Clã, kongsi e crédito: a economia moral do comércio chinês: resumo

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O equivalente singapurense da ética calvinista de Genebra foi uma economia institucional da confiança, construída por migrantes chineses a partir de famílias, associações dialetais e distritais, templos, irmandades juramentadas e sociedades. A tese de Weber de que os valores confucianos travavam o capitalismo e a afirmação posterior de que os "valores asiáticos" explicavam o crescimento do Leste Asiático explicam ambas menos do que as instituições pelas quais os mercadores chineses partilhavam informações, faziam cumprir obrigações e puniam o inadimplemento. As associações fundadas a partir de 1819 e as sociedades secretas documentadas desde 1820 ofereceram ajuda mútua, arbitragem e ordem privada até que o Estado colonial registrou as sociedades em 1869, criou o Chinese Protectorate em 1877 e as proibiu a partir de 1890. A ética do *xinyong* transformou a reputação em garantia dentro dessas redes. Já as firmas de remessa, 49 em 1887 e cerca de 200 em seu auge, fizeram de Singapura o polo pelo qual migrantes de todo o Sudeste Asiático enviavam dinheiro ao sul da China. A transição gradual da confiança pessoal para a institucional, concluída pelos bancos chineses e pelo Estado regulador moderno, deixou um legado de empresas familiares, relações de longo prazo e canais informais com o qual banqueiros, consultores e compliance officers em Singapura ainda se deparam hoje.

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