

Internationalisation and Development in East Asian higher education: an introduction

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It is important to recognise that comparison is not a method or even an academic technique; rather, it is a discursive strategy... Good comparisons often come from the experience of strangeness and absences. (Benedict Anderson, 2016)

Asia is a geographical, not cultural entity. Nevertheless it has been the symbolic representation of 'East' on the whole to be juxtaposed with the West. Nandy (1998) argues that although many Asians have defined their continent culturally, that definition can be in fact read "as an artefact of Asian reactions to Western colonialism rather than as an autonomous search for larger cultural similarities" (Nandy, 1998: 142). East Asia may then be considered a more meaningful unit of analysis, more than a geographical referent with civilisational commonalities. However, the overgeneralisation of East Asian commonalities - often grouped as 'Confucian' - could also easily trap us in the (self-)Orientalising discourse. The academic practice of Orientalism is found among contemporary East Asian scholars as well, whose analyses actually refer to the Western narratives of East Asia (Kim, 2009b: 869).

Bearing in mind the problématique of such imaginary conceptions of Asia and East Asia, this Special Issue attempts to offer comparative analyses of the internationalisation and development phenomena in East Asian higher education - especially among the countries well known for their economic successes in the twentieth century. Internationalisation and development have been major concepts in both academic and policy work in the field of higher education (Scott, 2000; Enders, 2004; Teichler, 2004; Altbach and Knight, 2007; King, Marginson and Naidoo, 2011; Streitwieser, 2014). However, such concepts have become increasingly political in East Asia (as elsewhere) - along with the intensifying competition for global rankings and reputations (Hazelkorn, 2014; Lo, 2011); while the dominant academic and policy discourses have still been led by scholars from the developed and especially Anglophone world (Jones and de Wit, 2014).

The rise of East Asia has been fast and often explained as either conforming to, or challenging the old belief that the *non*-West would be able to achieve prosperity and stability through western prescriptions. The concepts of the Developmental State (Thompson, 1996; Woo-Cummings, 1999) and Confucian capitalism (Vogel, 1979) have been employed to explicate relations of the high level of educational attainment of the populace and the success of strong government-led economic development in East Asia (first in Japan and whose path was followed by South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and now China (Kim, 2009b; Tai, 1989; Berger, 1986). Contemporaneously the rise of China as the largest economy in the world² is transforming the global order - as presciently argued by

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² China surpassed the United States as the world's largest economy in 2014 – as measured by purchasing power – according to the International Monetary Fund.

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Martin Jacques (2009)'s book, *When China rules the world*. In the expanded and updated edition published in 2012, he illustrates China will not become more Western and how its impact will be as much political and cultural as economic, changing the world as we know it.

The pattern of internationalisation and the speed of development in East Asian higher education can also fit in this broad framework of understanding. Jessop (2016) in this volume examines the shifting roles of higher education and research in East Asian states in the reorientation of developmental states moving from export-oriented, investment-led growth to knowledge-intensive, investment-led growth, in some cases, reflecting a global trend towards 'financialisation'.

There have been also strategic efforts – in both political and academic interests to conceptualise East Asia by drawing boundaries of 'Greater China' and 'Chineseness' - as analysed and discussed in Lo (2016)'s paper in this volume. Marginson (2011) argues that the rise of the Confucian model should be recognised as a distinctive model of higher education in some respects more effective than systems in North America, the English-speaking world and Europe.

However, it is important to note that the ideational framework of reference that has shaped higher education systems in East Asia is also from the West - more specifically from the conventions and rules established in Europe and North America. For instance, in the case of Japan where the modern higher education system developed under the country's own initiatives (Nakayama, 1989; Yonezawa, Horta and Osawa, 2016), the Japanese idea of the university was articulated with the epistemological support of the German concept of *Staatwissenschaft* ('the study of the State'). The German impact on Japan was evident in the development of Imperial Universities in Japan. (Kim, 2001 70-71; Kim, 2007: 43). Overall there was a deliberate effort to reshape aspirations for 'modernities' in East Asia, led by Japan then, by importing the European Enlightenments and notions of science.

As well known, Japan was the earliest adopter and follower of Western ideas of modernity, and its paths to modernisation created an insider/outsider position in the geopolitics of East Asia a century ago. The ambivalent modernist position of Japan in Asia developed a unique Japanese *Weltanschauungen* (world views) with a particular ethno-nationalist comparative gaze as illuminated by Meiji intellectuals who have been early exposed to western civilisation and knowledge - e.g. Okakura Tenshin, Taguchi Ukichi, Fukuzawa Yukichi. They contributed to defining Japan's unique position and its international relations – especially Japan's imperialistic endeavours in Asia as the first industrialised country in the non-Western world.

However, the concept of 'Asia' as mentioned earlier can be problematic as it is neither a cultural, religious or linguistic unity, nor a unified world. "The principle of its [Asian] identity lies outside itself, in relation to (an) Other" (Ching, 1998: 70), and this is encapsulated in Fukuzawa Yukichi's proposal of "*Datsu-A Ron*" (□亞論: Escape from Asia Theory)" in 1885, which has shaped the unique Japanese positionality and its inter-state relations in East Asia. As a nationalistic political theory, *Datsu-A Ron* meant to enable Japan to resist European imperialism in the nineteenth century. In the binary division between West and East (Asia), Fukuzawa's *Datsu-A Ron* rationalised that Japan should "leave Asia" and join the group of

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European colonisers as practically the whole Asia was either colonised already, or in danger of becoming subjugated then. (Korhonen, 2014).

The concept of 'Asia' among the Meiji scholars in Japan then was both a geographic and 'Euro-centric' civilisational term based on what was written as an imagery of Asia by European thinkers - e.g. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's race theory, Kant, or Weber (ibid). In *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (1895), Fukuzawa's reference to "the East" or "Asia" were partial, mainly drawing on China and Confucianism. There were only limited references to other counties of Asia (such as Korea, India, and the Ottoman Empire). For Fukuzawa, the concepts of the East and the West were closely entwined with his interpretation of civilisation in the European Enlightenment tradition of reason, independence and freedom. In this analogy Confucianism was considered as a major attribute to absolutism in Japan during the Tokugawa period. By associating the West with civilisation and the East with stagnation, Fukuzawa thought that Japanese people's mentality needed urgent change. In *An Encouragement of Learning* (1895), he encouraged the Japanese people to rid themselves of Chinese influences and actively promoted Westernisation through education as essential for Japan to maintain its sovereignty and remain independent from foreign control (Howland, 2002; Rachel, 2011).

Overall, Japan's position and its self-proclaimed role in East Asia a century ago is certainly different from that of China in contemporary East Asia - as marked by the re-emergence of China or 'Greater China' (combining China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao, and Chinese overseas) as a global power in the twenty-first century world political economy. (For the detailed analysis of 'Greater China', see Lo (2015)'s article in this volume).

In the early phase of state-led modernisation and internationalisation in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, Japan sought to emulate Germany and other major Western powers, but soon Japan itself became a distinctive model of international academic mobility and transnational indigenisation of knowledge. Its scale and process were coordinated and controlled by strong nationalist agendas and the emphasis was on practical knowledge (Kim, 2009a).

The Japanese colonial states in Korea and Taiwan then provided an *indirect* channel to Western knowledge for Koreans and Taiwanese (Kim, 2001). The Japanese colonial government sent able Korean students to Japan and not to Western countries. In Korea, it was the private education sector – especially Christian private institutions such as Yonsei and Ewha - that opened a direct path to Western knowledge for Koreans (including women for the first time) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the other hand, in Japan, it was the government that sent students and scholars with specific missions to the Western world to study various political and economic systems and directly absorb scientific knowledge needed for modernisation. Many of the elite private higher education institutions in Japan (e.g. Keio, Doshisha and Waseda universities) were founded mainly by the innovative national leaders of the nineteenth century, i.e., the Japanese samurai elites who had early experienced the Western education system (Kim, 2001: 64-72; 85-89).

In the early period of the Meiji reformation, American and European academics were appointed to the professorial posts at major Japanese universities - even at Tokyo Imperial University until about the early 1890s. However, the open policy of foreign academic staffing ceased, with the strong emphasis on Japanese nationalism at the turn of the last century.

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Tetsujiro Inoue, the first holder of the new German-style professorial chair in Philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University from 1890 affirms the situation:

We had many foreigners as teachers at Tokyo University in the early years of Meiji, in order to make up the deficiency in Japanese professors. In principle, however, professors at Japanese universities should all be Japanese. Accordingly, we managed to dismiss the foreign instructors relatively quickly from the Faculties of Medicine, Law, and Science so that there was not one of them left. That was the policy throughout the university... The Japanese university is a place where Japanese perform the professorial tasks – it is very different from a colonial university. (Excerpted from Tetsujiro Inoue, 1943, *Kaikyuroku (Reminiscences)*; translated by Hall; Re-quoted from Hall, 1998: 102; Kim, 2009a: 392).

125 years later, the Japanese government-led development of higher education strategies have become the opposite – i.e. by increasing the number of foreign academic staff and students and international collaborations. The *Nikkei Asian Review* provides the summary report on the Japanese government's rationale behind its 'Super Global University Project'.

If the selected 37 universities meet their goals, half of their teaching staff would come from abroad and a fifth of their classes would be taught in English - as announced by the Education Minister Hakubun Shimomura. The ambitious target was made after comparison to benchmark world-class universities – quoting 30% in the case of Harvard and 40% of teaching staff in Cambridge are international whereas in Japan, the figure averaged just 4% in 2012 (*Nikkei Asian Review*, September 27, 2014).

Contemporaneously all three Northeast Asian countries (China, Japan and Korea) have promulgated specific policies to recruit academic talents from abroad, increase international research collaborations, internationalise their higher education systems and enhance their rankings in the world university league tables: e.g. 1,000 talents scheme in China, 2008; the World Class University (WCU) project in Korea, 2008; and the Super Global University programme in Japan, 2015.³

However, apart from the surface similarities in the globalised policy world (Phillips and Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi and Waldow, 2012), there is something specific about East Asian higher education, which demarcates East Asia from the rest. That is, the internationalisation and development of East Asian higher education has been much attributed to *outbound* academic mobility and *selective* engagement with useful knowledge transfer since the Meiji period (Kim, 2009a).

³ On the other hand, Internationalisation is hardly new to the Hong Kong education system. Hong Kong has long attracted many overseas faculty members – e.g. as many as 45 per cent of the academic staff in the University of Hong Kong were recruited from overseas (Fok, 2007: 187-188).

In the case of Taiwan, 'Excellence Initiative' was launched in 2005 to improve international rankings - through infrastructure investment, employment of outstanding faculty from overseas and participation in international academic collaboration. The Education Innovation Plan announced in 2011 was to establish strong working relationships with distinguished international universities, and increase the numbers of international students which is significant and rising. However, there is still no foreign university presence in Taiwan at present (Hou, 2016).

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In this volume, Yonezawa, Horta and Osawa (2016) investigate the role of international mobility in the formation and development of East and Southeast Asian academics in STEM fields. They discuss the multiple and heterogeneous identities of the academic profession in East and Southeast Asia and the implications for the development of a regional identity for the profession in East Asia. Contemporaneously China is now the biggest exporter of students to the US, and business studies has been the most popular subject among the Chinese students studying abroad (IIE; WSJ, Nov. 21, 2014). South Korea is the third leading country sending students to the United States, after China and India, despite having a population that is less than 1/20th of those countries (IIE, Open Doors Data Fact Sheets by Country: 2014).

Academic networks established early through colonisation and diplomatic relations a century ago tend to continue to shape the patterns of academic mobility in East Asia (Yonezawa, Horta and Osawa, 2016). In fact, the patterns of academic mobility and knowledge transfer, translation and transformation (Cowen, 2009) have become more visible nowadays in the notion of what has been termed as 'policyscapes' (Carney, 2009) and also increasingly competitive as further instigated by international rankings. Carney (2009; 2011) used the concept "Policyscapes" - deriving from Appadurai's conceptual apparatus of "scapes" - especially "ideoscapes" composed of elements of the Enlightenment worldview - in order to explore the spread of policy ideas and pedagogical practices across different national education systems. Moon (2016)'s article in this volume also draws on Appadurai's notion of "scapes" as both imaginative and material worlds to examine the 'disjunctured' ways in which 'ethnoscapes' (global flows of students) and 'ideoscapes' (globally legitimated ideas of valorising diversity) are apprehended and accommodated by actors at both the meso- and micro-levels in the context of South Korea.

Regardless of the pattern of outbound academic mobility and the active importation of western academic capitalism (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004; Münch 2014), academic habitus in Northeast Asia, however, has been not so much internationalised but framed by ethno-nationalist culture - almost exclusive in the case of Japan and Korea (Hall, 1998; Ching, 1998; Kim, 2005; Kim, 2011). Such ethno-national cultural traits remain very strong in Japan and Korea contemporaneously - as vividly illuminated and critiqued in three articles in this volume: by Poole (2016) on bureaucratic impediments to internationalisation policy in Japan; Stephanie Kim (2016) on the experience of international academics in Korea underneath the façade of internationalisation of HE policies; and Moon (2016) on the instrumental approach to internationalisation without cultural diversity in Korean academe.

Overall, this Special Issue offers critical insights and analyses of the contemporary boundaries and meanings of internationalisation and development in East Asian higher education. To understand further how they fit into larger, indeed, longer patterns, it would be important to attend to the *longue durée* historical forces and politics that have defined the boundaries and meanings - which has also shaped the 'comparative gaze of East Asia' in both senses of the term.

Notes on Contributor

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