

# The Fourth Transformation of Singapore's Industrial Relations ?

*Strategic Choice and Industrial  
Relations other than in America*

# Strategic Choice

- Dunlop, 1958
- Kochan, Katz and McKersie/Capelli (1984-6)
- *The strategic choice approach embodies a general framework for analysis of industrial relations issues, which includes participants' strategic choices, and a three-tier institutional map of industrial relations institutions*
- Informs MIT studies

# Transformation

- The transformation of industrial relations is defined as a change such that what emerges is significantly and morphologically different from what went before, but one that nevertheless contains residual elements of the previous one.
- Do the current changes in Singapore's industrial relations constitute a transformation?

# Earlier Transformations

- **Colonial Administration to 1960**
  - Trade Unions Act 1940
- **Regulated Pluralism to 1968**
  - Winsemius Report, 1960 (IR ACT 1960)
- **Corporatism to 1979**
  - Modernisation Seminar 1969 (E Act 1968)
- **Corporate Paternalism to 1997**
  - NWC Report 1979 (TU Act 1982)

# ‘Manpower Planning’

- ***Strategic Initiative Taken by Political Elites***
- **PAP**

*To respond to globalisation by transforming industrial relations into strategic HRM, called ‘manpower planning’.*

# ‘Manpower Planning’

- ***Strategic Choices Made by Trade Union Leaders***
- ***NTUC***
- *To engage with Ministry of Manpower and Singapore National Employers' Federation to increase workforce mobility and promote lifelong learning.*

# ‘Manpower Planning’

- ***Strategic Choices Made by Employers***
- **SNEF**
- *To engage with MOM and National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) to increase workforce flexibility and mobility.*

# Ministry of Manpower (MOM)

- Mission: *to develop a globally competitive workforce and foster a highly favourable workplace to achieve sustainable economic growth for the well being of Singaporeans*
- Six Strategies →

# MOM's Six Strategies

- (1) the integration of manpower planning
- (2) the development of lifelong learning for lifelong employability
- (3) the augmentation of the talent pool
- (4) the transformation of the work environment
- (5) the development of a vibrant manpower industry
- (6) the redefinition of partnerships
- *Of its 41 recommendations, 33 require MOM to take the lead, and one each the Ministries of Trade and Industry, Finance, Education and Environment but involving the Ministry of Manpower. The lead partners with MOM specifically include the NTUC and the SNEF for strategies (2), (4) and (6).*

# **NTUC's Five Pillars**

- 1. Enhance Employability for Life**
- 2. Strengthen Competitiveness**
- 3. Build Healthy Body, Healthy Mind**
- 4. CareMore**
- 5. Develop a Stronger Labour Movement**

# SNEF Strategies

- Pursue productivity
- Stay competitive
- Win workers
- Create more high value-added jobs
- Cultivate corporate citizenship

# Review

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