 3. Analysis sample of first 10 clauses. News: The Straits Times - 2 February 2011. *Hold on to core values amid changes: PM Lee. Govt 'will manage pace of change to keep sense of belonging'* by Li Xueying. Analysis of modality (probability, obligation) and affect (emotion, judgement) shown in italics and on bold square brackets. Major clauses are numbered.

1. As *the world changes* [**Textual: theme**], so too *must* [**Interpersonal: modality, high**] Singapore.
2. But even as *the country* [**Textual: theme**] *keeps reinventing itself* [**Ideational: "the country", actor**] to keep up with *global developments* [**Textual: rheme**], Singaporeans *must hold fast* [**Interpersonal: modality, high**] to certain constants – *their* [**Ideational: possessor; Textual: theme**] *core values, Asian heritage and 'the national spirit'* [**Ideational: qualities possessed; Interpersonal: judgement, affect**] to overcome *crises* [**Interpersonal: judgement, affect; Textual: rheme**] together, said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.
3. In his Chinese New Year message, where he traditionally also *focuses* [**Interpersonal: emphasis**] on *the importance* [**Interpersonal: judgement, affect**] of family togetherness, Mr Lee took stock of some *hot-button* [**Interpersonal: judgement, affect**] issues that concern Singaporeans.
4. Some 'feel a sense of *dislocation and unfamiliarity*' [**Interpersonal: affect**] amid

- the *rapid* [Interpersonal: amplification, judgement, affect] changes.
5. While *there are* [Ideational: existential] *physical improvements* [Ideational: existent; Interpersonal: judgement, affect] such as *the new* [Interpersonal: judgement] *Marina Bay skyline and upgraded housing estates* [Ideational: existent], *society is also changing* on a more intangible level.
  6. *Younger Singaporeans* [Ideational: actor; Textual: theme; Interpersonal: judgement] *have* [Ideational: relational] *different attitudes and aspirations* [Ideational: attribute; Interpersonal: judgement; Textual: rheme], *he* [Ideational: actor] *observed* [Ideational: phenomenon].
  7. Also, *the population* [Ideational: passive participant; Textual: theme] *has been augmented with a good number of new immigrants* [Interpersonal: judgement], *he said*, referring to the *influx* [Interpersonal: judgement, amplification] of foreigners in recent years.
  8. Acknowledging that *there has been* [Ideational: relational, existential] *some unease* [Interpersonal: moderate modality, affect] *with these trends* [Ideational: existent], *he said* that while *Singapore cannot* [Interpersonal: polarity, high modality] *stay static, the Government* [Ideational: actor; Textual: theme] *'will manage* [Interpersonal: modality, high] *the pace of change* [Ideational: goal] so that *we* [Ideational: actor; Interpersonal: affect; Textual: theme] *keep our bearings, sense of place and sense of belonging'* [Ideational: possession; Interpersonal: affect; Textual: rheme].
  9. *It is important* [Interpersonal: modality, high, judgement] *to hold fast to core attributes* [Interpersonal: modality, high, judgement], *he* [Ideational: sayer] *said*.
  10. 'This means *we have to* [Interpersonal: modality, high] *preserve a Singaporean core* [Interpersonal: judgement, affect] *in our society. We need* [Interpersonal: modality, high] *immigrants to reinforce our ranks, but we must* [Interpersonal: modality, high] *maintain a clear majority* [Interpersonal: modality, high, judgement] *of local-born Singaporeans* [Interpersonal: amplification, focus] *who set the tone of our society and uphold our core values and ethos* [Interpersonal: judgement, modality, high, focus].

The discourse of Singapore's TFR is characterised by a sense of obligation for Singaporeans to hold onto their core Asian values and heritage, in part ensuring that Singapore maintains a majority of local born individuals. From the main article of which Text Example 3 is an extract,

this sense of obligation and urgency is conveyed using high modality words such as 'must' i.e. "Singaporeans *must* hold fast to certain constants their core values", "we *have to* preserve a Singaporean core in our society" and "Singaporeans also *need to* have enough babies to replace themselves". The government on the other hand also sees themselves in a position of high responsibility, in working together with the people to achieve these goals. This sense of high obligation is also expressed using high modals such as 'will' where the government also puts themselves in an active role, of providing the framework (implementing various social schemes for example) within which Singaporeans can reasonably achieve these goals, "We *will* keep housing affordable to Singaporeans", "the Government *will strive* to mitigate the impact in this year's budget." (Li 2011). The specific measure of control for Singapore's overall low TFR is reflected in general in their population policies.

The Singapore government's population policies since its independence during the 1960s, have spanned three main phases, that of the anti-natalist phase to about the 1970s, a period of eugenics with a preferred "stop at two" policy during the 1970s to late 1980s and the pro-natalist phase from the late 1980s till present (Wong & Yeoh 2003), where it is the latest phase that the Singapore government finds an increasing challenge as TFR, defined as the average number of children born to women of child-bearing age between the ages of 15 to 49 who are Singapore citizens or permanent residents, has been on a steady decline. Singapore's official stance is not much different from that of more developed countries, framing the trend as worrying and a matter to be urgently addressed.

In the Singapore socio-political discourse, the declining fertility trend was one seen as threatening the very perpetuation and survival of the country in the near future, and that if the trend were to continue, the country "will fold up because there'll be no original citizens left to form the majority and we cannot have new citizens, new PRs to settle our social ethos, our social spirit, our social norms. So my message is a simple one. The answer is very difficult but the problems, if we don't find the answers, are enormous... So our choice is simple. Either accept migrants at the rate at which we can assimilate them and make them conform to our values and have others on temporary work permit holders to help build up Singapore and improve." (Lee 2012) Fundamental in Lee's message was also for Singaporeans to have a change in mindset.

It was in such a socio-political context of Singapore's low TFR discourse and ideology that Singapore introduced the Children Development Co-Savings or its "Baby Bonus Scheme" in



2001. The scheme was designed to lighten the financial burden of raising children in Singapore, comprising two-tiers, the first in the form of a cash incentive and the second in the form of co-saving arrangement that the government matches dollar for dollar subject to a maximum amount.

Considering that Singapore's TFR is presented as a problem in official government discourse, it would be appropriate to assume that any government led initiative on child incentives would be launched with the success of such incentives in mind, in this case an increase in Singapore's TFR. Yet since its implementation in 2001, the scheme has since been reviewed twice, in 2004 and 2008 (Basu 2009, Musfirah 2011, MCDS 2012) much due to its non-success (Chan & Yeoh 2002, Wong & Yeoh 2003, Chua 2009, PMO 2012).

Before considering the factors that contribute to the non-success of the "Baby Bonus Scheme", the section below outlines the second political discourse, that of "Singapore Incorporated" as a means of organizing the country's strategic economic growth.

*Discourse (II): "Singapore Incorporated"*

How can you not? You have half the population uneducated and their potential wasted. Economically and intellectually, it is just unthinkable. It would be a totally different kind of society. ~ DPM Lee Hsien Loong (Plate 2004)

In keeping with Chan's (2012) view that Singapore is an "unnatural country", the ideology of a corporation-run state was present since Singapore's independence during the 1960s. It was in fact, its single most important task, to be economically viable and to be economically successful, much due to the fact of its lack of natural resources and the manner in which the split between the federal government of Malaya and Singapore occurred. To this end, most public and social policy catered to the economic development of the country, including population control, where "Population control was viewed then as critical in balancing the available economic resources with the demands of an increasing population" (Singapore Department of Statistics 2002, in Yap 2003). The approach then was to go with an industrialization programme called the "First State Development Plan" led by Albert Winsemius Dutch economist and Singapore's long time economic advisor from 1961 to 1984. The unpublished work by Winsemius covered the years from 1960 to 1964, and provided Singapore's blueprint for industrialization with the Economic Development Board (EDB) as the central governmental facilitator. Much of the country's policies, regulation, planning, propaganda and information constitutes a crafted construct that

involved creating a culture that would attract foreign investments into Singapore and an environment that would adapt to the needs of multinational corporations (Haley 1998b). The continuous developments in this direction laid the grounds for the beginnings of the “Singapore Incorporated” discourse and set the dominant roles of a agenda setter to centralized government with its various institutions as agents who helped work towards this goal (Haley, Low & Toh 1996).

In a multi-pronged strategy that also touched upon the country’s social fabric, a key component of Singapore’s social security structure, a mandatory savings and post-retirement benefits system, the Central Provident Fund (CPF) was launched in 1955 that steered the country away from it becoming a welfare state that covered housing, healthcare and education. The CPF scheme was launched together with several other institutions in order to create the structures and sinews of a corporatist state. The founding of the Development Bank of Singapore (DBS) was to oversee the financial aspects of the industrialization of the country, and the Jurong Town Corporation (JTC) managed industrial development. These institutions worked in tandem with EDB, who continued to promote investments. In 1994, the Singapore government urged European businessmen to tap into the Asia-Pacific economic growth via Singapore Unlimited, marketing Singapore as both product and production facilitator, “We market Singapore as a “product”. To stay ahead of the competition we have to constantly innovate and enhance the Singapore product” (Yeo, 1994).

“Singapore Incorporated” is a metaphor used as a means to conceptualize, re-frame and reinterpret Singapore’s business environment and strategic destiny. The metaphor encapsulates stakeholders’ relationships and relationships that set the goals and boundaries for Singapore in terms of its business environment and strategic destiny (Haley, Low & Toh 1996). The government has carefully crafted a culture in their organization environment that is welcoming of MNCs, where through policy measures, regulation, planning and a continuous forging of a “Singaporean soul”. This social engineering and re-engineering (Haley 1998a, Haque 2004, Keng, Kuan, Jiuan & Kwon 2004) by the government is part of what makes the constant organization evolution of “Singapore Incorporated” a continuous process, where the government strongly promotes a series of values and behaviours as part of its ‘corporate culture’ in order to facilitate its diversified portfolio, keeping its competitive advantage whilst maintaining flexibility.

Today, “Singapore Incorporated” as a metaphor could also be seen as set in the discourse that

not just encompasses the country's social realities but continues to steer it, where in my view, it encapsulates the evolution of Singapore's growth and development, reflecting the general ideology of Singapore as a single, individualistic global player with multiple identities across various socio-political contexts and relations, as a sovereign state to the people of Singapore, and as a trading partner on the international scene as reflected in a recent speech by PM Lee Hsien Loong (2012):

Text Example 4: Excerpt of "Harnessing the Global-Asia Confluence", a speech by Singapore's PM Lee at the Singapore Summit Conference, 21 Sept. 2012. Major clauses are numbered, metafunction analysis in bold and square bracketed.

1. *Singapore* [**Ideational: actor; Textual: theme**] *will have to* [**Interpersonal: high modality**] *adapt to all* [**Interpersonal: polarity, amplification**] *of these changes, like other countries, like all businesses* [**Interpersonal: comparison; Textual: rheme**].
2. *We* [**Ideational: actor; Textual: theme**] *have to* [**Interpersonal: high modality**] *take the world as it is* [**Textual: rheme**].
3. *We* [**Ideational: perceiver; Textual: theme**] *cannot* [**Interpersonal: negative polarity**] *imagine ourselves changing the world* [**Interpersonal: judgement; Textual: rheme**].
4. *But there are* [**Ideational: existential**] *some advantages* [**Ideational: existent; Interpersonal: judgement, attitude; Textual: theme**] *which we are born with* [**Textual: rheme**].
5. *We are* [**Ideational: relational; Textual: theme**] *closely* [**Interpersonal: judgement**] *linked to key* [**Interpersonal: focus, judgment**] *Asian countries and markets –*
6. *China, India, ASEAN, and many* [**Interpersonal: quantity**] *MNCs* [**Ideational: relational; Interpersonal: focus; Textual: theme**] *are in Singapore* [**Interpersonal: focus, Textual: rheme**].
7. *Our region* [**Ideational: actor; Textual: theme**] *is doing well* [**Interpersonal: judgement, attitude**] *and we* [**Ideational: sensor; Textual: theme**] *are grateful* [**Interpersonal: attitude**] *for that* [**Textual: rheme**].
8. *Global and Asian forces* [**Ideational: actor; Interpersonal: focus; Textual: theme**] *are constantly* [**Interpersonal: modality**] *at play here* [**Textual: rheme**].
9. *Our survival* [**Ideational: actor; Interpersonal: judgement, attitude; Textual: theme**] *depends on* [**Interpersonal: judgement, attitude**] *our living the Global-*

*Asia story* [**Interpersonal: focus**] – connecting *Asia* [**Interpersonal: focus**] to *the world* [**Interpersonal: focus**] and *vice versa* [**Textual: rheme**].

10. So *we have to* [**Ideational: actor; Interpersonal: high modality; Textual: theme**] *prepare for the risk* [**Interpersonal: judgement, attitude**] *scenarios* [**Textual: rheme**], *just in case* [**Interpersonal: judgement, attitude**] they materialise.

The speech of which the excerpt of Text Example 4 comes from, is characteristic of the “Singapore Incorporated” discourse. In clause 1 of Text Example 4, Singapore is seen as a single ‘global player’ that “like other countries, like all business” will need to adapt to global economic forces at play. And where the country is not only part of the global economic dialogue being linked to other Asian countries and markets where China, India and ASEAN play important roles in helping define Singapore’s success. This relation was described as the “Global-Asia confluence” (8 occurrences in the speech), where Singapore has its own Global-Asia story (Text Example 4, clause 9) to steer, live and tell. In this sense, “Singapore Incorporated” as an organization, has evolved through time, through different eras of economic ups and downs, the latest influences being the global financial crisis and the unsteady Euro zone.

Far from being detached and unemotional, the story of “Singapore Incorporated” is narrated with highly emotive choice of words. The semantic nesting of words shown in bold from Text Example 4, conveys a sense of grit and determination for Singapore to adapt and manage global changes and that there is a sense of tension, of being confronted with uncertainties and potential crises that the country may find itself needing to address at any one time – the future is uncertain. In that sense, passion and emotion are conveyed via a sense of urgency, the need to be strong, to act in togetherness, to protect itself from ‘outside’ forces whilst at the same time being part of it, and to fight for a deserved bright future.

This constant ambition is reiterated on numerous occasions throughout the “Singapore Incorporated” discourse. In a speech by PM Lee at the Economic Society of Singapore Annual Dinner, paragraph 17, he noted that the country will want to be “among the leading global cities” of the world. And to the argument that Singapore should pay more attention to social realities rather than economic growth, the point of view was still, “...without growth, we have no chance of improving the collective wellbeing. Far more countries worry about growing too slowly, than growing too fast. For Singapore, slow growth will mean that new investments will be fewer, good jobs will be scarcer, and unemployment will be higher.” (Lee 2012, 8 June, para. 24)

*Singapore's "Baby Bonus Scheme: an ideological evaluation*

"There is some evidence that the Baby Bonus Scheme has a slightly positive but statistically insignificant impact on fertility rates" (Chua, 2009: 41). This perspective is not singular, and when studied from a critical theory perspective, Singapore's "baby bonus scheme" from the collective/national level perspective can be said to produce insignificant results towards the overall TFR of the country due to what can be argued as general myopia, hampered from a macro (national level) perspective in the following broad ways:

a. *Dominant ideology* - The country's pre-dominantly aggressive capitalist ideology as illustrated in the "Singapore Incorporated" discourse. The country's dominant ideology, a result of its founding as a free port of trade in recent history and its socio-economic struggles post WWII has to be necessarily fostered for this small, globally exposed country, means that most Singaporeans cannot help but look upon children as economic commodities, functioning within in a transactional matrix. This has the effect that anyone who can do the math will realize that the current amount of financial incentives from the government still falls short of the actual realities of having and raising children. It is also this dominant ideology that is likely to set the backdrop of navigation towards the singular goal of success for the country as a sovereign entity in the future.

b. *General non sequitur* - A recent study in Sweden found that even with advanced parental incentives, 33% of women and 8% of men in Sweden have found that having children and taking time off to look after children has had negative consequences on their incomes and carrier (Lindberg 2012). This point towards the general non sequitur of linking a false cause (i.e. not enough money) to the effect (i.e. not enough babies) that is true for either welfare or non-welfare states, that policy makers will find difficult to circumvent.

In the case of Singapore, the government incentives as a blanket solution to the country's low total fertility rate (TFR) encounters the same problems as state welfare programs and outreach in other countries i.e. the incentives will be useful only to certain families and households situated at specific levels along the economic curve, but is not helpful to others of a different socio-economic profile.

Government incentives for example, will make little impact on more affluent households, whose incentives for having more children may not be financially motivated but might come

from a want for a more conducive and stress free fostering environment for their children, whilst the incentives would be inadequate for the longer term requisites for poorer income families where financial support might be needed to cover both parents and children beyond the child's 12 years of age.

At a micro / individual level, and following from the above general non sequitor, the "Baby Bonus Scheme" seemingly suffers from myopia due to a lack of an integrated perspective of how global trends have already affected Singaporeans and the lifestyle choices made. On the individual level, the child-incentive scheme seems unable to provide for the following:

*a. The changing map of family planning in a postmodern society.* From a postmodern perspective, a quick glance at the world population and its rate of increase becomes painfully obvious that children are no longer needed for economic reasons, but rather the contrary. More human beings on the planet, if no working sustainable solutions are found, might eventually cause a collapse of the entire planet's resources and thus be a threat to the survival of the very human species. For the rational and economically minded person it is clear that children in a modern society have changed from 'assets' to an increasingly expensive 'contemplated choice of consumption'. Ceteris parabus, the average child-bearing couple in Singapore today would also have two sets of aging parents to care for. In times of financial uncertainties, not least to mention that the world has not yet fully stabilized in the wake of the 2007/8 financial crisis, where Europe continues to struggle with its policies on the Euro and where Spain is possibly facing fracture due to differential economic success within the country, it would be self-preservation and for one's own survival in such times not to financially burden the family more by taking on individual life projects that would otherwise be considered a second career in raising children.

With extended education, children will start being productive increasingly later in life and for this reason alone, might be less able to provide for their parents in the future. As an adult with an eastern values paradigm of Confucius filial piety, you might yourself also need to choose if you want to provide for your parents – whom you already have an obligation towards -- or for children you might want but if so, might not be able to afford.

All this considered, it will seem likely that the 'asset to liability' shift is reflecting a reality that will appear more certain, stable and lasting for most potential parents than any economic incentives any government can propose.

b. *Advancing information and communication technologies (ICTs) and its resulting impact on the Singapore social fabric.* The growing up of Gen-Y defined also as “the Millennials”, individuals born 1990s and later who can be described as the first group of individuals having the Internet as a way of life has already had an impact on the socio-cultural fabric of a highly globalized Singapore. A paradigm shift due to ICTs has changed the manner in which people now organize their lives and place their life priorities.

The current service and knowledge oriented societies means that work organizations and corporations are transnational in nature, thus often requiring individuals to travel on the job. In such cases, even having one child would hamper the mobility for the parent/s involved, the reason why couples today may prefer not to have children, or to have children later in life. Alternatively, individuals might even choose to remain single in order to maintain a highly mobile lifestyle.

c. *Changing parenting ideology.* A uni-directional policy of child support incentives i.e. to the parent for the child and in Singapore’s conservative stance, to the mother for the child, could be critically argued, to perpetuate an ideological perspective of children as economic commodities, owned by parents. This ideology is current in other developing countries today, where children continue to be bartered and sold for financial gains or when the sex of the child would mean a certain economic advantage / disadvantage to the parents, most notably at the time of marriage. At the same time such financial incentives overlook a new level of consciousness when it comes to the concept of parenting, that people are generally becoming more aware of different parenting methods. Not all parents today believe steadfastly in caning children, realizing that depending on situation, caning might end up inducing a life trauma than simply coming across to the child as a method of discipline.

With the knowledge economy comes a maturation of a general consciousness of people, where a more inclusive ‘we’ perspective comes into place. So a new understanding of not just what children are for (i.e. the continuing of the family name or sustenance of the species etc.), but what *kind* of children you want to have, backed by a new understanding of how children can / should be raised for a rather different kind of future that goes beyond the parents’ individual egos. This in turn has brought about a greater sense of awareness on the part of the parent towards their children’s needs and children’s rights. While in agrarian societies, the ideology was that children were owned by their parents, today comes the realization that children are not something to be owned, in fact, they will grow up to be agents of their own and necessarily so in order to survive in the current partially globalized world.

In this sense, the term 'liability', I view from a dialectic perspective. Meaning to say that it is not only parents who can see children as a 'liability' but that children have a right to optimal standards of living, to a life in which they did not ask to be born into. All of this is to say that children are neither pets nor toys to satisfy social expectations or to gratify the temporary want to reproduce. But that raising children in itself, is a career choice. This distinction is seen more clearly in more individualistic societies where grandparents are not expected to help look after grandchildren, and where help in the form of "maids", "home-helpers" or "domestic helpers" is not an option – much like the Scandinavian countries. If you choose to have children, then it is your sole responsibility to raise them to be the best adults they can be in order to secure a positive future for all, regardless.

As such, post-knowledge economies demand that children today are raised differently than from previous generations, where advances in studies in the fields of bio-sciences, genetics, coupled with social cognitive psychology, parenting and childcare means that people are now more aware of how children should and can be raised. So it isn't good enough for parents now that their child is 'clothed and fed' but parents today are aware that the child has certain rights – the right to have access to and spend time with *both* parents, the right to quality home-cooked food as opposed to pre-fab factory processed baby food with additives in bottles, the right to (sans luxuries) a certain standard of living and quality of life, such as physical space and time enough to play, learn and develop, the right to a certain number of hours of education in their formative years, the right to medication when needed etc.

*d. The current awareness of feminist issues in Singapore (AWARE 2004).* This brings about an awareness of not just the importance of the paternal role of the father in the child's formative years, but the child's right of access to both parents in general. This will have the result that monetary child-support incentives will in future need to broaden and deepen in perspective and reach, going beyond financial supplements towards a lifestyle change. A lifestyle where parents will realize that part of the fun of having children is to actually spend time with them and watch them grow up. For that, they will begin to demand a working situation where they can take time off from work to spend time with their children. For this to occur, a general ideological shift in terms of how society organizes their working life and how corporations operate in general in Singapore will need to take place.

Though the above points are non-conclusive and open to debate, the "Baby Bonus Scheme" when viewed from the national discourse perspective seems a social policy that pacifies in the short term, where in part, the outmoding and out manoeuvring of these policies has much to do with the transformations accorded by advancing ICTs around the globe that leads to a change



in the surrounding context. The realities of the world and global economics seems for Singapore, to change faster than what can be coped with in terms of a change in traditional family values i.e. the want in the Asian tradition to carry on the family name for example.

Perhaps more useful would be for the state to formulate transformative social policies that integrate the various socio-economic aspects of life for couples at a child bearing age, to broaden and deepen the outlook and reach of the baby bonus scheme. A non-government led initiative can also be encouraged, where a general “baby-culture” could also be spearheaded either by parents themselves or various independent social institutions. One such campaign can be found in Sweden under events related to “barnkultur” (“child-culture”) for example, where everything from literature readings at public libraries, museum exhibitions catered to children, baby gyms, allowing parents to bring their children to work to a cozy café coffee-culture for parents is grouped into a genre of activities to form a children-conducive environment that includes planning for the public transport system to have room for at least 2 large prams per seating carriage. In this sense, children are a lifestyle and not viewed only in terms of economic returns.

Due to the above contextual reasons at a ‘collectivistic’/national level, Singapore’s “Baby Bonus Scheme” seems to pacify but does not overly encourage non-affluent couples to have children per se. But the same government led initiative when viewed from the perspective of Singapore as an individual global player set within the discourse of “Singapore Incorporated”, can be argued to hit right on the mark for its longer term model of economic success.

*Singapore’s baby bonus scheme: supporting Discourse (II), “Singapore Incorporated”.*

Within the discourse of species survival, the metaphor of “Singapore Incorporated” (Haley, Low & Toh 1996) as a means for the country to envision its government led development, re-frame its business environment and set its strategic destiny, where the country views itself as a collective of individuals who on the global stage act as a single entity, survival in this sense requires a different understanding, one that is economically streamlined not geared towards biological reproduction but rather (re-)production of economic efficiency. Such a perspective would also lean towards maximizing such concepts of outsourcing and global sourcing for gain in productivity and efficiency as much as possible (one could interpret Australia’s new “golden ticket” visa as a move situated within such a context of global sourcing of human capital).

If we also view Singapore or any other nation / collective of individuals as part of the world, where heuristically thinking, different parts of the world would be better suited for different functions in order for the people of the world to share a common destiny and prosper all around (the very aims and goals of supranational structures) then the realities of a location such as Singapore, with scarce land and no natural resources that ultimately drives its economic function as a global meeting place would leave very little room for this particular society to raise children, since what is needed for a proper efficient functioning of this society are individuals who are highly skilled, highly affluent and have a lifestyle that is highly mobile.

Stretching the metaphor of “Singapore Incorporated” further it is not difficult to imagine or conceptualize Singapore as the sci-fi future airport lounge of the world, functioning as it has always been as a focal global trading point, but all infrastructure and functions redefined and re-framed to better suit the knowledge and networking economies of the future. Singapore’s advanced airport infrastructure and services, the affluent Sentosa Cove, Marina Bay Sands coupled and Gardens by the Bay, stand as examples of what is to come in future, the realization of which is implied in PM Lee’s National Day Rally Speech, 2012:

“Finally, we can always improve the baby bonus, it is always welcome. We can look at that but I do not think money is the point. It is ultimately not about money, it is about values, it is about deep motivations. Singaporeans will marry and have children because of the fulfilment that having a family brings and the measures as I have said are to address the practical problems and to point the direction to signal the changes we would like to see in the mindsets. Beyond these specific packages, we need to create the right environment, the right social environment, the right ethos so that Singaporeans want to settle down and have kids and strengthen that sense that this is home, here is where we want to raise our families.” ~ PM Lee, 26 Aug 2012.

This change of mindsets, This study would argue, is not for Singaporeans to buy into the low TFR discourse in full extent, but rather, to realize that Singaporeans would greater benefit by supporting the ideology of the dominant “Singapore Incorporated”, where for the moment, the “Baby Bonus Scheme” is introduced as a means to soften a hard social regressive reaction towards the ‘Family’ and ‘Self’, and not to fully improve the country’s overall low TFR in the short term perspective. The “change of mindset” is perhaps for Singaporeans to realize the

extent of “Singapore Incorporated” as a way of life, as a corporate culture and it is within that framework that the organization will evolve in heterochronous fashion.

### **Concluding Remarks: A Heterarchous Organization Structure to Manage Heterochronous Developments**

Returning to Stinchcombe’s perspective on organization evolution and Darwin’s theory of evolution applied to organization and management, and to the questions from the beginning of this study – to what extent does Singapore’s “Baby Bonus Scheme” address / support Discourse (I), Singapore’s TFR and to what extent does it support Discourse (II), “Singapore Incorporated”, the evolution of the organization of the nation of Singapore has been interesting to follow where the “Baby Bonus Scheme” can be seen as a measure that straddles the two discourses as a government led incentive, as a way of managing the complexities of heterochronous organizational and societal developments, where global economics can be seen to outrun traditional family values.

This duo-levelled strategy that I view to be part solution to address a heterochronous development in Singapore, and a first move towards a more facilitative style of governance, is difficult to grasp for a large majority of people in Singapore who are themselves, at different stages of political awareness and maturity. And with the Confucian based value system in place, with a hierarchy of relationships forming the foundations of the Singapore social fabric, many continue to look to the government as a benevolent provider that steers the country towards future prosperity. It will take time for the general consciousness of Singapore to develop and mature in that aspect, where a realization of this would in turn lead towards a lateralization (not adissolution) of hierarchies, where a new organizational structure is formed, one that is perhaps reflected more in the Scandinavian societies today.

When it comes to the role of Singapore on the global scene and its future survival, one could well use its historical developments as a trajectory framework. Singapore was borne out of global trade, having its roots and beginnings as a free port of trade and owning its prosperity to a mostly immigrant society. Till today, it has no natural resources other than its people who continue to come from different backgrounds and nationalities.

Singapore has always been a global city, and for it to leverage on what it already has and learn to manage its multiple complexities in a heterarchous fashion that is not only self-organizing

but self-governing. For this to actualize, certain value systems and levels of individual/social/organizational maturity will need to be in place, where one could say that this will take time, but navigating towards such a system in strategic visioning is a first step. The people of Singapore, citizens or non-citizens, those who find themselves there for whatever life's reasons, will need to learn to view things from an intrinsically international perspective, because as a potential first in the world, Singapore needs people of a global mindset.

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