

Colonialism, Self-Rule, and the Asian Tigers

Tracing the Drivers Behind 50 Years of Economic Success

Han Sheng Chia

We are Singapore

There was a time when people said

That Singapore wouldn't make it

But we did

There was a time, when troubles seemed too much

For us to take

But we did

We built a nation, strong and free

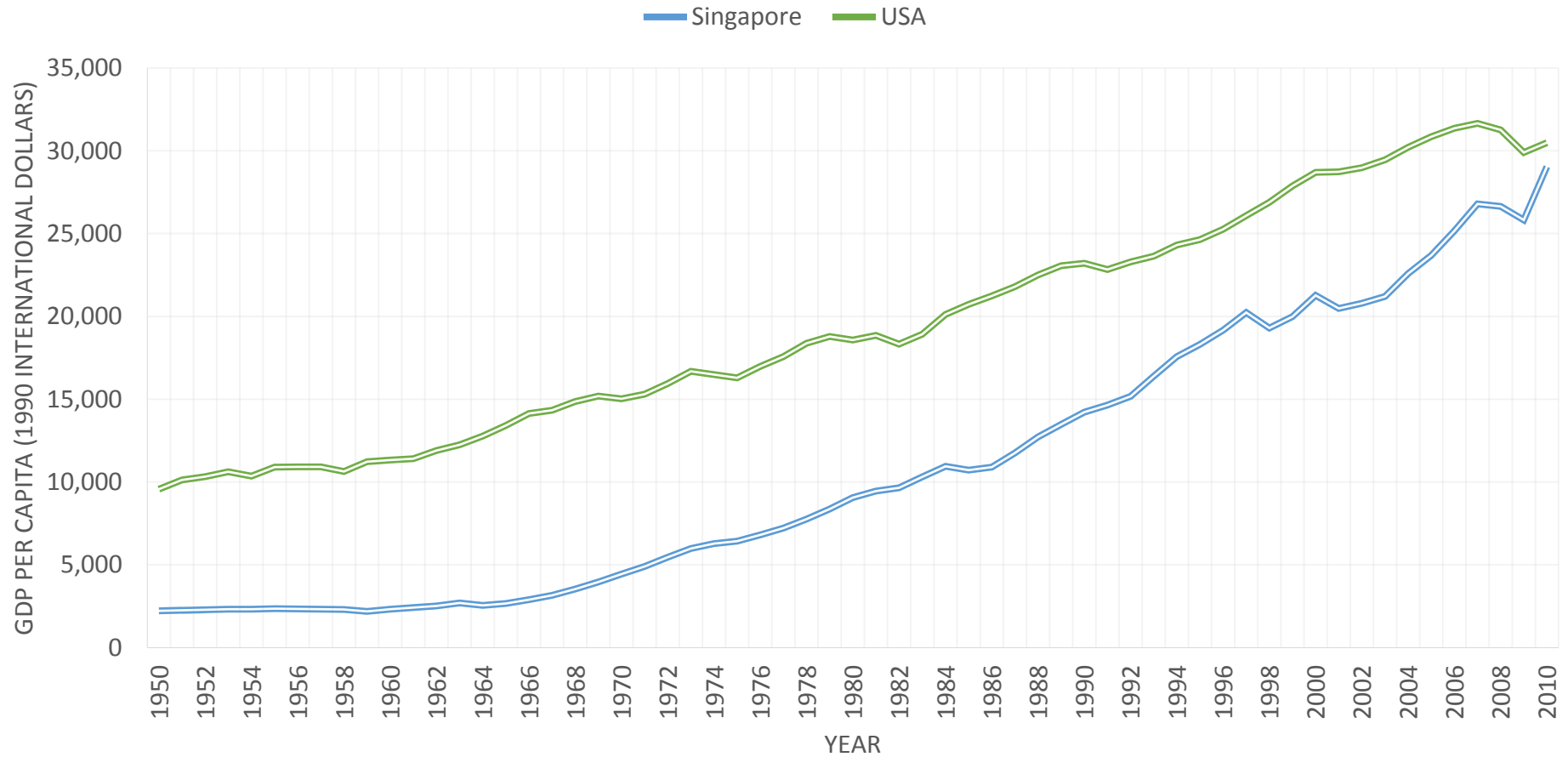
Reaching out together, for peace and harmony





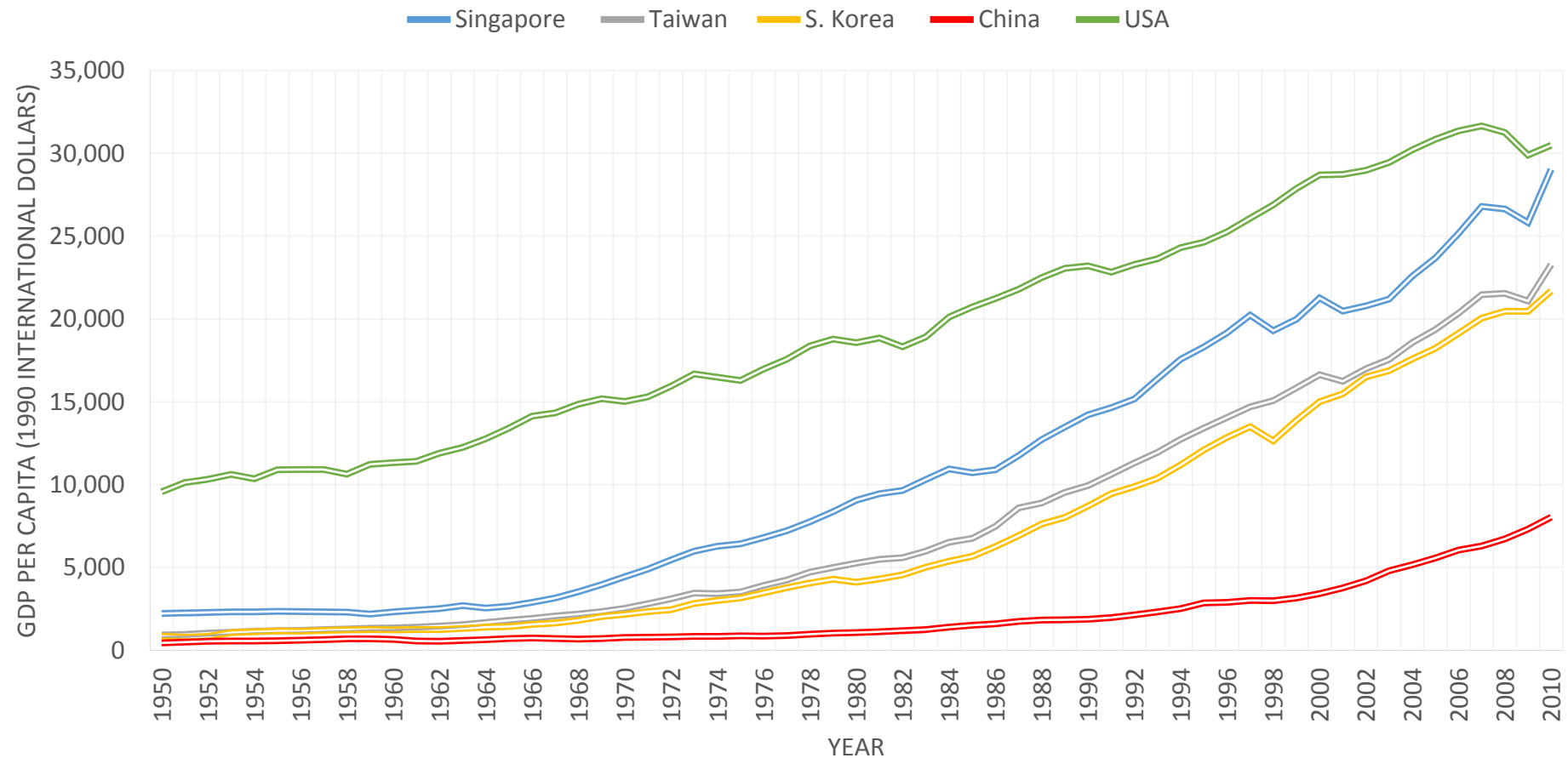
Economic Success

TOP ASIAN PERFORMERS + USA GDP PER CAPITA



Economic Success

TOP ASIAN PERFORMERS + USA GDP PER CAPITA



Research Puzzle

Question 1:

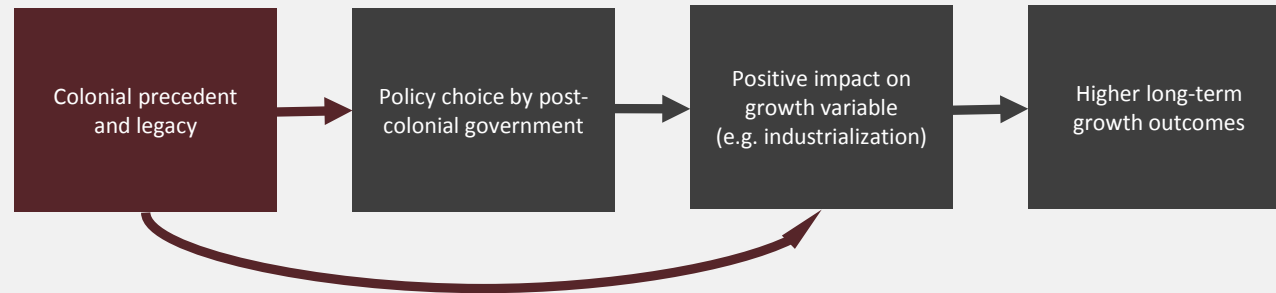
Did colonialism contribute in any way to the Asian Tigers' long-term economic success?

Question 2:

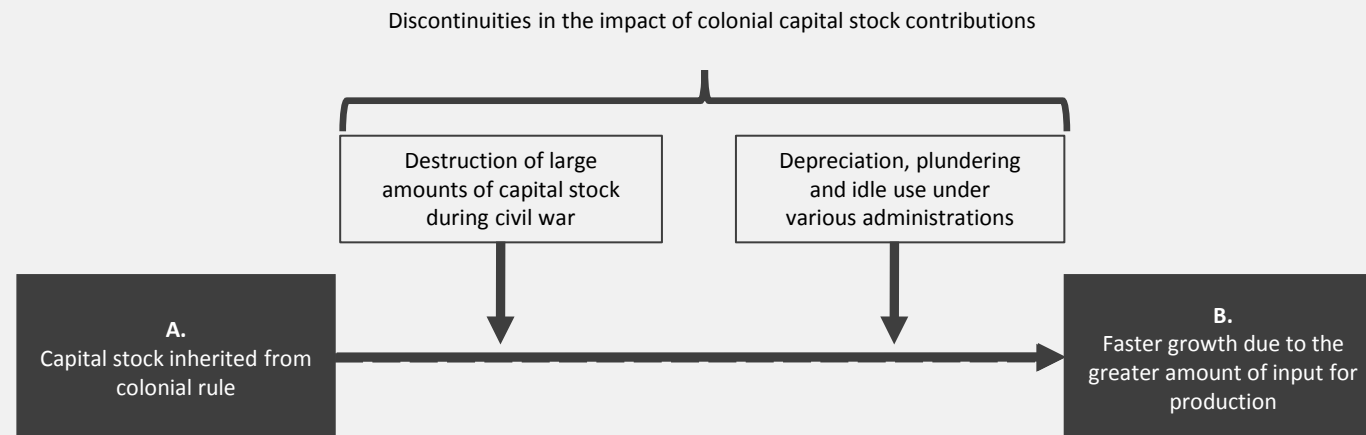
If it did, what was the extent of the contribution relative to that of post-colonial governments?

Theoretical Significance

1 Nationalistic Perspective



2 Snapshot View



Practical Significance

Helps policy makers understand:

- Whether there are colonial prerequisites for achieving the kind of growth seen in the Asian Tigers
- What can be replicated in the post-colonial era

Methodology

Comparative case study

- S.Korea, Taiwan, Singapore

Process trace of three growth variables

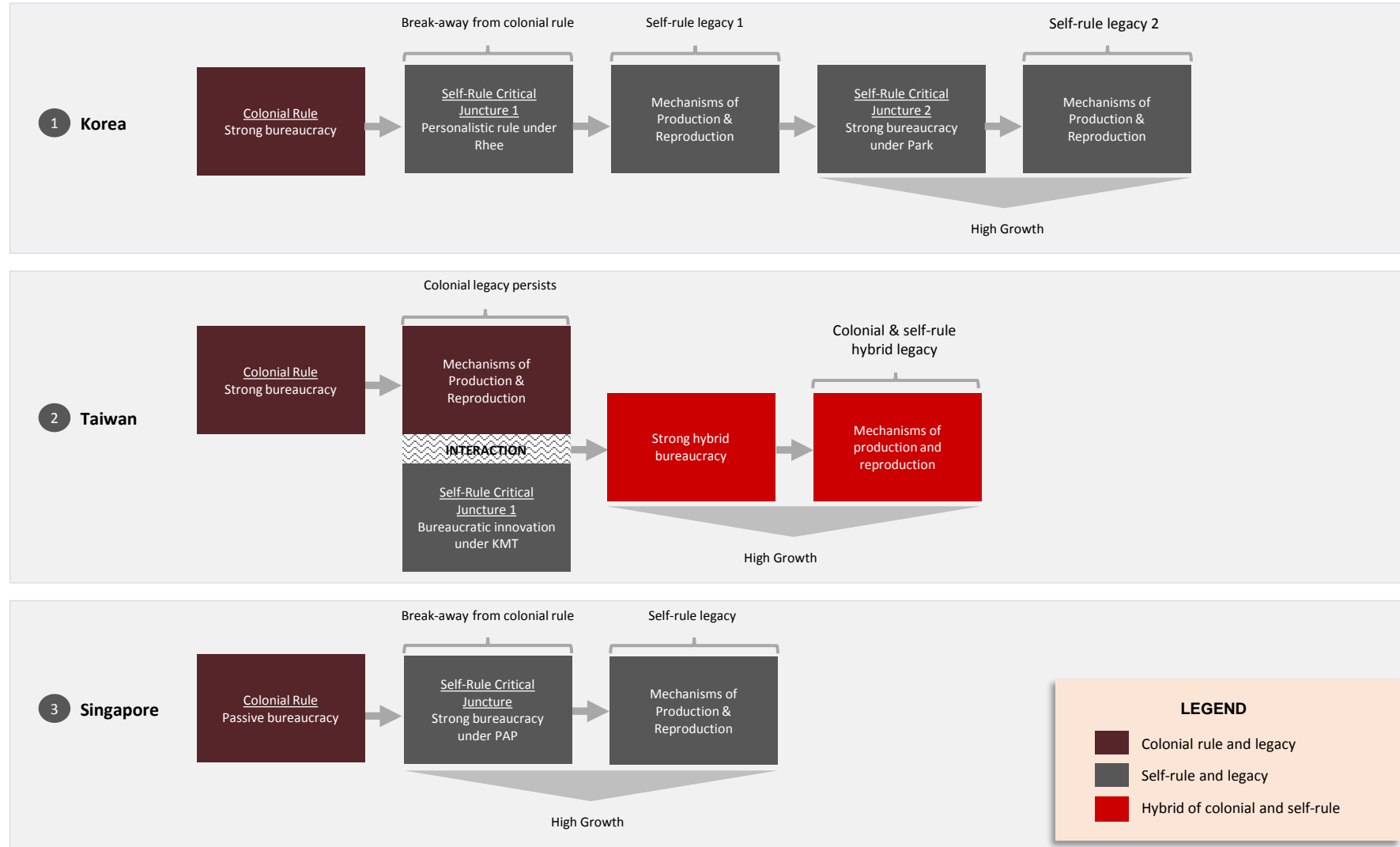
- Strong government bureaucracy
- Government-business relationships
- Export Oriented Industrialization (EOI)



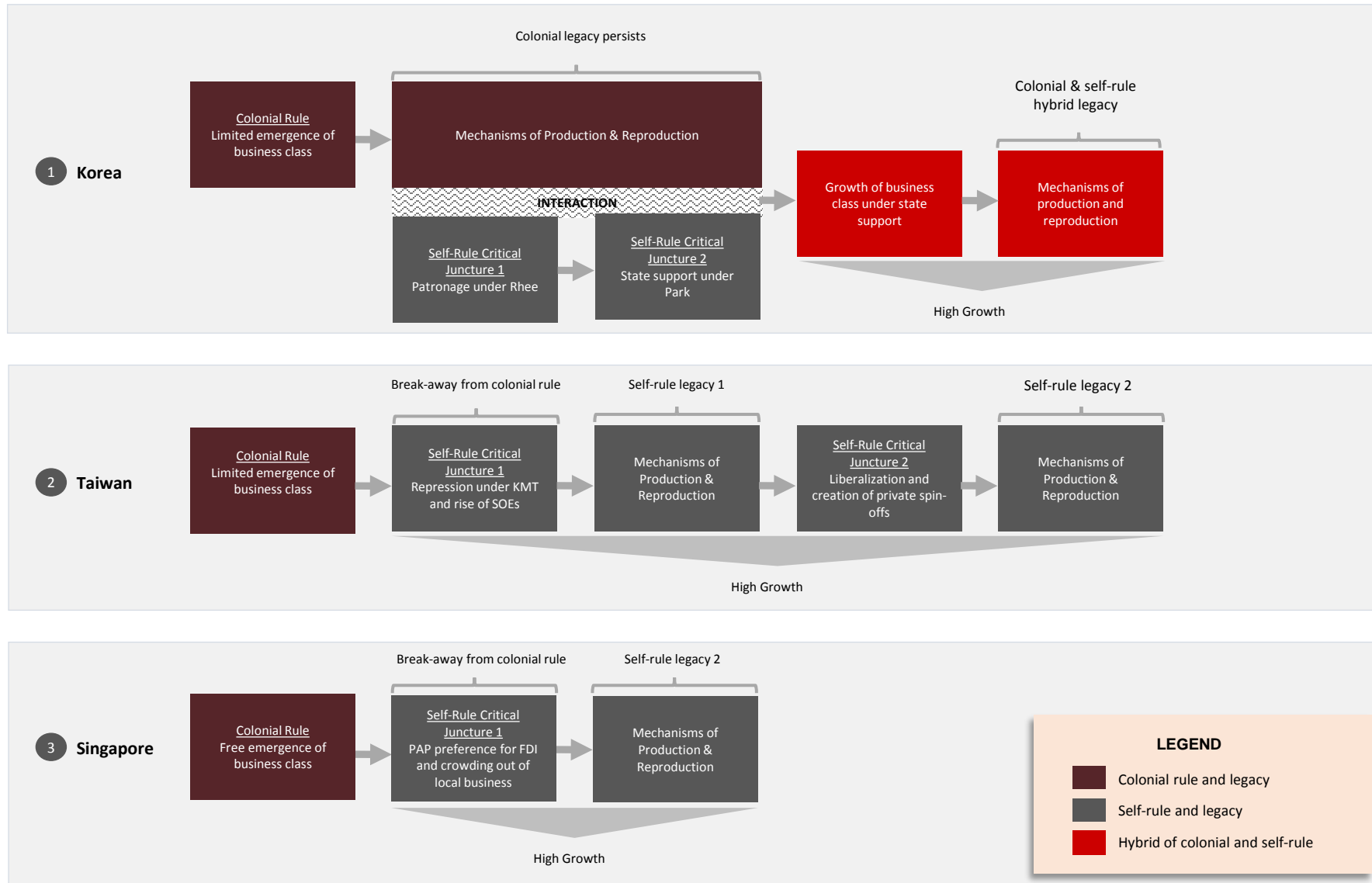
Methodology

Growth Variable	Definition	Method of Assessment
1. Strong government bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State institutions associated with planning economic policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualitative analysis of meritocratic practices, bureaucratic autonomy and civil service strength in directing growth industries
2. Strong business-government relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship between governments and domestic or foreign firms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualitative analysis of relationship such as indigenous business and foreign investment promotion strategies
3. Export Oriented Industrialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EOI is defined as the structural development of a country's economy into one with a high degree of industrial output targeted for exports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amount and type of capital stock utilized by private business or the government• Proportion of GDP generated from industrial activity

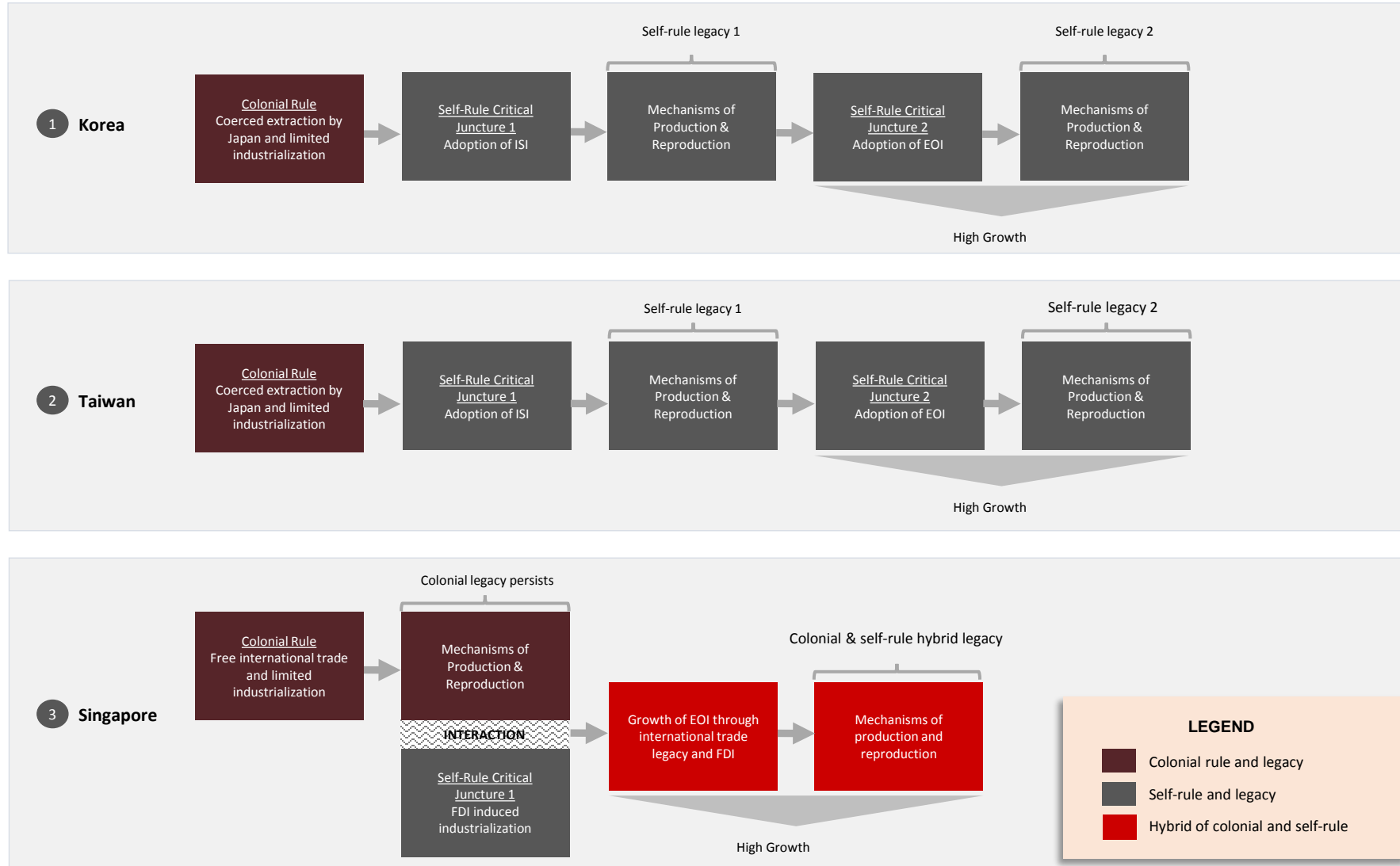
Achieving a strong bureaucracy



Achieving a strong government-business relationship



Achieving export oriented industrialization



Implications



Theoretical

- There are many pathways to becoming a Tiger
- Even the final form of what it means to be a “Tiger” has variations
- Post-colonial regimes have agency to break away from previous path dependency

Practical

- Optimistic for policy makers
- Caveats and caution required

Future Research

Trace more variables

- Education, healthcare, macroeconomic stabilization

Study interaction between variables

- More positive externalities to be discussed