SOCIAL WORK IN HONG KONG, SINGAPORE AND TAIWAN: BRIDGING TRADITION AND MODERNISATION

PETER CHING-YUNG LEE

In the context of social work, many critical issues in Asia’s “Four Tigers” are profoundly different from their Western counterparts. Is it possible that certain elements of a common culture have different effects on social work as a profession? What are the effects of a strong family structure on social development? Can these countries retain their tradition and cultural identity while reconciling the impact of Western influences? The purpose of this paper is to examine how Chinese culture gives Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan their specific characteristics in social work and to assess the extent to which these societies are dealing with their recurrent social, political, and economic dilemmas. Issues and strategies in which social work can be directed toward the realisation of social goals are also be discussed.

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Purpose and Assumptions

As members of the so called Asian Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs), Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan have achieved a rapid and remarkable economic growth in the last two decades or so and have come to be known as Asia’s "Four Tigers", or "Four Little Dragons" (Midgley, 1986; Tai, 1989; Weiss, 1989). By adopting Western capitalism with the acceptance of Confucianism as the essence of their major culture, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan have an overwhelming majority of ethnic Chinese population and share common historical circumstances, cultural heritage, physical attributes, even strategies of development. In other words, the cultural setting of Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan has been to a considerable extent impacted by Chinese experiences, which have been, in turn, heavily influenced by Confucianism.

In the context of social work, many critical issues — the policy and organisational characteristics, the roles and functions of social work, the professional education and trainings, the philosophy and cultural values — in these societies are profoundly different from their Western counterparts. In Taiwan, for example, where Confucianism is officially recognised, what would be the most conspicuous manifestations of the Confucian culture in the realm of development. Is it possible that certain elements of a common culture have different effects on social work as a profession? What are the effects of a strong family structure on social development? Can these countries retain their tradition and cultural identity while reconciling the impact of Western influences? The purpose of this paper is to examine how Chinese culture gives Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan their specific characteristics in social work and to assess the extent to which these societies are dealing with their recurrent social, political, and economic dilemmas. Issues and strategies in which social work can be directed toward the realisation of social goals are also be discussed.
Demographic and Socioeconomic Profile

While economic strategies of these societies have been extensively analysed, much less scrutinised is the societal context of their development. For this reason we need to go beyond the boundaries of economics and delve into the realm of sociocultural themes and institutions.

As reflected in Table 1, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan are economically prosperous and relatively more industrialised in Asia. These societies have achieved considerable social progress as well, measured by the United Nations' Human Development Index (United Nations, 1992). Yet, they also differ from each other according to their economic, political and social trends.

Situated midway between China and India, Singapore held the second highest per capita GNP among Asian countries, after Japan. Within all three societies, Singapore is the most diverse society with three officially recognised racial groups — Indian (7 per cent), Chinese (74 per cent) and Malays (15 per cent). Soon after it achieved independence from the British rule in June 1959, Singapore decided to build up a politically stable society under which trade expansion and industrial growth can take place. The priorities were given to the planned industrialisation, higher employment and income levels, provision of decent housing, and the strong national identity. In its pervasive moralism, Singapore's public policy is thoroughly Confucian. The creation of a relatively stable political climate is a major strategy to induce multinational corporations to invest in Singapore. A dedicated labour force with respect to work efficiency and law and order has provided sufficient support to the government's economic policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population (millions) (1988)</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area (1,000 km²)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy (years)</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita GNP (US $) (1987)</td>
<td>8,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita GDP (US $) (1986)</td>
<td>5,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Growth Rate (%) (1988)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Welfare Expenditure as % of GDP (1986)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Literacy Rate (1985)</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of Highest 20%/Lowest 20% Income (1986)</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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Note: * 1991's figure for Taiwan.
** indicates data not available.

A market economy, a dedicated labour force consisting largely of immigrants from China, an ideal geographical location and deep-water harbour, and relative political
stability have all contributed to the prosperity of Hong Kong. Today Hong Kong is
the world's third largest container port, third largest gold dealing centre, and the third
largest banking and financial centre. Yet, Hong Kong differs from its NICs neigh-
bours in two important ways: it is the only city-state still ruled by foreigners, and it
lives completely in the shadow of its enormous neighbour, China. Will this dynamic
character change when Hong Kong is formally ceded back to China in 1997? Initially,
guarantees by the Chinese government about the economic system, free press, and
other issues seemed to assure continuation of the territory—colony's status.
However, uncertainty has arisen, largely because of shifting policy on the part of
China.

The government of the Republic of China on Taiwan started the land reform
programme by distributing land to farmers and transforming capitals in the hands of
landlords from agriculture to industrial sectors. By launching a series of long-range
economic plans since 1953, Taiwan's economy grew rapidly, characterised by
export expansion, the increase of GNP, national income growth, high degree of
urbanisation, and relatively full and stable employment. The standard of living has
increased greatly, while Taiwanese social structure also underwent a dramatic
changes. Currently, more than 85 per cent of the Taiwan population is engaged in
industrial business-service-oriented activities. Industrial products constituted 18 per
cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 1952 has increased to 44 per cent in
1987, while per capita GDP during the same period increased from US $ 151 to US
$4969 (Lin, 1991).

Social Work Roles and Functions

To understand social welfare and social work in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan,
we must first understand what each society does and does not contribute to the
welfare production. Second, an understanding of the conjoint significance of the
family, the culture and the state is particularly important in our analysis.

1. Types of Roles

In all three societies, the roles of social workers and their abilities to address societal
issues varies with the macro or micro level of intervention required, reflecting diverse
organisational positions. They are employed at all levels, from grass-roots to policy
making.

An analysis of human services in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan suggests
different levels of intervention of which the three most basic roles are social policy,
social administration and direct services.

At the social policy level, social intervention is often political, ideological, and is
inevitably tied to economic development. All three governments have established
policy directives in setting social welfare schemes, using as criteria for their choice
what has come to be known as a system of selective social benefits. In determining
who has a priority to be helped, resources are deployed to meet the most obvious
threats to their present and future welfare. For example, decisive factors such as
the welfare ideology, the labour movement, and the particular state structure have
most likely played significant roles in shaping the development of modern social
welfare in Singapore and Taiwan (Midgley, 1986; Roh, 1989; Lin, 1991; Lee, 1992). As a result, the principal policy features are clear. Primarily, the level of benefits are based on the principle of basic minimum provision and volume of services are related to nation's economic considerations (for example, Taiwan's Aged Welfare Law, enacted in 1980, defined the "elderly" as the person 70 years of age and above.). Secondly, the priority policy choice is a cohort of selective few beneficiary targeted populations, such as children, the elderly, the handicapped, and the poor, as in the case of Taiwan. At this point, social policies in these three Chinese societies are inevitably rudimentary, restricted and lacking the institutional framework that ultimately must be an essential conditions for the effective utilisation of human services.

In social administration, the organisation of administrative services to implement policy decisions is a crucial element in all three societies. At present, two patterns of administrative decentralisation are common: one is the decentralisation according to locality while the other is the decentralisation according to organisation subunits within the framework of central governmental control, such as the case of Taiwan.

The first type of decentralisation often includes the provision of services through voluntary agencies under heavy governmental subsidy as in the case of Hong Kong. All have statutory education, housing, social security, child welfare services, health and mental health services, accompanied by the growth of social service bureaucracies in the management of service delivery. However, the social service department is casted in the role of "enabler" rather than direct provider, facilitating and coordinating the efforts of other sources of support.

The role of direct service worker is closely related to a host of social welfare issues and in particular with the human resources of each country. Unlike its Asian counterparts, the provision of social welfare services in Hong Kong is shared by the public sector (Social Welfare Department) and voluntary agencies, most are subsidised by the government. Voluntary welfare agencies in Hong Kong is unique in the sense that they provide most of direct social work services which include family services, child care services, rehabilitation work, services for the elderly, services for youth, community development, and various support services. While many direct human services in these societies have made much progress in the 1970s, the gap between the educational background and professional status in most social welfare fields is till very great. In Taiwan, for instance, despite the relatively early emergence of social work education, there has been a surprising lack of public recognition toward social work as a profession. This may help to explain in part why a proposal for licensing social workers failed to achieve full sanction by the government at this point.

Social workers in these Confucian-oriented societies are well aware of the importance of the family and the community, and have developed techniques of group and community work aimed at ensuring that clients gain access to welfare resources as are available. At the same time, it has to be recognised that social reform roles of social workers in three NICs have been limited by their relationship to their employers, mostly from public sectors. With the exception of Hong Kong, they are mostly public officials and as such are expected to implement the policies of the government, not to engage in political activity against those policies. Meanwhile,
there are too many tasks for them to perform with clients as the family and community became less and less capable of keeping a benevolent eye on their members (Jones, 1990).

Our discussion has been based on the assumption that support within the Asian family system is on the retreat and this is usually taken to be the inevitable result of economic growth and its accompanying modernisation. Aside from the case of Japan, where some of the traditional functions of the family seem to have been taken over by the employer, there is evidence to suggest that a good deal of family support is still possible and that they are seeking to recover some of the traditional ground lost in recent years (Lee, 1989; Tai, 1989; Jones, 1990).

2. Social Work in Different Service Systems

In the last four decades, the three NICs' governments had placed their major focuses on economic growth and political development, whereas social development was treated as a "residual" element in their pursuit of national development. Consequently, most of the social welfare legislations were not instituted until 1970s. The result has been an efflorescence and proliferation of specific and categorical social programmes of almost confusing variety.

Recognising pitfalls from rapid economic growth, these better-off NICs are in a better position to do more socially. Today, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan have comparatively well structured and funded social welfare systems, though mostly geared toward industrial and economic development. Achievements in Hong Kong, for example, include providing public housing for 45 per cent of the population, 9 years free education for all children, basic medical consultation and care for the sick, a public assistance scheme which guarantees a basic living standard, and various social services for the disabled and aged (Chow, 1986; Kwan and Chan, 1986; Kwan, 1988).

However, despite the percentage increases of the total social welfare expenditure to the total national budget, appropriations for social welfare in three societies in general remain inadequate. Aside from general social services, Taiwan has the most comprehensive and invested Social Insurance Scheme which composed well over 50 per cent of the total social welfare budget. The most advantageous terms of all in the Taiwanese social insurance model are given to civil servants, labourers, and military personnels. Now the government of Taiwan plans to implement universal health insurance by the year 1995, pensions for the aged and unemployment insurance during 1996-97, making it the first of the Asian NICs to establish fairly comprehensive insurance programmes for the entire population (Yu, 1993). By contrast, Hong Kong and Singapore do not operate social insurance schemes but rely on a variety of different provisions such as employer liability schemes for work injury, sickness and maternity benefits.

The Social Assistance Schemes in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan are provided on a very residual basis whereby only those vulnerable segment of the population (for example, mentally ill, poorest of the poor and handicapped) are cared for by the government (Kwan, 1988; Leung, 1989; Jones, 1990; Lee, 1992).
Meanwhile, cash allowance has been kept at the level far below subsistence requirements with the intention of discouraging or deterring people from relying on the state. Hong Kong, apart from providing subsidies to private charities, relies entirely on means-tested relief. Singapore supplements minimal non-contributory relief by the programme known as the Central Provident Fund. This is a form of compulsory saving, according to income, mainly to provide a lump sum on retirement and very short-term benefits for sickness or maternity.

It is well recognised to the potential of insurance and provident schemes for the mobilisation of capital which then can be used for further development (Jones, 1990). This is the case for Singapore, where the well known public housing programme has been largely financed through compulsory saving in the form of the National Provident Fund, which made possible for the government to provide satisfactory rentable housing, most of it high-rise. In Singapore, many sizes and types of apartment are available, and allocation takes account of need (especially family size and three-generation household) as well as income. Application for public housing units, for instance, will be expedited if parents and their grown children decide to live together in adjacent flats. By contrast, Taiwan's public investment in housing has been kept minimal (Lee, 1988; Roh, 1989).

It is fair to say that social work professional focus in all three societies remains on individual functioning and on services to ameliorate, stabilise or modify problematic situations. Although there is a growing recognition to the profession, the role of social worker remains to be a limited one. On the other hand, social workers in this region have also developed and provided services in some fields of practice (for example, social policies in Taiwan, housing in Singapore, and government — voluntary sector partnership in Hong Kong) which have been useful and necessary.

3. Social Work Education and Training

Although far from its ideal form, it is clear that social work education in these NICs, at the current stage of development, is capable of providing an appropriate and adequate training, ranging from diploma, bachelor and master to doctoral level programmes. They have a network of fairly good quality schools — in terms of faculty qualification (for example, nearly all faculty members from the Department of Social Work and Psychology at the National University of Singapore hold doctoral degrees), teaching quality and research efforts. Most of the programmes are members of the Asia and Pacific Association for Social Work Education (APASWE), a fairly strong association of social work schools and educators with some 130 members (Cox, 1991). Asia Pacific Regional Seminar on Social Work, held biennially, has provided major means for scholarly as well as practical exchanges among educators and professionals in this region. Social work educators from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong have also formed Northeast Asian Seminar for Social Welfare Education since 1970s.

It should be noted that the Asian Pacific region is one of great diversity and complexity. This diversity certainly reflects the NICs historical origins, its colonial ties, rapid social changes and the differing development paths. Except Hong Kong, the majority of Singapore and Taiwan's social work programmes are affiliated with
Psychology or Sociology departments at universities and colleges. Given the nature of diversity, the following analysis attempts to pay more attention to the social work curriculum concerns.

A. Mission and Content of the Curriculum

According to the curriculum study conducted by the Asian and Pacific Association for Social Work Education (APASWE), there appears to be a diversity of educational philosophy and curriculum in these countries (Cox and Britto, 1986). For example, the British model has affected the social work curricula in Hong Kong and Singapore as a result of colonial ties. There is a strong tendency in favour of North American model of social work among these Asian NICs, since significant number of social work educators hold post-graduate degrees from universities in North America (George, 1991).

B. Common but Limited Foci of Social Work Education

Adding to this diversity of social work educational missions is the fact that the teachings of social work methods in these NICs social work programmes vary beyond the common core of casework, group work, research and community work, and field work (Cox, 1988). In most schools, there is much teaching of casework and community work, but little effort is placed on the social policy field. There is also differing emphasis on expected outcome for social work students. In the Polytechnic in Hong Kong, for example, students may enroll in a graduate programme qualifying them as "professional" social workers, according to government salary criteria. Other students are enrolled in a diploma programme from which they will be employed as social work "assistants".

C. Social Development Perspective

Although still in early stage of exploration, there appears to be a common perception to design social work training toward social development perspective rather than the remedial nature of traditional social work practices (Cox and Britto, 1986). Midgley (1986) even argued that the individual casework is inappropriate for social workers of developing countries and is a form of cultural imperialism. Even though social development combines policy analysis, social planning, community organisation, administration, programme evaluation and social advocacy, the reality is that the state of the art of social development, with all that it implies, is still primitive. It is this disjunction between the emerging shared curricula goal of social development and the reality which will challenge social work education in the NICs to develop more socioculturally relevant strategies.

D. Urban Social Work Orientation

Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan are overwhelmingly urban, even though agricultural sector is more important in Taiwan. Naturally, in much of their social work curriculum, social work practice with urban orientation seems to have found fairly wide acceptance (Kwan, 1986; Cox, 1991). However, where and how the urban model of social work comes to an end of usefulness remains at issue.
E. The Indigenisation of the Curriculum

The concept of "indigenisation" is applied by the Western and Western-minded professionals to denote strategies of adapting Western models to the indigenous conditions of the developing nations (Ragab, 1990). Indigenisation of the social work curriculum has been a marked trend in much of the NICs social work programmes since the 1970s. Many schools in these Asian NICs, particularly in the case of Singapore and Taiwan, have developed socioculturally relevant teaching materials and curricula design to adapt Western social work concepts to local context (Ichibangase, 1990; Tiong, 1991; Lee, 1992). And the Asian Pacific Journal of Social Work (APJSW) is intended to serve as a major forum in search of cultural and regional relevance in social work. However, as George (1991) pointed out, two important issues related to indigenisation remain unanswered. One is whether local problems should seek local solutions: that is, whether intervention should be based on socioculturally relevant frame of reference or be based on Western approaches. The second issue has to do with the contradiction between two separate directions: locally-oriented indigenisation and comparative internationalism. How can both localism and crossculturalism be encouraged at the same time?

Added to this debate is the validity of many local social workers who received training abroad — in Europe or America. There is bound to be some doubt as to whether this is relevant to distinctively different cultural and socioeconomic contexts. This dilemma for social work can never be resolved in the context of such a debate. The answer must be found within the professionals itself, through its people and institutions. And, until some political and educational decisions (or compromises) can be reached, the question about the indigenisation of social work education will remain unanswerable.

Socioeconomic and Cultural Challenges for Social Work

It has been a common view that traditional Chinese values are an impediment to modernisation. But the unexpected vitality of some of those values, such as familism, as displayed in the industrial growth of Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, suggests that a reassessment of the role of Chinese values in connection with modernisation is needed. With the possible exception of Hong Kong, governments in Singapore and Taiwan have been a determining force in their economic development. From all practical view point, social welfare is, at the current stage of development, also a major governmental obligation in these Asian NICs. Yet, there are major differences in the degree and quality of governmental involvement in social policies. In trying to fulfill social obligation, these societies are thus confronted with a number of questions which seldom permit a satisfactory answer. For example, what degree and pattern of change will the existing cultural context allow? Of what nature is either the resistance to change or the forces that may assist it? To what extent is it possible to distinguish cultural factors from the political, economic and social issues that determine the future course of social work in three NICs societies? Social work as a profession in all three Asian NICs seems to have reached at the turning point where a clear sense of professional identity will be needed to guide its future development. Ultimately, there are several emerging trends evident that are worthy of noting in the context of social work.
A. Politically speaking, these societies are under the rule of democratic governments, some of them can be classified as "dominant party" states in which opposition parties are rarely permitted to come to power (for example, Singapore). As a percentage of central government expenditures in 1987, defence spending — which invariably compete with resources available for social spending — exceeded 15 per cent in Asian NICs except Hong Kong (Estes, 1990; Human Development Report, 1990). These defence spending patterns clearly reflect the high level of political instability that stems from either long-standing intra-regional tension (for example, Singapore), or from uncertain territorial futures (for example, Hong Kong and Taiwan).

B. Economically speaking, it goes without saying that economic growth in the past four decades has greatly increased their national wealth and has definitely contributed to increasing disposable revenue for social spending. However, three Chinese societies are now faced with common economic challenges that will have serious social implications. The first major issue centres around the question of accountability. Most of their social programmes evolved, especially since the 1970s, as a result of the continuous ad hoc interplay or conflict between the policy makers of economic and social sectors; each pressing claims about what the future holds for further redistribution of wealth and income and the means for achieving well-being of the society. However, the economic institutions and basic economic decisions remained strong and became (still is) responsible for directing some national resources for social ends (Roh, 1989; Estes, 1990; Lin, 1991). Another major concern is the issue of economic growth and equity. The gap between the rich and the poor, especially in Taiwan, seems to have grown wider since the early 1980s, which will have serious and critical socio-political implications (James, Naya and Meier, 1989; Lin, 1991).

C. Socially speaking, the standard measure of how well the fruits of economic growth are distributed is the extent of social development. However, entrenched values and cultural mores often revolving around Confucianism — have played a major role in shaping social policies. The ideal of a common good, intertwined with national priorities, allowed these NICs to put social needs on the back burner as they strived to achieve their economic goals. Now, however, demands and expectations for social advancement are increasing. These societies are among the world's most densely populated countries. Though environmental policies and protection are starting to take effect, as in Taiwan and Singapore, but the side effects of industrialisation still extract a heavy cost on health and on quality of life.

1. Adding to these pressing social issues is the demographic dilemma of an aging population, the result of a decreasing birth rate and prolonged life. The major social issue is providing quality care and amenities for an increasing elderly population — in Singapore and Taiwan those over 60 age bracket exceeds 7 percent, and in Hong Kong, more than 11 percent. In Singapore, a medical insurance scheme, MediSave, is supported only by 6 per cent of employee wages (Weiss, 1989). Care of the aged by the family has traditionally been considered a merit in the Chinese culture. However, this is changing, thus elderly people are increasingly living alone and left to care for themselves. Thus, the elderly from these societies are finding themselves caught in a transitional dilemma between traditional value expectations
and the reality of the changing social and family structures. The rapid increase of suicide among older persons in Hong Kong, for example, is an alarming sign that they are ill-prepared to cope with rapidly changing society (Kwan, 1988).

2. The rapid social change has also brought significant changes in family structure and family life, the shift to smaller family size compounds the demographic problem; there will be fewer young wage earners to support the retirees. The trend has also brought many unmet family needs. The alarming rise in the divorce rate, for example, has multiple implications not only for those disintegrated families but also for the social welfare institutions in the areas of custody, placements, and other human services (Kim and Kang, 1984; Kwan and Chan, 1986; Lee, 1988; Lee, 1989). In spite of much pro-family rhetoric, none of their family welfare programmes provide either benefits specifically for dependents, or supplements for those with family responsibilities. Even if a substantial traditional family oriented welfare sector has been preserved or reviewed, there is still an important role for the social workers in these societies. The scale of human problems are such that relatives and friends are no longer be expected to cope with them without professional advice and support.

3. Working women now comprise well over one-thirds of the NICs’ total labour force in 1988 (Leung, 1989; Human Development Report, 1990; Taiwan Statistical Data Book, 1990). While the female literacy rates are high by any standard, women in these societies are not evenly distributed throughout the job market nor do they receive compatible wages for equal work in every job category. The increasing number of working women and working mothers has brought increasing needs for families regarding child care and other employment benefit issues.

4. The negative impacts of modernisation and prospering in the Asian NICs have led to certain social turmoils. For example, increases in violent crimes, racketeering, threat of extortion to industrialists, pornography, child prostitution, violence against women, and juvenile delinquency are some of the rooted or newly emerging criminal activities.

5. A review of existing social policies of the NICs (Lee, 1988; Lee, 1989; Leung, 1989; Ichibangase et al., 1990; Lin, 1991) indicates that none of these societies have yet developed a comprehensive family policies in dealing with the impact of social changes on the family structure and relationship.

**Alternatives Facing Social Work and Society**

As Estes (1990) indicated, the current and future development dilemmas faced by Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan — even in the presence of considerable new wealth — suggests that further increases in per capita income alone will not be sufficient to advancing social development. One of the most fundamental questions facing the Asian NICs is not whether Asian NICs are spending too much for social welfare, but whether what is being spent will contribute significantly toward the development of a better society. It is clear that, if Asian NICs are to achieve significant social development gains, then, effective strategies will require close cooperation and technical assistance between the economic as well as the social sectors of the NICs.
The biggest challenge affecting the future of social work in three societies will continue to be the problem of resources. Economic development in the next decade is still undoubtedly going to be the most important factor impacting upon their social policy. The emphasis on growth must not be allowed to obscure the importance of social policy objectives. All three states, with limited natural resources, have had to focus on developing their wealth in human resources — but then, these are the most important of all resources. Traditionally, the emphasis on education fits well with the shift toward more skill-intensive and technologically advanced industries. Since female education substantially reduces fertility, increasing female enrollment at all levels deserves more attention (James, Naya and Meier, 1989). Enhanced educational opportunities for the poor are essential if three Asian NICs are to have a basis for better income distribution in the future.

The problems and the dilemma of discharging public responsibility toward the family are likely to continue. The search for the expansion of the state in family policy has to occur because serious economic and social problems could not be addressed through individualistic and private remedies in the past, and so have required collective solution. There will be greater emphasis on the total family and family support system in the making of future social policy. It is economically and socially prudent to design a policy that offers both opportunities and social protection for the families.

Above all, the issues these Asian societies will face over the next decade are whether it will be possible to move away from the incremental, fragmented form of policy making. Therefore, in considering social development perspective for formulating family policies, two interrelated dimensions should be noted: the first is the development of the capacity of the family to work continuously for their welfare; the second is the alteration or development of a society's institutions so that family needs are met at all levels. In this process a balance should be sought between quantitative and qualitative meeting of needs through changes in societal institutions and in the use of available resources. The significance of social development clearly places a responsibility on all societal institutions, especially Asian NICs governmental institutions, as a major responsibility to promote family betterment.

Searching for a future coherent direction of social work in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan seems fraught with complex issues. At present, the major issue facing social work in three NICs seems to be its inability to address the local needs in a meaningful way. Yet, it is conceivable that social work in all three societies could become an instrument of social change in the future. It is not such an instrument presently. As social work educators and practitioners in these societies challenge traditional methods of practice and experiment with new approaches, definitions of intervention will change. These changes, if were allowed to develop fully, will convey a process considerably more significant than simply modifying social work nomenclature. Where circumstance permits, social work students should be prepared to work with changing family systems, social problems and political-economic contexts, as social reform ideas have gained ground in recent years. Centrally involved will be a reconceptualisation, research and experimentation with practice methods, and reconsideration of the broad social missions of social work. The birth of the new regional journal — Asian Pacific Journal of Social Work — is a commitment to this
goal and should deserve strong supports from the region. In calling for a greater degree of collaboration between schools and scholars in the Asian Pacific region, Cox (1991) has also raised some important and challenging strategies which clearly place the emphasis on institution development, such as the development of advanced educational programme on a cooperative basis that will reflect regional more than national realities.

The final factor which will inevitably influence the future of social work in all three NICs will be a political one. A common challenge facing them is that of making a smooth transition from old to new political leadership. In Hong Kong and Taiwan, for example, the priority is also the changing relationship with China. The advent of 1997 for Hong Kong and unification issue for Taiwan are already presenting critical decisions for government and people to face in the immediate future. Ultimately, the future of their development will depend greatly on narrowing the gap between the changing socio-political realities and good social policy making. But if appropriate policies are to be realised, all three societies will have to give more attention to improving positive social development.

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Hong Kong and Singapore are in the top three ideal destinations to do business in the world. Tons of benefits for corporations. Indeed, your company can be established within just 3 working days. Infrastructure facilities like business premises and services are also available nearly all the time, making it much easier for people to run their businesses. Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore had all proactively implemented travel restrictions on passengers coming from the mainland, contravening the World Health Organization's [WHO] insistence that travel bans were not necessary. The precautions came at a significant economic cost to these international hubs, which all rely on mainland China as their biggest trading partner and source of tourists. David Hui, in Hong Kong, says it's vital that the U.S. starts limiting social contacts to avoid a large-scale outbreak with the potential to overwhelm the health system. Schools need to be closed and mass gatherings canceled—something that is just now beginning to happen. Ms. Tsien (Hong Kong) will describe Hong Kong's community-based work with older adults and policy makers to improve the age-friendliness of selected neighborhoods. Dr. Conybeare will discuss the similarities and differences in country approaches. Discover the world's research. This thesis analyzes the People's Republic of China's modernization strategy in order to test the hypothesis according to which the "open-door" policy might represent a shift from Marxism to a Neoclassical economy model. To do so, the author compares the performance realized by the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and by the newly established Shanghai-Pudong New Area (1990). The newly industrializing countries of Asia (Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore) are prime examples. I've been to Hong Kong and Taiwan before, as for Singapore, I've been there countless time at the Changi Airport, I have even stayed at the hotel there, but I have never been to the city yet. I think Hong Kong is very interesting. The architecture is not always appealing, but there are many interesting places there. For instance, if you like to have the kind of hectic lifestyle that the physical infrastructure and social dynamics offered by Hong Kong and can keep up with the high cost of living there, then Hong Kong will be the place. In my own case, I find London, Florence and Tokyo are far better for me than Hong Kong (where I'm now based), Singapore or Taiwan. Yer pays yer money, yer picks yer goods. Thanks for the A2A (Dec 3, 2017).