

THE FOREIGN POLICY POTENTIAL OF “SMALL STATE SOFT POWER” INFORMATION STRATEGIES

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A 1997 Commonwealth Secretariat report on small states commented that “for small states, particularly those that are remote from the major markets and commercial and financial centers, the communications revolution has created the possibility of reducing traditional barriers and opened up new opportunities.” Drawing upon existing research by Nye, Melissen, Chong and others, soft power can be argued to be a source of disproportionate clout for small states in a globalizing context. Soft power’s information strategies can be explored in three dimensions: enlargement of political economy potential; models of good governance; and diplomatic mediation. Case studies of Panama, the Vatican City and Singapore will be employed.

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Introduction

Small states suffer from a definitional problem in both theory and political practice because of their anomalous power capabilities. As numerous studies have argued, small states vary in terms of territorial size, population density, market potential, administrative capacities, resource possession and mobilization, as well as degrees of geographical remoteness. In fact, the early literature on small states addressed their survival prospects in terms of ‘small powers’ and power inequality. In a neorealist vein, small states are at best marginally relevant in power bargaining in the initial stages of a crisis, but ultimately irrelevant in final outcomes. Despite these pessimistic analyses, studies commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat and United Nations Institute for Training and Research argue that significant variations of small state power capacities exist across differing contexts. This offers more than cautious optimism for the prospects of small states. In this vein, this article argues that the anomalies inherent in small state power become an advantage when they are construed as information strategies. The foregoing argument will partly draw upon Michael Handel’s (1981) thesis of weak states which provides the insight that power capabilities are distributed in a rainbow-like pattern in the international system, thereby enabling those weak in one power index to offset, or match, the advantage of states perceived as strong in two or more indices.

Additionally, the new crop of studies addressing the emergence of soft power under the labels “new public diplomacy” and “foreign policy in global information space”, in international relations will helpfully supply new ways of extrapolating the power projections of small states. The soft power of small states can be developed in terms of the enlargement of their *political economy potential*; *models of good governance*; and *diplomatic mediation*. Picking illustrative case studies for these propositions has proven to be difficult in part because no two small states are completely alike in their power endowments. Each small state’s foreign policy elite will also exhibit different degrees of ingenuity in marshalling soft power for projection. Nevertheless, it will be argued that despite the structural imperfections of each of the three countries I have chosen, these can serve as exploratory vehicles for both the limitations and potentials of the small state exercise of soft power. Panama has been chosen because its claim to relevance and integration into the international community depends almost wholly upon the marketing of its infrastructural services in and around the Panama Canal Zone. Singapore has been selected on the grounds that it has consistently been ranked amongst the most competitive small economies in worldwide indices compiled by economic intelligence agencies such as the World Economic Forum and the International Institute of Management and Development (IMD). It has also demonstrated a reasonably consistent stance of diplomatic outspokenness at international forums. Thirdly, the Vatican City State, in spite of its physical size, hosts the seat of the leaders of the Catholic Church. The proclamation on its website is strongly indicative of its informational strategy, or symbolic power, in foreign policy: “The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible principle and foundation of unity of both the bishops and of the faithful.” (The Holy Father, 2007) Of course, one might argue that the Vatican City State is neither a nation nor a state when assessed according to the historical record of the Peace of Westphalia, but it has been recognized as a statist entity in international law and actively mediates in diplomatic disputes utilizing moral norms without the backing of military and economic sanctions. The Vatican City State’s inordinate reliance upon informational power is a profile that neither conventional great power nor small state can match, and yet learn lessons from. In the conclusion, it will be argued that while the highly politicized but imprecise label of “small states” will remain in policy and theoretical

discourse, a more accurate way of comprehending their information strategies would be in terms of “small state, soft power”.

Defining the Small State and the Securitization of Vulnerability

The first generation of literature systematically addressing the foreign policies of small states was dominated by two concerns: definition, and power deficiencies. Attempts to define small states have opened up scientific and political conundrums that have persisted to this day. David Vital famously titled his 1967 book *The Inequality of States – a Study of the Small Power in International Relations* in an attempt to “spell out some of the practical political implications of the material inequality of states.” (Vital 1967:3) This work focused on a zero-sum premise that the degree of a state’s material weakness translated proportionately into degrees of diminished independence within international relations. While admitting its intrinsic imprecision, Vital settled on the definition of small states via a set of upper limits: “(a) a population of 10-15 million in the case of economically advanced countries; and (b) a population of 20-30 million in the case of underdeveloped countries.” (Vital 1967:8) Vital explained that he was concerned with distinguishing the “small” from among the middle powers, and believed that states with populations under five million need not merit a separate category of analysis since those with even fewer population would find the problems afflicting those within his “upper limits” magnified. In Vital’s perspective, Argentina, Canada and Poland could be excluded circa 1967, because they were comparatively more developed than Uruguay and Finland who could be admitted under his definition. Robert Keohane’s review (1969) of Vital’s book, along with Rothstein’s *Alliances and Small Powers* (1968) and others dealing with alliance theory, welcomed the fact that these studies provided a fresh alternative to the slippery concept of “nonalignment” then in vogue at the United Nations among the small states making up the majority of the Third World. Vital, Rothstein and others seemed to at least account for the tendency of the weak and small to borrow power to ameliorate their deficiencies. Despite helpfully suggesting that Vital and Rothstein had ignored intangible power and influence factors available to “Lilliputians [that] can tie up Gulliver, or make him do their fighting for them”, (1969:310) Keohane does not seem to have appreciated the political discursive implications of small states voluntarily wishing to be recognized as such. The clamor for nonalignment symbolizes discursive interest of greater significance than their articulators’ wish to merely head off the material disadvantages of an international order biased in favor of neorealist designs.

Fortunately, there were nuances to an otherwise realist-dominated inception to research on small states. At the seventeenth Nobel Symposium convened in Norway in 1970, papers addressed the status of small states from western, non-western and nonaligned angles. Hilding Eek’s contribution declared that that ““small states’ is a practical, conventional term useful as such but evades definition” and this is attributable to the questions raised by their status of the legal and political utility of statehood in the international system. (1971:11-12) Radovan Vukadinović (1971) of the University of Zagreb explicated the link between small status, military and economic weakness, and an aspiration to democratize international relations. “Small and middle countries” serve their national interests best when they join a caucus for peace and progress, and to do so in vindication of the principles of the UN. Former Irish Prime Minister Sean Lemass (1971) contributed the idea that small states, or small powers, played a crucial role in international organizations by virtue of the fact that voting blocs often needed mediators to soften extreme positions and promote *modus vivendi* in various resolutions.

Incrementally, the moderating credibility of the small would allow them to generate a justice constituency at the UN. At the height of the Cold War, this seemed not an unreasonable line of analysis given the fact that despite its faults, the UN played useful backchannel roles in the major crises between the contending superpower camps. Ion Nicolae (1971), representing the Rumanian Association for International Law and International Relations, underscored the fact that “small and medium-sized countries” frequently defended the moral norms of the UN Charter and other aspects of customary international law – including the contentious principles of sovereignty, independence and non-interference.

Against the emergence of the role of small states as defenders of norms, we can turn to Annette Fox’s classic work *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War Two* (1959). Fox argued that small state actorness could be defined in terms of “‘local’ powers whose demands are restricted to their own and immediately adjacent areas, while great powers exert their influence over wide areas.” (Fox 1959:3, fn8) She observed in her study of Turkey, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Spain that the small state’s most potent instrument was that of diplomacy amidst a balance of power situation. Furthermore, because of the small state’s severe deficit vis-à-vis great powers in military economic and technological strengths, the former could afford to be single-minded and intense in perfecting the diplomatic instrument. In doing so, the small state could afford to cast diplomacy in the form of “the capacity to appeal to world public opinion, operating from a ‘rectitude’ base, or their fighting qualities may gain them a reputation for being likely to resist violence with violence.” (Fox 1959:2-3) This is evidently a discourse of vulnerability, but one that makes a virtue out of necessity by playing up moral information in either a prelude to aggrandizement or blunting an enemy’s war plans in progress. Interestingly, Fox tentatively concluded that any neutral state’s chances of successfully resisting pressures from belligerents would be improved under conditions of neorealist arms balancing under parity; possession of military resources of value to the belligerents; the weakening of domestic unity within the aggrandizing state; the increasing influence of groups within the aggrandizing state sympathetic to the small state; and the entrenched reputation that accompanies a long existence as “a member of the family of nations, an independent country with which the great powers had had to negotiate.” (Fox 1959:184)

This early literature, while giving the substantive appearance of realist inclinations, suggests that small states do exercise discursive power as part of their arsenal, and significantly, this affects and reinforces the elusiveness of their definition. A study produced by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in 1971 quoted the UN Secretary-General’s definition from 1966 which defined small states as “entities which are exceptionally small in area, population and human and economic resources.” (UNITAR 1971:29) The report went on to elaborate a paragraph-long political interpretation of this definition which deserves thorough quotation here for illustrating the tactical amorphousness of the status of the small:

If smallness or size *per se* is to become a factor in the establishment of criteria for admission to the United Nations, or an element in the determination of a country’s ability to carry out the obligations contained in the Charter, then a definition – simple or complex – may have to be worked out. *On the other hand, if one is interested in the general aspects and consequences of smallness, and in new forms of United Nations assistance to small states and territories, then there is no real need for a rigorous definition. In that case, various elements of smallness ought to be taken into account, and, as a result, certain small states and territories may be*

considered, generally or only from certain points of view, as belonging to a special group in which the consequences of smallness are of particular importance. (UNITAR 1971:29. Italics mine.)

The study went on to conclude that smallness “is a comparative and not an absolute idea.” (UNITAR 1971:29) The authors of this report proceeded to argue that most, if not all, of the problems of underdevelopment, isolation, secession and other governance issues are intimately related to “the political status of that territory or the evolution of that status.” (UNITAR 1971:54) In this regard, “old and stable European mini-states” of the likes of Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Monaco, San Marino and Andorra have developed interdependent relationships with their neighbors within the context of a security community, whereas Guinea (Bissau), British-controlled Gibraltar, Spanish-controlled Ifni (*vis-à-vis* Morocco), British Honduras *vis-à-vis* Guatemala, the Falklands *vis-à-vis* Argentina, Hong Kong and Macau *vis-à-vis* China circa 1971, can only seek amity within international relations if their respective geopolitical questions were resolved either domestically or between the neighboring protagonists. Consequently, a “crucial test for a territory which becomes independent is whether it could conduct its foreign relations through its own administrative and diplomatic agencies.” (UNITAR 1971:111)

Since 1985, the Commonwealth Secretariat’s ongoing series of reports treating the prospects of small states have taken up in greater depth the theme of vulnerability. These reports borrowed UNITAR’s working preference for *statistically* defining a small state according to the population cut-off of one million, and subsequently refined it to 1.5 million and below, (Commonwealth Secretariat 1997:9) while accommodating features of tactical amorphousness in the political definition. Following Buzan *et al*’s (1998) theory of securitization, it might be said that the Commonwealth reports effectively securitized small state vulnerability. The latter would mean that “the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure.” An actor defining a security threat claims unto itself a right – moral, political or otherwise – to confront the issue through means that transcend the ordinary. Therefore Buzan *et al* assert that “security” is “thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue...” (Buzan *et al* 1998:23-24) It is a speech act that legitimates and delegitimates. In the first report, the Commonwealth Consultative Group stated that vulnerability and the elimination of threats were the two faces of security. A small state is logically assumed to lack the means to either deter threats or repel attacks. It would thus mean that securing a small state can lead to a philosophy of despair or to the embrace of the neorealist argument that small state security is obtained through the protection of a superior power. Yet, on the other hand security can be enhanced to the extent that “it is within the competence of the small state to diminish its vulnerabilities”. (Commonwealth Secretariat 1985:15) The Commonwealth’s 1997 report further clarified that “to be vulnerable is to be especially susceptible to risk of harm. Since all societies are subject to risk, all societies are vulnerable. What makes vulnerability a focus of concern is that some societies are more at risk than others.” (Commonwealth Secretariat 1997:13) This thread runs through the 1997 report’s imputation of five characteristics to small states. Firstly, openness characterizes small state economies and societies. Economically, they tend to alleviate shortages of manpower and talent by inviting expatriate staff to man managerial and other highly technical positions. Conversely, the unemployed, the ambitious and the talented may be attracted by better prospects that lay beyond the small state. Socially, there is a tendency to look outward for sources of ideological and material amelioration, or to forewarn one’s population of impending dangers. Nonetheless, geography might ironically enforce a

second characteristic – that of insularity. The 1997 report explains it as a psychological and ideological issue: “This is often manifest in a close association with a sense of place which gives preference to individual identity over collective solidarity, making cooperation between islands problematic and secession an ever-present possibility.” (Commonwealth Secretariat 1997:11) Insularity might also manifest remoteness that imposes economic and administrative costs, environmental harms and “acute indefensibility” in relation to threats from the sea. Thirdly, there is a socio-political resilience among many small states manifested through “institutional coherence” and a predominant political culture “of ‘concerted political harmony’ which sees incremental change as the most effective way to promote political legitimacy and deliver efficient administration.” (Commonwealth Secretariat 1997:11) In apparent reference to the interethnic troubles roiling the South Pacific island states, the report conceded that political order does on occasion break down and repression sets in, but these negative spots are a “comparative rarity” when most political regimes in small states “tend to be pragmatic and robust, able to withstand significant challenges which larger states would find difficult to meet.” Fourthly, the 1997 report admits to the characteristic of weakness in military power terms; hence “accordingly, they must rely more than other states do on the international system to maintain their security.” (Commonwealth Secretariat 1997:11) The fifth characteristic is that of dependence which flows from weakness. Small states are synonymously militarily weak states, hence they need to tap or ride on the resources of more powerful ones to attain hard security. Economically, development means reliance upon significant levels of official development assistance doled out by international financial institutions and great powers. Yet “it is important to note that dependence is not a static concept and that changes in the international system can provide new opportunities for both sets of partners from which each can benefit, as in the promotion of offshore financial services or greater awareness of the needs of environmental protection.” (Commonwealth Secretariat 1997:12)

The culmination of the Commonwealth contribution suggests that the small state’s discursive identity of vulnerability does not translate into helplessness. It defies conventional realist and neorealist logic by arguing that strengths do coexist with weaknesses – and this is the core of the theme of resilience that recent small state research signals. It is worth noting that volumes on comparative small state regionalism and alliance security have assessed that small states can serve as models of mutual collaboration and approximations of a security community, (Braveboy-Wagner 1993) while also enhancing multilateral peacekeeping operations. (Schmidl 2001; Borchert 2001) Erwin Schmidl argued that small states contribute healthy injections of budget-consciousness and honest broker credentials to multinational peacekeeping operations around the world by virtue of their relative weakness and low profile compared to major powers. (2001:86) In short, they fill the role of the ‘endearing diplomat’ among military contingents tasked to police a fragile peace on the ground. Furthermore, the roles of the Swiss peacekeepers in Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo have been reported positively; and the same approbation has been applied in the international media for the friendly Dutch rapport with local populations as part of allied peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan and northern Iraq.(Chivers 2007) Even in terms of global political economy, small states serve as possible demonstration precincts for judicious combinations of regulation, de-regulation and rental income in relation to the pressures of global competition in trade and financial services. (Horscroft 2007) It is not surprising that some small states in the Asian and Caribbean regions brand themselves as tax and investment havens. The preceding literature survey registers the point that the definition of a small state is bound up in its discursive viability as a contributor to sustaining international society in

its various dimensions. As has been reiterated by certain studies, ‘smallness’ is a tactical concept that can be diplomatically exploited, and yet remains under-researched except by a handful of observers.

Soft Power – the Extension of Small State Capabilities and the Medium of Virtual Enlargement

As some of the preceding literature has pointed out, the art of survival for small states includes significant attempts to enlarge their importance to the international community. For the purposes of analysis, this can be termed “virtual enlargement”. Smallness, being geographically limited, can be psychologically tactical in disarming major powers’ suspicions towards the small state’s motives. On the other hand, as some (Fox 1959; Lemass 1971; Nicolae 1971; Vukadinović 1971; Commonwealth Secretariat 1997) have argued, the small state’s foreign policy apparatus may possess among its human resources, intellectual and propagandistic skills that are disproportionate to its physical size. This can be termed as compensatory informational, or symbolic power. It might even be regarded as a leveler between great and small powers, large states and their smaller neighbors. It is this intriguing capability that deserves study – what is this intangible informational or symbolic power that small states can be adept at? Subsequently, the case studies employed in this article will be equally exploratory, as well as illustrative, in offering some answers to this question. The purpose is to make a tentative probe into small state information strategies.

As many scholars on soft power have noted, the informational power of getting others to want what one wants through attraction instead of coercion, defies sovereignty-bound ways of comprehending power. Not surprisingly, Joseph Nye’s (2004) book introduced the subject by recalling the misunderstanding of soft power by policymakers and intellectuals long inured in associating power with iron and steel production or sheer numbers of punitive consequences measured by bombs and deaths. In the interim, a few others (Lennon 2003; Armistead 2004) have attempted to expand the notion of soft power as a rainbow policy application of nation-building, aid, reconstruction and image-burnishing as an adjunct to the fight against terrorism or in support of a conventional military campaign. Jan Melissen’s edited volume, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (2005), attempted to address soft power more systematically through the long tradition of public diplomacy as that form of open diplomacy that targets the public opinion in foreign societies with or without the consent of their governments. Included in the measure of public diplomacy is also the explicit cultivation of non-official groups within a target state’s domestic sphere such as civil society groups, influential individuals, and other nongovernmental organizations. Alan Chong’s *Foreign Policy in Global Information Space: Actualizing Soft Power* (2007) develops the concept of soft power further by elaborating it as a precipitate diplomatic capability arising out of the emergence of a global information space collectively produced by communication technologies, capitalism and post-Cold War geopolitics. Chong further extends the operational formulation of soft power by embedding it within the possibilities of foreign policy leadership “inside-out” and “outside-in”. Leadership inside-out refers to the projection of one’s national values or model of governance through the treatment of one’s national polity as a veritable showcase for emulation. Leadership outside-in refers to the indirect exertion of foreign policy soft power through the structural circulation of one’s ideas through regime norms and political discourses aligned to one’s allies and friendly international organizations. Therefore, the investigation of the condition of small states joins with the burgeoning literature on soft power on two issues: articulating anomalous power as an instrument, and the utility of transformative ideas as a serious investment in foreign policy capability. The thrust of small state

foreign policy, despite the official disclaimers to the contrary, is to extend one's global space, and informational power is the way to achieve this at minimal cost using structures of communication that span important global forums. As Melissen (2005b:10) and Chong and Valencic (2001) have noted, foreign policies of the global South have recently awoken to the possibilities that their economic spaces for profitable interconnection with the global economy lie in tandem with the extension of their images and their branding of them. Secondly, fluid networks rather than neorealist hierarchies characterize the application of informational power – who one knows and appeals to openly is just as efficacious as, if not more than, the anchoring of a small and weak state's destiny with a militarily powerful benefactor.

We can therefore link the possibility of soft power usage by small states with the prospects for virtual enlargement of their presence in the international community through medium theory borrowed from media studies. Media philosopher Marshall McLuhan argues that any medium is more than a technological arm of efficacy; it is simultaneously a message by itself, and both a potential and actual shaper of representation, aesthetic, memory and other content carried upon it. (McLuhan 1974:51-66, 70-71) In McLuhan's well-known parlance, "the medium is the message" and it "is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs". (McLuhan 1974:16) McLuhan illustrated his thesis with an eclectic range of examples. The invention of the electric light bulb did not merely introduce continuous lighting to urban areas, it also transformed the possibilities of public and commercial advertising and signage. Entertainment was also revolutionized by its possibilities. The invention of the television and computer altered not only human interfaces with business; but also spawned new occupations, sense ratios between machine and humankind, speeded up experience and its corresponding decision-making; and generated new social problems such as viewer addictions and neglect of literary pursuits in the mainstream of both children and adult education. As the "nth capability" and "extension of man", the medium enlarges the reach of its creator and might also supersede its original design once it is embraced by a wider community. In the policy realm, politico-diplomatic discourse as a policy *qua* medium can generate a corresponding form of virtual enlargement. This can be achieved through cultural diffusion, audience socialization, contribution to regime norm-building and transnational nongovernmental networking.

The three cases to be examined in this article manifest these characteristics of "small state soft power" by converting their bases of anomalous power into instruments for virtual enlargement. This process can be distinguished in terms of the promotion of national political economy potential; models of good governance; and diplomatic mediation. Firstly, national political economy potential can be construed in terms of the demonstrable competence in the management of communities affecting the wealth of a government and its population. Within a global capitalist economy, capital flows, trade flows, labor traffic, consumer traffic, as well as attractiveness for infrastructural development, depend on spatial reputations for hospitality to economic activities. As development economists have pointed out, "any new entrant in the world market is likely to face severe handicaps arising out of strong product differentiation, brand-name preferences, high cost of advertising, and high cost of after-sales service facilities. These handicaps can become formidable for smaller economies which have little past experience, and which are unable to recover some of these costs from sales in the domestic market."(Jalan 1982:4) Others draw attention to the plight of the "concentration phenomenon" in small economies whereby national output is concentrated in a handful of industries. As Lloyd and Sundrum put it, "it is the result of the constraint of size in terms of the production possibilities which shrinks the dimensions as well as the quantities producible of all commodities. Those industries requiring

essential inputs of natural raw materials cannot exist and those requiring large scale will not be established for any set of world prices.” (1982:27) One can add more subsidiary items to the list of small state economic debilities. Contrary to such conventional thinking, resource-minimal small states can build economic soft power by taking advantage of niche-building strategies in a virtually borderless world economy connected by electronic, air and shipping links. Multinational production occurs in transnational networks or ‘chains’ that are spatially horizontal as well as vertical. This affords the possibilities of tailoring economic aspiration to suitable specialization of production and economies of scale through creative attraction. ‘Outsourcing’ of data entry and other labor-intensive informational tasks are feasible for small states provided they invest in a ready pool of semi-skilled and skilled labor. One has in mind Singapore, Taiwan, the Philippines, and the hitherto quasi-independent territory of Hong Kong. Similarly, tourism and its strategic marketing of a package of attractions enhance the presence of a small state through the generation of a claim to world culture. Here, one can include the member states of the South Pacific Forum, New Zealand and Malta. Furthermore, the variegated needs of hosting capital flows have opened up possibilities for small states to function as havens for wealth management and storage – where alongside Cayman Islands, Bahamas and Liechtenstein, there is Bahrain, Isle of Man, Panama, Qatar, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

Admittedly, establishing integrated nodes in the global capitalist network requires good governance as a foundation for creative adaptation to capitalism. Establishing models of good governance therefore matter as a complementary soft power strategy. According to most international indices, good governance, despite its subjectivity, refers to a catalogue of normative standards in government: probity in application of the law, financial propriety, absence of cronyism, policing corruption, peaceful transfers of leadership, and bureaucracy efficiency. According to Chong, if soft power leadership “is to be exercised in terms of a convincing projection of a model society and organizational showcase abroad for objectives of national interest, then the burden of responsibility must weigh upon the unity of elites and masses alike, however ordered. Since antiquity, kings and elite rulers of empires and nation-states have asserted tributary claims, moral, cultural and military superiority on the basis of physical displays and assertions of grandeur.” (2007:62) Examples include the ancient Greek assertion that principles of virtuosity and right living should be limited only to *Hellenes* guided by philosopher kings. There is also the Roman imperium’s presumption of natural colonial administration of inferior peoples from a self-regarding centre. In East Asia’s past, there is an example of the Chinese empire’s political cosmology of claiming the “mandate of heaven” for its Emperor. Chong notes that within the modern world one finds models of a cohesive framework of government-society relations serving as a source of extra-national power of attraction in the *mission civilisatrice* of late European imperialism, the Marxist-Leninist ideology, and in the promotion of American-style liberal democracy and modernization in the Third World in the 1960s and 1970s.(2007:63) By the 1990s, the advent of electronically mediated global television and Internet websites have also enabled the transmission of diverse models of good governance. The transnational attraction of the ‘Third Way’ around the turn of the last century, expressed as modernized, globalization-acclimatized social democracy is borne by images of President Clinton, Prime Minister Blair and Chancellor Schroeder delivering the socio-economic goals of the good life at home in terms of pruned social welfare, investment-friendly taxation, and an emphasis on centre-left community. Presidents Vicente Fox and Ricardo Lagos of Mexico and Chile respectively, have been reported to be more recent adherents to the ‘Third Way’ as well. Some skeptics might object that these above-mentioned models of good governance appear positively correlated to the sheer size of the polities

they represent and therefore they offer limited, if any, relevance to small states. But if the World Bank's and International Monetary Fund's official prognoses are anything to go by, good governance is soft power by structural default of the global economy. Loans and foreign direct investment availability to small states – especially those residing within or have just graduated from “developing” status – are not a matter of automatic access through the generosity of international institutions but are dependent upon reputation. The work of the Commonwealth Secretariat on various dimensions of the plight of its small developing member states is testimony that reputation for good governance matters in defending the viability of statehood especially since the alternative is size-induced domestic political trauma and the humiliation of foreign intervention.(1997:102-114) Finally, in discussing good governance as soft power possibilities for small states, one must not neglect their contributions in the abstract, but nonetheless relevant, roles in the normative. Titoist Yugoslavia served as an important flag bearer of non-alignment during the Cold War while its Asian counterpart, Burma, provided the United Nations with its first Asian Secretary-General. Until the Nazi gold controversy in the 1990s, Switzerland has served as a significant oasis of political neutrality hosting peace talks between belligerents in far-flung corners of the globe. In this category of benchmarks, we can naturally include the Vatican City State which, by virtue of its religious character, serves a primarily moral function in international relations, albeit not without controversy.

Diplomatic mediation, our third dimension of small state soft power, stems from the moral capital derived from the domestic reputation and international record of small states. Harold Nicolson's classic, *The Evolution of Diplomacy* (1962), has sketched a concise picture of diplomacy as the aspiration towards the pacific settlement of interstate disputes through the building of trust. In today's diplomatic terminology, mediation is understood as “a special kind of negotiation designed to promote the settlement of a conflict” where a third party, that is not directly involved in the conflict, is involved. (Berridge 2005:194) The condition for the introduction of the third party is that “it must be substantially *impartial* in the dispute, at least once the negotiation has started and on the issue actually on the agenda.” (Berridge 2005:195) It is clear that in such a role both intellectual capital and moral standing are called for. Small states may fulfill a positive political function in the international order simply by virtue of their status and characteristics. Small states, unlike their larger neighbors and great powers, benefit from the diplomatic expectation that their size renders them more vulnerable and peaceable. As the earlier literature survey has indicated, small states tend to be more concerned with upholding the norms of international society and persuading its members to practice peaceful intercourse. Their Foreign Service apparatuses would accordingly be closely attuned to being vigilant about impending conflict signals. Subsequently, if one follows the prognoses of the Commonwealth Secretariat's (1997) report, then small states are well versed in mediation by virtue of their domestic institutional coherence and vulnerability-induced political culture of “concerted political harmony”.(1997:11) This list of general attributes comfortably parallels Nicolson's ideal of a diplomat: truthfulness; intellectual and moral precision; the quality of calm; modesty of character; adaptability to circumstances; a gift of imagination; and loyalty to the cause of his sending government. (Nicolson 1969:55-67) These are ideational powers that well trained diplomatic services can attain without any scientific correlation with the size of physical national territory. Yet there may be detractors to this observation. For every Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Costa Rica, there will be an Israel, a Cuba and a Myanmar. These inconvenient samples cannot however hold the pacific constructive capabilities of small states hostage in an international order that is in permanent need of mediators. There are also cases, in the wake of wars directly involving small states, where the postconflict regime undergoes an internal epiphany resulting in a pacifist turn in its foreign policy.

Many of the Central American states have followed this pattern in the late twentieth century. The situation is potentially hopeful in post-Cold War Indochina where Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand may be finally reaping a peace dividend within their security complex.

It is thus possible to identify an ensemble of three information strategies derived from the understanding of “small state, soft power”. The [promotion of national political economy potential; models of good governance; and diplomatic mediatory roles are mostly invariant to physical size.](#) Small states can theoretically utilize soft power as their medium for extending themselves without the corresponding backing of physical size. Following McLuhan, it is possible for information *qua* discourse, goodwill, reputation, image and other positive symbolic devices to take on a quasi-autonomous presence of their own, while at the same time associated with their state of origin. As with most normative standards, their very creators also incur the risk of being judged by the symbols they profess. This is a gamble implicit in soft power. The following three exploratory cases of Panama, the Vatican City State and Singapore will illustrate the viability of the proposition of small state information strategies as foreign policy, while also highlighting their weaknesses where apparent.

Soft Power Projection – Are there Models for Small States?

Panama

By fact of geography and history, the Republic of Panama possesses an acute awareness of its small status. In 1903, it was created with American backing as the by-product of a plan to build a strategic waterway for the defense of the United States as well as to project American military and commercial power across the oceans. Prior to that, the territory of present-day Panama was part of the state of Colombia, and even earlier envisioned as part of Simon Bolivar’s dream of a postcolonial New Granada. Spanish colonialism had governed New Granada as a larger whole in their scheme of imperial jurisdictions. The conception of Panama only began with the Franco-Colombian design for exploiting its isthmian position for building a canal for shipping. Ferdinand de Lessep’s engineering efforts failed in 1889 for a variety of reasons including financial and political ones. For geopoliticians of the late nineteenth century, Panama’s position flanking both the North Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea at the narrowest stretch of Central America meant that with a man-made canal dug across it, it could act as a maritime chokepoint serving the highest power bidder. Shipping times from the Pacific to the Atlantic ports could be cut by more than half. Naval fleets, then and today, could respond to threats in either ocean through rapid concentrations of force, or its dispersal, if necessary. In short, the Panamanian secession from the larger state of Colombia in 1903 was an incidental political windfall for its population, but a deliberate ploy on the part of the nascent American superpower. The Americans had every intention of rendering Panama a satellite state for the purposes of building a shipping canal for which they would build, own and operate. That was the upshot of the 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty which granted Panamanian independence while also declaring that the state of Panama granted “in perpetuity the use, occupation and control of a zone of land and land under water for the construction, maintenance, operation, sanitation and protection.” (Quoted in Tate 1963:120) Aside from the Canal, Panama’s current population size of 3.2 million certainly sets it apart from the populations of South America, and certainly renders it a midget in proximity to the American colossus that formally controlled the canal up till 31 December 1999.

The discourse of smallness is clearly political for Panama. Reliance upon the Canal and its American protector, translated into a relationship of direct dependence for the government in Panama City. It was an unequal relationship for nearly 96 years since its formal independence. Panamanian foreign policy was either regulated by a succession of supplements to the 1903 treaty, or governed by considerations of American national interests as expressed by the latter's various Presidencies. To begin with, the scripting of Panamanian independence took place amidst the failure of the Colombian government in Bogotá to maintain law and order in a restive province overrun with a population that had emigrated there to build and support an American-run isthmian railroad linking Panama City on the Pacific coast with Colón on the Caribbean. (Musicant 1990:83-136) This served as the perfect pretext for several American interventions on behalf of a Colombian government preoccupied with an internal civil war, compounded by banditry engaged in by the unemployed in Panama. At the inception of railway construction in 1848, a treaty between both sides had enabled the US to "guarantee" free transit across the isthmus. Between 1901 and 1903, the restiveness in Panama culminated in a secessionist movement, which was encouraged by an entrepreneurial Frenchman, Philippe Bunau-Varilla, who succeeded De Lessep's stake in the Canal venture. Bunau-Varilla secretly egged on the Theodore Roosevelt presidency in Washington to secure a free hand in the eventual construction of the canal by supporting Panamanian self-determination. This ushered in a pattern of path dependence for Panama's post-independence governments right up till the 1990s. As it has been documented by various authors, (Smith 1992; Major 1993) the Panamanian elite maneuvered for and against democracy under the shadow of the American presence in the Canal Zone. According to Smith (1992:220), there were three strains in Panamanian politics: firstly, the conservative and oligarchic, which held sway in the initial years of the republic and derived power from trade and agricultural activities, but was subsequently marginalized due to the primacy of new economic bases of power; secondly, the populist nationalism that emerged most intensely in the interwar years, represented by the Panameñista movement of Arnulfo Arias Madrid; and thirdly, the democratic bourgeois stream which grew out of populist nationalism and merged with those advocating capitalist modernization and economic diversification. The immediate post-independence elite were constrained in their foreign policy horizons due to their patrimonial subordination to American designs on the Canal. Indeed, the first oligarchic President, Manuel Amador, survived a revolt by his own military commander, General Esteban Huertas, principally due to the American exercise of gunboat diplomacy offshore and the movement of US Marines within striking distance of Panama City. Both protagonists had in fact been complicit with the US in the 1903 plot to separate from Colombia. Consequently, Washington made the decision to temporarily downgrade the Panamanian army to a police force. Washington's labor and trade policies in the Canal Zone stirred further resentment in the 1910s and 1920s over wages and the increasing desire by Panama to extract higher economic rents from goods and services rendered to shipping and residents in the Canal Zone. Populist nationalism manifested periodically in violent incidents between Panamanian policemen and American soldiers; and between "colored" Panamanian and migrant West Indian laborers on one side against their "white" American supervisors and managers. (Major 1993:ch.4,6) Not surprisingly, populist parties that held office in Panama City in the interwar years spelled out demands to the effect "that the provisions of the new [Canal] Treaty be inspired by these purposes: not to injure the prosperity of Panama; not to reduce the revenues of her government and not to diminish her prestige as a nation." (US State Department notes quoted in Major 1993:110) Foreign policy towards the outside was fixated upon the US redress of Panamanian grievances. The subsequent pattern of US canal policies managed to head off the rewriting of Panamanian international identity through piecemeal concessions and the support of counter-elites who were content to base their legitimacy more firmly on Canal-derived businesses, including such

illicit ones as drugs, money laundering, racketeering and prostitution. The twenty-year military junta presided over by Generals Omar Torrijos through to Manuel Noriega between 1968 and 1989 represented a modernizing elite that deviated slightly from the oligarchs and populists in their economic bases, but not in their fundamentals of reliance upon the US in foreign policy.

Nevertheless the discursive scrum in the wake of the 1964 Panama Flag Riots deserves some mention as an attempt to use soft power to garner diplomatic sympathy under the cover of diplomatic mediation. Under consistent populist pressures incited in part by the excitement of Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba in 1959, the Panamanian government had consistently called for the flying of the Panamanian flag alongside the American in the Canal Zone. The Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson presidencies had pledged in principle to accommodate Panamanian sentiments but implementation proved sluggish. In January 1964, the decision by the American-run Balboa High School within the Canal Zone not to fly either national flag served as a lightning rod for Panamanian frustration. On 9 January 1964, a group of students from Panama City's premier high school, the *Instituto Nacional*, marched into the Canal Zone headed for the Balboa High School "to protest a protest." (McPherson 2004:87) Meanwhile, the students of Balboa School had begun a protest of their own against their administrators by flying a makeshift Stars and Stripes on their school's flagpole. The Panamanian students arrived with a banner of their own which they insisted to their Balboa counterparts should also be flown. The American zone police stopped the Panamanian procession at the edge of the Balboa premises and suggested that they stood beside the flagpole, held up their banner and sang their national anthem. Instead the Panamanians unveiled a flag in addition to their banner during their rendition. The Balboa students retaliated by "drowning out" the Panamanian chorus with their singing of the Star Spangled Banner. Shouting and shoving erupted between the two sides and the Panamanian flag was torn in the process. Conscious of their humiliation and seething anger, the Panamanian delegation turned around and marched out of the zone throwing stones at streetlights and overturning garbage cans. By then, there were plenty of sympathetic witnesses among the bystanders on the Panamanian side who spread the outrage by word of mouth and through popular radio and press. As a result unnamed mobs took revenge on the Canal Zone population by attacking US-owned property in areas bordering the Canal Zone. On the US side, shots were fired to frighten the rioters but casualties were nevertheless suffered by the Panamanians. Taken aback, the Zone Police handed security control over to the US Army. The Panamanians suddenly brought out guns and started sniping at US military personnel in the border zones. Violence played out for four days before the Panamanian *Guardia Nacional* intervened to restrain the rioters. What is relevant is the escalation of this episode of rioting into the Panamanian attempt at revanchist public diplomacy against the US under the auspices of an Organization of American States (OAS) mediation. Declassified Panamanian reports revealed that the government of President Chiari admitted in private that they had been negligent in crowd control, but for the purposes of bolstering its domestic legitimacy amidst such an unexpected crisis, it decided to "demonstrate emotion". (McPherson 2004:91) Therefore, while the Americans rolled out legally valid claims that Panama provided the *agents provocateurs* and blamed Panama for failing its own public security, the Panamanians accused the US of blatant arrogance, unrelenting imperialism and so on. Furthermore, the Panamanian lawyers and diplomats seemed to undermine their case by showing film evidence of Panamanians wantonly destroying property even as they forwarded autopsies of 18 deaths on their side. Alan McPherson observed that in this episode Panama,

as a small country with few means of propaganda, it used international organizations to draw world attention. Any investigation by the OAS or the United Nations would provide Panama

with a global stage on which to engage not the legal minutiae of the riots but rather the broader issue of US occupation of Panama's sovereign territory. Panama, therefore, chased public opinion rather than an exposition of the facts." (McPherson 2004:96)

McPherson further noted that "the OAS investigation, therefore, suggests that, just as Latin American diplomats were wary of putting the United States on trial, so were they ill at ease with putting critics of the United States on trial." (2004:101) In this regard, this early exercise in Panamanian soft power enlarged the country's bargaining space out of all proportion to its subordination to the Canal treaties.

Following changes in US security priorities with the winding down of the Cold War, the 1977 Carter-Torrijos treaties and the 1989 US intervention that ousted General Noriega paved the way for the final withdrawal of direct American military and commercial control of the Canal Zone by the end of 1999. It also helped that the Panamanian political parties, despite their relentless infighting, managed to practice a semblance of peaceful constitutional democratic politics. Panamanian politicians have gradually reconciled themselves to the need to market their country's prosperity and identity through visions of "Panama – the Financial Crossroads of the World", and the "Singapore of Central America".(Nevaer 1996:175-177) The emergence of Panama as an international financial center began in the early 1960s against a background of widespread Latin American instability. Panama's currency, the Balboa, had historically been fixed to be on par with the US dollar. Furthermore, the republic's relative stability attracted banks and capital from all the major South American economies. Its sheltering function for regional capital in turn allowed Panama to function as the lender for Latin American development. However, its early reputation was tarnished during the two decades of military dictatorship by its connection with drug financing and money laundering. Nevertheless, with the dictatorship over by 1989, scholars have argued that Panama began to successfully project itself as a major offshore banking centre.

As Barney Warf explains, the meaning of "offshore" in a globalizing world order is more than the creation of a zone of massive financial deregulation, tax shelters, and an absence of capital controls; unique local advantages assist in luring transnational capital flows to one's shores. (2002:36) Warf identified four advantages for the branding of Panama. Firstly, the Panama Canal – the historical evil in the eyes of nationalists for nearly a century – helped prepare Panama for globalization. Workers in the Canal Zone had been paid in US dollars since its construction, and the Canal's 14,000 employees helped contribute some 6% to the state's GNP, while accounting for 3.4% of world sea cargo in 2004. Additionally, ships in transit unloaded and bought supplies through local banking facilities. In 2002, it was estimated that banks in Panama processed an estimated US\$10 billion in re-exports annually through the Colón Free Trade Zone. In March 2007, Panama announced that Latin America's first International Wholesale Merchandise Mart would be built in the zone, offering manufacturers worldwide the ability to buy and operate their permanent showroom to attract clients from all over South America. This comes in the wake of US\$14.8 billion trade volume handled by the zone, a 17.7% increase over 2005. (PR Newswire Europe 2007) Secondly, it became inevitable that banking developed as a sizable employment sector and attraction given the impetus provided by Canal multiplier effects. Thirdly, the Canal's presence encouraged the growth of Panama's status as the world's second largest shipping registry, with 350,000 foreign-registered firms on its soil in 2002. Fourthly, by maintaining a dollar-based economy, with even the local currency on par with the dollar, Panama has effectively anchored its monetary policies to the US Federal Reserve. There is no central bank in Panama City and the only nationally-owned bank, *Banco Nacional*, acts as the "fiscal agent"

of the US Federal Reserve in Panama. Since the 1977 Carter-Torrijos Treaties, *Banco Nacional* became the only foreign member of the New York Federal Reserve Bank that is not a central bank. (Warf 2002:37) Studies nevertheless credit the Torrijos regime's Minister of Planning, Dr Nicholas Ardito Barletta for implementing Chicago School economic designs in Panamanian banking. Barletta was responsible for setting out legislation for liberalizing banking regulations and ensuring that most foreign banks locating in Panama had to have physical assets and join a professional code of banking secrecy. Offshore banks not intending to operate in the local market needed a separate "international license" to serve only foreign clients. A parallel scheme was extended by Barletta to foreign trading corporations, allowing them to "offshore" their activities resulting in a "100% tax haven" and full profit repatriation.

Panama has since enhanced its hub status by joining the WTO in 1997. It has bilateral ties with the Central American Free Trade Area which groups its neighbors, and is in negotiations with the US for a Free Trade Agreement. It had started collaborating with the US-sponsored Plan-Puebla Panama (PPP) since 2001. The PPP is an ongoing multi-billion dollar development plan that would transform southern Mexico and all of Central America into a single free trade zone with superhighways for hassle-free transport. Increasingly, the post-Noriega governments have started courting pensioners' tourism and jet-setting luxury travelers through beachfront property developments, a discount-filled "Tourist Pensionado Visa" program, and a drastic remake of Panama City's entertainment and restaurant scene. Trump Ocean Club International Hotel and Tower is slated to host a resort combining 68 floors of rooms, condominiums, a casino, a yacht club and a business center. (Farrell 2007)

All this transnational economic promotion has nevertheless carried some risks. Panamanian officials have in recent years striven to balance the demands for financial secrecy with the increasing international clamor for transactional transparency in the wake of shocks such as the Asian financial meltdown of 1997, the fight against drug trafficking, and the crackdown on post-9/11 terrorism financing. Furthermore, the offshore financial centers in the Caribbean and East Asia have begun to chip away at Panama's appeal. The 2007 A.T. Kearney Global Services Location Index noted that the leading offshore centers lost ground across the board in terms of relative cost advantages. The report warned that the regulatory environment would be insufficient for attraction; instead, education, skills development and infrastructure development are needed to sustain competitive advantage. (Hugin Press Release 2007) Newcomers like Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Baltic States had moved into the top 20 while Panama slipped to 41. As early as 1993, an American investment guide warned that Panama's post-Noriega governments have made only modest moves to reduce tariffs on imports into the country, which ranged at the time from 40-50%, even while the country's Colón Free Trade Zone and banking policies were praised for regulatory hospitality. (Tuller 1993: 177) The IMF has also warned offshore havens like Panama to exercise closer supervision of foreign banks to minimize risks of financial contagion through fraud and overvaluation of assets. Additionally, the Panamanian revenues from Canal services and the Colón Free Trade Zone suffered corresponding declines through foreign exposure during the Asian contagion of 1997-8 and the brief US slowdown in 2003-4. It is thus clear that if Panamanian soft power is taken as an illustration of promotion of political economy potential, it should be noted simultaneously for its existential nature in relation to coping with global trends. Panama also barely passed muster as a consistent model for good governance. It was instead a model of "good capitalism" derived from the American legacy of the Canal and its ancillaries. In fact, it effectively demonstrated the calculated abuse of diplomatic mediatory roles during the 1964 Flag Riot controversy.

Vatican City State

The Vatican City State came into existence as a result of the terrestrial fortunes of geopolitics since the late medieval period. Territorial diminution was the direct result of the rise and fall of proximate European and extra-European powers in the wake of the dissolution of the original Roman Empire centered in the “Eternal City”. This would be the conventional exposition. Nonetheless, the Vatican City State also represented a religion that preached a transnational fellowship of belief – Catholic Christianity. Hans Küng’s history of the Catholic Church described the meaning of “Church” as “the fellowship of those who believe in Christ, the fellowship of those who have committed themselves to the person and cause of Christ and attest it as hope for all men and women.” (2003:5) A fellowship is definable as an association through shared ideals and hence of what has earlier been discussed as symbolic power. Fellowships of spiritual beliefs tend also to proselytize and endeavor to ameliorate worldly conditions towards their vision of the ideal. Territoriality is not theologically a barrier to the universal practice and desirability of the faith. In this regard, it would be more appropriate to comprehend Vatican foreign policy in terms of our analytical categories of “model of good governance” and “diplomatic mediation”, and omitting its political economy potential since the Vatican City State does not operate an economy that registers its performance through measures of Gross National Product!

The history of the Catholic Church since the crucifixion of Christ in fact predates many of the struggles for legitimacy experienced by the comparatively more recent institution of the nation-state. The biblical tract *The Acts of the Apostles* – authored following the resurrection of Christ – documents a relatively egalitarian geography of Catholicism. Following the martyrdom of Saint Peter in Rome circa 90 A.D., and death of Saint Paul, who was credited for spreading the gospel beyond its Jewish origins to the rest of the Mediterranean, the fellowship of Catholics assumed both a heterogeneous character and the acceleration of bureaucratization. Local customs, pre-Catholic beliefs and politics had to be aligned with, or assessed against the purity of the faith. This task required authorities, patriarchs, and a papacy. The early medieval narratives of persecution and the concomitant struggles of the fellowship to maintain a resistant inner order have become part of Roman Catholic lore. Additionally, throughout the medieval era, instances also abound of how the very Church that interpreted Greco-Roman knowledge and invented proto-industrial economics and sciences was challenged at every turn by its beneficiaries and worldly kingdoms for political legitimacy. Names such as Copernicus and Galileo challenged Catholic monopolies of science, while Aquinas, Augustine and various Jesuit personalities strained orthodoxy from within by improving human reason in contemplation of God’s gifts of the intellect. (Woods 2005:ch.5) The medieval fiction of the Donation of Constantine, whereby the last emperor resident in Rome purportedly granted all jurisdiction over Rome itself, the rest of Italy and the western hemisphere to Pope Silvester I, was a remarkable informational stratagem employed by many early Popes to consolidate their ecclesiastical supremacy over temporal political powers. (Hanson 1990:23-26) Nevertheless, just as Pope Leo III seized the opportunity to crown the Frankish king Charles Martel’s son Pippin as Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne in 800 A.D., the later Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV attempted between 1081 and 1085 to capitalize on discontent within the Italian church to delegitimize Pope Gregory VII as the ultimate arbiter of German political affairs. This proved to be one episode in a protracted symbolic struggle right up to the twentieth century when the Italian Dictator Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaties of

1929 recognizing the Pope's territorial sovereignty over the existing boundaries of the Vatican City State.

Yet, as the current Vatican Secretary of State put it, these experiences of dealing with political heterogeneity within the universal Church constituted experience within papal diplomacy:

History shows that from the very beginning of Christianity the leaders of the Church were confronted with the difficult task of reconciling diverse cultures and traditions within the unity of faith and morals which mark the Church as Catholic, as "Universal". So, disputes and controversies, divisions and other problems arose...When confronted with disputes, Bishops and Councils turned to the Bishop of Rome to seek his mediation or his decision. Since the second century, there are testimonies that the Pope settled these disputes and problems, thus securing the unity of the church. It is in this religious context that the figure of the Papal Envoys (or Legates) first appeared. (Lajolo 2005:13)

The institution of the Pope, also known as the Holy See, writ large as the sovereign of the Vatican City State, has become synonymous with "moral diplomacy" – that of composing differences, enjoining peace, and setting out appropriate normative standards of conduct in both domestic and international affairs. According to Hanson (1990:4-5), these are all "expressive powers" exercised in support of ostensibly western values and Catholic values. Secretary of State Lajolo however prefers to treat them as the promotion of universal values recorded in the United Nations Charter and other international bodies: the preservation of the dignity of the human person; the preservation of peace and pursuit of peaceful coexistence amidst ethno-religious differences; the rejection of war as a policy instrument except under limited circumstances; support for democratization and "dialogue even with 'difficult' regimes"; upholding international law and support for multilateral diplomacy; and the exceptional presence of the Holy See in international relations with " 'no temporal power, no ambition to enter into competition with you [the society of states]' " but " 'to serve you in the area of our competence, with disinterestedness, humility and love.'" (Lajolo 2005:22-29) Lajolo's latter phrases were a direct quote from Pope Paul VI's address to the UN in 1965.

Indeed the Vatican City State's modest official description of its temporal power downplays its subtle disproportionate effects at critical junctures of modern international relations. Often, due to the subtlety of the Vatican's soft power applications, its role in international affairs has stoked controversy and derision. During the interwar years and the Second World War, Popes Pius XI (1922-39) and his successor, Pius XII (1939-58), have both been accused of collusion with the fascist regimes of Mussolini and Hitler. Detailed studies of available Vatican archives have revealed that both Popes, and especially Pius XII, approached international affairs with the studied conservatism characteristic of seasoned diplomatists. Eugenio Pacelli, who assumed the papacy as Pius XII, had in fact acquired experience teaching international law and serving his predecessor as the Vatican's Secretary of State from 1930 onwards. It was reasoned by both Popes that open denunciations of fascist policies would not have served the ecclesiastical preservation of Catholic communities under fascist rule. In fact Pius XI's relations with Mussolini were efficaciously opportunistic in preserving the privileged status of the Church and the Holy See's sovereignty over Vatican City through the Lateran treaties of 1929. (Pollard 1985:ch.7) Pope Pius XI signed *concordats* with both Mussolini and Hitler to restrain any temptation on their part to harass the institutional Churches in their countries. Pius XII continued their observance. Apart from a significant number of breaches by fascist forces during World War Two,

these treaties succeeded in mitigating greater persecutions against Catholics. Pius XII had declared in 1940 that the mitigation of greater evils required the toleration of lesser ones in the interim, hence a differentiation between public and private power projection: “For Us impartiality means judging things according to truth and justice. But when it concerns Our public statements, We have closely considered the situation of the Church in the various countries in order to spare the Catholics living there from unnecessary difficulties.” (Quoted in Blet 1999:65) It was an anguished and obscured exercise of soft power. The Allied governments expected Pius XII to condemn Hitler’s treachery at Munich and the invasion of Poland but he remained publicly restrained and evenhanded throughout the Second World War. Pius XII’s private use of soft power through the dispatch of papal nuncios to pressure Berlin and Rome, as well as their fascist satellites in central and eastern Europe, to restrain human rights abuses proved far more effective in halting deportations of Jews and other minorities where they could be reached in time. It is also a matter of little known record that papal intercessions for neutral third countries to issue asylum papers saved large numbers of displaced persons from worse fates under the Nazis. Retrospective studies of Nazi intelligence archives reveal that Hitler’s regime treated the Vatican’s influence as a sufficiently serious threat to its domestic stability to the extent that it mounted an extensive eavesdropping campaign to detect signs of a defection to the Allied cause right up till the final days of the war. (Alvarez and Graham 1997) It can nevertheless be queried counterfactually whether “small state soft power” should in these cases be mounted more openly.

That the Vatican City State continues to support the cause of human rights in tandem with the defense of the faith is evident in its Cold War dealings with Poland and China. Results have however been mixed. As many observers have pointed out, the advent of the Marxist-Leninist revolution in the USSR placed its adherents in fundamental ideological opposition to Catholicism. Lenin and his successors had exaggerated Marx’s attribution of religion as the “opiate of the masses” and targeted the Catholic Church for persecution in the incitement of revolutionary fervor. In Poland’s case, Catholicism bound Poles to their historic past as the cradle of central European Catholicism even while Stalin’s postwar occupation forces installed a pliant communist regime in Warsaw. Even so, the communist government trod cautiously against the Catholic Church to the extent of tolerating the elevation of an ex-resistance leader and Marian devotee, Cardinal Wyszynski as the Primate of Poland. A young Father Karol Wojtyla, who also shared Wyszynski’s disdain for the atheism and cultural vacuity of communist rule, was promoted as Archbishop of Krakow on the strength of his paternalistic qualities, charisma and intellectual capacities. Father Wojtyla – the man who would be elected Pope John Paul II in 1978 – developed, through his personal experiences and exposure to Thomism in Roman seminaries and his doctoral work there, a deep attachment to the mystical qualities and dignity of the human individual. (Cornwell 2004:ch.3-5) During this time, he had experienced the transition from Pope Pius XII’s uncompromising hostility towards communism to Pope John XXIII’s preference for *Ostpolitik* towards Moscow and its satellites. The latter policy was parallel to détente practiced by the Western powers towards the Soviet bloc from the late 1960s to 1970s. Accommodation with earthly communist government would logically diminish persecution and enhance the space for the growth of the congregations of Catholics in oppressed states. Karol Wojtyla was appalled by such a policy, and together with Wyszynski, pursued a domestic version of containment against the Polish governments of Gomulka and Gierk. These governments could not prevent food shortages, shrinking wages and the concomitant rise in food prices despite the promises of Marxism-Leninism. Wojtyla seized upon the accommodationist strategy of the Polish communists and piled more pressure by calling for state funding for Catholic seminaries and schools, and criticized government bans on catechism classes and recruitment of seminarians. Yet Wojtyla was also a shrewd politician in the

making; in 1976, when food prices precipitated unrest in Poland, tempting union leaders to call a general strike, Wojtyla urged them to call it off to avert a Soviet intervention; and in return the government was dissuaded from punishing the dissidents. Yet in front of a congregation of young people in 1977, Wojtyla declared that “human rights cannot be given in the form of concessions” (quoted in Cornwell 2004:50) and subsequently encouraged organizational synergy between parish networks and worker organizations “to create a mass nonviolent insurgency at the grassroots.” (Cornwell 2004:50)

Unsurprisingly, the Vatican’s foreign policy towards Poland and the communist world returned to a hard line under Pope John Paul II’s stewardship. Destabilizing Poland proved to be a successful wedge against Moscow’s hold on Eastern Europe – so much so that the Soviets engaged their Bulgarian allies to mount an assassination attempt against John Paul II in 1981 in Rome. Fortunately for the Holy See, these hard power plots failed in the face of the relentless onslaught of soft power. John Paul II, as Archbishop Wojtyla, had already laid the seeds for the awakening of symbolic resistance against communism through his organizational influence and speeches. When he paid his first Papal visit to his homeland in June 1979 it opened the dam for popular defiance against the Polish government. John Cornwell captured the intangible nature of this occasion in the following manner:

On the eve of Whit Sunday – Saturday June 2, 1979 – John Paul, Pope for less than nine months, faced a congregation of more than a million in the very navel of his homeland – Victory Square, Warsaw. “Come, Holy Spirit,” he intoned, “fill the hearts of the faithful and renew the face of the earth.” He added, to the ecstatic roar of the multitude, “of *this* earth,” indicating with a sweep of his right hand the entire country and people of Poland...Then the crowds starting chanting: “We want God! We want God!” Church bells pealed throughout the nation. The writer Neal Ascherson, who was present on that day, says that a boy turned to him and said: “I feel that I never heard anybody speak before.” Afterward people were weeping, walking up and down the streets as if mesmerized, stunned by what they had seen and heard. (2004:75)

Lech Walesa, the soon-to-be leader of Solidarity, the trade union movement that was to ultimately topple Polish communism testified to John Paul II’s symbolic power:

I had been an opposition activist for 10 years and in that time I had attracted 10 people. Out of 40 million people [in Poland] I could organize 10 people. But after that visit it became clear something could happen. A year later it was impossible to handle the flow of people who wanted to join us. I know the parable of the loaves and the fishes, but I think our miracle was even greater. We went from 10 people to 10 million people. People just woke up. They wanted a change and they started to believe in themselves.(Quoted in Maguire 2003:48)

Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Poland’s first post-communist prime minister, recalled that the communist authorities intentionally left the Church to its own devices in handling the logistics of crowd management. (Maguire 2003:48) Ironically, the religious-civil society networks were already in place to step into the breach, showing up the haplessness of the communist state. John Paul II did not mention the Soviet Union but declared to the Polish communist leader Gierek that “it is the Church’s mission to make our people more confident, responsible, creative, and useful. For this activity the

Church does not desire privileges, but only and exclusively what is essential for the accomplishment of its mission.” (Quoted in Cornwell 2004:75-6) Ten years later, Polish communism imploded.

While it still remains a matter of interpretation whether the Holy See’s intervention in Poland also decisively catalyzed the fall of communism in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria, moral diplomacy was frustrated by a combination of entrenched ideological resistance in China and the Holy See’s early political mistakes. Unlike Poland, where the Roman genesis of Catholicism lay within its historical footprint of geopolitical experience, China represented an unknown frontier for the conquest of minds. Catholic influence arrived in China in tentative fashion since the late Middle Ages in the form of European envoys seeking alliances against Muslim invasions. China was itself a civilization that rivaled the European in every dimension including its own version of ancestor worship, veneration of the emperor, Daoism, Confucianism, and subsequently Buddhism and traces of Islam on its periphery. When the first full scale Catholic mission arrived in 1583, its leader, Mateo Ricci practiced a policy of proselytization through accommodation to local culture. Ricci and his fellow Jesuits learnt the dominant Chinese customs while resident in Beijing, then ruled by the Ming Emperor. In this way, he earned the trust of his host population and its elites in order to win converts, who numbered 2,500 by the time Ricci died in 1601. The converts in turn assisted the missionaries in translating Catholic literature and western scientific works. This modest but healthy beginning was unfortunately set back by the policy of subsequent Popes in the lead up to the Opium Wars when Chinese customs were declared fundamentally incompatible with Catholicism forcing the Chinese faithful to choose sides on the pain of excommunication. By the 1800s, the image of Catholicism in China was tainted by the association of its western evangelizers with the arrival of European gunboats and troops imposing unequal treaties upon the moribund Chinese empire. (Leung 1992:ch.2) From then until the communist takeover in 1949, the Vatican did not establish full diplomatic relations with China, with the exception of a brief period in 1942-9, due to the intervention of the French government whose missionaries worked to establish domination over Chinese Catholics as an extension of official influence, and the outbreak of war with Japan and the ongoing Chinese civil war. Being western-supported, the Kuomintang (KMT) under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was more sympathetic to the Vatican’s religiously inspired diplomacy than his rival, Mao Zedong’s Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The Vatican nuncio to China tried to behave impartially towards both sides during the closing stages of the civil war with the aim of ensuring protection of Chinese Catholics, even staying behind in Nanjing, while the KMT regime and its supporters evacuated to Taiwan. Yet, despite the CCP’s initial propaganda of gathering all bourgeois and sympathetic socio-religious forces into a common united front for the liberation of a new China, Mao’s government reneged on religious freedom and attacked all vestiges of western influence under the banner of eradicating imperialist religious influences. The papal nuncio was ultimately expelled in 1951 without even the possibility of a dialogue with the CCP. (Chan 1989:816) By default, the papal nunciature re-established itself in Taiwan, and up till 1971, constituted a full embassy to the government in Taipei. From 1951 till today, the Vatican’s foreign policy became embroiled in the cross-Straits controversy and was warmly regarded by the government in Taipei as its only full European diplomatic partner.

Unsurprisingly, the Catholic Church in China encountered persecution comparable to those in other communist countries even while the faithful continued to observe their religion discreetly. Unlike Poland, the communist government in Beijing regarded the Vatican’s rights to consecrate bishops and excommunicate violators as a threat to national sovereignty. In 1957, Beijing established the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association as an umbrella organization for the Chinese faithful in order

to ensure that they are autonomous from Vatican controls. This association enjoyed the privilege of formalizing the consecration of CCP-approved bishops and priests while distinguishing Catholics “loyal to China” from those serving the cause of the Vatican. Therefore Catholic loyalties became officially divided, while an underground Church faithful to Vatican City policies thrived. The Vatican’s *Ostpolitik* in the 1960s and 1970s did not ameliorate matters significantly because Catholicism was not a majority religion within China, and neither did China perceive any benefit in establishing ties with the Vatican. The papacy of John Paul II had also been cool towards Beijing in any case while being focused on ending the Cold War against Catholicism in Eastern Europe. John Paul II managed to rile Beijing in 1981 when Bishop Deng Yiming, a Jesuit previously imprisoned by Beijing for 22 years, was appointed Archbishop of Guangzhou. Beijing retaliated by consecrating five new bishops of its choosing. (Chan 1989:823) Even in the post-Cold War era, Beijing seems to fear Vatican influence given the events in Poland, Eastern Europe and the Philippines. The ideological contagion of liberal and foreign ideas could undo authoritarian legitimacy all the more amidst the sociopolitical inequalities precipitated by the modernization program initiated by Deng Xiaoping and carried on by his successors. (Leung 1998:132-136) While scholars have pointed out that unlike Poland, where 90% of its population is Catholic, while less than 1% is in China (Leung 1992:71; 1998:134), the Vatican’s ideological threat remains potentially disproportionate. Ironically, Beijing has attempted to counter the Vatican’s control over Catholic seminaries in China by funding a RMB70-80 million national seminary outside the capital where it is hoped that pro-Vatican teachings can be screened out. That form of control did not, however, prevent protests by students at seminaries in Chengdu, Beijing national and Shijiazhuang in 2000 against the ordination of CCP-approved bishops and spiritual directors. (Leung 2001:669-670) Under the shadow of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on the transfer of Hong Kong, John Paul II had already hinted at the possible shape of things to come when he called upon the overseas Chinese Catholics to serve as “a bridge to China”. Beatrice Leung has already traced the significant efforts by the Hong Kong Catholic community to exert a moderating influence on the mainland from as early as 1978. (1992:238-255) Pope Benedict XVI had in 2006 ordained as cardinal a prominent democracy advocate, Bishop Joseph Zen of Hong Kong, sparking Beijing’s complaints of interference. At the same time, Secretary of State Lajolo indicated that the needs of China’s several million Catholics were more pressing than those of Taiwan’s 300,000 Catholics, hinting that a major diplomatic concession might be in the offing. (Associated Press 2006) In 2007, Benedict sent Beijing a letter reaffirming noninterference with Beijing’s political authority while urging closure between the Vatican and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association’s churches. Observers noted that over the past decade practices between the two churches had converged with some “Patriotic” churches openly displaying pictures of the Pope. (Rosenthal 2007)

This short survey of the foreign policy of the Vatican City State cannot be exhaustive given the constraints of space, but a general pattern of its exercise of small state soft power is discernible. The moral and ideological standing of the Vatican foreign policy is derived from the Holy See’s dual position as temporal sovereign of its 44 hectares, as well as its headship of the universal Roman Catholic Church. This has translated into an extraordinary diplomatic contradiction that nevertheless lends the City State disproportionate soft power – the Pope in tandem with his government machinery (the Roman Curia) represent a repository of religious wisdom conferred by the Holy Scriptures, while the City State also accords and receives diplomatic recognition along with all the conventional privileges allowed under international law for entering into diplomatic relations. This has led some geographers and lawyers to criticize the UN and other intergovernmental organizations for allowing a

transnational religion to masquerade as a state. (Toschi 1931; Abdullah 1996) The weakness of the Vatican City State is most certainly its lack of a national community of persons identified distinctly either by race or civil criteria, unless one stretches the meaning of religion. Another objection raised is the fact of practical dependence of the Vatican City's sovereign day-to-day functions upon the generosity of the Italian nation-state in regard to the provision of power utilities, transportation access and modern defense. The regular protectors of the Vatican, the Swiss Guards, are by no means a modern army equipped for territorial defense. (Toschi 1931) However, if one attempts to probe at the implications of the Holy See conducting international relations from the perspective of implementing the principles of Catholicism *for* the cause of human conscience as some measure of moving international society towards the existential goal of the good life, the Vatican's soft power substantiates this article's argument that virtual enlargement occurs through diplomatic possibilities in mediation and spreading good governance. The very reason that some have claimed for the Vatican practicing filibuster on abortion rights and reproductive health amidst the drafting of UN declarations on human population and women's rights in the 1990s is the same reason that most secular nation-states fail to champion these causes. The opinion of moral rectitude may fall on the ideological right, or the left, but there are constituencies that support these. Yet, like the rest of international society, the Holy See has not proven itself infallible in temporal matters. While it has sustained campaigns *for* human rights observance and governmental accountability, and *against* Liberation Theology, in Latin America, the Vatican City State has exhibited moral caprice over the War on Terror following the events of 9/11. (Cornwell 2004:ch.27) It has also alienated Israeli public opinion over the inadequate penance offered over the Holocaust, while supporting Palestinian causes seeking relief from Israeli pressures. (Cornwell 2004:ch.21, 24) Proffering the world a model of good governance is difficult diplomacy as both Popes Pius XII and John Paul II have found out, but as the reigning Pope Benedict XVI has reflected, it is still a lacuna in the practical meaning of international society.

Singapore

Judging from the indices regularly published by the World Economic Forum on national competitiveness, or those by A.T. Kearney and Foreign Policy magazine on globalization rankings, the Republic of Singapore enjoys a disproportionate image in relation to its physical size of 704 square kilometers. It has consistently been ranked among the top five most competitive and globalized states in the world. In many ways, this reflects the outcome of its government's strategic decision to compensate for territorial inferiority, political vulnerability and resource barrenness by extending its 'international value' through a range of soft power measures since the early 1960s. The roots of Singaporean soft power can be traced to the circumstances of its ruling elite's political rambunctiousness in asserting the island's socio-political difference within the postcolonial Southeast Asian environment. Consequently, the do-it-yourself pragmatism of the Republic's own brand of development economics constituted a second source of soft power. Thirdly, the Cold War supplied a learning context for its foreign policy practitioners to practice a diplomatic style of calculated candor in addressing security issues generated by vastly larger states. As this analysis will suggest, Singaporean soft power has not been a smooth exercise, but rather an embryonic experiment with tangible successes while imposing some inevitable costs upon its domestic society.

The art of utilizing soft power was ingrained in the style of the ruling People's Action Party's (PAP) politicians during their struggle for independence from the British colonial authorities between

1954 and 1962, and subsequently during the brief federation with Malaysia in 1963-5. The leaders who founded this party, which has governed the country since independence, shared a determined vision of creating an independent, non-communist, democratic socialist postcolonial state, preferably within a federation with neighboring Malaya. To achieve this aim, they sought to take advantage of both the political spaces created by the British-dictated pace of self-government, and the Third World currents of anticolonialism overseas. It helped that the founders of the PAP were lawyers (such as Lee Kuan Yew), British-trained civil servants and economists (Goh Keng Swee), lecturers (Toh Chin Chye), and journalists (such as S. Rajaratnam). These professional backgrounds supplied these personalities with the gift of discourse and the wit to outmaneuver their opponents through arguments and strategic alliances. Furthermore, each was familiar with the inner workings of British politics and legal principles. Through their English-stream education, they were able to connect with Third World intellectual currents. Their initial far-left political bandwagon gallantly even invited communist participation. And it was also ironically a combination of discursive defense and political opportunism that subsequently marginalized the communist elements in their party. Similarly, these persuasive powers helped to convince the nationalist elites in Kuala Lumpur to admit Singapore into a federation as part of a deal with the British authorities for political independence. Despite a shared colonial history under the British empire for nearly 150 years, the politics practiced by Malaysian elites proved to be very different from Singapore's. Separate racial and religious identities tended to be heavily accentuated in electoral manifestoes among the main parties in Kuala Lumpur whereas the PAP preferred to eradicate the colonial legacy of racial divisions under the ideology of a "Malaysian Malaysia". The communitarian debate between the PAP and its erstwhile opponents in Malaysia revolved around the need to retain affirmative action policies for the indigenous Malays. This was a spur for the exercise of soft power when the PAP in Singapore sought to impose its vision on Malaysian foreign policy within the federation and overseas. Furthermore, given the confrontational stance of neighboring Indonesia towards a "neocolonial" Malaysian federation still dependent on British military protection through treaty, the PAP openly lamented the lack of initiative from Kuala Lumpur in countering Indonesian propaganda against the federation. Following a series of bloody racial riots, the decision was made by Kuala Lumpur to 'separate' Singapore as an independent state with its own identity. The Malaysian premier's remarks on the Separation made it clear that Singapore's aggressiveness in promoting its distinct worldview contributed to the split. (Tunku 1968)

As is already evident, Singapore's anticolonial history was steered in large part by the discursive power of defining community. In the field of political economy, it was no different. Given the sheer geography of a resource-barren island with a teeming population, except for its strategic location at the crossroads between the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea, economic autarky was not a feasible option for its newly-independent government. Global capitalism could however offer a risky but potentially infinite set of possibilities for the republic's survival. Early statements by Prime Minister Lee, Foreign Minister Rajaratnam and others from the PAP unveiled visions of developing an "oasis" for talent, skills and capital, as well as a "global city" offering manufacturing and trading hub functions that would convert not only Southeast Asia but the world at large into an infinite hinterland. (Lee 1968; Chong 2006) This clearly went against the grain of mainstream Third World thinking concerning the dangers of entrenching neocolonialism through dependency upon western technology, corporations and markets. Singapore's demographical and geographical statistics ensured that there were virtually no sizable domestic industries to protect at the point of independence. (Leifer 2000: ch.1-2) Instead, the pattern of dependence was well demonstrated by the British cultivation of the transshipment trade through Singapore's harbors. Path dependence in this regard

created a cognitive association with early understandings of what in the 1990s would come to be recognized as a strategy of globalization. By embracing the logic of attracting flows of transient labor, corporations, capital and information, Singapore's value to a globally-networked capitalism could transcend being a cheap transshipment hub to one providing technological solutions, research and development and headquartering functions. In the 1960s and 1970s, this export oriented strategy was no different from that pursued by the other East Asian newly-industrializing economies. But by the 1980s, the strategic industrial policies began to target the technologies of higher value – epitomized by Alvin Toffler's 'Third Wave' thesis – aeronautical engineering, computer innovation, internet services, biotechnology, wafer fabrication, water recycling and desalination. The Republic's political economy potential was realized only through the assiduous efforts of state agencies such as the Economic Development Board and the Trade Development Board (subsequently renamed International Enterprise Singapore). As has been studied elsewhere (Schein 1996; Chong 2001), these agencies were the implementers of a detailed branding strategy since the 1960s that lent itself to being exemplified as almost a textbook case of 'international public relations'.

Singapore's enlargement of its economic profile was not achieved without significant sacrifices in the domestic sphere. The World Economic Forum's *Global Competitiveness Report 2006-7* explained the Singaporean advantage in position number five, over the USA, Japan, Germany, Netherlands and Britain, in the following manner:

Leading within Asia are Singapore and Japan, ranked 5th and 7th respectively, closely followed by Hong Kong (11) and Taiwan (13). These economies are characterized by high-quality infrastructure, flexible and efficient markets, healthy and well-educated workforces and high levels of technological readiness and innovative capacity. (WEF 2007)

The competitive characteristics of Singapore's economy emerged as a direct evolution of the PAP's democratic socialist credentials into pragmatic "survivalism" following the island's unexpected independence. This synthetic ideology encapsulated what some scholars have termed the disciplinary aspects of Singapore's political system: the developmental state would ensure collective prosperity; the operation of such a state would be premised upon social peace between the races, and cooperative attitudes from labor unions and individual workers towards nation-building programs; the developmental state would in turn behave paternalistically in both adjusting public policies according to long term strategic business projections and actively redistributing the benefits of economic growth; finally, given its paternalistic mandate, the state would police dissidence and engineer social compliance where required in health, education and employment. (Ganesan 2005:103-106)

The efficient aspects of the Singaporean developmental state have approximated Chalmers Johnson's notion of the "plan rational" state. (1982:19-23) Infrastructure such as the harbors, airport, energy utilities, industrial land, and transportation policy were developed by dedicated state agencies that enjoyed quasi-autonomous budgets. Corruption was checked by another government watchdog that reported only to the Prime Minister's Office. Impressed by its meticulous attention towards the construction of the backbone of transnational capitalism, foreign investors in manufacturing, banking, retail and media have consistently rated Singapore as an economic haven in a Third World region. Many of these infrastructural agencies have outgrown their initial mandate and since the mid-1990s have been "privatized" as government-linked companies (GLCs) that are free to pursue profitable investments and research and development within Singapore and overseas. Critics have castigated

these GLCs for squeezing out private sector participation in Singapore's growth while its supporters have pointed out that these very companies are the geneses of Singaporean multinational companies that have become fledgling global competitors. SembCorp Marine and Keppel Marine are examples of GLCs that have dominated segments of the global offshore oil rig market from humble beginnings. Temasek Holdings, the parent of the GLCs, has emerged as a multifaceted investment holding company that has anchored itself in the growth of retail banks, telecommunications and consumer electronics companies in China, India, Pakistan and South Korea. A few of its headline making investments such as the acquisition of Shin Corporation in Thailand has nevertheless backfired on nationalist and political grounds, even though the investment portfolio seems healthy in enlarging the foreign policy value of "Singapore Incorporated". Apart from China and India, some of the fastest growing Southeast Asian economies such as Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines appear to welcome Temasek's involvement as a means of bolstering their economic growth.

In contrast, the social aspects of the developmental state encounter a mixed reception on account of their authoritarian support of a foreign economic policy of enlargement. Human rights in the Singaporean polity are often lamented as being excessively subordinated into state-directed economic priorities. Labor and other resource markets are "flexible" in the perception of economic ratings agencies due to the government's ability to influence the priorities of local universities and polytechnics in churning out compliant workers with industry-relevant skills and armed with a positive attitude towards skill upgrading. Furthermore, the alignment between the PAP government and the peak labor organization, the National Trades Union Congress, has ensured that workers' grievances are settled mostly in industrial arbitration courts and other corporatist channels rather than on the streets in the form of strikes and lock-outs. Existing legislation provides both carrots and sticks. Policies ensure workers' rights to contractual benefits, performance-linked bonuses, and a state-administered compulsory savings fund for health, educational and housing expenses, as well as subsidies in consumer goods and housing; while strikes are allowed only under stringent conditions. The government's control of the popular media has ensured that its dominant message of "survivalism" in a competitive global economy and often anarchical international society attains the status of a self-evident discourse within the Singaporean psyche. The PAP's frequently large electoral mandates, registering upwards of 59% of the popular vote, reinforce the population's acquiescence in the tried and tested formula of a paternalistic developmental state with the moral license to police unruly social currents that threaten the compact that delivers First World prosperity with accepted curbs on political rights. By the late 1990s, there were however, signs that this compact is being revised with the PAP's increasing awareness of Singapore's need to participate in the "knowledge-based economy" of the future where creative and abstract symbolic skills are expected to sustain First World standards of living. The linkage made by Manuel Castells, Michael Porter and Joseph Nye between industrial creativity and liberalism appear to have caught the attention of Singaporean planners.

Not surprisingly, the "Singapore Model of Development" (SMD) has its supporters who assist in enlarging the brand of Singapore as a model of governance in its wider foreign policy impact. As has been argued elsewhere (Chong 2007: ch.4), the SMD is presented as a form of soft power in two ways. In its *holistic informal form*, the recipient state adopts the totality of the paternalistic developmental state premised upon rational elite planning and disciplined compliance by the population under the rubric of a communitarian vision. This can be illustrated by Lee Kuan Yew's pithy statement: "The more dissension, the more contention and the less consensus, the less you get on

with the job.” (Quoted in Chong 2007: 130) In the *segmented formal version* of the SMD, recipient states selectively adopt parts of the Singaporean developmental state deemed to be relevant to their needs. Within Asia, the holistic SMD has been adopted by China in its industrial park projects; as well as by Vietnam in both industrial parks and governmental reform. In both cases, the SMD’s appeal coincided with major programs for national revitalization as well as the ruling governments’ predilections for controlling reform within an authoritarian setting. Singapore’s active participation in the Asian Values Debate of 1992-2000 arose specifically from its diplomatic promotion of itself as a model of good governance. (Chong 2007: ch.4) It is remarkable that in spite of implementational hiccups arising from local bureaucratic politics in those countries, both the Chinese and Vietnamese governments managed to steer their SMD projects using pre-existing channels of authoritarian instrumentality. Throughout the 1990s, elites in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand attempted to similarly transplant the SMD into their developmental plans. But these were all frustrated by a combination of democratic currents in their societies and weak political leaderships. Indonesia’s ongoing instabilities are particularly illustrative given the polarization of its polity into sectarian violence and xenophobic nationalism following the Asian financial crisis of 1997-8 and its triggering of President Suharto’s downfall through street protests.

The segmented formal version of the SMD has witnessed a significant expansion since 1992 when the Singapore Cooperation Program (SCP) was formalized in partnership with a handful of developed countries to offer instructional courses in public policy-making; information technology applications in government; banking and finance; air, sea and land transport management; and industrial productivity. According to Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this program reflected a sense of reciprocity towards the Commonwealth’s Colombo Plan assistance scheme in the 1960s, from which Singaporean officials benefited. The operating principle is that foreign officials are encouraged to exercise discretion in “cherry-picking” aspects of the SMD that are most relevant to their local needs; subsequently the Singaporean government subsidizes foreign participation, either in whole or in part. Singapore benefits from this by building a reputation for transferring skills rather than monetary grants. This philosophy of “teaching a man to fish, rather than giving him a meal, so he will never go hungry in future” underpins an aid program that cannot be easily criticized under the dominant dependency paradigm. At the same time, it excuses the donor from any responsibility for the misapplication of good governance methods transplanted into the recipient’s context. This low risk aid strategy has worked to enhance Singapore’s standing among Southern African states among whom the Republic of Botswana has publicly acclaimed the transfer of Singapore’s labor productivity culture as part of its growth engine. Similarly, Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, Laotian and Afghan officials have acknowledged the utility of the SCP in their domestic reforms. It was also no small irony that both the IMF and World Bank signed accords with Singapore to socialize Asian policy-makers with “good practices” in public finance following the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-8. It was also extremely flattering to Singaporean transport planners that London Mayor Ken Livingstone has openly credited Singapore as an inspiration for his implementation of the vehicular toll zone in central London in 2004. The significant improvement in London’s traffic flow stands as a credit to the Singaporean example. In 2005, following the shocking scenes of negligence and social disaffection exhibited in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, American journalist Thomas Friedman (2005) unashamedly envied Singapore’s rehearsed efficiency in civil defense mobilization in contrast to a conservative American government that weakened its own humanitarian relief capacities through years of budget cutbacks.

If Singaporean soft power was broadly efficacious in promoting its own model of good governance, it has encountered more ambiguous results in diplomatic mediation. As Lee Kuan Yew and Rajaratnam have both emphasized, the island's foreign policy ought never to be allowed to be solely in the play of regional forces. Given the Republic's background of unresolved tensions with neighboring Malaysia and Indonesia over ideological, territorial and economic issues stemming from the independence of Singapore, diplomatic mediation is perceived to be a tool for avoiding the hegemony of one's neighbors while also entrenching external great power interest in a complex multipolar balance. Additionally, performing mediatory roles within international institutions earns reciprocal goodwill for the future. Singapore's participation in the founding of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is intended to "socialize" its neighbors into a diplomatic culture of resorting primarily to peaceful resolution of disputes, or at least to their pacific postponement, pending resolution. ASEAN's various diplomatic documents bind its members to a vaguely worded reaffirmation of Westphalian principles and membership clauses consistent with the UN Charter. In operationalisation, the invocation of the "ASEAN spirit" or the "ASEAN Way" has enabled Singapore to defuse tensions with Jakarta over the hanging of Indonesian soldiers arising from the military confrontation of 1963-5, and also forestalled trade disruptions over accusations of trade diversion and theft of Indonesian natural resources. Beginning in the late 1990s, the issue of the transnational haze emanating from unregulated forest burning in Indonesian Borneo and Sumatra has also constituted another strain on relations with Singapore; this was ameliorated once again on the understanding that the ASEAN Spirit could provide diplomatic cover for Singapore's provision of provincial level aid in fighting fires on Indonesian soil. With Malaysia, the long simmering tensions from the events of 1965 have been partially dampened by the transactional goodwill generated through foreign policy coordination within ASEAN – both countries collaborate on economic working groups, joint policing against civil criminals and terrorists, and combating air pollution. Both Indonesian and Malaysian territorial disputes with Singapore have also been postponed indefinitely under the ASEAN Spirit in spite of the occasional saber-rattling in their respective media. Furthermore, the ASEAN Way had enabled the original five non-communist members to organize a crusade at the UN to relentlessly delegitimize then-nonmember Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia during the Cold War.

Additionally, Singaporean soft power has stretched the notion of diplomatic mediation to include leadership for change. In this regard, Singapore's entrenched interest in the promotion of its economic interests serves as an example of its soft power extension through multilateralism. The Republic has energetically lobbied for the conclusion of the various rounds of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations for liberalizing trade in goods and services ever since the inception of its predecessor, the GATT. Trading on these credentials in the post-Cold War order, Singapore has attempted to coax its ASEAN partners to speed up the realization of an ASEAN Free Trade Area only to encounter dilemmas arising from a "two-lane" ASEAN economy divided by income gaps. To socialize ASEAN into the logic of freeing up trade faster, the Republic embarked upon a sustained campaign to negotiate bilateral and trilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) with its major trading partners following the collapse of the WTO's Seattle round in 1999. As a result, Singapore has signed FTAs with New Zealand, Australia, Japan, the US, India, Jordan, South Korea and Panama. This demonstration effect had spurred Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia to contemplate their own bilateral FTAs with major trading powers as well. (Dent 2006) Currently, an ASEAN-China FTA is on the cards, in tandem with a Singapore-China FTA. The aim of competitive liberalization is to generate a web of overlapping free trade precedents that could build a global momentum towards speeding up the WTO process. There are also numerous subtle examples of Singaporean diplomatic

mediation involved in assisting the UN in governing peacekeeping missions in East Timor, Kosovo and Central Africa. In this way, Singapore transcends its geographical destiny by enhancing its global brand as a “good international citizen”, albeit not one without envy from its regional neighbors.

Conclusion

Reflected through the soft power concept, the category of small states emerges as both political expediency and a strategic advantage. As the earlier literature survey reveals, the determinism of equating small with irretrievable vulnerability cannot remain a given in understanding the circumstances of vulnerable states in international politics. The status of geographical pygmy tends to be relative, rather than absolute. The UNITAR and Commonwealth studies have called ample attention to these characteristics. Furthermore, as various scholars have argued, the quality of vulnerability associated with smallness has ironically offered states identified as such a base of moral rectitude and a posture as a Cassandra warning international society of the decline of standards of diplomatic civility. Due to entrenched perceptions of vulnerability, the voice of the weak carries a disproportionate informational weight as a barometer on normative issues in international relations. Indeed recent research by Matthias Maass (2003) argues that the fortunes of small states are directly correlated to the waxing and waning of the international system’s pacific potential in various periods of modern history.

One can therefore contemplate soft power, or symbolic power, as a means of virtual enlargement of small states’ foreign policy reach and presence. If one examines the bases of soft power, it becomes evident that small states can utilize their successful developmental experiences to promote national political economy potential. This of course requires that a Sierra Leone, a Fiji or a Cuba ought to progress to the status of Panama or Singapore in order to attract investors and trading networks to their locations. The ability of Panama or Singapore to promote itself as a model of good governance is closely related to economic provenance, but less easily achieved. Panama has clearly yet to demonstrate sustained peaceful and constitutional power transitions. Singapore appears to have earned this reputation for political stability through the performative strengths of its domestic corporatist structures, and the fact that its aid program trades on this very reputation in enlarging its symbolic importance to much of Asia. The Vatican City State offers a contrasting notion of good governance derived from religiously-informed ethics applied through expressive powers in the media and theatre of papal diplomacy. Spreading models of good governance is a delicate foreign policy maneuver that is always subject to challenge and dissent from the rest of international society as both the Vatican and Singapore have found out. Yet it cannot be denied that the very intangibility of the demonstration effect of examples of good government has enlarged the international presence of both small states immeasurably. There is a hidden compliment in the criticisms leveled by legal scholars against the Vatican for being a religion masquerading as a state. Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Communist Poland and China reacted to papal diplomacy with varying degrees of dread and resistance because of this ideational threat. Conversely, Singapore gets politicized as a propaganda target of convenience in regional politics because of its very economic prosperity and defiance of adversity through corporatist formulas.

Finally, small states appear adept in exercising soft power through diplomatic mediation, albeit through somewhat unconventional logics, and even so, inconsistently. Witness Panamanian foreign

policy's projection of its domestic search for national autonomy into a combative anti-American vilification campaign in the 1964 Flag Riot controversy and the prestige it obtained from the consequent handover of the Panama Canal after 1978. Subsequently, the political economy potential of 'Panama Incorporated' depended on a level of financial comity with the US. On its part, the Vatican controversially adopted silent neutrality among the belligerents in World War Two in order to preserve a climate of minimal civility that allowed it to save lives or moderate fascist and Allied behavior. Nonetheless, during much of the Cold War covering John Paul II's papacy, the mediatory role was sacrificed in favor of promoting a religiously-motivated view of good government. Singapore too adapted diplomatic mediation to constrain hard power in relation to ASEAN and the UN, but adopted also more conventional mediatory approaches to tackle non-traditional and transnational security threats like pollution and trade protectionism. In sum, and in spite of all its vagaries and pitfalls, "small state soft power" ought to be regarded as a relevant subject for appraising the foreign policy prowess of small states if only because it allows the latter the capacity for virtual enlargement through discourse.

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