Transnational higher education, authoritarianism, and the governance of 'academic freedom': the case of Singapore’s Global Schoolhouse

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Qatar Education City: Virginia Commonwealth University; Cornell University; Texas A&M University; Carnegie Mellon University; Georgetown University; Northwestern University
The Globalization of Education Services: “Modes of Provision”

- **Mode 1**: Cross-Border Supply (e.g., on-line distance education)

- **Mode 2**: Consumption Abroad of Education Services (e.g., students traveling to another country to study).

- **Mode 3**: Commercial Presence (e.g., establishing a foreign campus)

- **Mode 4**: Presence of Natural Persons (e.g., faculty teaching in another country)
Constructing Knowledge Spaces in the Asia-Pacific

Experimentation

- Site of regulatory experimentation:
  - Mode of Provision 3: Commercial Presence (e.g., establishing a foreign campus)

- Site of institutional experimentation (incl., institutional mobility):
  - Public >> Australian & European unis
  - Private >> American unis

DUKE-NUS COLLABORATION (14 APRIL 2005)
Opening up territory to **build capacity**...
...to brand...
The Globalization of HE Services and Academic Freedom: New Formations?

1. In which ways, if any, is the principle of academic freedom being stretched across space and governed in the development process?

2. What are the spill-over effects, if any, in local academic contexts when an authoritarian regime is governing?
The Origins of Academic Freedom
The German Influence

- **Lehrfreiheit**: academics should be free to conduct research on any topic and publish or speak about their findings without fear of reproach from both church and state. This freedom also applies to the teaching process.
- **Lernfreiheit**: minimal administrative coercions such that students should be free to determine their own course of studies.
- **Freiheit der Wissenschaft**: academic self-government with respect to internal university affairs.

(Metzger, 1955)
Johns Hopkins (1876) Univ. of Chicago (1890)

- Thorstein Veblen’s “The Higher Learning in America” (1906)
- Dewey & Lovejoy (founded the AAUP in 1915)
"Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe that the Great State University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found." (Taken from a report of the Board of Regents in 1894.)

Memorial, Class of 1910.
American Association of University Professors (AUPP) 1940 Statement

- The freedom to inquire, discover, publish, teach, and even participate in political activities, is linked to the notion that academics, students, and academic institutions are also supposed to be free from the undesired control and authority of government, business, and the church.

- In addition, ‘duties correlative with rights’...

- Academic Freedom
  - Institutionalized
  - Inscribed
  - Performed
  - But variation
Academic Freedom: institutionalized, inscribed, performed, but variation

“The essential functions of a university are the pursuit, creation and dissemination of knowledge through Research and other scholarly and creative activities, and by Teaching. Academic Freedom is essential to these functions and ensures the right of Members to teach, investigate and speculate, and/or to create or perform works of art, without deference to prescribed doctrine.” (University of Western Ontario)
Emergent Spaces in Singapore *circa* 1998-2008
Importing and Exporting HE Services in the Asia-Pacific (OECD, 2004)

Table 4.7. An Asia-Pacific regional typology of cross-border education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Developed exporter nations with strong domestic capacity and minor role as importers</th>
<th>2. Developed nations with a strong domestic capacity but also active as importers</th>
<th>3. Developed or intermediate nations with inadequate domestic capacity, active in both import and export</th>
<th>4. Intermediate nations with inadequate domestic capacity globally active as importers only</th>
<th>5. Undeveloped nations, with low domestic participation and relatively weak demand for education imports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia, New Zealand (Taiwan)</td>
<td>Japan, Korea (Taiwan)</td>
<td>Singapore, Hong Kong (Taiwan) (Malaysia, India)</td>
<td>China, Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan (Malaysia, India) (Bangladesh, Fiji)</td>
<td>Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, small island nations (Bangladesh, Fiji)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trade focus. English-language education creates market potential as exporters

Language base limits exporter function, though Japan is a large exporter. Non-trade objectives dominate policy approach

Major markets for provider nations. Import and export is mostly English-language education. Mixture of trade and other policies. Focus on building knowledge economy

Major markets for provider nations, especially English-language education. Policy dilemmas: import or build domestic capacity?

Note: Intermediate cases are indicated in brackets.
Figure II.7. South, East and South-East Asia: top 10 recipients of FDI inflows, 2005-2006
(Billions of dollars)

Source: UNCTAD, FDI/TNC database (www.unctad.org/fdistatistics) and annex table B.1.

*a Ranked on the basis of the magnitude of FDI inflows in 2006.
Figure II.9. South, East and South-East Asia: top 10 sources of FDI outflows, 2005-2006
(Billions of dollars)

Source: UNCTAD, FDI/TNC database (www.unctad.org/fdistatistics) and annex table B.1.
* Ranked by magnitude of FDI outflows in 2006.
### Figure 1: Stylized Stages of Singapore’s Economic Development and National Innovation System Changes

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Development</strong></td>
<td>Beginning of DFI-Driven, Export-led Industrialization</td>
<td>Transition to NIE</td>
<td>Transition from NIE to Developed Economy</td>
<td>Transition to Knowledge-based Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Innovation System</strong></td>
<td>Primary focus on developing Operative Capability to manage Production</td>
<td>Primary focus on developing Adaptive Capability to support Process Technological Deepening</td>
<td>Primary focus on developing Innovative Capability to support applied R&amp;D</td>
<td>Primary focus on developing Intellectual Capital Creation and Commercialization/Entrepreneurial Capability to support Knowledge-based economic growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Wong Poh Kam, National University of Singapore)
Diversifying Economies and Constructing Global Souls in Singapore

![Graph showing economic growth in Singapore from 1995 to 2005. The graph compares total economy, financial services, and manufacturing sectors.]
Industry 21

**VIBRANT**
Dynamic, brimming with activities
Continuously growing through creation and upgrading of industries

**ROBUST**
Resilient in fast changing environment
Sustained competitiveness through core capabilities not easily duplicable elsewhere

**GLOBAL HUB**
Key node of the network
global economy with leading competency, tapping international partners for markets/talents/resources/technologies

**KNOWLEDGE-DRIVEN INDUSTRIES**
Industries with strong emphasis on technology/innovation/capabilities

*Singapore as a vibrant and robust global hub of knowledge-driven industries*
WCUs (Branding):
1,000 undergrads, 2,000 postgrads

NUS, NTU & SMU (Bedrock):
50,000 undergrads, 20,000 postgrads *

Additional Universities
(Diversity; focus on teaching & applied research):
60,000 undergrads, 12,500 postgrads **

* The figures represent organic growth. Currently, NUS, NTU and SMU enrol approximately 37,000 undergraduates and 15,000 postgraduates.

** These would be new students. Of the total, an estimated 50,000 would be international students (40,000 undergrads, 10,000 postgrads).
Singaporean State «» Foreign Universities (1998 - present)

- Johns Hopkins University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- University of Pennsylvania
- INSEAD
- University of Chicago
- Technische Universiteit Eindhoven
- Technische Universität München
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Stanford University
- Cornell University
- Duke University
- Karolinska Institutet
- University of New South Wales (RIP, 2007)
- ESSEC
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Warwick University (abort)
- IIM Bangalore
- SP Jain
- NYU (Law and Film)
- Queen Margaret University
Does it matter? Yes...

- Always, but...
- Linked to periodic controversies
- Reactions shaped by mode of provision:
  - **Mode 1**: Cross-Border Supply (e.g., on-line distance education)
  - **Mode 2**: Consumption Abroad of Education Services (e.g., students traveling to another country to study).
  - **Mode 3**: Commercial Presence (e.g., establishing a foreign campus)
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In which ways, if any, is the principle of academic freedom being stretched across space and governed in the development process?

- Principles of AF are verbally expressed by foreign universities
- Singaporean state engages with administrative entrepreneurs (bilateral basis) to forge consensus

- Governance options:
  - Words: verbal agreements with senior ministers
  - Texts: government-university Memorandum of Understandings & Agreements
  - Targets: via invited discipline...

- Knowledge inequities...
INSEAD’s verbal agreement

“There are three specific areas that we have to be careful about. First, we cannot get involved in any activity that stimulates racial or religious tensions. If we do so, we are going to get immediately cracked up. Second...Singapore has two big Muslim countries as neighbors and we have to be careful, we cannot start insulting Muslims, etc. And third, they basically said that if we get ourselves involved in local politics, we better get our bags packed.... We as faculty said that we have no problems with the first two areas because we are not in the business of creating racial or religious tensions, and we are not in the business of insulting countries. Local politics, we are not interested in it, because Singapore is far too small for our interests. So it was like yes, we can live with it.”
Cornell’s Contractual Agreement

“The principles of non-discrimination and academic freedom are clearly spelled out in the contract. As mentioned earlier, oversight is through the two committees to the Deans of the respective institutions. If an issue cannot be resolved, there is a provision for resolution through international arbitration. New York State law will apply in all legal proceedings… Cornell’s counsel’s office has engaged in due diligence with MIT, Carnegie-Mellon, and Duke to assess their satisfaction with Nanyang. All information received was positive.”
UNSW’s spatial approach

- “International students studying in the notoriously strict nation would be guaranteed freedom of speech and association on campus, but once outside, they would be subject to Singaporean laws.
- Professor Ingleson: ‘But there are rules and regulations that are tighter than here [in Sydney] and in the public space you have to be aware of those,’ he said.”
What are the spill-over effects, if any, in local academic contexts?

- ‘Academic freedom and social responsibility’ (24 Nov. 1966)
Governing foreigners and locals in a “global education hub”

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN SINGAPORE

A CONFIDENTIAL REPORT PREPARED FOR
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
(SINGAPORE FEASIBILITY STUDY)

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Consultation Paper, September 2005
University of Warwick
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The long arm of the Singapore Medical Council (2002-2007)
Of academic freedom in a globalizing era

What is the role of the university, as a now global actor, in supporting the core principle of academic freedom:

- Leadership: universities have a “special, indeed indispensable, role to play in this effort:
  - Intra...
  - To develop and articulate best practices and core principles...

[John Sexton, NYU]
‘Uni used Singapore laws to stop FOI bid’ *(Sydney Morning Herald, 29 Aug. 2007)*

“THE University of NSW has used the secrecy laws [Official Secrets Act of Singapore] of an authoritarian foreign regime to justify its decision not to release documents under freedom-of-information laws”
Scaling up, shedding light?