Singapore, from third to first world country.

The effect of development in Little India and Chinatown.

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the development of Singapore in the period from before Singapore's independence (in 1965) until today. Singapore went from being a third world to becoming a first world country in a matter of decades. The change involved an impressive economic growth as well as an intensive modernization process. This paper answers questions concerning the effects of the modernization process in Chinatown and Little India in Singapore. How has the modernization process affected the built landscape, how has it changed the perception of the landscape, and what are the effects of conservation?

This paper argues that Singapore's Peoples Action Party (PAP) government was influenced by the ideals of modernization theory when laying the foundations for the coming growth of Singapore, as western countries formed the ideal for Singapore's future development. Theories of landscape, ethnicity and modernization make up the theoretical foundations of this paper.

By combining pre-recorded interviews with former residents, informal conversations with youths and personal in-depth interviews with stakeholders in the study areas, the narratives of the government and population are illustrated. Document review, picture analysis and observation are complimentary methods used to underline the findings further.

This dissertation concludes that the there is a gap between inhabitants and the government in terms of how the development process is viewed. Inhabitants and users of the Chinatown and Little India areas do not all share the government's positive view. However, this gap has been narrowed by an intentional production of a national identity based on economic success and modernity as symbols of the Singaporean nation. Although the two areas have developed quite differently from each other over the years, Chinatown and Little India have both received conservation status. Conservation appears to have had a two-sided effect. In Chinatown tourism has become the primary industry, while Little India has made use of the incentives provided in terms of conservation to keep a focus on traditional trades.

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1. Introduction

Willis (2005) opens a chapter on development theories by describing development as improvement of people's lives. How improvement is perceived depends on who assesses it. When winning the first national election for government in 1959 the Peoples Action Party (PAP) set out to improve both the quality of life for inhabitants and the economic growth of Singapore. Influenced by modernization theory the ideals for development were economic growth and a modern lifestyle. A modern city state was achieved. But how did the inhabitants experience the process of modernization?

Theories of development have changed greatly over the last 60 years. This dissertation takes us "behind" development theory and into the actual workings of development as experienced by Singapore. I wanted to explore the life of inhabitants in Singapore both before and during a period of high economic growth. This dissertation examines the development of Singapore as it was experienced by the inhabitants. I have researched Singapore's traditional ethnic areas, Chinatown and Little India, where redevelopment versus conservation has been heavily debated in both areas. Both Chinatown and Little India was gazetted to conservation status in 1989, and are now considered national heritage areas.

There are numerous reasons for focusing primarily on Chinatown and Little India. One of the main reasons that I chose Chinatown and Little India is that areas occupied by particular ethnic groups are more likely to represent traditional and cultural features unique to that ethnic group. I wanted to contrast the traditional with the modern. The contrast between inhabitants of these ethnic areas and the government will be highlighted through exploring government views on development, conservation and urban renewal.

My personal reason for choosing this as the topic of my paper was that I had an interest for landscape studies. I take an interest in the utilization of landscapes and the display of values in landscape. As a student of development I also take an interest in development. I decided to discover at firsthand how development changed landscapes and how this affected the inhabitants of such landscapes. I needed a case study where development had been rapid and had happened recently. By choosing a country which had developed rapidly and recently I could interview the people that had experienced the development and learn their story. I chose

Singapore, much due to the fact that I have two very good friends who are native Singaporeans. They were able to help me along and this made the research easier.

There is numerous literature to be found on both areas. Especially Chinatown has been studied in detail, by both individuals and organizations. Organizations include the Oral History Centre (OHC) and the National Archives of Singapore (NAS). Lily Kong and Brenda Yeoh (1994, 1995, 2003) have contributed greatly to the literature on landscapes of Singapore, and Chinatown in particular. T.C Chang has written papers on Little India's ethnic character and the role of tourism in Little India (1999, 2000). The most referred to work on Little India is the 1982 edition of "Singapore's Little India, past, present and future" by Siddique and Shotam (1982). Gopalakrishnan and Perera (1983) have given a description of the changing landscapes of Chinatown, Little India and Greylang. Newer contributions to this field are Yong (2004) and Teo et al. (2004) which both give more general descriptions of the changes in recent times. The PAP's view of development in Singapore can be found in the books of former Prime Minister, Lee (1998, 2000)

The intentions of this dissertation were to give a review of the development process in both Little India and Chinatown, but at the same time compare the effects of the development. To my knowledge there does not exist a comparative review of the development process of Little India and Chinatown. I have tried to identify reasons for why the two areas have gone in different directions.

1.1 Research questions

- How has the modernization of Singapore affected the built landscape in Chinatown and Little India?
    - o Has this affected the inhabitant's use of the landscape?
    - o What are the effects of conservation?
- Is landscape perceived more visually as a result of the modernization process?

2. Background to study area

This chapter will introduce Singapore as a nation. A brief history of Singapore will be presented, followed by a presentation of the study areas. Public housing and city planning will then be dealt with in greater detail as a background to later chapters.

2.1 Singapore – a city state

Singapore lies off the tip of the Malaysian peninsula, as illustrated by figure 1. The area of Singapore is 699.4 sq. km. Compared to Norway (385 199 sq.km), Singapore is a small country, and is categorized as a city state. The total population in Singapore was estimated to be 4,351 million in 2005. This gives Singapore a population density of 6,221 inhabitants pr sq. km (Infomap Singapore 2007). Norway has a population density of 15 inhabitants per sq.km (Statistisk sentral byrå 2007 A). Oslo, Norway's capital and largest city has a population density of 4062 persons per sq.km (Statistisk sentral byrå 2007 B). Singapore consists of three major ethnic groups, in 2005 the distribution was as follows Chinese (76%), Malaysian (14%) and Indian (9%) (Singapore Department of Statistics 2005)

Figure 1. Singapore an overview

(University of Missouri-St. Louis 2008)

2.2 A brief history of Singapore

The history of Singapore is usually traced back to the arrival of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles. The arrival of Raffles marks a turning point in Singapore history. With the arrival of Raffles in 1819, Singapore local residents signed an agreement stating that the British would be allowed to establish a trading post, in return for protection. In 1824 the British acquired full sovereignty over the island. Singapore became a British colony. British colonial rule is considered to have laid the foundations of Singapore as it is known today (Perry et al. 1997). The British started a meticulous city-planning which included a plan to separate the ethnic communities. This was the foundation of ethnic areas like Chinatown (Yeoh & Kong 1994). However the Indian community moved away from their first settlements, and ended up in the Serangoon Road area, an area which later came to be known as the Little India (Siddique & Shotam 1990)

From the start Singapore was intended to be a British centre for trade in Asia. Singapore served as a free port serving both Asian and Western private enterprises. This was done without monopolies, duties or other trade restrictions. Such unrestricted trade was unknown at that time, and it firmly established Singapore as an important trading post. Already in the late 19th century Singapore had a large economy based on trade (Perry et al.1997). According to Park (1998) Singapore was a non-industrial trade entrepôt. This worked well during the colonial days but led to problems when Singapore gained independence (Lee 2000).

In 1959 Singapore gained internal self-government. At this point there are several questions which had to be resolved if Singapore was to survive as an independent city state. The Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, saw little chance of survival if Singapore was to stand alone as an independent nation (Josey 1980). Singapore joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. With the eviction of Singapore from the federation in 1965, Singapore found itself on its own. Singapore still had British army bases in the country, providing a form of safety and also a stable income (Lee 2000). But as an independent nation there were pressing matters to resolve if Singapore was to survive.

As identified by Lee (2000) the first major tasks for independent Singapore were to build an army, to establish markets (other than the Malaysian market), and to solve the

underemployment and housing problems. Building the army was a task undertaken with Israeli assistance (Chan 1991, Lee 2000). As Singapore was a non-industrial entrepôt there were not enough jobs. Expanding the tourist industry relieved the unemployment situation, but did not solve it. The tourist industry was labour intensive and brought in money and created jobs. Initiatives to develop the tourist industry were taken already in 1959 (Lee 2000). The solution to the labour question was partly found within the manufacturing sector. The main thrust of the economic development was to come from the manufacturing sector. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) advised Singapore in 1960 on industrialization. The Singaporean government declared in 1961 that industrialisation would resolve the economic problems (Nyaw & Chan 1982). According to Cheng (1991) the manufacturing sector in 1977 employed 27 percent of all people employed in Singapore. The UNDP's report outlined two preconditions for success: the first was to eliminate the communists, who made economic progress impossible[1]; the second was to keep the statue of Singapore's British founder Thomas Stamford Raffles. The reasons for these two preconditions were that Singapore would need the technical, managerial, entrepreneurial and marketing skills found in Europe and America (Lee 2000).

In Singapore modernity has been seen as an end. The means to this end has been development involving state programs and social objectives which required rationalization and industrialization (Nederveen Pieterse 2001, Wong & Yap 2004). The rational use of land and the constant focus on industrialization and economic growth has made its mark upon the Singaporean landscape. According to Wong and Yap (2004) modernization in Singapore was translated into action plans of a social economic character. It included industrialization, public housing and infrastructure provisions.

> "Thus, industrialization through modernization of the manufacturing industry executed in a rational manner is both a prerequisite and a searched outcome of modernization"(Wong & Yap 2004:1)

Wong and Yap (2004) write that there was a moral contract between the ruling party (the People's Action Party, PAP) and the masses. Since the government ensured welfare, job growth and prosperity it did not need to be a pluralistic democracy. The PAP government transformed Singapore into a first world country, but development had its price. The inhabitant lost the right to hold politically motivated strikes, civil society was to a large extent disregarded and political opponents could be jailed without a trial (Trocki 2001, 2006, Leggett 2005). Individuals, and their needs were placed below the needs of the society as a whole

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[1] According to the UNDP (Lee 2000).

(Kong & Yeoh 2003). This left the government with considerable room for action. It is not to be forgotten that as a city state Singapore did not have to deal with rural-urban migration which has posed problems for other developing countries. Wong & Yap (2004) state that the loss of Malaysia as a potential hinterland (after the eviction of Singapore from the Malaysian federation) made Singapore look elsewhere for markets and investors. Singapore turned to the West. In order to emerge as a modern country and to attract foreign investors, the slums were cleared. In short one can say that the loss of Malaysia as a hinterland justified the slum clearance in the central areas with regard to the fact that economic survival was now dependent on trade and multinational investments to create jobs.

2.3 Study areas

The area in and around the central business district (CBD) is the area that is most disputed in Singapore. This is considered prime land and hence the most valuable land (Perry et al.1997, Kong & Yeoh 2000). This is the same general area in which the two study areas are situated. The location of Chinatown and Little India is illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 2. CBD and surrounding areas (Expedia 2007)

According to the master plan of 2003 (URA 2003) for the central area of Little India it is regulated to business use. There are almost no residential areas and the few that exist are regulated through the demand for businesses on the first floor. The area around Serangoon

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road (Which is the main road in Little India) is a conservation area and there are several places of worship which are also preserved. Most of the businesses around and along Serangoon road have obtained conservation status. A similar regulation, with few buildings for residential purposes can also be found in Chinatown where most areas are regulated for business, although some smaller areas around Smith Street and Cross Street are regulated for both residential purposes and business. The business buildings in Chinatown also have conservation status like the commercial area of Little India

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2.4 Conservation

Both study areas are defined as national heritage by the Singaporean government. It was in 1986 that conservation plans were first revealed. In 1989 both areas were given the title of "conservation area" (URA 1995, b, c). Before 1989, privately owned buildings were preserved at the initiative and expense of the owners. Needless to say quite a number of buildings were neglected, and the government saw the need for a more centralized conservation plan, which was institutionalized with the 1989 conservation master plan. As described by Kong & Yeoh (2003:135) the government saw the need for heritage landscapes in order to define Singapore as an independent nation:

> "The creation of heritage landscapes not only provides the nation with a sense of historical continuity but also confers on its city visual identity to rise above the homogenization exerted by forces of technology, modernity and globalization"

The goal of conservation as described by Urban Redevelopment Authority (1995 a, b, c) is to retain and restore buildings of historical and architectural importance, to improve the general physical environment and to introduce appropriate new features to further enhance the identity of the area. In addition to this it is also a goal to retain and ethnic-based activities while consolidating the area with new and compatible activities, and to involve both the public and private sectors in carrying out conservation projects.

In order to better preserve the core areas of conservation areas the URA (2000) has defined incompatible trades and pollutive trades, these are illustrated in figure 3. The incompatible trades are trades which are not allowed in the core area of conservation, but are allowed in the outskirts. Pollutive trades on the other hand are not allowed in the core area, nor in the outskirts of these conservation areas.

Incompatible trades (not allowed inside the core area)	Pollutive trades (not allowed inside or outside the core area)
Western fast-food restaurants and supermarket	Engineering, spray painting, welding, plumbing, motor, metal, joinery workshops
Building materials/car showrooms	Tyres and battery shops
Launderettes	Printing presses
Photocopying/plan printing shops	Plastic products manufacturing
Banks	Industries
Nursing homes	Animal fodder/feed products manufacturing
Western knock-down furniture	
Offices (not allowed on 1st storey)	

Figure 3. Table of incompatible and pollutive trades

Given the conservation status of Chinatown and Little India there are now regulations of which businesses that can be set up there. Such regulations can help traditional trades keep up their work. Unfortunately the rent is still quite high, this ensures that only the most economically profitable traditional trades can be kept alive. There are exceptions from the list above, in Little India, remittances banks are allowed. Banks are described as incompatible trades by the URA (1995 a,b,c) but since the Indian culture has a strong tradition with remittances it serves as an upkeep of tradition and is allowed.

2.5 The five foot way

The term five foot way comes from the founder of Singapore, Sir Stamford Raffles. His planning stipulated that all buildings were to have a covered walkway or a corridor about five feet wide in front. This would provide protection both from heat and rain (Ong & Tan 1985).

The five foot way was to be a place to do trade. A number of different trades could be found; shoe shiners, sewing women, knife sharpeners, barbers, letter writers and many more. But

also entertainers, as snake charmers could be found along the five foot way (Ong & Tan 1985).

2.6 Chinatown

Chinatown started its life as a designated place for the Chinese population of Singapore. It was Singapore's founder, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles who had the idea that the different ethnic groups were to have separate living quarters (Yeoh & Kong 1994). The Chinese population grew fast during the early years. The immigrants came from different areas of China and represented different dialect groups and clans. Clan associations became a part of Chinese society in Singapore. Many of the immigrants were workers, and with no family present they shared living quarters and sleeping areas with other workers. The living conditions were not always hygienic. The streets bustled with life and especially street hawkers were a well known sight. The street life was reported to be colourful and entertaining by travellers. The colonial government feared the social pollution of secret societies, opium and prostitution. Overcrowding became the main challenge in Chinatown. The sheer number of people living in Chinatown made hygiene difficult and living conditions were bad, and especially after the end of WW2 conditions were inhumane (Henderson 2000). The clean-up of Chinatown and what has been described as the cleaning up of moral and physical pollution begun with the eviction of tenants and a law requiring that hawkers were to be stationary and indoors (Yeoh & Kong 1994). The slum clearance and the redevelopment of Chinatown served a double purpose; on one side it would improve the living conditions of the inhabitants, while on the other side the major redevelopment of Chinatown would serve as an example of the tangible proof of the socio-economic forces developing Singapore from a third world country towards a first world country.

2.6.1 First impression of Chinatown

My first impression of Chinatown was a rather chaotic one. I arrived by the MRT (mass rapid transport) to the Chinatown station. I walked out of the station and right into a shopping mall. I was a bit surprised, as I expected to come out into a Chinese neighbourhood. After finding my way out of the mall I entered Pagoda Street. Chinese style shophouses lined both sides of the street. The street was closed for car traffic, leaving the whole street to pedestrians and small stands. I had left the shopping mall; however, there was still an overwhelming focus on shopping. The streets were lined with small stands selling goods. The goods were articles

which were targeted at tourists, such as small electronics, copies of traditional Chinese artifacts, Chinese style clothing and other small souvenirs. I found the owners of the stalls very aggressive in their approach; they would shout out their offers or approach you personally to buy their goods. As I was perceived as a tourist I was constantly approached or shouted at. This gave a chaotic impression. I found it hard to relax and make field notes as I was approached so often. In order to make notes I would buy some food at a street restaurant and sit at my table and take some notes of what was going on around me.

2.7 Little India

The main street of Little India is Serangoon road. The area which would come to be known as Little India was originally a place for the cattle industry, but an Indian convict jail was also found here. Such enterprises provided jobs for the Indian population. The availability of work was an important factor for Indians who migrated to Singapore. The retail industry developed further with increasing numbers of Indians who settled in the area. The buildings formerly used by the cattle trade became transformed into living quarters and shops (Chang 2000). It was Indian bachelors who settled in the area, living in bachelor colonies. Between 1930 and 1950 these bachelors decided to bring their families to Singapore, which in turn changed the demographic structure of Little India.

The Peoples Action Party (PAP) government focused in the 1960s and 1970s on slum clearance and rehousing the population. Little India lost its value as a residential area , but emerged as a centre for Indian Singaporeans, and other people identifying with the Indian culture. In the 1980s the government decided to conserve the old ethnic areas as they were seen to represent an important part of Singapore's heritage (Yeoh & Kong 1994, Perry et al.1997, Kong & Yeoh 2003). In 1989 an area of 13 hectares, encompassing around 900 buildings was named the Little India historic district and made a conservation area. Even though the whole area is considered a conservation area only a minor part of Little India underwent a process of adaptive reuse. This adaptive reuse meant eviction of tenants, conservation of facades, renovation of interiors and resale. This core area is where the Indian culture's distinctiveness is displayed. The value of property and the rent is set to market prices in order to ensure that only economic viable businesses, which are compatible with the

demands set by the government, are established in the area.[2] Little India today serves as a gathering point for foreign workers from Bangladesh and India, giving a whole new customer group for the businesses in Little India, and also adding new life to the streets and parks. Other areas in Singapore also absorb foreign workers. Each group find their own place to gather, the Filipino wokers gather around the Orchard Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) station, or in the lucky plaza on Sundays (Teo et al.2004).

2.7.1 A first impression of Little India

My first impression of Little India was different from Chinatown. In Little India I met a different architecture, different music, and a different smell. The people visiting or working in the area were often dressed in Indian clothing, and especially sarees could be seen in multiple patterns and colours. One of the first things I noticed was the utilization of the landscape. In Little India the five foot way would often be a display area for goods found within the stores located in the shophouses. In contrast to Chinatown the shop owners used the five foot way as a display area, but kept to their stores and did not approach customers in the same way. A great variety of goods could be found, differing from those found in Chinatown. There were more unprepared foodstuffs, as well as more traditional Indian clothing, spice stores and garland makers. Figure 4 shows unprepared foodstuff along the five foot way. Notice in figure 4 how the people are using the street for walking instead of the five foot way. The five foot way was sometimes uneven. It could be hard to navigate the five foot way because of its usage as storage space. This meant that the pedestrians would often use the streets for walking, which obstructed traffic. The area of Little India where the recycling businesses were at work seemed to be extra congested because of the space that old electrical equipment took up. The Indian temples were also very easily recognizable in the streets. I observed people sleeping on the sidewalks or in chairs and sofas in front of houses. This gave me a rather chaotic first impression of Little India. I experienced a lot of new smells, sounds and visual impressions.

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[2] There are rules which regulate which kind of business that can be established within this core area (Urban Redevelopment Authority 1995 a,b,c)

Figure 4. Street scene from Little India.

Photograph by the author, 18 July 2007

2.8 Public housing

Today about 84% of the Singaporean population live in public housing, provided by the Housing and Development Board (HDB 2007). The HDB was set up in 1960 to improve the living conditions for Singaporeans. In the 1960s the situation was seen as serious. According to the HDB:

> "A large number of people were still living in unhygienic, potentially hazardous slums and crowded squatter settlements packed in the city centers" (Housing and Development Board 2007).

Teh (1975) describes the number of people who were living in slums around 1960 as one quarter of a million, and in addition another third of a million people lived in squatter areas. Kong & Yeoh (2003) report that the total Singaporean population in 1960 was about 1.6 million. Hence the total number of people in poor living conditions comprised about 35 % of the total population. These people were in need of rehousing, since the sanitary and hygienic levels of these slums were not fit as a healthy living environment. A further reason for redevelopment was that the land these people occupied was underutilized, since the buildings were only one, two or three storeys high. Hence the government saw several reasons for undertaking rehousing of these people. Public housing was built in several storeys to accommodate more people on the same ground area. The public housing first and foremost served the majority of the middle and the lower income groups. Private enterprises offered housing to the upper and middle income groups. By the end of the first 10 years of the HDB's

existence it had built 120,669 housing units. Public housing helped keep wages down by ensuring housing at reasonable rates (Park 1998). Public housing became an important part of industrialization. Liu (1985) mentions several positive effects of rehousing the population. Living conditions have been raised, and the income level and educational level have also increased. People's lifestyles and values have also shifted significantly.

One of the planning concepts behind the HDB is to create self-sufficient neighbourhoods. A neighbourhood consists of several high rise apartment blocks. The ground floor of the HDB buildings are kept empty so that they can be used for either business or recreation (Teh 1975). Each area or neighbourhood is provided with shopping facilities, but also areas for physical and social recreation. This opens up for job opportunities within the HDB neighbourhood. An important factor in the building of Singapore as an independent nation was to create a sense of place. This was related to the building of public housing since homeownership represents a valuable asset. When having a personal stake in Singapore, people were thought to feel a stronger belonging and even be prepared to defend it, if necessary (Kong & Yeoh 2003).

2.9 City planning and redevelopment

Singapore's inhabitants seems to accept that the key to sustainable urbanization and development is proper planning and control. Singapore's plans for land use have their roots in the British colonial period (Wong & Yap 2004).

According to Perry, Kong and Yeoh (1997) Singapore's planners saw the need to improve housing in order to achieve economic growth. City planning would be the physical manifestation of the policies devised by the PAP government. City planning became an important tool for the Singaporean government. Lily Kong and Brenda Yeoh (2003) illustrate how city planning is not just the decisions of what goes where, but can also impose an ideology in a landscape. Such an ideology can in Singapore be seen as either state ideology or consumer capitalism. By letting the ideology become an everyday part of the landscape, artificial elements can appear to be natural. But the landscape is always read differently by different people, so what appears natural to some might seem non-natural to someone else. By implementing careful city-planning the state has exercised power and shaped a landscape, although the inhabitants might have a different vision of what the landscape is, or what it

ought to be (Kong & Yeoh 2003). The housing landscapes are the landscapes which are the most familiar to people in their everyday life. In Singapore these housing landscapes are created by the government and offered to the population. Offering housing created a difference between citizens and non-citizens, making a separation between insiders and outsiders (Kong & Yeoh 2003). Housing has been regulated in order to mix races and different income groups (Kong & Yeoh 2003). This is a part of the government's intentions to build a multiracial society.

Teo et al. (2004) write that landscapes consist of both landscapes of everyday life and landscapes of spectacle. Landscapes of spectacle are meant ot impress by their sheer grandur, size or distinction. Such landscapes are based mostly upon the visual impact they have. The visual aspect is the most important part of a landscape of spectacle. The holders of power are usually associated with such landscapes of spectacle, being political, social or economical power. The everyday landscapes would become an integral part of Singaporeans' life, while the landscapes of spectacle could contribute to creating a sense of pride of being a part of Singapore. The Singapore skyline is a source of pride and physical evidence that Singapore is a modern city. Such landscapes of spectacles would emphasize the sense of pride at being a Singaporean. The nation building process would build upon Singaporeans as modern and economic successful. This process is well described by Kong & Yeoh (2003). The city-planning of Singapore has contributed to creating both landscapes of spectacle and everyday landscapes, according to Kong & Yeoh (2003). Both types of landscapes have contributed to the nation-building process seen in Singapore.

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3. Theory

Theories help determine how findings are treated. Hence the choice of theories is important in order to resolve the research questions posed. In terms of theory there is one unorthodox choice in this dissertation, namely to include modernization theory. Modernization theory can be said to form a backdrop for the discussion and analysis to come. It is important to include since the Singaporean government had such an emphasis on modernization and economic growth.

The chapter opens with modernization theory, followed by theories of landscape. Within landscape theories two different ways of understanding landscapes are presented. Approaches to shaping urban built environment discuss how a theory becomes a built landscape. The last theoretical addition is a brief review of ethnic theory.

3.1 Modernization theory

Modernisation theory is used in retrospect in order to shed some light on the processes that have been taking place over time. The theory is used to give insight into how the built environment of Singapore has developed and been altered as a result of policies shaped by the government. I do not believe that all actions taken have been in congruence with modernisation theory, but I see that modernization theory can be relevant since it focuses on social and economic growth, with a special emphasis on the latter. The basis of modernization theory is a shift from traditional to modern which includes both economic and social factors. The built environment reflects the transition from traditional to modern.

Modernization theory is not a single, homogenous theory, but rather a collection of several theoretical approaches. This leaves us in a position where it is not possible to find intrinsic elements of modernization theory, but we can instead find common elements as described by Brohman (1996).

The six common elements Brohman (1996) describes are as follows:
1. Modernization draws upon a number of development factors (technological change, capital accumulation, changing values and attitudes). These different factors can be

analyzed from several different disciplinary perspectives, but most common is the idea of inducing social change (in values, norms, beliefs, customs). It was thought that these social changes would prompt other spheres of development. Classical sociology was the apparatus which was most widely used in order to theorize about such social change.

2. Societies and the components which make up societies (values, institutions, social groups, regions) can be divided into traditional and modern spheres. These two spheres usually exists separately, but "dual" societies can exist for shorter periods of time. In the end the modern will overtake the traditional.

3. Development, as experienced by the West, is the same path which the third world countries will follow. The modernization process is seen as similar for all countries, but the rates of change and the general pace of development might differ. Modernization is seen as inevitable and assumed to be beneficial for all. Modernization through capitalization, as experienced by the West, is the blueprint for the development elsewhere. Modernization is synonymous with Westernization.

4. When the West developed, the key factors for development came from within. Such factors might involve changes in values and attitudes, technological innovations and investment capital. In the third world, however, such factors come from the outside. It was believed that if these factors could be supplied the modernization process would speed up.

5. The pace of modernization is dependent on "agents of change". "Agents of change" are the modernizing elite of a society. These elites were people involved in innovation and diffusion. Targeting such people at an early stage was thought to facilitate rapid structural transformation.

6. Even though diffusion comes from the outside, modernization cannot work without internal factors. The success of modernization depends on the removal of structural and social "barriers". Usually such "barriers" are linked to the traditional sector. Deficiencies resulting from backward internal structures are seen as the fundamental causes of underdevelopment. If structural change can be induced, then modernization and growth will follow rapidly.

Parson (2000 [1964]) identifies certain "*evolutionary universals*". These are features which all modern societies have developed, and which all underdeveloped societies have to develop in order to become modern. The general thought is that all societies will develop along the same

lines and that these evolutionary universals are the "*structural foundations of modern society*" (Parson (2000 [1964]:99). It is not so much the evolutionary universals themselves that are interesting, but rather the idea behind them. Modernization theory depicts society as evolving through predetermined stages. The predetermined stages have been seen differently by different writers, but there is a common element in that most writers talk about a transition from traditional to modern (Brohman 1996). A more industrialised country was thought to show the less industrial developed countries an image of their future. This leaves us with modernization theory as a teleological theory, in which the end is determined and known to the states starting to develop (Nederveen Pieterse 2006). The goal of development is an industrialised society, as found in the west.

In an essay entitled "The passing of traditional society", Daniel Lerner (2000 [1958]) describes how an old culture is substituted with a new culture. The case study is from the Middle East, and the new culture which emerges is heavily influenced by western culture. The mass media convey new ideas and thoughts to the inhabitants. Brohman (1996) supports the idea that mass media help the transition from traditional to modern. As I discovered in Singapore a lot of the TV channels and media were presented in American and English. Singapore was determined to evolve and change into a modern, Western state. To quote the former Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew:

> "If the Communists in China could eradicate all flies and sparrows, surely we could get our people to change their Third World habits" (Lee 2000:58).

One of the criticisms which have emerged towards modernization theory is that it is Eurocentric. In Singapore's case this was utilized as one of the strengths, since the Singaporean government wanted to adopt a Western society. Nederveen Pieterse (2006) states that in postcolonial countries there has been a replication of the nation-building processes that have gone on in the West.

Modernization theory emphasized economic growth as one of the most important features of development. Theorists saw the combination of social patterns and economic development. The general thought was that non-economic factors would develop with the same logic as capitalist economic growth; accordingly there would be a high correlation between economic growth and social patterns. Economic growth would be the key factor to eliminating social problems. With economic prosperity social problems would wither away (Brohman 1996).

Nederveen Pieterse (2006) describes modernization as a process of social engineering from the state. This social engineering can also be found in the policies which shaped the landscape. Traditional features would have to go in order to make way for new, modern structures.

There is no escaping that Singapore has had large economic growth. I choose not to go in depth on the growth itself, but rather the social consequences of this growth will be the focal point of this paper. I will, however, make reference to some modernization theorists, and their writings on economic growth; this is done in order to show the importance of economic growth for modernization theory.

Walter Rostow is probably one of the best know economic writers on modernization theory. According to Thirlwall (2006), Rostow's work was both a political theory and a descriptive economic study of the pattern of growth and the development of nations. Rostow (2000 [1960]) characterised countries by stages according to the dominant economic dimension in a country. Rostow divided the economic dimensions into five stages: traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of mass consumption. According to Rostow, all countries could be identified within one of the 5 stages. The ability to move from one stage to another was dependent on economic development. The leading economic sectors of a country would make up the basis for the categorisation within the 5 stages. Other authors have also formulated economic models of transition. Worth mentioning is Arthur Lewis' dualism model, which describes how the modern capitalist sector will engulf the traditional, pre-capitalist sector (Skarstein 1997). This model has later been picked up by Terrence McGee (1979), who made a variation of the dualism model. McGee, as Lewis, sees certain predefines stages which a country will move through.

An interesting point made by Gereffi (2000 [1994]) is that Singapore, as with Brazil, Korea, Taiwan and Mexico, started out with import substitution, but only Brazil and Mexico went on to phase two of import substitution, while Taiwan and South Korea went on to industrialisation through export. This last also holds true for Singapore, which after a short period of import substitution sought growth through export-oriented industrialisation. This path to economic growth is in line with modernization theory.

Rostow (2000 [1960]) categorises the five stages after the leading industry. Rostow's framework can be applied to any country. Friedmann (1965) uses Rostows framework for categorising, and applies this concept to Venezuela.[3] My intention is not to categorise Singapore in-depth or to show a perfect match but rather to show how modernization theory has been a part of the planning process when it came to the economic growth.

In modernization theory the "take-off" phase is categorised by the growth of industry and the expanding need for labour. Rostow (2000 [1960]) describes it as a period when new industries expand rapidly, and the profits are reinvested in industry. Thirlwall (2006) describes the phase as a short phase where economic growth becomes self-sustaining. The label "take off" can hence be given to Singapore in the period from 1959-1965

The period which followed after 1965 had a focus on turning Singapore into a convenient productive location for international capital (Park 1998). This was achieved with manufacturing industries and emphasis on export-oriented industrialisation (EOI). It can be described as the "drive to maturity" A criticism of Rostow is that since the stage of preconditions for take-off and the take-off stage are very similar they can be hard to separate (Thirlwall 2006). This reduces the applicability of this model.

Economic activities marked the landscape. Factories were built and more public housing was needed. Singapore kept the worker's wages low while providing public housing. Low wages meant more contracts for Singaporean factories (Nyaw & Chan 1982, Park 1998). This development of the city landscape in order to generate economic growth worked well. According to Keilly and McGee (2003), cities were receiving large amounts of capital investments from abroad. This is in sharp contrast to the dependency theory, represented by the satellite-metropol theory provided by Andre Gunder Frank (2000[1969]), which claimed that cities would form a chain which would eventually lead the surplus out of the country, when in fact the cities represented a way for capital to enter the country. When Singapore developed further it was not just the erection of new buildings which affected the landscape, but an increasing tourist industry demanded Asian culture on display. Ethnic areas like Chinatown were now remodelled in order to display the Asian culture. The Government

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[3] It can be noted that John Friedman later in his career left the modernization approach and devoted his work to other approaches within development theory. However around 1965 J. Friedman was working with planning in Venezuela and used the modernization framework.

policy was to rid areas of physical, social and moral pollution. This led to the refurbishment of Chinatown to become as we know it today (Yeoh & Kong 1994).

3.2 Landscape

Landscape can be compared to the notion of place, since both can refer to a given space with socially constructed meaning. The notion of place in geography is a widely discussed term and I will not elaborate on the full debate over the meaning of place. My paper and the theory of landscapes as a construct of social interactions and lived practices draw upon two notions of place: "locale" and the "sense of place". The "locale" view is that place is considered to be a stage where activities, or daily practices are played out. It is the background for all activities."Sense of place" sees places as given meaning through social practices (Hansen & Simonsen 2004). Without social practices place would be left without meaning (Yeoh & Kong 1995). Theories of landscape include both the notion of landscapes as produced by social practices, but also an outsider's gaze at any given landscape, often referred to as landscape as a way of seeing. Landscape can be defined in two main categories: an elitist way of seeing, or the result of daily practices (Yeoh & Kong 1994). The two categories are useful for identifying contradicting views of the same landscape. One should not place too much emphasis on categorising since there are many positions that come in between these two notions of landscape. I use this dichotomy in order to point out the extremes; this makes the later analysis easier. In this paper it is the cultural landscape that will be discussed. The term cultural landscape, as an academic term, goes back to Friedrich Ratzel and was in frequent use by German geographers in the early 20th century (Jones 2003). In short one can say that a cultural landscape is a landscape marked by the culture of the people living in the given landscape. Carl Sauer was one of the first to recognize this connection between landscape and people and introduced the term cultural landscape to the English speaking world (Winchester et. al. 2003). Sauer breaks with the earlier notions of landscape where it is believed that environment is the main actor in shaping landscapes. This break with the common understanding of landscape can be summarized in Sauer's statement:

"Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result" (Sauer 1925:46). Nowadays it is becoming ever more evident how landscapes are affected by humans, and that the number of landscapes which does not bear the sings of human behaviour or culture is very few. Hence some writers argue that the term cultural landscape is not longer

useful as most landscapes can be defined as cultural landscapes (Christensen 2002). This paper uses the term cultural landscape since it is a term which in an intuitive way describes the interaction between humans and landscapes.

Landscape can also be affected by language. Words and the meaning attributed to them and the ability of giving words a negative or a positive association can affect the mental categories of landscape. Tuan (1991) argues that the way places are described give rise to a certain reputation. Places are made by the means of place-names, informal conversations and written texts. Jones (2003) writes that by naming places and landscapes we make them familiar and real. Kong & Yeoh (2003) describes how the landscape of Singapore has been deconstructed and constructed in order to fit the national identity. Local identities are almost always in some way affected by globalization (Winchester et al. 2003). Only a socio-political revolution would bring about changes in names of a city or places. It is believed that by changing names, the past can be forgotten and a new meaning can be attributed to the place (Tuan 1991). Language is important in the making of place; language provides a foundation to describing, grouping, and differentiating things, events and experiences. An ideology can be the background for the treating of a place in a given way. Social domination can be upheld with the use of language to describe and categorise places (Pred 1984).

Narratives are important in establishing socially constructed facts. Fairhead & Leach (1995) shows how such narratives help support the analysis held by the western scientists. Narratives are social constructions and they are used to legitimize the actions of the authors of the narratives. Narratives seems to persist over a long time period. In order to challenge narratives one can create counter-narratives. Such counter-narratives will challenge the original narrative and might alter peoples' perception of an issue (Roe 1991).

3.2.1 Space

Lefebvre (1991) views the production of space as a triad. He divides space into: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces. The three concepts of space in Lefebvre's triad are both separate and interconnected at the same time (Hansen & Simonsen 2004). The three concepts are not designed to describe space, but rather the production of space. In the present paper representations of space and representational spaces will be of importance. Although spatial practice is also of importance, it will not be treated in detail.

Representations of space and representational spaces reflect the difference between the conscious planning and creation of spaces by architects and city planners, and the unconscious social reproduction through people's social practices.

Lefebvre (1991) uses the notion of representations of space in order to describe space as viewed by the planners, architects, and social engineers. This is the dominant part of the production of space since the people with this view are often in positions of power over space and planning. Space in terms of representations of space is often thoughts about what space ought to be, and how it could be. Planners, architects and social engineers are in a position to design an area and have their abstract plans made into physical surroundings.

Peet (1996) describes well how the space or landscape can be designed and built with a purpose:

> "....landscapes are the spatial surfaces of regulatory regimes, intended to frame social imaginaries often in definite, system-supportive ways, articulated via discursive means among others, but conjoined expressly with regional and national systems of power" (Peet 1996:37).

Such intentional design of landscapes can help regimes of power to visualize their ideology.

Representational space on the other hand is the space as directly lived through symbols and images. According to Lefebvre (1991) it is passively experienced space since representational space does not represent a conscious construction of space, but space is rather seen as the result of the daily actions. Representational space is the space of users and inhabitants; this notion of space is seen as dominated by the representations of space since the inhabitants live in the space designed and created by architects and planners. The term dominated is used since the planners and architects have the power consciously to design and create physical space while the inhabitant's actions contribute to the space in a unconscious manner.

All planners and architects are also users or inhabitants in a space, making them unable to only see space as representations of space. Because of this there is no fixed position and there are always middle positions. Hence one must use the triad in order to understand Lefebvre. The three concepts of space are always affecting each other and all contribute to the production of space.

Blomley (1998) sees these different ways of understanding the production of space as crucial to shaping of landscapes, since conflicts often occur between inhabitants and the government

in a given area. Jones (1998) states that the government have their experts (planners, architects etc.) who will often view the landscape differently from the inhabitants, causing a division between state and local inhabitants. Conflicts in landscapes will also be reflected in the insider-outsider perspective of Relph (1976). Lefebvre (1991) describes dichotomies as very difficult as they lead to opposition or contrasts. When dealing with dichotomies (such as the insider-outsider concept, or the landscape as a way of seeing opposed to the landscape as a social practice) the middle positions are still there, even though one tends to focus on the extremes, such as insiders or outsiders.

I will now proceed to introduce two approaches to landscape as presented by several writers (Kong & Yeoh 1994; Olwig (1996) and Cosgrove (1998)). This dichotomy serves to divide the notion of landscape, but it is not an absolute division between the two landscape notions.

3.3 Landscape as a way of seeing

The term landscape as a way of seeing represents an outsider view, and is associated with the Italian/British landscape tradition. The English landscape tradition originates from landscape paintings. Palka (1995) describes how the old English word *landskip* came to mean Dutch landscape paintings. The English upper class grew very fond of landscape paintings and imported them to Great Britain. There were two distinct landscape painting traditions: Dutch (northern) and the Italian/British (Setten 2003). The Italian/British landscape paintings portrayed the landscape as an aesthetic scene. As Setten (2003) puts it, the daily life of ordinary people was not generally seen in the Italian/British landscape paintings. The landscape that was depicted was a harmonic landscape. The Italian/British tradition gave rise to a visual way of assessing landscapes (Jones 1991, Palka 1995). Landscapes were designed to be aesthetic; the English upper class made *landscape gardens* in order to shape the landscapes to their liking (Cosgrove 1998). But landscapes were also used for other purposes. Olwig (1996) describes how landscape was brought in to form the background in the theatre. It was the upper class who designed *landscape gardens,* and who ordered the landscape paintings. This led to a situation where what was considered a landscape was a reflection of what the upper class considered to be a landscape. The upper class used the countryside for recreational purposes and the landscape was valued for aesthetics and not for productive capacity. The upper class, which had a formal connection to the land, was considered outsiders in a sense that they were owners and had a distanced perspective of the land they

owned. This gives rise to Cosgrove's (1998) notion of landscape as a way of seeing. The upper class were outside the social practices generated by the people who lived and worked on the land. "Landscape was a 'way of seeing' that was bourgeois, individualist and related to the exercise of power over space*" (Cosgrove 1985:45). The Italian/British tradition gave rise to an understanding of landscape as a visual element. Later it has been argued by authors like Palka (1995) that landscapes are conceived in more ways then visual. Both sound and smell can be a part of how a landscape is evaluated, and one can also argue that also the feel (of the weather for instance) of the landscape will affect our evaluation of landscapes.

3.4 Landscape as social practice

The Northern European landscape tradition differs from the Italian/British tradition. The term landscape has in this Northern European tradition been given a different meaning from the visual/outsider view provided by the British upper class. To use the example of landscape paintings again, Northern European paintings depicted the everyday life of people and how they worked with and in the landscape (Setten 2003). One of the features of this style was the interaction between people and land, but not all such paintings depicted this interaction.

Olwig (1996) has provided a thorough review of how the Northern European meaning of landscape has evolved. The landscape term has its origins in the term *Landschaft*, which was a common word in the Germanic languages that were spoken in Northern Europe. *Landschaft* appeared in various spellings since it was a word common for several Germanic languages, but nevertheless the word had the same meaning. *Landschaft* was closely related to both law and identity. Olwig (1996) writes that even though different *Landschaften* could share both a similar language and ethnicity, they did not share a common law. Laws differed in the separate *Landschaften*. This is due to the fact that *Landschaften* were made up of complex user rights, instead of individual property rights. Customary law made up the foundation of the laws within the *Landschaften*. Olwig (1996) states that the different *Landschaften* developed their own identities.

The close link between identity and landscape can be found on a subjective level. It depends on the users of the landscape and their experience of it. Landscape can be calm and relaxing. Norwegians use the outdoors to go hiking in order to relax and disconnect from their daily

lives (Gullestad 1990). There are also landscapes of fear (Tuan 1980) or landscapes can be mundane, everyday landscapes which one grows accustom to.

Mitchell (2000) provides a good description of the identity aspect of landscape:

"Ongoing and everyday social struggle – along with all the mundane aspects of everyday life itself, like shopping, playing, and working – forms and reforms the landscape. Landscape reifies (at least momentarily) the "natural" social order. And landscape, therefore, becomes the "stage" for the social reproduction of not only labor-power, but society itself" (Mitchell 2000:141).

Christensen (2002) notes that a given location in Norway is fundamentally different for people passing by and the local residents. While the people passing by assess the landscape based on visual impressions, the local residents see the place for more than the apparent visual qualities; they remember people who used to live there and events that took place. These memories are a part of making the landscape what it is to local residents. Important to note is that experiences of landscapes differ from each other. There are not two which are alike. Each person will experience, remember or feel differently about any given experience. So there is no singular meaning given to a landscape. All meanings found in landscapes are historically situated. The meaning given to a certain place is a result of the processes which have been taking place and the historical context in which the meaning was attributed. Lefebvre (1979) describes that by expanding spatial relations the number of spaces is also expanding. The mobility of people leads to new spatial and social relations.

"Everywhere, people are realizing that spatial relations also are social relations" (Lefebvre 1979:290). With greater mobility and movement of people we expand our spatial capabilities and hence we also enhance the number of spaces. Lefebvre (1979) describes how a change in lifestyle does not mean anything if there is not an production of an appropriate space to accompany it. This can be seen in relations to moving in to a new house; this is a significant change in lifestyle which is accompanied by the production of new space. People moved out of their houses and into an HDB complex would have to create a new space for themselves.

3.5 Insiders and outsiders

Landscape regarded as both a way of seeing and as a result of social interaction can be closely affiliated with what Edward Relph (1976) saw as inside and outside positions. One can think of the Italian/British tradition, which leaves landscape as a way of seeing, as being the

outsider position, while the Northern European view of landscape as the result of social practices and closely connected with identity can be considered an insider position to a landscape. However, Relph (1976) points out that there are a lot of possible positions, not just insiders and outsiders. There can be several degrees of outsider/insider. This is hence not necessarily a dualism. It is seldom easy to draw clear lines between who are outsiders and who are insiders.

3.6 Place and identity

Places are significant for individuals because they are the focus of personal feelings. Places can be infused with meanings and feelings. Place is created by people both as individuals and groups (Relph 1976, Hansen & Simonsen 2004). Rose (1995) describes three ways in which identity can be related to place, identifying with a place, identifying against a place and not identifying at all.

Places which are familiar to us can evoke a sense of belonging. In given places we find ourselves relaxed and at home. Qualities you assign to that given place can make you feel comfortable and at ease. This is what Rose (1995) describes as identifying with a place. Edward Relph (1976) sees place as closely connected with identity, especially identification with a given place. The basis for an inside position, according to Relph, is a feeling of belonging and that you can identify with this place. The more of an insider you are, the stronger you identify with the place. There are a number of levels of outside or inside positions. Rose (1995) gives an example of how beliefs of settlers affected the landscape they settled. Beliefs and identity of people occupying an area of land can impose certain physical features on a landscape. There are different scales of belonging to a place; one can experience identifying with a place on a local, regional, national or a supranational scale.

Identifying against a place is the second approach, by Rose (1995), in an effort to link places to identity. A number of people use contrasts to identify who they are not, making it easier to distinguish who they are. People can identify against places, places which they do not feel that they belong to in any way. Massey (1997) shows how people living in given places contrast themselves to other places in order to make the features of their own places more obvious. Said (2002[1995]) describes how Europe has used the Orient in order to define itself.

According to Said (2002[1995]), Europe depended on its image of the Orient in order to define itself.[4]

The last approach by Rose (1995) is not to identify at all. As described by Christensen 2002, the visitors assess a new place based on visual elements. When reaching a new place, people often do not strongly about that place at all. When approaching a new place as an outsider there is no prior connection to the place and hence no feelings have had the time to develop. There is not a feeling for or against the place, leaving the person indifferent towards the place. This is often the case of immigrants, but can also be experienced in other cases. As a Norwegian citizen I do not feel European, but rather Norwegian. I do not identify with Europe until I am faced with a situation in which continents and belonging to continents are discussed.

Cresswell (1996) illustrates that there are codes of behaviour for any given place. Sometimes the rules of behaviour are written in text, but most of the times the rules which apply are not written or stated, but are merely expected to be followed. If you should fail to follow such unwritten rules you would appear to be out of place. Often thoughts about appropriate behaviour do not strike us until we face what we regard as inappropriate behaviour (Cresswell 1996).

3.7 Approach to the shaping of the urban built environment in colonial cities.

In this section I will attempt to show the connection between modernization theory and landscape. Brenda Yeoh (1996) presents three approaches to the colonial city: the modernization paradigm, the cultural explanation and the political economy approach. The modernization paradigm views colonial cities as a transition between the traditional and the modern. This approach is based upon the theory that every city passes through a linear progression of stages until the form and function of a western-style modern city is obtained. This is clearly in line with modernization theory. The colonial city is thought to be a middle phase, where there are several modern elements, but one can also find traditional native or

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[4] A similar use of dichotomy can be found in Singapore around the mid-1970s. Singapore's nation building process was in need of "genuine Asian values" in order to generate a national identity. When defining "Asian" values", "European values (most notably the values of the former colonial masters, the British)" were identified as contrasts to the "Asian values" (Hill & Fee 1995)

pre-colonial elements. The western/modern elements will be shopping facilities, port and suburbs.

Colonial cities are interesting because they represent both the traditional values of the indigenous people and the western values of the colonisers. In Singapore there were few indigenous people, only a few Malay fishermen, hence their influence on Singapore is limited. In Singapore's case there was much foreign influence, first from the colonial masters and the immigrants (from China, Malaysia and India), then from the trading partners and tourists. The modernization paradigm states that with the development of the city, old, pre-colonial elements will disappear and modern/western elements will dominate the city. Yeoh (1996) refers to a model by Terrence McGee (1979), which states that colonial states will develop through 3 predetermined stages. This model will be further elaborated under the heading, "from traditional to modern landscapes". Walter Rostow argued that colonialism had been very important for the growth of former colonies. He claimed this since it was widely believed, within modernization theory, that development needed exogenous factors to start. Endogenous factors would be hurdles to development, but with the help of exogenous factors development could take place. The colonial powers provided this exogenous help needed in order to pass the endogenous hurdles (Willis 2005).

3.8 City planning as an important tool

Modernization theory is a powerful tool in constructing the landscape. The ideas which characterise modernization theory are taken up in politics and contribute in shaping policies. Politics are very important when making guidelines and policies for how to develop the city, especially within modernization theory which often was used as a tool for planners (Willis 2005). According to Lund (1994) planning was an accepted tool for development. City planning is described by Perry, Kong and Yeoh (1997) as one of the key factors to the success of Singapore's economic growth. It is stated by the government that city planning optimizes the scarce resource which land is and it helps to control the real estate market. Planning not only concerns the location of buildings and the type of building. Planning concerns also the ideological shaping of Singapore. Singapore has three major ethnic groups and these are all, in their own way, affected by the construction and reconstruction of landscape.

"The reconstructions and management of landscapes has become a critical factor in the material and ideological shaping of Singapore"(Kong & Yeoh 2003:4)

City planning has been utilised to a great extent in Singapore. However, the state and the population does not always agree on what is a valuable landscape. Put strongly by Teo et al. (1995:44):".... at the end of the day, it is the state which has the power to define landscapes and their meanings on its own terms." Singapore had a clear strategy when it came to the built environment and the landscape. Singapore would build what was described as a "first world oasis in a third world region" (Lee 2000:58). Singapore would ensure western standards of public and personal security, healthcare, education, telecommunications, transport and services. The thought behind this scheme was to create a familiar environment for foreign investors, hence generating the image of Singapore as a good land to invest in.

Modernization theory and its ideals have greatly affected Singapore's ruling elite. The policies put into action bear the mark of a society intent on developing along the same path as the West. By getting rid of the traditional and making room for the modern, foreign investors would be encouraged to invest in Singapore. As preached by modernization theory, the diffusion would come from the outside, but Singapore had to rid itself of internal structural and social barriers. The People's Action Party (PAP) would act as the "actors of change" in order to turn Singapore into the modern metropolis it is today.

3.9 From traditional to modern landscapes

McGee (1979) is concerned with developing a spatial model of East Asian cities. The model which he suggests is a model that has a traditional (bazaar) sector and a modern (firm/capitalist) sector. McGee envisages three phases of spatial development in cities. Phase one is a phase where the bazaar economy is the dominant one. The second phase is marked by an acceleration of the firm sector, leading to an even split between firm and bazaar sector in spatial use. In phase three the firm type activities become dominant leaving only small pockets of traditional bazaar economy. These small bazaar pockets might prove rather resilient, but unless they are protected by the government the last remains of the bazaar sector will perish (McGee 1979). The model resembles the economic model of Arthur Lewis (but not spatial, like McGee's). Arthur Lewis suggests that the modern sector will engulf the traditional sector because the modern sector will be more efficient and this will contribute to commercialization of the traditional sector (Skarstein 1997, Thirlwall 2006). McGee states

that his model is not intended to fit any special city, but rather to give an overview over the general trends, hence variations from this model to be expected. The general idea of the model is to show how development of a firm sector will affect land use. As for Singapore the rise of the firm sector has contributed to a rather strict city planning, leaving nothing to chance.

Residential areas for the workers differ. The workers in the firm sector will be living further away from their work area then workers of the bazaar economy. In general McGee (1979) explains this by the long and irregular hours worked in the bazaar economy and that the workers, often poor people, can save transport costs by living close to their work. The shophouses found both in Little India and Chinatown are such examples of how residential functions are combined with retail functions. According to McGee Singapore has moved from phase 1 to 3 in a matter of a decade. Even though Singapore is now a phase 3 society small pockets of bazaar economy is expected to be found

The changes can be seen in Singapore, for example in terms of hawkers. Hawkers have been subject to different forms of regulation for a long time. McGee (1977) reviews actions taken against street hawkers and states that the most positive policies towards hawkers are the limited locational restrictions. Hawkers need to work in areas with high pedestrian density. This is usually the basis of conflict since these areas are crowded and hawkers seem to be in the way. Chinatown was famous for its number of street hawkers; especially after WW2 a lot of poor people supported themselves as hawkers, and on a regular day in 1968 there would be as many as 1200 street hawkers in Chinatown alone (Archives and Oral History Department 1983). Singapore started to formalise such trade early on. Formalisation meant that the hawkers would have a permanent stand which was non-mobile. For mobile hawkers, regular markets would be arranged. Such permanent stands would help formalize the trade and keep it under supervision. In 1983 Singapore introduced a law which confined street hawkers to indoor premises. The basis for this decision was hygiene (Chinese Heritage Museum 2007).

Other traditional features, which are not economic, but represent tradition are burial grounds. Burial grounds have become heavily debated since they were sacred to the relatives of the people buried there, but were a huge resource which was unutilized according to city planners. The traditional burial rituals of the Chinese were replaced with cremation

3.10 Ethnic theory

Urban landscapes have been studied thoroughly from the early 1980s and onwards. A field which has been given less attention is ethnic spaces within the city. Buzzelli (2001) gives several reasons to why there has been little interest for ethnic spaces within the cities of the world. One of the most interesting reasons he gives is that scholars tend to see migrants as migrants only for a short while. The general idea is that after migrants settle in a new city they will "blend in" and adapt to their new surroundings. Even when ethnic symbols can be seen in an urban landscape these symbols are often regarded as unimportant: "Ethnic markers in the landscape are regarded as 'trivial', 'exotic tidbits', even epiphenomena of 'pseudo-ethnicity' in the urban fabric of assimilation"(Buzzelli 2001:574). Ethnic groups will always involve an inside/outside perspective. Ethnic groups separate themselves from other ethnic groups by determining which features are common for their group. By identifying such features one can determine if a person qualifies to be a part of a given ethnic group or not. As with all such dichotomies there is the question of middle positions. In ethnicity there are many middle positions, and it is an impossible task to identify all people within a given ethnic group. But in general one could say that if a group sustains its identity when its members interact with people outside the group then there are criteria for determining membership and exclusion (Barth 1996 [1969]).

The term "race" has been substituted by ethnicity, for two reasons. First of all, interbreeding has always occurred between humans so that there are no fixed boundaries. Second, hereditary physical traits do not follow clear boundaries. The term "race" is a social construct, and serves its purpose as a categorization based on judgment and not on genetic facts (Hylland Eriksen 1996 [1993]). Every inhabitant of Singapore has an identity card, and on this card "race" is stated[5]. This use of the term makes the social construct "race" an important category in Singapore (Kong & Yeoh 2003). Banks (1996) describes ethnic groups as a social construct. Banks (1996:12) summarizes the general idea held by Fredrik Barth; "it is not so much the group which endures as the idea of the group".

Cultural categories and social group referents are the focus of ethnic inquiry. Groups have boundaries in order to separate who are included in a given group and who are left out. Mechanisms exist to maintain such boundaries. Differences amongst groups are defined as

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[5] I use the word race here since that is what is printed on the identification card of the Singaporeans.

index features; such index features must be easily seen, grasped, understood and reacted to in social situations. Index features can tell which groups a person belong to. It is common that insider aspects of a group are exaggerated amongst outsiders to that group. Stereotyping is one of the most common types of caricature. By stereotyping one can exaggerate certain index features connected to a group, making the boundaries between different groups even clearer. Different ways of dressing might symbolize belonging to a certain group; this is also the case with language (Nash 1996 [1989]). Ethnic groups often share a common language, a common religion and a common origin.

"Ethnic groups are merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories" (Barth 1996 [1969]:79). Segregation is a term for such a separation of people of different socio-economic and cultural characteristic (Sandhu & Sandhu 2007). Ethnic groups are known to occupy areas of cities, giving these areas a special look and feel from the rest of the city. Such enclaves can be seen around the world, for example Chinatown of San Francisco, the French-Creole district of New Orleans, Little London of Toronto (which later became Little Italy) or Little India of Singapore (Arreola 1995, Perry et al. 1997, Buzzelli 2001). [6]

Ethnic groups have traditions which they see as a result of their past. Tradition has its roots in the past, but there is also a future dimension of tradition. The responsibility of preservation is held by the carriers of tradition; hence the future of a group is decided by the effort of the present individual group members (Nash 1996 [1989]).
"Tradition is the past of a culture, as that past is thought to have continuity, a presence and a future. These features of tradition bestow upon the past a weight of authority; the very fact of survival, pastness, and continuity give an aura of authority, legitimacy and rightness to cultural beliefs and practices"(Nash 1996 [1989]:27).

In order for an ethnic group to persist when co-existing next to other ethnic groups there has to be a structuring of interaction. There have to be some general rules, but different ethnic groups also have to be allowed to set their own rules to create their own identity (Barth 1996 [1969]). Such a system exists in Singapore. In Singapore there is a state system dominated by the largest ethnic group (Chinese), but cultural diversity and religion are left to the inhabitants. Such a system was described by Furnivall in 1944 (Furnivall 1976). [7] Yeoh

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[6] The Little London area later experienced large Italian settlement. The Italians took over the area and made it into a Italian ethnic area known as Little Italy (Buzzelli 2001).
[7] The first edition of his book *Netherlands India, a study of plural economy*

(1996:2) describes the colonial city (represented by Singapore) as the archetypical exemplification of what J.S. Furnivall has called a *'plural society'*.

Furnivall (1956) describes the plural society as following:

> *"Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit. Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labour along the racial lines"* (Furnivall 1956:304).

Barth (1996 [1969]) describes ethnic groups as culture-bearing units. Persons belonging to an ethnic group can be recognized by the members exhibiting the particular traits of their culture. Mary Douglas (1986) explains how latent groups survive. There are several reasons for their survival. Maintenance of boundaries is a key issue; the group has to know its members and who are not considered members. Another important issue is the shared beliefs and the common thought style of the group's members. These keeps the group together. "Ethnic groups only persist as significant units if they imply marked difference in behavior, i.e. persisting cultural differences" (Barth 1996 [1969]:79).

Barth (1996 [1969]) writes that a group of Norwegian mountain farmers identify themselves with traditional Norwegian values, and see themselves as Norwegian. The lifestyle of these mountain farmers might differ from the lifestyle of other Norwegians, but they still identify themselves as Norwegians since there is a set of Norwegian values which these farmers recognize. Recognition and identification with a set of values is a common feature of ethnicity (Banks 1996).

4. **Methodology**

This dissertation has been a continuous process for the last year and a half. The methodology of this paper has changed several times, agility in the research methodology has allowed for changes which were necessary to collect the data needed for this paper.

4.1 The process

Before I left for Singapore I had a rather clear idea of how to go about my research. I had identified the research areas and I had made an interview guide. The data material would consist mainly of interviews in combination with observation. Upon arrival I rapidly understood that I had to change my research design. My first mistake had been to presume that there were still a number of residents living in the two study areas. My initial idea was to contact these informants and interview them about their past and present experiences of Chinatown and Little India. As it turned out, there were few residents living in the areas, and they proved to be hard to identify. Most people I met were either working in stores or in other establishments geared towards business, but they were not living in the area where they were working. I turned to the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) and the National Library of Singapore. At the NAS I found an oral history archive, called Oral History Centre (OHC). The Oral History Centre contained a number of prerecorded interviews. The informants spoke of either their lives/experiences in Singapore or spoke on a given theme. One of the themes was development, and the effect development had on the lives of the informants. These interviews became the backbone of my studies as they gave a lot of information about past conditions. I decided to use observation to uncover the present situation, but also other methods were used in the puzzle to make up a complete picture.

As the process of collecting data progressed, I came to depend on my friends, and their friends, for informal conversations. These conversations could build upon my observations and help me clarify questions I had. Such conversations would also provide the important age perspective which would be of importance since I am working with change over time. It was very interesting to listen to different perspectives from both old and younger inhabitants.

From the oral history archive I learnt a lot that I had not previously read in the secondary literature dealing with the study areas. When reviewing the data material I found the Little

India area to be the more interesting. I decided to go a bit deeper into the Little India area, hoping to resolve more of the questions of why and how the Little India area had preserved more of the features that I, as an outsider, would perceive to be traditional Indian culture in the landscape. To gain some more perspectives on the Little India area I conducted two interviews with stakeholders within the area. The first interview was conducted with a representative for the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA). The second interview was with a representative for the Hindu Endowments Board (HEB), who can be said to be a stakeholder both within the physical surroundings, but also within the religious sphere. My approach changed as I saw the difference between Chinatown and Little India. This has led to an imbalance in the data collected from the two areas. The imbalance is represented through my growing interest in the Little India area, and the collection of more data from this area than Chinatown. Towards the end of my fieldwork I started making contacts which would give me possibilities of more interviews. The interviews were planned and confirmed with both the Singapore Tourism Board and a leader of a Clan association. Unfortunately I experienced a collapsed lung and was hospitalized for 10 days, with the following week and a half spent convalescing. Needless to say this amputated my fieldwork, denying me more interviews. Hence the data material collected in the early stages of the fieldwork became the core of my data.

4.2 The qualitative approach

This paper takes a qualitative approach to development. The reason for choosing a qualitative approach in is based upon the subjective experience of landscape. The same landscape can be viewed differently by different people. I do not think that I would get the same level of details and insight into the personal views held by the informants if I was to do a quantitative study.

Qualitative research and research done within the qualitative tradition can be traced back to a philosophical starting point that knowledge is situated and partial. Knowledge is created in relations between people in a social setting. As for the data I have collected for this paper, it is subjective and it is created in the meeting between me and my informants. Photographs are framed by the photographer in a certain way, written texts are written in a context, and the interview situation is based upon the personal relations between the informant and the researcher. Objective and value-free knowledge does not exist. The qualitative approach is a

good starting point since it recognizes this and makes use of positionality to help explain the researcher influence on the research (Dwyer & Limb 2001).

Qualitative methods are well suited for exploring personal experiences. My paper relies heavily on the informant's use of and views of the landscape. Thagaard (2002) states that qualitative methods are appropriate for exploring something that is previously unknown. In my case both the study areas and Singapore were new to me, and hence the qualitative methods were of good use.

4.3 Primary and secondary data

During my fieldwork I had to make some changes to the nature of data material; these changes are conscious decisions. Awareness of the change from primary data to secondary data eases the use of such secondary data.

The difference between primary and secondary data can be found in who has gathered the data and for which purpose. Primary data is gathered by the researcher himself and is tailormade for the purpose for which it was collected. The data is affected by the researcher and by the context in which it came into being. When somebody else then the researcher who collected the data uses the same data material it becomes secondary data. The person who decides to make use of these already existing data has some challenges. Secondary data are collected and influenced by someone else; secondary data can prove difficult to use since it has been collected for another study than your own (Kitchin & Tate 2000). Secondary data is well suited for use, but one must reflect upon the context in which it came into being and the purpose for the collection of such data.

The primary data in my paper consist of observation, two in-depth interviews and numerous informal conversations. Secondary data in my case consist of several types of material. I have examined pictures, video recordings, books and most importantly I have gained access to the interview database of the National Archives. In the Oral History Centre (OHC) I found 13 interviews which I used. In my research, secondary data turned out to be a very good option. I was interested in the element of change and development over time. Secondary data gave me access to the views and opinions of the elderly, who might not be around to speak their mind today (Ringdal 2001).

4.3.1 Oral History Centre as a source of secondary data

The Oral History Centre (OHC) is the unit in control of the collection and administration of the oral archives. In 1979, the Government of Singapore took the initiative in establishing an Oral History Unit with the intention of recording information on appropriate subjects of historical importance and of filling in the gaps in primary source material concerning the nation's history and development. In 1993, it came under the National Heritage Board together with three Museums; the Oral History Centre is now part of the National Archives of Singapore. The OHC has about 3000 interviews, which are cataloged in a database. The database is divided into 37 main categories or projects as they are known as.[8] The projects are given names after what type of data they contain.

As for the interviews I listened to several that were conducted by the same interviewer. I was reduced to only obtaining information through audio, but I could get a feel of the general atmosphere in the room during the interview. The atmosphere was good, and laughter could be heard in several interviews. The interviewers from OHC were very skilled, conducting interviews in a professional manner. The interviewers employed at the OCH have a background from different schools. According to the OCH preference is given to people educated within history or sociology. The interviewers are trained within the art of oral history, but in some instances volunteers conduct interviews, which are later donated to the OCH.

4.4 Positionality

The researcher has a background that will affect the research. When it comes to interpretations or what to emphasize this will differ between researchers (Kvale 1996, Butler 2001). Knowledge is generated between people; it is not objective but subjective. Cindy Katz (1994) states that all scientists are tainted by cultural baggage. Since no one is able to do value-free research, it crucial to position oneself within the research (Haraway 1988).

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[8] This depends on how you categorize, but I have counted 37 projects as of 2007 (I counted" Communities of Singapore" parts 1, 2 and 3 as one project. The same also goes for "Development of Education in Singapore", which consists of three language parts).

Jones (1985) emphasizes the values held by the researcher and how this affects the research. Values held by a researcher can, consciously or unconsciously, be reflected in the data material and the methods. The personal views the researcher has towards issues such as which methods work better than others become important in fieldwork. Personally I decided at an early stage that in-depth interview was my choice of method. This changed when I realized that I could not perform the interviews as planned. Based on my pre-determination I searched for other ways of conducting my fieldwork and came up with the idea of using the Oral History Centre. I am sure the fieldwork could have been done with other methods, but the voice inside my head said that the Oral History Centre would be the right choice. This is merely an example of how the researcher's personal beliefs and values affect the fieldwork. Such values do not come only from oneself; such meanings can also be a result of an individual's connection to a group.

When still quite young and growing up I was convinced that statements were either right or wrong. I was a firm believer in objective knowledge; this world view has changed as I have got older. At university the professors I met initially seemed to place more value on quantitative methods. I subscribed to this thought for some time, but after a while I changed from political science to geography and realised that qualitative methods were just as valuable. I eventually chose to use qualitative methods for my fieldwork. I like the thought of personal contact between researcher and the researched. The qualitative methods can be said to have a personal appeal to me, and I am more likely to make us of them also in future work.

4.4.1 Positioning myself in the field

I would describe myself as an outsider to the study areas. I had never been to Singapore prior to the research. I stand out in terms of being Caucasian, but other than that there are few physical features that reveal me as a possible outsider.[9] Both study areas are considered to be important areas for tourists in Singapore. I chose to utilize the tourist role. This was a conscious choice I made in order to move around, ask questions and take pictures without arousing attention. The two study areas were quite different from each other, and unlike my usual environment. Since the study areas were unfamiliar to me I had to spend some time observing, and then asking informants about my observations to help me understand the study areas better. Thagaard (2003) emphasizes that an insider position does not necessarily give

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[9] Caucasians fall into the category *others* in terms of ethnicity in Singapore; this category makes up 2% of the total population (Singapore Department of Statistics 2005).

you a better position to come up with reliable results, but that an outside position can give just as good reliability. What is common for both outsiders and insiders is the need to reflect upon one's own position and the effect this can have on one's research. As an outsider in a tourist role I had little effect on the people I observed, as they are used to tourists. The effect I might have had is that people might have been "putting on a show" when they noticed me. Tourists are important for the areas, and hence people might have been posing for my pictures and appearing differently around me.

I experienced my position as outsider as a both positive and negative. It was positive in the sense that I could observe and take photos and observe without anybody thinking twice about it, but it was negative in a sense of distance to the subjects. I never felt close to the people who lived/worked in the study areas. I felt I could gain insight into how conditions had been through the use of OHC, but I felt I did not get the same, thorough information on how conditions were now. I had to rely on my own observation and informal conversations when trying to understand the situation today. Dowler (2001) states that friendships can complicate relations between researcher and informant, and hence it can be good for the research to keep a distance towards the informants. I did have some close friends in Singapore, who were a great resource to me. I feel that my friendship with local inhabitants was positive and it did not affect my studies negatively.

I think it is important to emphasize that I have had few encounters with the Chinese or Indian cultures prior to my research. I have grown up in Norway, and I have not experienced cities of the same size as Singapore. The two study areas stand out from the rest of the city centre of Singapore. They are both special in architecture and the layout of the areas differs. I have visited China once, and this impression probably stayed in the back of my mind as I found Chinatown not as expected. My first impression of Chinatown was a bit chaotic. I wandered into Pagoda Street and was amazed by the crowd and the constant offers from the small shops owners along the streets. A little extract from my field notes reveals my first impressions:

> "The whole area is commercialized, everywhere small stands can be found, and they all offer to sell you something. Tourists are everywhere, especially western (Caucasians) but also Asian tourists" (Own field notes).

The impressions of a chaotic place, with a lot of tourists and a commercial focus stayed with me throughout the work.

My first impression of Little India was a bit different. Little India also had a lot of tourists, but it differed in terms of what the stores along the five foot way offered. This was my first meeting with Indian culture and I found it to confirm some of my ideas of Indian culture. These ideas had been acquired through watching TV-shows and reading about India. Being there personally gave a much more real and up-close impression. For me Little India offered some new sights and impressions. In my field notes I have noted the different architecture, the Indian music being played over loudspeakers in stores and the number of people in traditional Indian clothing. My first impression can be said to be positive and a bit more exciting than my visit to Chinatown, since this was new to me.

4.5 Ethics

One potential trap I could fall into was to feel I had to buy something in order to access informants. I chose not to buy goods in exchange for information, and I think this was the right ethical choice. I feel I avoided what is known as potentially exploitative relationships. I tried to talk to shopkeepers but I got little response since I was not buying anything. It seemed I was taking their time if I was walking around but not shopping.

When interviewing the representatives of URA and HED I prepared well. I did not want to be caught in an asymmetrical interview situation. An asymmetrical interview situation is when the interviewee has more power than the interviewer or vice versa. There was little doubt that both representatives had more knowledge about their field than I had. This can allow them to take control over the interview situation. In order to even out this asymmetrical power balance I used my interview guide to control the interview and to lead the interview onto the themes in which I was interested (Dowling 2000).

I switched between two roles during my stay in Singapore. In situations where I was in direct contact with people I would identify myself as a researcher: in situations where I was not in direct contact with people, as for example when I was walking around in the study areas, I would slip into an anonymous "tourist" role. In direct contact with people I would always identify myself as a researcher and I would openly discuss the goal of my studies, in order to ensure informed consent. By identifying myself as a researcher it became easier to ask questions that might have seemed strange to the local inhabitants. If a conversation became

interesting to my studies, I would ask the informant if I could make use of this conversation in my paper. This also holds true for all interviews conducted. As the informants were at all times fully aware of that the information was to be used in my work and that participation was voluntarily, this should ensure informed consent (Dowling 2000, Kitchin & Tate 2000, Valentine 2001).

When observing, I was in a public place and it became impossible to identify myself as a researcher to all people. Hence when in public areas I would instead appear to be a tourist, which was a category that seemed natural for me and the subjects surrounding me. Kitchin & Tate (2000) suggests that observation is a good way to register direct actions:

> "Rather than asking people about their views and feelings, you watch what they do and listen to what they say." (Kitchin & Tate 2000:220)

In a participatory observation situation one can both listen and observe. I conducted straight observation and hence I did not find it ethically correct to listen in on what was said. I felt that this would not be appropriate and that it would be a breach of research ethics. As long as I had not identified myself as a researcher to the people involved in the conversations, I should not listen to or use personal conversations as a part of my research.

4.6 Access to field

My areas of interest were public areas where physical access was easy to obtain, but my challenge lay in the psychological access to the field. To access informants and their world was rather difficult and I thought in the early phases of the research that a tourist role would be better. Both study areas were primarily areas regulated for business. Both areas had a large number of shops, restaurants and coffee shops. The shop owners and the people working in the shops often lived in areas other than where they worked, and this led them to take little interest in the study areas. The shop clerks were most interested in doing business and would be very eager to talk to you if you were about to buy something, but they did not find you interesting as a researcher or a tourist who is not out to buy something. This is where my role as a tourist backfired on me and left me in a situation where I felt uncomfortable in the study areas because of the constant pressure to buy something. I realize now that my fieldwork could have been done differently. I might have been better off if I had spoken to more people and tried harder to identify informants. My fear was that by being too insistent I would

compromise relations between informants, the field itself and myself. I did not want to "ruin" the field for other researchers; hence I made my observations without being too intrusive.

The interviews in the oral history archives were easy to access. Some of the interviews had restricted access but one could apply for access. If access was gained for these tapes, then one is allowed to listen through them, but one cannot take notes during the listening process.

Younger informants were another issue. I had good access to younger people because we could chat over coffee or dinner. Within the younger generation I also had a number of friends, which eased access, and I was constantly introduced to new people who I would talk to.

4.7 Selection of informants

When one is researching change over time, age becomes a relevant variable. For my study it is relevant to see how landscape has been used/percieved before and now. I found a large collection of interviews with elderly informants who had resided in the study areas. These interviews from OHC were secondary sources as they were conducted by others. There was not an even number of men and women. My data material from OHC consists of a larger number of interviews with men than with women. The informants at the Oral History Archive were selected on the basis of what they had been interviewed about and where they lived or had lived earlier.

I had to use the network of my friends in Singapore to get in contact with younger informants. The younger informants were used mostly in informal conversations and not structured interviews. My primary data contains conversations with both men and women, and were evenly divided between male and female. Informants were identified in several ways. For the youths I used the network of my Singaporean friends. I was constantly introduced to new people, and had conversations with these people. Interviews with the representatives of URA and the HEB were obtained through e-mailing organizations that had a stake in the study areas.

4.7.1 Informant selection at OHC

The two projects which I used the most, "*Communities of Singapore*" and "*Special project Chinatown*", have different origins. In general projects are initiated after observing which types of information is missing within the OHC. When a theme is identified the project and its size is determined after considering factors such as manpower resources and time frame. The "*Special project Chinatown"* was initiated in collaboration with museums, while the "*Communities of Singapore"* project was initiated by the oral history specialist. These two projects were recorded at different times. The "*Special project Chinatown*" was recorded from 1999 to 2000. While the *"Communities of Singapore"* project has been recorded in the time period from 1983 til 1992. This leads to a large span in the time period in which the interviews were collected. Hence information that might appear in some interviews can be outdated.

These projects contain interviews with inhabitants of different communities, and the "*Special project Chinatown*" also includes changes to the inhabitant's life as a major part. These categories formed the starting point for my identification of interesting informants. The interviews often last for a rather long period of time, the shortest ones were limited to an hour, while others would stretch over 24 hours. The interviews would often cover the informant's life in Singapore. The interviews would in some instances take the shape of a life-history interview. Such interviews were helpful in determining changes to the informant's life in the given communities. So even if the interviews did not incorporate exact questions of changes to the landscape one could trace how the informant's life changed over time. All interviews are categorized in the web pages of OHC and listed with a synopsis, allowing me to decide which interviews were the most useful for my purpose. I read through an online catalogue in order to find the interviews that would be of interest to me. I also utilized a text search if there were certain themes I felt lacked. Such text searches could give me interviews outside my primary categories, but which could contain information that would supplement the information found within the primary categories. The interviews that were of interest would then be ordered from the staff, so that I could listen through them. In total I used 13 interviews from the OHC. Of these 7 concerned Chinatown, and the remaining 6 Little India.

4.8 Tools in the study

4.8.1 Observation

Kitchin & Tate (2000) describe observation as a less intrusive research method than interviews. You step back and watch as the world unfolds before your eyes. Observation focuses on people's behaviour, and the researcher can then work to uncover the meaning behind such behaviour. When observing, one does not have to see people in a contemporary setting in order to discover their behaviour. Cultural landscapes also tell a lot about the people who inhabit them, a cultural landscape being defined as a landscape affected by human culture (Jones 1989).

The research value of observation lies in the directness of the observation. Instead of speaking to people and asking them questions about their actions, one can use observation to see what is actually done. Observation of actual events secures a high degree of validity. In interviews and in questionnaires people can answer what they think would be more correct. When observed, actions may become clearer.

Observation can be divided into subtypes. I will here concentrate on what Kitchin & Tate (2000) describe as straight observation. Straight observation does not include participation; it is a situation where the researcher is detached from the situation. The researcher stays in the "background". The goal of the observation is that the subjects studied will take no notice of the person and instead go about their daily business. Observation can also be categorized by the degree of structure. I chose not to utilize a checklist, but rather made use of a notebook and a camera.

The observations took place over several days. I visited the areas on different days and I also varied the time of day for my visit. Through visits performed on different days and time of day I could uncover how the areas changed. I walked around, carrying a notebook and my camera. I would take notes when seeing something of interest, and I would take photos of interesting features. I did not leave the "field" when I left the two study areas, but always had my notebook with me. When walking around other areas of Singapore I could see similarities and differences between the study areas and the rest of Singapore.

4.8.2 Picture analysis

At the National Archives of Singapore, a lot of photographic material could be found. I had two means of selecting pictures. First and foremost I would use the PICAS (Picture Archive Singapore) database. In this database one is able to search all the photos held by the NAS. I searched pictures by caption, this function allowed me to browse pictures which were of interest to my study. An option was also to search pictures by which year they were taken. This allowed for an interesting illustration of how given areas in Singapore had changed over the years. Pictures in the PICAS database were either taken on behalf of NAS or they were photographs which had been donated by informants or photographers.

The other mean of searching pictures was to review the printed, photographic material available at NAS. Numerous books photo documenting the development could be found in the book shelves. The pictures in the printed books were usually available in the PICAS database, so when an interesting image was found it could be retrieved in the database. The pictures utilized in this dissertation has been taken in the time period from 1955 to 2008. The pictures were taken by different persons.

When analysing the pictures I tried to figure out what the photographer intended to focus on. In most photos there is an object which the photographer has decided to capture on film. Depending on what the photographer has intended to show one can try to uncover the meaning of the photo. An important feature of photography is that you need to decide what to leave out and what to include, hence photography is very subjective. It is up to the photographer to decide what should be in the photo. With these thoughts in mind I have viewed pictures and tried to see which message the photographer tried to convey, but at the same time I have tried to look for elements in the pictures which might not be the focus of the picture, but will contribute to reveal something about life as it was earlier. Knowles and Sweetman (2004) describe pictures as highly selective. Pictures are easily manipulated or altered. There are a number of choices made by the photographer when taking a photo. There is the obvious choice of lens, the distance to the motif, the lighting and the framing. More complex choices are settings in ISO value, shutter speed or aperture. Alterations in any of these parameters of the same motif can make one picture very different from another and alter the viewer's impression of the photo.

Einar Strumse (1998) has made a study aiming to uncover what people want to see in the agricultural landscape. He has several predefined categories and each of these categories are represented through photos. Two of the three lower scoring categories contain modern human made structures. In the pictures these human-made structures are photographed as rather large and dominating, and the surrounding landscape is not portrayed. One can only wonder if this way of framing the photos has contributed to giving these categories a low score. If the pictures had been taken from a greater distance then the result might have been different.

Amidst the critique of photography as subjective, one should take into consideration that photos are very good at conveying an emotional tone. As described by Knowles and Sweetman (2004), interviews reduced to merely a piece of text can actually strip the interview of irony or humour that the interview originally contained. Dependence on text can occur when one is too occupied with transcribing. Pictures can give a visual impression of how things were at a given time and should be used as a supplement to text.

I have taken my own pictures to show a certain feature or underline a statement. My pictures are not value-free, but are used to emphasize what I write in my text.

4.8.3 Interviews conducted by myself

Interviews have been conducted in several forms. I have had a lot of informal conversations. These have occurred in situations where I met persons who had interesting information. Immediately after the conversation ended I made notes on the interesting topics which came up during the conversation. In such situations I might have had what is known as selective memory, which means I only remembered the things which I felt "fit my paper" Such selective memory also has some positive effects since I am more likely to remember things which are important to my paper during a conversation.

For the more formal interviews I dressed smartly, as I wanted the informants to treat me with respect and hence I wore clothing which would ensure that I would be taken seriously. The formal interviews I performed were with representatives of the Hindu Endowment Board (HEB) and the Urban Renewal Authority (URA). Both of these interviews were with persons who are used to be interviewed. They had a lot of knowledge and it became increasingly

important to avoid an asymmetrical power relation, as described in the section on ethics (Dowling 2000).

I know I am not skilled enough to write down both answers, body language and at the same time keep up a "well floating conversation". My notes contains no documentation of the body language, but instead I chose to make notes of the general feeling of the interviews. I think that the general impression left by an interview says a lot about the interview. If you are left with a positive feeling and felt good about the interview, then the information exchange and the construction of knowledge have probably been good.

One could tell, and there was no need to note this, that the URA officer was bothered when we spoke about the future development of Little India. This information was at the time still confidential. He avoided the subject to a great degree. I did ask some questions about the further development of the area, but since the URA officer avoided the topic I understood that I should back down. Other than that, both interviews went well. There was a positive feel to them, and they seemed like conversations only interrupted by me taking notes along the way.

4.8.4 Interviews from NAS

These interviews were to make up the main thrust of the research. I have used 7 interviews with former residents of Chinatown and 6 interviews with residents from Little India. The interviews had different lengths, but I usually made use of half an hour to one hour of each interview. After finding the relevant tapes, I listened through the interviews, with a pen and a notebook ready to take notes. I did not transcribe the interviews in full, since there were questions/themes that were of no interest. It was hard to make the informants fit into predefined categories because the questions varied between the interviews.

Interviews could be restricted. It was the informants himself which decided if the interview he had given should be made available to the public. In order to access restricted interviews one had to apply access by contacting the informant. In cases where the informant had passed away, the family of the informants would grant access to the interview. Since some of the interviews were restricted, certain rules applied. When dealing with restricted interviews I was not allowed to take notes during the listening phase, so when I was finished with listening I would take notes. In this process some detailed information might have been lost. Restricted

interviews will contribute to the understanding of the areas in questions, but will not be directly quoted in any way because of ethical considerations.

A common feature of the interviews found at the oral history archives is that none of the respondents are identified by name, and they will all be referred to here as Oral History Centre, however I have identified the interview with the year the interview was given. Use of such interviews gives me good insight into older informants, who would have been hard to track down on my own. Some of the informants have passed away and the recorded interview represents a unique opportunity to learn about the experiences of informants which are not longer able to share their experiences in person.

I have considered arguments both for and against the use of these interviews. I decided that the use of these interviews was not problem-free, but it is a very good source of data and this data source fits well into my paper. Even though these prerecorded interviews are a secondary source and the data are collected for another purpose than my study, these interviews relate too many of the same themes that I had included in my interview guide. However, I lack opportunities to ask follow-up questions or get involved in the interviews in any way. I am at the mercy of the interviewer. I only receive the audible information. I do not know of the actual body language of either interviewer or informant. The interviewer and the relationship between interviewee and the interviewer is unknown, but from the general impression I got, it appeared to be a good relationship. The language is English. This can cause some problems concerning the ability of the informants to convey their message. The interviewer speaks Chinese (Mandarin), Malay or Indian (Tamil) in addition to English, so in cases where the informant may have trouble finding words there is a short exchange of phrases in the native tongue of the informant. This was, of course, of little help for me since I do not speak any of the above mentioned languages other than English. However, this might help the informant-researcher relationship. The researcher would help the informants, and often a little bit of laughter would be heard after such situations. This leads me to believe that the relationship between researcher and informant was relaxed, even though there is a tape-recorder present.

4.8.5 Narratives

As described by Vandsemb (1995) a narrative is a sequence of events told in words. Narratives are characterized by the presence of a story and a storyteller. To quote Vandsemb (1995) on the importance of a story:

> "In creating stories people are able to impose order and coherence on the stream of experience and to work out the meaning of incidents and events in the real world. Stories are a means of interpreting or reinterpreting events by construction a casual pattern that integrates what is known about an event, as well as that which is uncertain but relevant to interpretation" (Vandsemb 1995:413).

Ley and Mountz (2001) describes how there might be contrasting narratives which are presented by different groups of people. Narratives can emphasize the personal instead of the wider social context. Such narratives, known as personal narratives are time and place specific life stories of individuals (Jones 2003). Such narratives are subjective, creating a story about reality, in which the personal experiences of the informant is put into a context. Such stories involve remembering, making it vulnerable to selective memory.

> "One aspect is the narrator's subjectivity, biases and beliefs, influencing what the narrator remembers or chooses to remember. Narratives have an explicit or implicit message, which may be influenced by ideological or moralizing considerations" (Jones 2003:28).

Other narratives, contrasting personal narratives can be narratives of places or historical events (Jones 2003). Narratives are used for sustaining social ties. By adhering to a narrative it is a signal that one shares a view of how the worlds is. According to Kvale (1996) the narratives of a group contributes to the constitution of the group's identity. Groups are held together by sharing a view of how the world is. Neuman (2005) illustrates how narratives ultimately are stories of people and their values. Fairhead & Leach (1995) illustrate how narratives are used as the background for legitimatizing actions.

4.8.6 Narrative analysis

In terms of methodology, narratives give a chance to identify how the informant sees himself in a wider context. Narratives are useful for describing and interpreting phenomena from the informant's point of view.

Narrative analysis focuses on the story told during the interview. Different stories from different informants can be used to piece together a more condensed and richer story (Kvale 1996). In this paper I have utilized narrative analysis in order to detect the narrative told by the inhabitants of Chinatown and Little India. These narratives have been compared to the

narratives told by representatives of the government. The different interviews I have listened to in the OHC, and the informal conversations I have had with other inhabitants of Singapore, have contributed to describing how the inhabitants experience the development of Singapore. The narratives held by the government have been explored by the reading texts published by the government and through an interview with a representative of the URA. By combining these sources of information I have pieced together two coherent narratives. Narratives gives the researcher a good opportunity to explore experiences the informants has had, but also to explore how they anticipate their future to be (Mikkelsen 2005).

4.9 Validity

Validity is a measurement of how well the theories and indicators are suited to elucidate the research question one has chosen (Berg & Mansvelt 2000). Validity is an important feature since qualitative methods are more personal and subject to individual interpretations than quantitative methods. Hence validity is important in order to establish an understanding of how you have chosen to approach the research question. I chose landscape as an indicator to describe changes and development. The different activities which go on within the landscape can tell a story about how landscapes are seen and used. But it is not only the observation of landscape which will form the basis of this paper. Narratives, as told by both government and the inhabitant's will be included in order to ensure to broader understanding of the changes.

4.10 Reliability

Reliability is closely connected with the interpretation of one's findings. In qualitative studies it is hard, if not impossible, to reproduce the results of an earlier research project. Hence it is important that the researcher states how the conclusions are reached. In this dissertation I have presented my findings in chapter 5, the analysis is undertaken in chapter 6. Such a division between findings and analysis should enable the reader to see how my findings are used in the analysis, hence illustrating how my conclusions are reached. By ensuring reliability the research can be more easily acknowledged by other researchers and there is a better chance of depicting the reality you encounter in the field.

4.10.1 Ensuring reliability

While collecting data I made use of different techniques. One can compare findings from the different techniques in order to check for reliability. If the findings from the different techniques point in the same direction this is an indication that the conclusions are the same as other researchers would have found. Knowledge is subjective, but several methods leading towards the same conclusions can mean that the researcher has been able to minimize the effect of this on the research. In my research I have utilized picture analysis, reviewed movies, done interviews, reviewed texts and carried out observation.

5. Findings

Findings are the raw material of any study. In this dissertation I have utilized several different sources of information. Different sources of information give a broad perspective in terms of answering the research questions.

Some of the following paragraphs contain the findings from the pre-recorded interviews, found at the Oral History Centre. I have used letters in order to separate the different informants and their statements. The informants have been assigned letters between A and F for informants regarding "*Special project Chinatown*". The informants from the "*Communities of Singapore*" project have been assigned letters from G through J.[10]

This chapter presents the findings from the research. The data is presented by area, and not necessarily by source. Findings from Chinatown are presented first, then Little India. Following this, interviews with representatives of the URA and the HEB are presented. The chapter ends with a review of two documentaries and an exhibition.

5.1 Chinatown

The interviewees found in the *Special project Chinatown* at the Oral History Centre (OHC) spoke mostly about their past experiences of Chinatown, as former residents. Some of the interviewees were also interviewed on their attitudes towards Chinatown as it is today. The interviews found on tape had been recorded in between 1999 and 2000.

5.1.1 Use of landscape in earlier times

Having grown up in Chinatown the informants told stories from their childhood. I have focused on some of their activities in order to describe the daily life in Chinatown. There were numerous activities for children in Chinatown. One of these activities was to play with marbles. According to informant E this activity was best undertaken in an area which had a soil surface, and hence marbles used to be played in the back alleys of Chinatown. These small alleys were not covered in concrete. Other activities also took place there, but

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[10] The observant reader will note that there are only 10 OHC informants identified by letters. In total there are 13 informants from the OHC utilized, but three of these were restricted material. The three restricted interviews are not referred to directly since the restrictions on note-taking hindered me from writing down notes during the listening phase.

unfortunately garbage and waste were also deposited here so this was not an area considered to be clean.

Other activities included catching or buying animals and having them fight. Such fighting is mentioned by several of the interviewees. Fish caught in the Singapore River were not eaten, due to pollution, but kept for entertainment. During spider season spiders were caught and kept in a box, and later used to fight each other. Fighting fish could be purchased and these fish were also used in fights. Such fights attracted a big crowd. For the children it was mere entertainment, but one of the informants, informant D recalled that adults would place rather large bets on the outcome of these fights. The fights were free of charge to watch. The venue for these fights was the five foot way.

For children, money was hard to come by, but occasionally when they had some money they would buy candy or ice cream. A mystical and very exciting event was to go to the storyteller. Storytellers would gather a crowd and tell the most amazing stories. Children were allowed in for a small charge, while the adults had to pay more. For those interviewees who visited the storyteller the memories are vivid.

Playing with waterguns was another activity which was enjoyed by the kids in Chinatown. The five foot way would provide a good area for this game of cops and robbers. Kite flying also occurred frequently. Kite flying could take place in the five foot way, but a better location was a small hill in found in Chinatown.

5.1.2 Different festivals

Chinese culture contains a number of festivals. All the informants from the OHC made reference to one or more of these festivals. The festivals listed below are the festivals most mentioned by the informants. During such festivals Chinatown would come alive with celebrations and different rituals. Festivals are something the informants seem to enjoy speaking of, and they know a lot about the history and background of the celebrations.

5.1.3 Chinese New Year

All the informants remember Chinese New Year as the busiest and happiest of the festivals. Preparation would usually begin two weeks before New Year itself. Figure 5 illustrates a busy shopping street in Chinatown. There would be temporary stalls selling articles for Chinese New Year. Especially firecrackers, oranges and good food are things the informants remember when it comes to this festival. Two of the informants (C and D) remember eating chicken. They appeared to be poor, and hence remember chicken at New Year as something extraordinary. The food that was eaten would be better than the food eaten the rest of the year. Even though many of the inhabitants in Chinatown were poor they would save money to eat good meals around New Year.

Figure 5. Intense shopping in Chinatown. Chinese New Years Eve 1962

The picture above (figure 5) taken by Wong, K. F. in 1962 the picture was obtained from NAS.

The festival itself was a festival to be spent with one's family. But visits were an important part of the festival as well. Visits would be made to friends and relatives and one would greet each other (Informant E). During Chinese New Year it was also tradition to receive small red envelopes which would contain gifts, often money. The red colour symbolizes luck. Throughout the OHC interviews stories of different informants describe different amounts in

the envelopes. One would give according to what one had, but it becomes obvious that those who did not receive much in their envelope had heard stories of others receiving more, and some of the informants state that they did not receive as much as others, but that they were happy with what they got.

Entertainment was an integral part of New Year celebrations. Shows would be held along the roadside. People would stand around to watch. For most of the shows there were very few, if any seats available. The shows would be held on a stage. The stage would be raised off the ground, and there would be one or two rows with chairs in front of the stage. Backstage there was an area for make-up, dressing and rehearsal. The area surrounding the stage would be filled with hawkers. The hawkers would sell cooked food and refreshments. There also used to be a procession that went through the streets but this procession ceased around the mid-1970s, as one informant C recalls.

5.1.4 Hungry Ghost Festival

Another festival held was Chinatown is the Hungry Ghost Festival. This is remembered by the informants as a festival to honour the dead. This festival occurred while I was in Singapore and I experienced the celebrations myself. I recognized the paper offerings described by informant A, and I saw the stages where the shows would be held. The ghosts of the forefathers were thought to observe this festival, and hence the shows that were put on, for example Chinese operas, were not for the entertainment of the living but for the ghosts. Of course these shows would be viewed by the living inhabitants of Chinatown as well. For these shows the first rows of seats would not be in use, these seats being reserved for the ghosts. As remembered by informant A, these shows would often end up blocking traffic. It was never intended to, but it happened. If a show would block the traffic one could apply for permission to close a street.

During this festival it was normal to make offerings to the ghosts. One would make objects out of paper and then burn them. It was believed that the objects which were burned on earth would be given to the ghosts in the next life. Cooked food would also be burned, also to ensure the well being of the ghosts. A special event, remembered well by all the informants, is the ritual of throwing coins onto the floor (or in the street). For the informants, who were interviewed about their childhood in Chinatown, this was a welcomed event. As the adults

threw small coins on the ground the kids would pick them up. With nimble fingers one could earn a pretty penny on such occasions. Several of the informants appear to be very enthusiastic when they speak of the candy they would buy with the money that they earned during this festival.

5.1.5 Qing Ming Jie (All Souls Day).

This is another festival to honour the dead. During this festival the relatives would clean up, sweep and care for the graves of their ancestors. It was a family affair, which would strengthen the family. There would be an offering at the graveyard; the offering usually meant burning food or paper replicas of things which were thought to bring the diseased luck. Afterwards there would be a dinner at night. Clan members would be buried at the same site. The clan associations arranged big outings around this festival to honour the dead. Kampong Santeng (off Thompson road) was a burial ground for Cantonese, while other clans, such as the YFFK representing the Hakka, had burial sites elsewhere. Clans had variable importance for the informants; some would attend clan meetings while others would not associate with them.

The younger Chinese I had informal conversations with did not feel much association to the clan of their parents. One of my younger informants stated that she had not attended a clan meeting for the last 5 years, even though her father was a prominent clan member.

5.1.6 Death and burial

Informant A from the OHC described vivid stories of the death houses and Sago Lane. Sago Lane was the venue of death houses and funeral parlours. This informant appears to be fascinated with the notion of death houses. He has vivid memories of walking along Sago Lane. Informant A also recalls burial rituals taking place in Chinatown. Another informant, informant C, from the OHC states the following: "dead bodies could be kept in the streets for a short period while awaiting a coffin. It was a scary sight and people would often avoid this street". In Chinese tradition it is bad luck to have death in your house, so people that were mortally ill or dying would go to a death house where they could rent a bed (or in some cases a coffin) and await their death. People who were without a family or other relatives that could ensure that they got a proper burial would also make use of death houses. In Chinese culture

burials are important, and by seeking out a death house one could be assured that someone gave you a proper burial. There was little to see of the death houses when I came to Singapore. The death houses along Sago Lane had been demolished in the 1950's. Burial ceremonies would also be held in Chinatown. These were often long ceremonies with a number of traditional rituals: "A priest would be hired to do the ceremony. The more you paid the better ceremony you got. A ceremony would last about 3 days, it could also last 5 or 7 days. One day was considered too little and an even number was not good" (Informant A).

Informant A, from the Oral History Centre speak of the ceremony called "Breaking of the 18 stages of hell". This ceremony was conducted by a priest. He would put 18 tiles around a fire, light the fire and then start to jump through the fire. The goal is to land on and break a tile each time he jumps through the fire. In between the jumps there would be a lot of chanting. Some priests also filled their mouth with alcohol, which they would spit out when crossing the fire, causing the flames to grow larger. Such a ritual was impressive to watch. The ritual ended when all 18 tiles were broken.

5.1.7 The changes of Chinatown

Some informants found on tape at the OHC had been interviewed on their perception of the changes Chinatown had gone through. In regards to the question of change there are especially two informants which do stand out. Informant D, strongly objects what Chinatown has become, while informant B dislikes the loss of the community spirit. When listening to these interviews one can clearly hear that even though the government has planned for a better living environment, the changes are not always seen to be for the better.

 "This life will never come back, we are too modernized" (Informant D) Chinatown used to be characterized by the community spirit. People were warm and friendly and people who did not even live there would come, as it was a place with the characteristics of the Chinese. But now people are too occupied with themselves; according to informant D, people today are more selfish than before. Informant B, feels that the identity shared by the former residents of Chinatown has now been lost. The changes have led Chinatown to be a place of no special interest. In other countries Chinatown areas stand out, but in Singapore it does not. This informant is afraid that pubs, hotels and such things will make up Chinatown. Chinatown nowadays is too commercialised; the atmosphere is gone. It is only in the time around Chinese New Year that the area comes back to life. The street scenes from earlier days can be

seen in figure 6. The informant does not appreciate the new, modern, clean look of Chinatown: "Chinatown is designed to be dirty, bustling and have a different smell" (Informant D). As Palka (1995) wrote, and this informant said, landscapes are also sensed with the nose, hence smell is important, and not only visual impressions.

Figure 6. Hawker stands along Sago Lane, Chinatown 1955

The picture in figure 6 was taken by Wong, Kwan 23.01.1955. Obtained from NAS

In Chinatown people frequently visited neighbours but according to some informants this is no longer the case. Other informants, in addition to informant B, say that they often sit in their house alone. In the old days, neighbours were helpful and friendly, but now you do not trust your neighbours. The doors are kept locked now, whereas they used to be open. "In earlier days people would meet more often. It was the most positive thing with Chinatown. There would be a tight relationship between people living there" (Informant B).

Informant C said on the subject of the distinctiveness of Chinatown that it was the hawkers and the people who made Chinatown so special. It is a sense of belonging when you come

from Chinatown. It has its own culture, and often people who have moved come back to chat with old friends. Both informants C and D wish to bring back the hawkers and let the inhabitants live like they used to.

Informant B interviewed on the subject of modern life in Chinatown states that the HDB flats in which residents now live have given more privacy. Earlier there were more common activities. People would meet more often and socialise. Now it seems that people are confined to their own space. In earlier days people would sit along the five foot way and drink coffee until it got late. Nowadays this does not happen so often. Neighbours were closer earlier, but now they are not so close. However, informant B still has contact with his old neighbours from Chinatown and they often go out together. He says they are like family.

5.1.8 Observations in Chinatown

According to my observations there were few children playing in the streets. The streets were instead filled with tourists wanting to see and experience Chinatown. Commerce is still an important part of the daily setting, although the methods have changed. Instead of hawkers offering goods on the streets there are shops on the ground floors of most buildings. Numerous sale stands can also be found lining the streets, and these offer mostly goods to tourists. There were also a number of restaurants lining the streets. This is a bit different from other places of Singapore, where food courts and coffee shops are more prominent Restaurants in high numbers are usually found in areas which attract tourist. The restaurants appear to be mainly visited by tourists. Many of the shophouses are restored. The facades appear to be well kept.

There are variations in street life. Pagoda Street is almost always full with people and eager salesmen. Temple Street, on the other hand, does not appear to house many activities. On a Sunday walk I observed Temple Street to be completely empty. Except for the cars parked along the five foot way, there was no sign of life. One night I decided to observe what happened in Chinatown after closing hours. Around 9.00 p.m. the small stands along Pagoda street closed down. The Chinatown area was now almost without tourists. The streets became empty compared to daytime. Along Sago Lane I saw several elderly people sitting on chairs (which they appeared to have brought along themselves) and talking calmly. On the benches

other people were lying and relaxing. The food courts and coffee shops came alive, and the customers appeared to be mostly local people.

The 7th lunar month, also known as the Hungry Ghost Festival, is celebrated around the month of August. At this time I left Singapore but I could see the offerings made to the ghosts; there were numerous offerings and they were placed on the sidewalks, in front of stores or houses. This was a very visible element in the landscape, especially since Singapore is so clean; then small bowls of soup stands out.

5.1.9 Weddings

During my observation in Chinatown I wandered around the area. In one of the streets I met an overwhelming number of bridal shops. The first thing that struck me was that the wedding outfits were exactly the same as we use in the west. I was under the impression that the Chinese would wear traditional Chinese costume for their wedding. Traditional Chinese weddings are on the way out. The young adults I spoke to declared that they probably were going to have a modern wedding. According to my young informants it is now quite usual to hold weddings early on Sundays. Arranging a wedding on a Sunday has several advantages, first of all, Sundays are a cheap day to rent a hotel, secondly if a wedding is held on a Sunday people will leave early since they have to be at work Monday morning. With a short wedding there is fewer things to arrange and the time and money spent will be reduced. Traditional Chinese weddings take a lot of time and are often more costly.

5.1.10 Clan associations

I spoke to one of the leading clansmen of the Ying Fo Fui Kun clan (YFFK). The conversation revealed that the clan association mostly used the landscape as a ceremonial ground on which festivals and celebrations were held. The YFFK clan arranges celebrations during festivals. The YFFK clan mostly arranges traditional Chinese festivals, but also modern celebrations, such as 8 March, the international women's day. Trips to mainland China are also arranged by the clan; on such trips the members learn more about their heritage. A choir belonging to the YFFK clan sings Chinese folk music in the dialect of the YFFK clan. According to one of the leading members of the clan, the upkeep of traditions and the education of the young are very important. Considering what answers I got from my

younger informants it appears that the YFFK have some work to do in order to get the young generation interested in the work and heritage of the clan. YFFK earlier owned a large cemetery, 10 shophouses, and an empty plot of land, but most of this has been acquired by the government for urban redevelopment.

5.2 Little India

5.2.1 Observation

One can see a distinct architecture in the Little India area. There are different colours in use and manifestations of the Indian culture can be seen, heard and smelt in the landscape. The sidewalks are covered with stands selling products. A notable difference between Chinatown and Little India is the number of stores selling food products. In Chinatown the sales were more geared towards tourists. In Little India there are shops selling spices and vegetables, while Indian music is played over the stereo. A lot of the women are wearing sarees. Many of the inhabitants also have the Tilak marking between their eyes, the Tilak is an important religious marking for Hindus. The number of foreign tourists is notably fewer than in Chinatown. I am most likely to notice the western tourists, but also Asian tourists seem to be fewer.

The sidewalks are seldom a good place to walk. Instead the streets are used for pedestrians, which of course is a source of annoyance for cars. The sidewalks are filled with either small stalls, offering products, or they are filled with other objects. In general the streets and the sidewalks reflect that there is a lot of activity going on. People can be seen sitting on street corners, stairs and generally in the streets drinking tea or coffee. I also recorded some people sleeping on the sidewalk in the midday sun. Little India has restaurants instead of food courts. If you want a food court you will have to go to the market on Buffalo road.

The bridal shops in Little India offer traditional costumes and the commercial posters use images of Indian people. Singapore in general was decorated by commercial posters featuring western people instead of Asian people.

In an effort to compare Chinatown and Little India at night time I also carried out observation in Little India around 9.0 p.m one night. My observations during night time revealed that

around 9.00 p.m. there are a number of people buying foodstuff in order to prepare meals. Another favoured activity is dining in one of the many restaurants of Little India. There are Chinese, Indians and tourists in the area. The number of people appeared to be greater in Little India at night time than in Chinatown at the same time, and the level of activities seemed to be higher.

On a Monday morning I went to Farrer Park. Sunday evening I had observed a large number of foreign workers gathering in Farrer Park. On the following morning I could observe numerous bottle caps, straws for bottles, and empty snack bags. This indicates what I had observed about Farrer Park being a meeting place for foreign workers. Little India also has more African people than I have seen in other places. It seems that Little India is a place for new immigrants as well as Indians.

5.2.2 Innhabitants' views of Little India

At the Oral History Centre I also found pre-recorded interviews with former residents of Little India. These interviews were recorded between 1983 and 1992. The following paragraphs describes my findings from listening to these interviews. Also these informants are identified by letters, ranging from G through J.

5.2 3 Employment

Work has always been one of the main reasons for attracting people to Little India. In little India's early days it was work in the cattle industry or in the jail that employed and attracted workers. Later, trade became more important for the area. There is room for both traditional trades and more modern trades. The shops along Serangoon Road sold goods from India. The Indian population which was spread around the island would come to the shops on Serangoon Road to buy goods which were familiar to them. The prices of such Indian goods were reported, by informants, to lower in Little India than other places in Singapore, the selection of goods is also larger in Little Indian than other places in Singapore, which increased the status of Little India as a shopping area. As described by informant H in 1992, the Tekka Market was a very popular market. The Tekka Market was closed down by the government for the same reasons which the Cattle Trade was closed down, namely hygiene.

The opportunities of work have affected the caste system. In Singapore you can have a job which you could not have in India. According to informant G (interviewed in 1983) this was well appreciated amongst the lower caste Indians who came to Singapore in order to seek employment. The same informant describes education and money to be more worth than caste.

5.2.4 Change in the population

Around 1930 the male workers started to bring their families to Singapore. This shift led the area to change its profile. With more women and children in the area the goods supplied changed accordingly. Living quarters and the demand for suitable living arrangements changed. Instead of renting a cubicle where the worker could sleep, people were now looking for rooms where families could live together. The shophouses now had business on the first floor and living quarters on the second floor. Informant G states that "the biggest change was that the downstairs would open shops and the variety of shops would change. Indian jewellery was hard to get outside Serangoon Road " (Informant G, interviewed in 1983). This expresses the change well. As the area changes to more modern trades, there is still a market for traditional goods which are difficult to obtain other places.

5.2.5 Religious life

Temples and religious life were and still are an important part of life in Little India. An old saying states that you should not settle in an area without a temple. Hence the first Indians who arrived built several temples along Serangoon Road. These temples would later attract other Indians to the area, since places of worship is important in Indian culture. Since temples are used in a number of rituals throughout the life of a Hindu the area became a religious center for both old and young. Today the Hindu Endowments Board (HEB) is a interest organization for the Hindus. The HEB assists Hindus with rituals, and guides them in situations where there is question about the practice.

According to informant I, which is a Sikh, religion plays an important part of the Sikh culture. They believe in the omnipresence of God. What you think is yours by right you should protect, but you should not be aggressive towards others. Aggressivity can only defended if you fight for something which is yours (Informant I, interviewed in 1989).

Indian wrestling is a tradition which occurs more seldomly. This used to occur in places with soft earth. It was for amusement and was seen as a test of strength. Other games were also played. Games would be held as festivals and fairs. They were often contests between neighbouring villages. Bets on the winners could be placed, but this was not the trend. Females had their own activities. There were also festivals only for women. More women took higher education.

5.2.6 Multi-ethnicity

The Little India area has always had a multiethnic population. Contrary to what one would believe when hearing the name Little India, the area has had both Chinese and Malysian inhabitants. Shopkeepers in the area have often been of other ethnic groups than Indian. This is especially true for the goldsmiths and tailors. "I do not like the term Little India" (Informant H, interviewed in 1992), said interviewee H. The term little India gave a feeling of an Indian colony, but in reality there were several ethnicities in that area.

Guest workers have always been attracted to the Little India area. Workers who identify with the Indian culture are known to seek out Little India. This has been the case with Indian workers, but also a number of Bangladeshi workers have sought out this area.

In migrant communities, it was common for a lot of migrants to occupy one house. A house meant for 10 could be used by 100 labourers. They would only rent a bed, and a place for their suitcase. To serve labourers there would be eating places, but some labourers would also cook for themselves. 5-10 labourers would go together, and make food for each other. Eating at coffeeshops was expensive. Some would hire a cook and share expenses. Catering for labourers were the barbers, with shops along the five foot way. There were also tailor's shops along the five foot way. Services catered for the migrant workers. It was not usual to go to the city as most of their needs covered in the area where they lived.

Overcrowding caused sanitation and air problems. Informant J recalls that "sanitation was a bucket, sewage did not exist, bathing facilities were two taps, one in the bathroom and one in the yard. All pots and pans would be washed in the yard" (Informant J, interviewed in 1990). Little India experienced problems with diseases.

5.2.7 Landscape of Serangoon Road

The built landscape of Serangoon Road consisted mainly of two-storey buildings, religious buildings (both Hindu temples and a Mosque), and buildings used by the cattle industry. Several of the OHC informants tell stories of buildings owned by their family which were acquired by the government and demolished in order to make room for modern housing or roads. Traditional settlements along the Serangoon Road is displayed in figure 7. Such buildings were demolished in order to make room for more modern buildings and infrastructure. The many bungalows which used to be in Little India are now demolished. The cattle trade and the breeding of cattle took place in designated buildings, but it was not uncommon for families to have a cow in the backyard. Cows could be brought directly to your door and milked in front of you in order to ensure fresh milk. The Indian diet contains a lot of milk and milk products, as described by informant J, milk products are very important to the Indians. Yoghurt, for example is an Indian dish. The buildings used for cattle breeding were demolished to make way for modern housing. According to the informants J and G, the reason for closing down the cattle trade in Little India was that such trade was both a health and a traffic hazard.Figure 7 depicts Seah Lang, Seah Estate in Serangoon Road. Acquired by the government in 1963 and demolished to make land avaliable.

Figure 7. Seah Estate along Serangoon Road (NAS 1963)

5.3 Interview with a representative of the Hindu Endowments Board

The Hindu Endowments Board (HEB) works to conserve the Hindu culture and is in charge of the national Hindu celebrations. HEB also hand out information material and advises the Singaporean government in matters concerning Hindus.

Festivals are important to the Hindus. In Hinduism there are a number of deities. Each temple is built to a different deity, and festivals are often in honour of a given deity hence some festivals can be very local in terms of taking place only in one given temple. Hindu rituals vary with which part of India they descend from. Different stages in life are all marked with rituals. The most important rituals are held in relation to birth, marriage, pregnancy and death. Religion plays an important part in the life of Hindus. Cremation is the norm for disposing of dead bodies. It is believed that the fire breaks the bond between the body and the soul, hence releasing the soul from its body.

The Thaipusam festival is a festival which is unique to Singapore. This festival involves a four kilometer long parade ending in the Sri Thandayuthapani temple. One of the characteristics of the Thaipusam festival is the Kavai bearers. These are people carrying large, steel ornaments. In figure 4 such a Kavai bearer is depicted. During this parade the police and volunteers close off two lanes in the road in order to secure the space needed for the participants. According to the HEB, the number of participants in the parade has increased over the years, but also the number of spectators which do not enter the parade has increased.

Figure 8. Kavai bearer depicted at the Thaipusam festival (HEB 2007)

The Hindus have not been affected by the government's policy to promote cremation instead of burial. Most Hindus are already firm believers in cremation. Moving of temples has affected the Hindus as most Hindu temples have been moved. Taken into consideration that Hindus are welcome in all Hindu temples this does not pose a big problem. There are not big differences in the teaching between temples. Christians, who have a particular church and teaching which they do belong to, have greater difficulties since they might experience that the church they belong to can be moved away from them.

During my interview with a representative of the HEB, it was revealed that the HEB wants to see further development of Little India. Especially infrastructure could be developed better. Little India was left out during the renewal of city areas. The HEB want's better footpaths. Lightning is not sufficient, drainage is not good enough, nor is the availability of public toilets. The HEB are in conversations with the URA to discuss matters. According to HEB improvements in the abovementioned matters will lead to an increased use of the area both by tourists and locals.

5.3.1 Tekka Mall

The Tekka Mall is a new, modern shopping mall located in Little India. It has made use of the Tekka name, giving associations to the well known Tekka Market. The space where the Tekka Mall is used to be an open space, this new shopping mall is not appreciated by local shoppers or store owners. The design of the building does not blend in with the rest of the architecture. In July 2007 there were many vacant spaces in the mall. It seemed a bit abandoned.

5.4 Interview with a representative of the URA

I interviewed Mr. Tan, Keng Leng on the subject of Little India, regarding development and conservation. Mr. Tan is one of the chief planners of Little India area and he has worked with conservation and development of the area for a number of years.

Mr. Tan described how Little India developed. Under British rule there was rent-control, which meant limitations on how high the rent could be. This proved to be important after WW2 when the public had little money. Rent control ensured that everybody could live and still afford to eat. After 1959 and the transition to a national PAP government there was a change. The first major task of the URA was to clean up slum areas and to provide a decent place to live, increasing the quality of life. When developing given areas the URA lifted the rent control. This effectively meant that the landlords could raise the rent as they pleased. As a result there would be very few tenants left and these people would have to find other accommodation. This was a part of the Government's plans to relocated tenants, and hence the government would assist them by providing public housing. The Housing and Development Board was very important in the development of both Little India and Chinatown. As a consequence large chains or successful brands will survive at the cost of lesser traditional trades. The higher rent might mean higher prices for consumers, indirectly giving the bill to them. This made it hard for small trades to survive. This was later helped by awarding both Little India and Chinatown with conservation status in 1989. Conservation status helped regulate which trades were allowed.

As stated by the URA planner, Mr. Tan:"Every area needs something to be identified with." The core area of conservation areas are protected against certain either unfit businesses or pollutive businesses. Special considerations can be taken, for example, in Kampong Glam it is not allowed to set up pubs or establishments which sell alcohol. This is due to the area's Muslim character and consideration for the Muslim inhabitants. Exclusion of such businesses will be of importance to keeping the area close to its cultural ties. There are a few trades which are allowed in Little India even though it is a conservation area. In core areas there are not supposed to be banks. But remittances are a very important part of Indian Culture and hence small remittance shops can be found. Another trade which is allowed is recycling. This takes place in an area where old goods are bought, repaired and shipped back to India.

When a planning project is set up there is always a pilot project to see if conservation is viable. The government provides incentives for conservation. This includes waiving different government fees that would have been levied on the developers. According to the URA the main goal is to preserve the buildings, but the buildings are not the only focus. The overall goal is to create a better living environment. This means that infrastructure and social needs are also fulfilled. In order to secure a good living environment, it is important to include stakeholders such as the Hindu Endowments Board (HEB) and to listen to their needs. Also important in planning is the consultation of the national heritage board and the Tourist Board. The Tourist Board has made some enquiries concerning what people come to see.

The foreign workers of Singapore often gather in the Little India area. It is a meeting place for Indians and people from Bangladesh. They meet in streets, and in open areas to relax. The employer often provides a dormitory, and hence the workers seek out of this dormitory when they have time off from work.

As a part of public education, signboards have been put up throughout Little India, telling the heritage and stories of streets and buildings, so that the physical structures do not stand alone. The private commercial sector is always challenging the URA. The private interests favour what is good for business, while the URA wants to develop and conserve. A good example of how private enterprises has pushed the limits can be found in the Bugis Junction shopping mall. Here old shophouses have been covered in glass and turned into a shopping mall. Only the facade of these shophouses remain. The inside has been changed into stores and dining areas. The URA uses market forces, or the private sector to develop areas. They give

incentives to businesses which are willing to restore and conserve shophouses. Of course the businesses wants to make money so they develop the site to be as suitable as possible for the purpose of business, while the URA wants the sites to be historically correct. Conservation always involves stakeholders. The URA is eager to conserve as much culture as possible, but they focus on conserving buildings, both monumental, important buildings, but also less known buildings which might have a more local/social value

I had seen the Tekka Mall and I thought it was strange to see a shopping mall which had vacant space and few customers. I asked Mr. Tan about it. Mr. Tan said that the lack of business is due to fierce competition within the retail sector. On the question of why Little India and Chinatown differ so much from each other, Mr. Tan mentioned that the Chinese seemed to be richer. They modernized faster and they adopted new trades faster. They were looking for profitable trades instead of traditional trades. The Indian community has not been so quick to modernize, and seem to stick more to their traditional trades. Chinatown has been more to the mercy at the private sector. The Tekka Mall seems to illustrate that Little India is an area not that adjusted to the market forces, as customers and store owners has not taken a liking to this modern shopping mall, but rather keep to the smaller, ethnic stores.

5.5 Documentaries

At the National Library of Singapore I found a collection of videotapes. These videos were documentaries which had been broadcasted on television. I reviewed three video documentaries. All three documentaries have been produced by the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation. The documentary series, "Changing Times", contained a number of documentaries from different places in Singapore. I viewed the documentaries which reviewed Chinatown and Little India. I reviewed one documentary about Chinatown, which had been broadcasted in 1992. There were two documentaries on the Little India area. The first documentary was "Changing landscapes, Serangoon Road". This documentary was first broadcast in 1988. The second documentary is called "Changing times, Serangoon Road", and was broadcast in 1992. Both documentaries about Little India contain much of the same footage and the same commentary.

5.5.1 Chinatown.

The story told about Chinatown is a story of an area rich in heritage. The documentary opens with a young couple getting married in a traditional Chinese fashion. The change from traditional to modern appears as the theme throughout the documentary. One of the examples used is the development of Sago Lane. This was the street in which the notorious death houses were located. Now this street is a hawker centre. The hawker centre represents the change from the traditional street hawkers to the stationary, indoor hawker centres. Outdoor hawkers were forced indoor by the Hawker Act of 1983. The residents interviewed explained how the rent had gone up and that they feared being evicted from their property. Shopkeepers complained over the lack of interest for their products and the rising level of rent.

What is included in a documentary can reveal the focus of the documentary, what is left out might represent the parts the documentary maker sees as unfit. I was intrigued when tourism was almost left out of the documentary of Chinatown. The documentary does not emphasize the tourist industry, but barely mentions it. A group of tourist are depicted while being on a walking tour of Chinatown, but the area appears to be calm and harmonic. And it is not recognizable to how I know it.

5.5.2 Little India

Both documentaries present the historical background of the area. The 1988 documentary portrays two features which are not seen in the 1992 documentary. Bachelor colonies in Little India were something which had existed for a while and this is portrayed in the 1988 documentary, but by 1990 there were no such colonies left. The rent of housing had gone up and they were forced out. Hence the 1992 documentary has left this out. Bachelor colonies were residential buildings for male workers. They shared sleeping space as some would work night shift and others dayshift. The families of such bachelors remained in their home country. The other feature which is particular for the 1988 documentary is the laundry, which rents an open, green space in Little India from the government in order to dry clothes. This space was later acquired by the government for development and the laundry had to find other ways of drying clothes, hence it is left out of the 1992 documentary.

When reviewing the history of the Little India area one has to mention the Tekka Market. The Tekka Market was a very popular market found in Little India. It has been called one of the most important markets in Singapore and people would make long journeys in order to shop

at this particular market. The government concluded that the market was not hygienic and hence they closed it down. According to the URA the building itself did not contain any architectural features worthy of conservation and it was demolished. A new market was built in its place. This market was given a new name, but the people shopping there still refer to it as the Tekka Market. The name Tekka Market can also be found in the description found in my travellers guide (Lewis & Martin 2006).

Both of the documentaries emphasize the traditional trades and the Indian roots of Little India. Traditional trades such as spice shops, garland makers and saree shops are found around Little India. The spices also flavour the air of Little India giving it a unique smell. The air is filled with Indian music creating an Indian atmosphere.

5.6 Exhibition at the Urban Redevelopment Authority building

At the headquarters of the Urban Redevelopment Authority there was an exhibition on display, *Singapore City Gallery*. The exhibition displayed the development of Singapore and the impact the URA has had on the decisions made. The exhibition displayed a lot of material. There were two large scale models of the Singapore Island. One of these models portrayed Singapore as of today, while the other displayed Singapore as the URA saw it in the future. Alongside these models there were also numerous pictures of how Singapore had looked in the past. A lot of maps illustrated how the island was divided into different zones and videos and text would serve to emphasize the message.

Singapore is very proud of its extensive city planning and there are frequent references to city planning as one of the key concepts in the growth and development of Singapore. The exhibition takes visitors on a "guided tour" of the development of Singapore. At one point there is a "public education". I especially noticed this part. The public education is a interactive feature where the respondent is asked what he would prefer. Following the question a number of alternatives are posed and the respondent checks off what he would like to see in Singapore, the alternatives are such as open spaces, gardens, shopping malls, Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) stations. For testing purposes I checked the boxes with the features which seemed to be ones least prioritized by the URA, as large gardens and burial grounds. When doing so a computer voice told me that these were features which were often requested but which could very seldom be fulfilled due to land shortage and considerations to other

inhabitants. Other sections of the exhibition uses pictures and text to illustrate the cultural heritage of Singapore and how it is conserved by the governments conservation program. Here there are several references to Chinatown and Little India. The URA displays what has been conserved and explains why this is important to conserve and which considerations have been made before conservation was introduced.

When the URA speaks of the value given to different monuments or buildings they value it in four ways, aesthetical, historical, social and technological. Aesthetic value reflects the design, style and age. Historic value refers to rare contributions made by Singapore's pioneers. Social value reflects upon the meaning (political, spiritual or religious) the building has to a group of people and finally technological value reflects the rarity and the quality of the technology available at the time of construction. The thing which struck me throughout the entire exhibition was that it spoke of conservation of buildings, but did not mention what makes these buildings come alive. It was simply stated that the former residents have now been give better places to live and that they now have a higher quality of life. According to the URA the historical buildings are thought to give the young a sense of heritage and to tell stories of past generations.

6. **Analysis**

This chapter suggests that the landscape, as the setting for social practices, has been sacrificed in order to make way for the government's outsider view of landscape as a visual object. Landscapes have been refurbished in order to make them more interesting for tourists. The local inhabitants have not been included in the decision process of deciding what to conserve. A narrative analysis suggests that the inhabitants of Singapore have slowly accepted the narratives presented by the government, even though elder inhabitants still do not accept the government's narratives. Tradition and culture have proved to be resilient in Little India, while Chinatown has surrendered its traditions in favour of profits and modernization.

The chapter begins with the narratives and the contrast between the government's narrative and the counter-narrative presented by the inhabitants. Following this there will be a discussion of how the narratives have changed the physical landscape of Singapore. A review of pictures will describe the combination of the physical and psychological change before the chapter is finished with a review of the value of ethnicity for the two study areas.

6.1 Government narratives

The government narrative built on foundations of modernization and economic growth. It was these two features which would be emphasized in the extensive planning in Singapore. The two main government actors, HDB and URA, worked continuously to fulfill the policies set by the government. All actions undertaken by the Peoples Action Party (PAP) government were justified as necessary in order for Singapore to develop economically. The PAP gathered its information from scientists. The narrative was based on rational and scientific principles; any criticism of the government's policies was rejected as irrational.

The government narrative is expressed in both writing, pictures and the in the minds of people. I interviewed Mr. Tan as a representative from the URA, and in addition I read texts published by the URA, viewed pictures and browsed through the exhibition at the URA headquarters. The exhibition found at the URA headquarters illustrates the process of transformation from traditional to modern. There is a clear sense of pride within both the URA and the HDB in what has been achieved in Singapore in so few years.

Lee (2000) describes that with the loss of Malaysia as a market, Singapore had to look elsewhere for investors. Europe and USA was thought to be the best place to attract investors. In order for the investors to meet a familiar environment and to increase the trust for Singapore's political stability a modern, disciplined, country was needed. The need for foreign investors was one of the underlying causes for the modernization process which took place in Singapore, according to Lee (2000). The HDB was established in 1960 in order to help the housing situation. The predecessor, the Singapore Improvement Trust, had not had the desired function and the need for a new agency was obvious (HDB 2007). The first goal of the HDB was to clear slums. This was given priority, not only for environmental reasons, but also because slums were regarded as a breeding ground for communism (Perry et al. 1997).

On the basis of overcrowding, bad hygiene (unsanitary conditions) and land shortage, the government decided to redevelop large areas. These three points were used in the arguments to convince the inhabitants that a change was for the better. The areas which were developed were often described as slums, and the buildings themselves as unsanitary. The Singaporean government was determined to improve life for its inhabitants. In one of the publications of the HDB, one can read the following statement: "In short the planning approach is not merely one of providing housing but rather one of creating a better living environment" (Teh 1975:11). The compensation for occupiers of land was relatively generous, although the same cannot be said for the landowners. The land occupiers were given cash compensation, and in addition were allowed to choose a site for relocation (within the government projects). This meant that relocation was a popular option amongst the land occupiers, who where often poor (Teh 1975).

At the URA exhibition the visitor is presented with challenges the planners and architects faced during this development. The exhibition describes the excellence of Singapore as it is, but also describes the sacrifices made. Visitors can learn about the process of deciding what to demolish and what to conserve. Two quotes found on the walls of the exhibition serves as an example to illustrate the mindset of the URA: "Land is scarce and we must balance between different needs such as commerce, transport, infrastructure and housing" (URA exhibition 2007). This is the returning argument of land scarcity, while the following statement refers to the state's decision to decide what is best without including the inhabitants in all decisions

made: "Different people with different backgrounds appreciate different things and we must balance between being sentimental and practical" (URA exhibition 2007).

In short the government narrative can be summarized as a process to eliminate slums, unsanitary conditions and to provide the inhabitants with a better living environment. People were relocated into government buildings. In such "HDB neighbourhoods" all the inhabitants' needs would be catered for. Areas redeveloped would be put to better use and contributed to creating a modern city state. The new symbols of Singaporeans would be the skyline and the modern lifestyle adapted from the first world countries. The change from traditional to modern would be a positive change. The glorified future would outshine the past.

6.1.1 Use of control in order to secure legitimacy for government narratives

When elected in 1959, the Peoples Action Party (PAP) started a meticulous process in order to create economic growth and to modernize Singapore. Singapore, which was regarded as a third world country in 1959, rose to become a first world country (Lee 2000). This extraordinary growth was the result of the actions taken by the PAP government.

The PAP government has worked continuously since Singapore's partial independence in 1959 to build one nation out of the many different ethnic groups (Kong & Yeoh 2003).[11] This nation-building process aimed at creating a common Singaporean identity. Chan & Evers (1973) write that the PAP government chose deliberately to construct a nation with a pragmatic identity with development and economic success as the symbols of identification. Kong & Yeoh (2003:32) write that this approach to shaping policies came to be known as *the ideology of pragmatism.* According to Chan & Evers (1973), this strong belief in the government's ability to predict "correct" solutions legitimized tight political control and eventually an authoritarian political system. The PAP deliberately used propaganda to create a national identity and to "educate" the population in the PAP way of thinking. The PAP government relied heavily on science when it came to forming policies

> "The pragmatism to which the national identity refers is one of purposive rational action, one of means-end calculation, one of technology and science" (Chan & Evers 1973).

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[11] The process started with the colonial government's decision to investigate the inhabitants' allegiance to Singapore. This interest in nationalism was sparked by race riots at the Chinese high school in the mid 1950s (Kong & Yeoh 2003).

Such a nation-building process contrasts what Douglas (1986) assesses as the problem of individual rationality: if everybody wants what is best for themselves then collective action seems impossible. The PAP created a society where there was strict control of the actions of the individual. The PAP stressed the value of collective action and that all had to contribute to progress. In terms of individual rationality it became obvious that the PAP government created a booming economic growth, and in addition HDB housing was made available to citizens, hence it was in the rational interest of the individual to contribute to the collective. The nation-building process would lead up to a situation where the workforce "would pull together in the same direction with a sense of public spiritedness and self-sacrifice in the national interest" (Kong & Yeoh 2003:31)

In 1963 the PAP launched a big offensive called operation "Cold Storage". In this offensive the PAP detained opposition members and union leaders, who were imprisoned for several years. Among those detained were also the leaders of the Rural Dwellers Association, which had earlier fought the government's HDB plans at Toa Payoh and Kallang Basin (Gamer 1972). Between 1965 and 1983 no opposition members could be found in the parliament, and the voices of opposition within the PAP were ruthlessly silenced (Gamer 1972). In 1967 the PAP government banned all politically motivated strikes (Leggett 2005). Douglas (1986) writes that there are situations in which the actors do not really have a choice other than to obey. In such situations it makes no sense to speak of rational choice models since there in reality is no choice, she argues. In the case of Singapore there is no doubt that the PAP were willing to use coercive means in order to discipline the inhabitants, but the PAP also improved living conditions through public housing and job security in order to secure cooperation with the inhabitants (Kong & Yeoh 2003). The methods used by the PAP aimed to ensure order. There were few public outcries and the population knew that they risked prison if they were to go against the government (Trocki 2006). Order is described by North (2005) as an important condition for long-run economic growth. By securing economic growth the common belief system was reinforced, creating legitimacy for the PAP government.

> "Authoritarian political order ideally exists when the participants find it in their interest, given their expectations about the actions of others, to obey written or unwritten rules specified by the ruler. Conformity is usually attributed to some mixture of coercive force by the ruler and social norms such that individuals find it in their interest to behave in ways conductive to the existing social order" (North 2005:104).

The PAP government also exercised control over the inhabitants who were moved into HDB buildings. As late as 1989 the PAP government introduced rules to regulate the HDB housing situation. The rules stated that the racial distribution in HDB buildings should be roughly the same as the racial distribution in the country. This meant that a certain percentage should be reserved for each of the different ethnic groups. Rules were also introduced to distribute evenly income classes (Kong & Yeoh 2003).

6.2 Inhabitants' counter-narratives

As seen in the previous chapter the interviewees describe both Chinatown and Little India as areas which were densely settled. In Chinatown there were numerous families residing, while Little India for a long time primarily housed bachelors. Between 1930-1950 the residential profile of Little India changed from bachelor colonies to family households. The following paragraphs sums up the narratives as I have reconstructed them from the interview material I have reviewed/collected. The narratives presented by inhabitants are counter-narratives contrasting to the narrative of the government.

6.2.1 Chinatown

Informants spoke of the daily activities which used to be found in Chinatown. The children played in the streets or along the five foot way, while the adults shared meals or a chatted in the streets. Activities where young and old met were common; these could be animal fights, or shows during celebrations. The informants who used to be residents of Chinatown have a very positive view of how Chinatown was before. However they are not pleased with how Chinatown is now, this is expressed by several of the informants F and B. The former residents acknowledge that Chinatown was crowded, but they seem to appreciate the community spirit which this close living caused. The changes of Chinatown are not seen to have been for the better. The informants B and E report that even if they received new HDB apartments they did not feel much happier since they now lost contact with friends and family. Close relations amongst neighbours and the constant socialization gave the Chinatown area distinctiveness and a sense of belonging for its inhabitants. The Chinatown which is found today does not appeal to the old residents as they feel that the feel, smell and look of Chinatown have been substituted for tourists and commercialization.

Inhabitants of Chinatown seem to have identified with the area. As Rose (1995) writes, identification with a place is one form of connecting identity with place. The fact that the inhabitants identify with the area give them a position as insiders. Outsiders are people who do not identify with the area. As described in the theory chapter, a notion of insiders and outsiders is not a simple concept. One can imagine that within Chinatown there would also be other groupings, hence creating a number of possible levels of insiders and outsiders. Gangs in Chinatown are one example of such internal groupings. Another grouping is shopkeepers. Inhabitants of Chinatown could recognize themselves as part of internal groupings, but for outsiders to Chinatown they were considered to be inhabitants of Chinatown.

As presented in the previous chapter celebrations and festivals were an important part of Chinatown. The festivals served to preserve the culture and traditions which the Chinese migrants brought with them to Singapore. The ethnicity of the Chinese was upheld through these celebrations and other traditions. The importance of spiritual life and the emphasis on ancestors is seen in the numerous references to festival which honor the dead, and the importance laid on the rituals connected to death. As a part of the Chinese death rites burial is considered to be the only way of disposing with dead bodies.

6.2.2 Little India

A short summary of the stories told by the informants associated with Little India gives rise to a narrative where Indian migrants came to Singapore in order to seek out work. The migrants were primarily bachelors leaving their families in India. The caste system is not that strong in Singapore, leading to unimagined possibilities for poor, lower caste men from India, as described by informant G, in 1983. Religion has always played a central role and it was also one of the reasons for the large Indian community which settled around Serangoon Road; as the traditional Indian saying goes, "do not settle in an area without a temple" (Informant H, interviewed in 1992). Along Serangoon Road the Indian workers found work, places to live and temples where they could worship. From around 1930 to the 1950s many of the Indian bachelors brought wives and children to Singapore. This caused a shift in the character of Little India. The area now catered for new needs, as well as the old traditional ones. This shift made Little India more attractive as a shopping area for traditional Indian goods and food, a

situation which would help make the area popular even after the area had lost its relevance as a residential area.

The festivals and religion still play an important part in Little India. The festivals draw a crowd to attend parades and other activities, while in daily life garland makers provide worshippers with flower garlands which can be brought to the temple. Today Little India has a constant refill of people who associated with the area. The foreign workers from Bangladesh and India are seeking out Little India. The HEB works for the conservation of Hindu interests in the Little India area. The HEB feels that Little India has received less financial government support than Chinatown. The HEB wants to see Little India improved in terms of infrastructure, as the five foot way, streets and shophouses are not in a condition which is acceptable.

6.3 The government's narratives gains terrain

Inevitably the narratives of the government are set up against the counter-narratives of the inhabitants. This paragraph describes the meeting between these narratives and illustrates how the government's narrative gains terrain. The idea behind such an illustration is to show how the inhabitants slowly give up their counter-narratives and accept the narratives presented by the government. I have used the example of the death houses, death rites and Chinese burial grounds.

The death houses were unique to Singapore, but in 1969 the death houses were bulldozed, and removed (Comaroff 2007). As late as 1965 still 89.8% of the Chinese population wanted to be buried, while only 10.2% wanted to be cremated. In 1972 the government declared that all cemeteries in and around the city area would be closed (Kong & Yeoh 2003). By deeming both death houses and cemeteries unhygienic the government could redevelop these areas with a legitimate reason, accepted by the inhabitants (Yeoh & Kong 1994, Kong & Yeoh 2003).

Death houses, which were located in Sago Lane, within the core area of Chinatown, represent a thing of the past.

> "In the 1900s, Singapore had a unique history of death houses located in the present day Sago Lane, which was also known as 'death street', to which the terminally ill would go to await death. They would rent a bed space, but those who could not afford a bed would purchase a coffin instead to lie within it.

> The older generation of Singaporeans has yet to shake off the imagery surrounding hospices that represent modern death houses" (Ong et al. 2002:373).

Such houses were a place for the old and dying to await their death. According to Chinese culture it is bad luck to have death in your house; hence people were moved out of their home before they died. People without families present would also go to such death houses. They knew that if they paid, then a funeral would be held for them. Funerals are an important part of the Chinese death rites. A funeral was the choice when it came to disposal of dead bodies.

The arguments used by the government were the same three found in the narratives described earlier: hygiene, land shortage and overcrowding. Bad hygiene was a result of overcrowded living quarters, burial grounds and the death houses (Kong & Yeoh 2003, Comaroff 2007). Chinese burial grounds were more extensive in use of land compared to other religious groups, causing them to been seen as a particular waste of land. Before 1985 as many as 21 cemeteries had been converted into area free for redevelopment (Perry et al.1997).

The PAP government backed up their practices with legal measures. The Land Acquisition Act of 1966 decommodifies land and allowed the government to acquire the land they needed (Chua 1997).

> "Such rhetoric was backed by considerable powers, most crucially in the form of the Land Acquisition Act, which gave the government the right to compulsorily acquire land for 'any public purpose' as well as absolute discretion to decide what that 'public purpose' entailed" (Kong & Yeoh 2003:60).

The government emphasized discipline, leaving the inhabitants with fewer choices. If the inhabitants wanted to stage a strike, they now risked jail and detention (Trocki, 2001, 2006). Innhabitants must take into consideration that the PAP can detain political opponents, and this might limit the actions they take against the government. As the costs of an action become higher the benefits should also be raised accordingly if the will to act is to remain the same (Ostrom 2005). Such measures made the costs of an open protest much higher; if one was to make such a protest the benefits of a potential outcome had to be high.

An example of such tight control, denying the inhabitants to keep up their tradition, is the clan association Ying Fo Fui Kun (YFFK). This clan association owned a large parcel of land which was used as a cemetery. When told that the PAP government was about to acquire the land for public housing purposes the clan decided to try to influence the process. In a letter to

the government the YFFK stated that they strongly objected that the government would acquire their only cemetery in Singapore, but they ended the letter with a statement that they would not stand in the way of progress by the government. The ancestors of the YFFK members were exhumed and relocated (Kong & Yeoh 2003).

The protests against the government's plans to exhume were silent, but present. Kong & Yeoh (2003) describes how people would take the bodies exhumed by the government and rebury them in private burial grounds, as such private burial grounds were filled, the availability of burial grounds declined. As no burial grounds could be found, people were either forced to accept cremation or they chose to bury their dead in either China or Malaysia.

Death and the worshipping of ancestors are very important features of the Chinese traditions. In addition to the rituals directly connected with death there is an annual festival devoted to celebrating the ancestors. The Qing Ming festival (also known as "all soul's day") is the second most celebrated festival by the Chinese population in Singapore (Tong, Ho & Lin 2004). During this festival one visits the graves of one's ancestors. It is common to tend to the grave during the day and have a dinner in the evening. Rituals such as the Qing Ming festival still take place as before, but since most of the burial grounds have been cleared the participants have to find other ways of celebrating their ancestors.

Although the PAP government was not afraid to use coercive measures, other ways to win the population over could also occur. When the tradition of burial came to an end those who had already been buried had to be cremated and moved. Since there is religious freedom in Singapore, the PAP government could not force the Chinese (which is the largest ethnic group who makes use of burial) to give up burial. Instead the Chinese had to be persuaded that cremation was the better choice. To help the government convey this message, middlemen were used. These middlemen were people who would come in contact with the family during the process of death rites.

> "Because they were directly in contact with the Chinese masses and held positions of respect and authority given their 'expert' knowledge, these middlemen were more successful in eroding the distrust of cremation without any semblance of coercion" (Kong & Yeoh 2003:63).

When using such middlemen the PAP government could convey their message to the population without seeming to be coercive. This use of middlemen changed the actions of the

inhabitants and helped the PAP increase control. Coercive measures were utilized in other issues. The PAP government was never afraid to use force to fulfill its goals (Trocki 2006).

In the case of Singapore the benefits of acting in congruence with the government could be high. The government would provide public housing, which was a major benefit as large numbers of Singapore's population during the 1950s and 1960s lived in poor housing conditions. In situations where the government demolished death houses or built houses on former burial grounds, the inhabitants were often negative to the PAP government's practices. On the other hand, such harsh actions were taken in order to create a modern Singapore, characterized by booming economic growth. The inhabitants saw the benefits of having proper housing and a job. Since the benefits of the PAP government became obvious, the inhabitants were also more open towards stark actions taken by the PAP in order to reach the level of economic growth (Kong & Yeoh 2003).

6.3.1 Narratives told by modern Singaporeans

The narratives presented by the government meet counter-narratives from the inhabitants. Control over the population helped the government to win support for their narratives. In terms of legitimacy the governments narratives are regarded to be more legitimate, since these are backed with propaganda and if necessary with force. The government did not need to force the narratives through since the economic growth served to legitimize the government's actions and narratives. By silencing critical voices the alternative narratives became fewer and the government narratives were regarded to be the truth.

Returning to the examples of death houses and Chinese burial grounds, research conducted by Kong & Yeoh (2003) reveals that the argument of land scarcity is not only accepted, but also supported by a growing number of the Chinese population. These inhabitants believed the actions taken by the government can be justified. Some informants described cremation as a way of disposing bodies with words such as: *faster*, *easier cleaner* or *simpler* (Kong & Yeoh 2003:74). According to Comaroff (2007:57), the death houses of Sago Lane are today described as a "shared embarrassment, a dirty or polluted backwater of the national memory".

Other interesting examples of how the mentality has changed can be found in more personal relations. Interviews with younger Chinese revealed two very interesting pieces of

information. First of all young, Singaporeans of Chinese ethnicity referred to the citizens of mainland China as "mainland PRC's" (Peoples Republic of China). This term was not a positive term, but was directed at people that looked old fashioned or in other ways were described as unmodern.

Another finding which came out of conversations with young Chinese Singaporean's was that weddings were modernized. As described in the findings chapter the traditional Chinese weddings were regarded as traditional, old-fashioned and to time-consuming. Modern weddings were held in a western fashion. A white wedding dress is the norm. The weddings were almost always held in hotels or restaurants, and always during the weekend. Such weddings would save both time and money. According to Yeoh & Kong (1994) traditional Chinese weddings and celebrations could spill out onto the streets of Chinatown, including neighbours and the community. Government regulations with regards to sanitation and regulations for use of public locations to serve food have reduced the use of public areas. As with the change from Chinatown community living to HDB living privacy is desired and the hotels and restaurants provide the wedding party with the requested privacy.

6.4 Physical changes in the landscape

As the government narrative gained terrain there was greater acceptance for the actions taken by the PAP government. The physical landscape changed as a result of the policies devised by the PAP. The inhabitants coming to terms with the narrative of the PAP also took pride in the new, modern landscape and the symbols of the "new" national identity. The landscapes of spectacle became important in symbolizing the success of Singapore. The visual aspects of landscape became more important. The government's view of landscape, related to the British Italian way of seeing landscapes, triumphed over the inhabitant's view of landscape based on social practice.

The government narrative focused on a change from traditional to modern. This narrative became one of the guiding principles of the policies devised to change Singapore from a third world country to a first world country. The Singaporean vision of a *first world oasis in a third world region* (Lee 2000:58) was a strong influence. In documents released by the URA the word "slum" is used continuously trough the documents, illustrating the way such areas was viewed by the URA. The quest for economic growth would be fueled by a dream of creating a

tropical city of excellence.[12] With thoughts of modernization affecting the policy development, the strategy was laid for moving from traditional to modern.

The URA or the HDB, or representatives from these organizations, are often regarded as outsiders when discussing who belongs in Chinatown and Little India. The planners and architects are often seen as outsiders since they do not have an informal connection to the land, through daily social practice, but rather have a formal approach to development of the area in question. They view Chinatown and Little India with other values than the inhabitants. As shown by Jones (1991, 1993), different groups find different values in the same landscape. Governments or other agencies evaluating land often make use of "experts" in order to map values in the landscape. These "experts" evaluate a landscape on the basis of standards set by the agency which hired them (Jones 1998). This creates a difference between inhabitants who have an informal connection to the land, and "experts" who have a formal, work-related approach to land. Such a division between formal and informal connections can be related to the two landscape approaches, the Northern European and the Italian-British. Lefebvre (1991) puts forward the idea that such planners and architects are in a situation which allows for their view of space to dominate other views of space. Lefebvre's argument is that the architects and planners are in a position where their abstract notions of space are converted into physical landscape. This gives such planners and architects the ability consciously to design and implement physical landscapes. The government in Singapore either developed all new built environments through their own agencies or private contractors built within a framework developed by the government. The design of physical landscapes was affected by the narratives of the government. Since modernization was an integral part of the government's narratives, then newly designed and built environment had to be perceived as modern.

From the statements made by Mr. Tan to the texts published by the URA, one can read that there was little concern for the inhabitants who either practice traditional trades or in some other way kept up the traditions. In the first and second phase of McGee's (1979) model, the employees in the traditional sector are residing close to their trades. The building of HDB buildings and the relocation of inhabitants would involve changes. The inhabitants of areas considered to be traditional (bazaar) would experience these policies at first hand. As stated by McGee (1979), the traditional features will die out if not protected by the government.

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[12] *Towards a tropical city of excellence* is the title of the book series which describes conservation in Singapore. The book series is published by the URA.

Historical areas were redeveloped and modernized at a high pace, but around 1989 certain areas are given conservation status. This conservation status helped what was left of traditional trades. The idea of incompatible or pollutive trades is a good example of how the government decided to help traditional (bazaar) trades from extinction. But the high rent of these core areas of conservation mean that even though only traditional trades are allowed to be set up, only the most profitable trades can be established.

The Prime Minister at that time, Lee, Kuan Yew admitted the development had first priority and sums it up in this manner:

> "We made our share of mistakes in Singapore. For example in our rush to rebuild Singapore, we knocked down many old and quaint Singapore buildings. Then we realized that we were destroying a valuable part of our cultural heritage, that we were demolishing what tourists found attractive and unique in Singapore" (URA exhibition 2007).

The focus on modernization and redevelopment of traditional areas halted as the Singaporean government saw the potential of the tourist industry. As seen in the quotation above, the government realized that cultural heritage could be used as a source for generating revenue. However, as remarked by Chang (2000) tourists and locals have different needs, even though they share a common meeting ground.

A clean, accessible landscape can be used to attract tourists and generate higher revenues than local inhabitants would create. An article by Yuen & Hock (2001) has the title "Urban Conservation in Singapore: Tradition or Tourist Bane?" This is an interesting question; the paper argues that Tourism can be held as a viable, economic argument for conservation. The revenues generated from tourism will compensate for the costs of not redeveloping the historical site. As described by Mr. Tan, the URA wants private enterprises to engage in conservation, hence there must be a chance of profit for them to participate.

Visual aspects tend to be more important than the other senses. The visual (Italian British view of landscape) tends to overcome other notions landscape. The social practices are not weighted as heavily as the visual impressions. In Chinatown the visual aspect is strong, as the social practises of the local inhabitants are not that strong, while in Little India tourists sample exotic food, shop for unique items and at the same time immerse themselves in a minority culture. At the same time Little India is an attractive location to the Singapore's Indian community, as the area caters for their specific needs (Chang 2000).

Hence the question arises, for whom is the conservation undertaken? It might appear that the government has undertaken conservation both in the interest of tourists and national interest. Acording to Chang (2000:351) it was believed that conservation of ethnic areas would contribute to Singapore's "oriental mystique and cultural heritage". The former residential and commercial sites were elevated to national importance as civic and tourism assets (Kong & Yeoh 1994). With regards to the data I have collected I feel that conservation focuses on what the tourists wants to see and not so much what is important for the local inhabitants. The conservation areas primarily focus on preserving buildings and do not care for the social life which takes place in these areas. It seems that there are few initiatives taken in order to retain traditions and social practices, but rather a focus on conserving buildings. The conservation of buildings creates a nice facade in the conservation areas. Conserving facades gives a nice visual impression, but does not affect the social practices in the area.

In the paper by Yuen & Hock (2001) a survey is presented, which concludes that when tourists visit conservation area they want to experience the area both in terms of visual impressions and a living community. The tourists who visit Singapore appear to be pleased with the community, but the tourists participating in the survey note that artificiality and tourist oriented development of conservation areas is negative. As an example of this practice the government was more interested in the buildings than in the activities in and around them. As described by the former Minister for National Development, S. Dhanabalan:

> ""Our approach [to conservation] is simple: restore the buildings, and let a new tradition emerge""
> (Yeoh & Peng 1995:59).

Such practices confirm the idea that conservation in Singapore is first of all concerned with the visual approach to landscapes. However the conservation of traditional trades and social practices has improved with the conservation status of 1989, leaving the core areas for traditional trades. The "new tradition" emerging in Chinatown was centred on the ability to make money. The rising rent made it hard for smaller businesses to pay for the costs with having a shop. Smaller businesses were pushed out and businesses intent on making money moved in. Tourism became a profitable business. Conservation and tourism go well together.

> "The common ground between an ideal past and an official or authentic past may be a landscape that
> tolerates temporal diversity and accommodates multiple land uses
> that give character, not charm alone, to the cityscape. This is a lesson for
> many cities" (Arreola 1995:532).

6.4.1 HDB Housing

Liu (1985) mentions several positive effects of re-housing the population. Living conditions have been raised, and the income level and educational level have also increased. People's lifestyles and values have also shifted significantly. Teh (1975) writes that the HDB have created more privacy amongst residents and there has been both a positive economic and social effect of the HDB. The former inhabitants do not necessarily agree that there have been positive social effects of the relocation to HDB. The issue of privacy is regarded to be a negative feature by the older informants who used to reside in Chinatown. HDB apartments decrease the contact between families and neighbours. One can also see this trend in weddings and other celebrations where it is no longer usual for celebrations to spill out on the streets, as the government has regulated the use of public areas for preparing and serving foodstuff (Yeoh & Kong 1994). Hence it makes sense to speak of a privatization of landscape as the social interaction has been weakened. Weakening the social interaction also opens for a change in how landscapes are perceived. Privatization of landscapes is experienced through the more extensive use of private spaces, provided through the number HDB apartments. The exploding number of HDB apartments can be likened to the statements of Lefebvre (1979) that there is an explosion of spaces, as people see spatial relations are also social relations. The increasing number HDB units (apartments) increase the number of living spaces and decreases the community life which used to characterize both Chinatown and Little India. Large, self-sustained HDB communities have moved the people out of the city centre and into small population enclaves, decreasing the social interaction which used to take place along the five foot way and in the streets. The people who have been moved out of Little India and Chinatown have had to create a new space for themselves in the HDB complexes; hence there has been an increase in the number of spaces (Lefebvre 1979).

6.5 Picture analysis

Building on the previous paragraphs, my argument is that both the mental perception of Singapore has changed as well as the physical landscape. I believe that this change, from social interaction to visual impressions can be traced in photography.

As described in the methodology chapter, there are several considerations to be taken when discussing photographs as a source of information. The most important factor is that each photo has a motif which the photographer intended to depict. The photographer has numerous

choices when it comes to lighting, framing, focus, and distance to the intended motif. Variations in such factors can change the outcome of how a picture is perceived.

I will explore in this paragraph the idea of what makes a good Singaporean motif, which has changed over the years. In the old pictures I have used throughout this dissertation one can see that the focus is on crowded scenes where people and their activities seem to be the principal motif. The pictures tell a story of a physical landscape in change. The built landscape has changed greatly over the last 50 years. What is more intriguing is that the people depicted in the landscape change. Early pictures show crowded streets, people at work, or children at play. Newer pictures do not show the same life. They show a more neat, clean and tidy landscape where high rise buildings, but seldom concentrations of people, are the motif. There are of course people in the pictures, but they are no longer the key feature of the pictures. Instead the pictures often depict the landscape as it has become as a result of city planning, a more visual approach to landscapes. The pictures which follow are my own pictures of what I perceive to be the most familiar scenes from Singapore. First of all I will present a comparison between an old and new picture taken from the same place, but with a difference in time. Figures 9 and 10 shows a familiar view from the Singapore River, but the landscape has changed greatly.[13] The image in figure 11 is the image which appears on your computer screen if you Google Singapore, this picture can be seen in figure 11. The Singapore skyline is well known, and it appears to be a well appreciated scene for photographers. My claim is that what the Singaporeans I have either met, spoken to or accessed through the OHC take photos of has changed from being busy, daily street scenes to landscapes of spectacle, represented by symbols of modernization. These symbols are often a result of the economic growth and modernization experienced by Singapore. One can say that these new national symbols have been deliberately created by the government by the use of narratives. Kong & Yeoh (2003) writes that the new Singaporean identity is based on a perception of Singapore as economically successful and modern.

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[13] Unfortunately the National Archives of Singapore does not have a date for figure 9. However, since Elgin Bridge was opened in 1929, this picture must be younger.

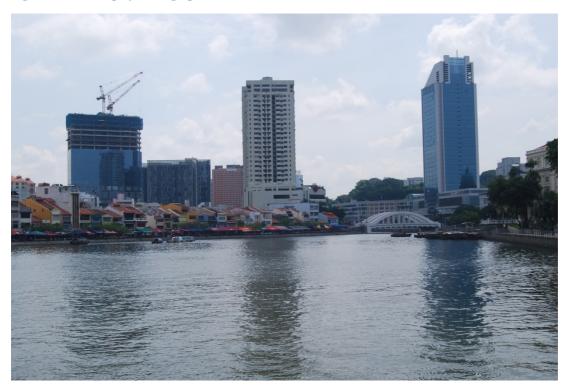**Figure 9. The boat quay. Photograph NAS. No date avaliable**

Figure 10. The boat quay 2007.

Photograph by the author (13. July 2007)

 Turning around 180 degrees from the standpoint where the picture in Figure 9 and 10 are taken, one will find what is one of the most photographed scenes of Singapore, the modern, downtown area represented by the skyline (as seen in Figure 11). This is the most published view when Singapore is depicted.

Figure 11. The Singapore skyline.

Photograph by the author (13. July 2007)

6.6 Ethnicity and its importance for the study areas

The two study areas have both been important in an ethnic sense. As a part of the racial segregation of Singapore, established by Stamford Raffles, these areas have been the traditional living areas for both ethnic groups.

Both ethnic groups occupy areas that, although not exclusive to them, are where these ethnic groups have a majority of the inhabitants. There is also strong insider-outsider identification related to these areas. The insider-outsider concept applies in different ways. One is identification within the ethnic group, and the distance to people outside the ethnic group (Barth 1996 [1969]); another is the identification with a given place, as described by Rose (1995). Identification with a given place creates an insider-outsider situation in terms of who identifies with a given place and who does not. The inhabitants of Little India and Chinatown feel they belong to these places in contrast to the government, which sees the areas as

underutilized land areas. The Northern European view of landscape is well suited to characterize the inhabitant's view of the area, while one can see parallels to the British-Italian view of landscape in the government's view of landscape. For both Chinatown and Little India the informants speak of belonging to the area. There is a sense of identification with these places. From the Indian people who do their shopping in Little India to the Chinese which go back to Chinatown during celebrations, there is a sense of belonging to these areas even if they are no longer residents.

The ethnic groups are held together by sharing activities, beliefs and history. The different festivals/celebrations which are held in both Chinatown and Little India appear to constitute the ethnic groups. Celebration of the Chinese New Year or Thaipusam festival is important for the people living in these areas. With the redevelopment of Chinatown the number of inhabitants was reduced. The reduction of inhabitants in Chinatown led the area to lose some of its importance in an ethnic sense. The close quarters living found in Chinatown made it a special place; it is remembered by the former inhabitants as a place with tight relations between people residing there.

The ethnic value of Chinatown is reduced, but around large celebrations, such as the Chinese New Year, the area plays an important role as a gathering place for the ethnic Chinese. The Thaipusam festival, which is a unique festival to Hindus in Singapore, always attracts a crowd to Little India, as do other celebrations. Hence both traditional festivals and religious festivals appear to be important to the study areas because they attract local inhabitants as well as tourists. Attracting local inhabitants appear to be harder for Chinatown than for Little India.

The Chinese make up 76% of the total population in Singapore (Singapore Department of Statistics 2005). Being a majority, the Chinese population are spread around Singapore. The availability of Chinese goods and traditional services is good. Chinese goods can be found throughout the entire city state, without a defined centre. This opens for more actors and a more spread shopping pattern. Indian goods are also found throughout the entire city state, but Little India provides more goods, and a better selection than other areas. This gives Little India a status as a shopping area for Indian goods. Studies show that people of the same ethnicity are more likely to stick together than to interact with people of a different ethnicity, hence Little India fulfils an important mission in being a meeting place for Indians (Dovidio

et al. 2005). This might also help to explain the loyalty towards the Indian shopkeepers, as the Indian population find together in this area. Mr. Tan, of the URA, believes that the quest for profit is what has changed Chinatown to such a degree; the Chinese have always been eager to modernize. The Little India area has modernized, but focused on the Indian community and the foreign workers as its customers instead of aiming for tourists. The appeal towards the Indian population seems to be founded on an ability to provide Indian culture, goods, food and a familiar atmosphere. Temples are also present in Little India, giving worshippers the possibility to use the Little India area in a religious setting.

7. Conclusion

This dissertation has reviewed the development of Singapore and the modernization process which has been an integral part of the development. As discussed in earlier chapters there has been a difference in opinion between government and inhabitants concerning whether the sacrifices made for development have been acceptable or not. The difference in opinion has been reduced over the years as Singapore experienced a booming economic growth and increased living standards.

7.1 Changes to the built landscape in Chinatown and Little India

The economic growth has relied on several factors, among them city planning. City planning has served a number of purposes including building a national identity and conserving the past as well as creating a new city. In terms of landscape use today, it seems that both Chinatown and Little India rely heavily on commercial activities. The physical landscape has been altered during this modernization process. A traditional landscape has been substituted by a modern landscape. In both areas HDB buildings have been constructed. These buildings have changed the living environment for the inhabitants of Chinatown and Little India.

Chinatown appears to have surrendered to the tourist industry, and can appear to tourists as both artificial and developed towards generating revenue. Little India on the other hand retains its status as a religious centre, a shopping area and a meeting place for the locals. By catering to traditional needs the Little India area has retained more of its original function. This creates a more genuine living environment and a more interesting experience for the tourists who come to visit. I asked the URA officer, Mr. Tan about why there had been such a different development in these two study areas. He believed that it was a question of culture: "It is the Chinese nature to make money". Mr. Tan believed that the Indian community is more focused on keeping traditions than the Chinese.

The interviews which were recorded by the OHC give the impression that the former inhabitants of Chinatown and Little India were very pleased with their former living arrangements in the study areas.

It is important to emphasize that even though the informants found at the OHC speak very positively about their days as residents in Chinatown and Little India things might not always

have been positive. As described earlier, personal narratives involve remembering, but also forgetting, which leaves the narrative vulnerable for selective memory. Informants may remember positive things, and they might also suppress the memories which do not fit the narrative. A narrative's representation of reality can be questioned. Narratives are not direct representations, but they are still representations of the reality. Narratives are not mimetic, making them subjective (Jones 2003). According to Vandsemb (1995) narratives are not direct representations but rather a story about reality.

7.1.1 Little India

Little India attracts members of the Indian population, as well as foreign workers from Bangladesh and India. The users of Little India are numerous and they use the area both for recreation during weekends and for religious celebrations.

Little India once served as a settlement for Indian migrants where they could find shelter and work. Later, the area developed into a residential and commercial area for the growing Indian population, and for the families who were brought from India. Little India lost its value as a residential area when the PAP came to power. In this period the population was re-housed in HDB buildings and the number of small shops in Little India were reduced as rent control was lifted and the rent was raised. In 1989 Little India received conservation status. This enabled the core area of Little India to be reserved for traditional trades and hence reinforced the area's status as an Indian trade centre. The physical landscape has been altered in terms of adding new, modern buildings and refurbishment of old buildings. However, it is not granted that all these new buildings have been appreciated by users of Little India. The informants at OHC were very fond of the old buildings and did not want to see change. The Tekka Mall is almost empty and tells a tale of shoppers who appreciate traditional stores and products. Little India still has a strong position amongst the Indian population in terms of providing Indian food, Hindu temples, traditional trades and Indian goods in demand. Hence Little India appears to be a living and thriving community.

7.1.2 Chinatown

Chinatown has experienced the construction of a number of new buildings, and the demolition of older buildings. The small shophouses have been demolished in order to make way for new development. An example used in this paper has been the demolishing of death houses along

Sago Lane. New buildings such as the Chinatown Complex now occupy space in Chinatown. The traditional shophouses have been refurbished and now appear with a new, clean facade. Infrastructure in Chinatown has improved due to the new uses of the area. Since tourism has become one of the most important sources of income in Chinatown, a suitable infrastructure is important. The Chinatown area is mostly used by tourists visiting, but also here can one find the local Singaporeans involved in activities, especially around Chinese New Year, or after the closing hours of the tourist businesses. With the renewal of Chinatown residents moved out, leaving the once bustling area with little or no trace of the practices which earlier occurred there. Several of the former residents, interviewed by the OHC, express fear of the future development of Chinatown. It is also widely recognized by former inhabitants, according to interviewes by the OHC, that the area has become too commercialized and has lost the charm and community spirit which used to make up the area.

7.2 Effects of conservation

When discussing the effects of conservation, numerous factors could be included. In this dissertation I have focused on the government's will to preserving buildings and the opportunity conservation status gives to those who conduct traditional trades. According to the URA there is no justification for freezing a conservation area at a given time, and hence market forces are allowed to work within these conservation areas. This has increased pressure on small shopkeepers and those few residents who remain. However, tourism can provide an economic argument to conserve traditional trades alongside the refurbished buildings. As stated by McGee (1979), the government has to protect pockets of traditional trades if the trades are to survive. The conservation status of both Little India and Chinatown allows for traditional trades, but only economically viable businesses can set up, due to high rent. Chinatown has utilized conservation status to develop further the tourist industry in the area, while Little India does not appear to be directed towards tourism to such a degree as Chinatown. Little India on the other hand uses conservation status to refurbish buildings, and to reserve the core area for traditional Indian trades. Hence one can say that the conservation in Little India is more directed at the local inhabitants and the newly arrived foreign workers.

7.3 Increasing privacy

The perception of landscape might have become more visual as the government has had their way in city planning, but the personal experiences and the subjective feelings towards will always exist as the counterpart to these visual landscapes. I would on the basis of my findings say that landscape, and the subjective experience of it, has become more private. It is no longer common to spend as much time with others as it used to be. Public areas in Chinatown are no longer a scene for social interaction between local inhabitants. The local inhabitants have moved away. People have gained new accommodation, which leaves them with more privacy and hence their experiences are not shared to the same degree as earlier. The traditional life by the five-foot way has been devoured by the capitalist sector and government resolutions which seem to find only interest in the built environment and not the people who populate it. As in the example regarding weddings, one can detect that people are busier; time is of the essence and efficiency is important. This reduces the time for social interaction. However an increasing number of tourists seem to use the landscape for social interactions. This is the case for both Chinatown and Little India. Tourists are outsiders and more concerned with the visual aspects of landscapes.

I will refer to this as the privatization of landscapes. In light of the ever increasing pace of daily life and the privacy of the home we are experiencing landscapes in a more personal way. The daily practices of the local inhabitants of a place are still found, but the rules of conduct have changed. The large public gatherings of Chinatown are now almost a thing of the past and this means that personal experience of landscape becomes paramount.[14]

7.4 A stronger emphasis on the visual landscape

I would argue that national identity has affected the motifs of photographers. When I reviewed old pictures, I found that people mostly form the motif of the photographer while buildings and landscapes are merely backgrounds in such pictures. Through the phase of high economic development, the motifs of pictures change. High rise buildings, modern designs and symbols of economic progress are now regarded as more interesting motifs. What are

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[14] Of course there has never been a common meaning given to particular places, since everybody experiences and senses the landscape in a different way, but now the emphasis is placed on whether a person experiences the landscape alongside someone he is familiar to or not.

depicted are no longer the lives of people and their social practices, but rather landscapes of spectacle. Both tourists and local inhabitants seem to take an interest in these landscapes of spectacles. There has been a transition from a time where social interaction was worth capturing on film, to a situation where visual spectacle is seen as more interesting. This shift from social interaction to visual impressions can also be found in the extensive city-planning of Singapore. The people have been moved out of conservation areas, and the buildings are instead the focal point of the government's attention.

7.5 Traditional behaviour in a modern landscape

In some cases the traditional celebrations and uses of landscape have become obsolete. The traditional Chinese weddings are decreasing in number, while modern style western weddings are becoming more popular. The Indians, on the other hand, still prefer the traditional Indian weddings, or at least keep traditional elements. The traditional Chinese weddings held in Chinatown would often spill onto the streets, but nowadays the weddings are often held in hotels and hence this use of the landscape is declining. According to the interviews found at the OHC, it seems that former residents, especially of Chinatown, regard their lives to be more private than before. With the introduction of HDB flats, people are more secluded from each other than earlier. According to the authorities, this enhances the lived environment, but the informants say that this has made them feel lonelier and that they miss the community and the activities that connected the people living in Chinatown.

The Chinese have a strong emphasis on ancestors. Several traditional celebrations, as Qing Ming Jie (all souls day) and The 7 lunar month festival of the Hungry Ghosts are examples of this. Since the traditional Chinese burial ritual has decreased over the years, these festivals have been altered. The physical landscape has changed and this affects the actions of the inhabitants. Instead of tending to graves one now has to visit the columbarium where their ancestors are kept. The death houses of Sago, which were deemed indecent and demolished, are another example. By demolishing these physical structures a mental change followed, and death rites changed.

7.6 Recommendations from this study

Throughout this dissertation a conflict between local inhabitants on one side and government and tourists on the other side has been presented. There is a difference in opinion in terms of what the landscape of the study areas should be used for. The findings from this study suggest that conservation should focus more on the social practices than the visual qualities of a landscape. In chapter 2.4 I described the goals of conservation. The goals listed by the URA do not seem to be fulfilled, especially not in Chinatown. It appears that Little India has been a more successful conservation area since the ethnic activities are better retained there.

The study by Yuen & Hock (2001) confirms that tourists do not want to see an artificial landscape which is constructed for tourists. Instead they want to experience more of the local culture and witness the social practices. By conserving the pattern of settlement, and not just the buildings alone, the social practices in the given area would be allowed to play out as before. A local community which is living and breathing would also be more in sympathy with what the tourists want to see. If it is not possible to conserve an area as a residential area, the local inhabitants should be able to utilize the area in another way, as Little India does with shopping, restaurants and services. Areas should be allowed develop organically. By forcing areas through a modernization process, important heritage memories and social practices might be lost as the death houses in Sago Lane, and the death rites of the Chinese.

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