Workshop Reports No. 2

Asian Universities in New Times

The HEAD Foundation

Workshop Report Series No. 2

Asian Universities in New Times

The HEAD Foundation

ISBN 978-981-09-6643-0

Table of Contents

S. GOPINATHAN

Introduction

In this second publication of the *Workshop Report Series* produced by The HEAD Foundation, we look more specifically at higher education, especially in the context of Asia in new times. Four leading experts in this field, Prof. Matthew Hartley, Prof. N. V. Varghese, Dr. Molly Lee and Mr. Alan Ruby, who convened at The Foundation in May 2015, share their views on this timely issue in their articles compiled here.

One may be led to believe that innovations such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are sounding the death knell of the university as a key institution of society which we have known for centuries. More likely, however, it is that the old metaphor of the university as an ivory tower is no longer appropriate. As characterised by Prof. Hartley, the university needs to be reconceived as a "bridge" – a place where expertise from universities, the government, think tanks, businesses, and other communities come together to grapple with common challenges.

It is in Asia that the expansion of the higher education sector is the greatest of all regions of the world. While the private sector is growing, it plays a vital yet ambivalent role, replete with challenges. The private sector is most able to meet the demands for expansion, but issues of quality assurance and affordability remain the prime concerns, as Prof. Varghese points out in his article.

Rather than to regard the story and development of Asian universities as essentially that of a transfer of Western institutions, the reality today is perhaps one of hybridity. In her article, Dr. Lee provides a history

of universities in Asia, and shares about ongoing research on their hybrid identities.

Ultimately, as Mr. Ruby reminds us in his article, "Universities are conservative in the sense that they create, protect, and transmit knowledge across generations."

The Foundation will build upon the insights of the experts in researching the challenges that Asian universities face in serving their societies. We should continue to find new ways for universities to realise their time-honoured mission for the betterment of society.

Prof. S. Gopinathan
Senior Advisor
The HEAD Foundation
Series Editor

Biographies of Presenters

PROF. J. MATTHEW HARTLEY

Executive Director, Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD) at Penn GSE; Professor of Education, University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education

Prof. Matthew Hartley's research focuses on academic governance, especially on how academic communities define their educational purposes. He serves on the editorial boards of *Educational Researcher*, *The Review of Higher Education*, and the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*. He earned his Master's and Doctoral degrees from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education.

DR. MOLLY N. N. LEE

Former Coordinator, Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID); Programme Specialist in Higher Education, UNESCO Asia and the Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok

Recently retired, Dr. Molly N. N. Lee was also a Professor of Education at Universiti Sains Malaysia. Dr. Lee has a Master's degree and PhD from Stanford University, and a Master's in Education Planning and Development from University of London, Institute of Education. Her research interests include higher education, science education, teacher education, globalisation and education, and gender and education.

MR. ALAN RUBY

Former Deputy Secretary of Employment, Education and Youth Affairs, Australia; Senior Fellow, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education

Mr. Alan Ruby has a 40-year career in government, business, philanthropy, and education ranging from being a classroom teacher to being the Australian Deputy Secretary of education and the Chair of the OECD education committee. At the University of Pennsylvania, Mr. Ruby is a Senior Scholar in the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy. He focuses on globalisation's effects on universities and education around the world. He earned the School's Excellence in Teaching Award in 2006.

PROF. N. V. VARGHESE

Director, Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE), National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi, India

Prof. N. V. Varghese was Head of Governance and Management in Education and Head of Training and Education Programmes at the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP UNESCO), Paris, France. Prior to that, he was Professor and Head of the Educational Planning Unit at NUEPA, where he was closely associated with educational planning at the federal and decentralised levels and with the design and development of externally funded education projects in India. He was also the Secretary General and responsible for the Secretariat of the International Working Group on Education (IWGE), which is a network of funding agencies in education. He has directed several research projects, and has published more than 20 books and research reports and nearly 150 research papers and articles in areas related to educational planning, financing, and higher education.

J. MATTHEW HARTLEY

Creating Responsive Universities and Preparing Leaders to Guide Them

Introduction

Higher education institutions are key societal institutions. Universities prepare our future leaders in politics, business, and law. They can contribute to the development of an enlightened citizenry – fostering social cohesion and the rule of law (Hartley & Huddleston, 2010).

In many countries, expanding access to higher education is an essential strategy for advancing a knowledge-based economy. Universities in many parts of the world partner with industries to create academic programmes that prepare students for the workplace of tomorrow, and instil the critical thinking and problem-solving skills that will prepare students for jobs that do not yet exist. In many localities, universities serve as "anchor institutions", offering employment to many and serving as a source of educational opportunity and cultural life.

Despite their importance, colleges and universities are operating in an increasingly uncertain and turbulent environment. A report (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2003) describing the European context a little more than a decade ago concluded:

> Almost without exception OECD governments have recently been reforming, reviewing or restructuring their higher education systems…. It is now well understood that universities and other higher education institutions need to adapt to a more complex environment in which expectations of higher education have changed beyond recognition. (p. 61)

If anything, the imperative to adapt in order to serve the needs of society has grown since that statement was written. The world is experiencing unprecedented economic changes, mass migration of peoples often spurred by political unrest, and the reshaping of our social lives and business processes due to technology. More is being asked of higher education in many places (including the US) at a time when state investment is declining.

There is also an important ideological debate occurring in the US, Europe, and elsewhere about the fundamental purpose of higher education. Should it exist to serve narrow economic needs? Or is there a larger civic and social purpose? The key questions I would like to address in this essay are the following: How do we establish responsive universities, ones that serve the purposes our societies define for them? And how do we ensure we have people who are prepared to lead these key societal institutions?

More is being asked of higher education in many places... at a time when state investment is declining.

Many systems of higher education are faced with a delicate balancing act. This includes finding the right balance between adequate oversight and institutional autonomy – ensuring institutions are serving their students (and society) while also giving institutions adequate freedom to innovate and respond to a changing world.

Also, the market is shaping higher education in many countries. Student demand influences the kinds of academic programmes institutions offer and the numbers of faculty required to meet those needs. Market demands, however, can also have a distorting effect. Institutions that merely "give the customer what he/she wants" are likely to find themselves making decisions less on their areas of unique strength (and therefore competitive advantage) and more on pursuing an ill-fated strategy of trying to be all things to all people.

These complexities underscore the imperative to prepare academic leaders who can guide their institutions in these challenging and changing times.

Autonomy

Many countries are seeking to create systems of higher education that are responsive and innovative.

The old model of the university as an ivory tower has been upended.

The European Commission and a number of European governments have recognised the value of institutional autonomy as a means of promoting innovation and research (Estermann & Nokkala, 2009).

The old model of the university as an ivory tower – a place where scholars remove themselves from the influences of the world to pursue "pure" scholarship in monastic solitude – has been upended. A more appropriate metaphor might be the university as a bridge – a place where expertise from universities, the government, think tanks, businesses, and communities come together to grapple with pressing common problems. It has also become clear that central control by the state is ill-suited to promote flexible and adaptable institutions. A key policy many countries have implemented is increased institutional autonomy.

There are different aspects of autonomy and the European University Association's (EUA) Lisbon Declaration (2007, pp. 2–7) points to four key dimensions:

- Organisational: How do structures, governing bodies, and policies and procedures influence decision making? Who has the final say in key decisions?
- Financial: How are funds allocated? Is there flexibility in how resources are allocated? Can institutions set their own tuition rates? Can they accumulate a surplus or borrow money to launch new initiatives?
- Staffing: Who recruits staff? Who sets the terms of employment, including salaries?
- Academic: Who designs academic programmes? Who sets the curriculum? Who oversees the quality of academic programmes?

It is important to note that autonomy is not synonymous with academic freedom. A centralised system may allow individual faculties to pursue their research interests freely. The two concepts, however, are closely connected. Academic autonomy includes the ability to shape admissions guidelines (who should be taught) and the freedom to create new academic programmes (what should be taught). Personnel-matters autonomy enables institutions to decide who should teach (faculty hiring). Finally, budgetary autonomy gives institutions the freedom to deploy funds in ways that allow them to realise their educational mission and to redeploy those

funds when new opportunities arise (Fielden, 2008).

There continues to be an ongoing debate about how much autonomy institutions should have. Different countries have policy and legal frameworks that influence autonomy in these areas (EUA, 2007). An analysis conducted by John Fielden (2008) from the World Bank in 2008 of policies in the Netherlands, UK, Denmark, Canada, Malaysia, and Pakistan shows quite disparate stances towards autonomy. All six nations had academic tenure, gave institutions the right to select textbooks, and allowed faculty to set research priorities – activities we typically associate with academic freedom. In many other areas (e.g., setting admissions guidelines, selecting students, introduction of new courses, setting graduation standards, setting the institutional budget), however, institutions in the Netherlands, UK, Canada, and Pakistan enjoyed a great deal of autonomy while Denmark and Malaysia had far less.

Kazakhstan is a particularly interesting example of a country that has made a clear decision to move towards a system with greater institutional autonomy. Prior to 2010, its Ministry of Education and Science controlled 60 per cent of the undergraduate curriculum. Today, institutions have control over 70 per cent of the curriculum (Hartley, Gopaul, Sagintayeva & Apergenova, 2014). The Republic established a new model university, Nazarbayev University, in 2010 and developed a legal framework providing full autonomy to the institution along with a governing board. This same system of autonomy will be rolled out to a group of 10 universities in the fall of 2015.

Implementing policies that allow for autonomy, however, is only a starting point. In my research in Kazakhstan, I have visited 25 universities in seven cities and interviewed members of boards of trustees, rectors, vice-rectors, faculty leaders, and students in order to understand how people are making sense of these reforms. While legal changes are important, what also needs to change are the norms and values (i.e., the culture) that shape institutional behaviour. The basic worldview of people who embrace a centralised approach differ markedly from those in an autonomous system (see Table 1). Autonomy has to be learnt and this can be a challenging process for leaders who need to guide their institutions towards a new system.

Table 1. Cultural norms supporting different systems of governance (Hartley, Gopaul, Sagintayeva & Apergenova, 2014).

Centralisation	Decentralisation (local control)
The Ministry should provide oversight	Boards of Trustees who understand the local context should provide oversight
Institutions should document compliance to regulations as a means of demonstrating quality (attestation)	Quality should be established through periodic review of progress towards goals (accreditation)
Standardisation across the system is fair	Flexibility allows institutions to be responsive to their unique contexts
Strategy should be set at the centre by the Ministry	Strategy should be set by institutions
The Ministry should engage in line-item budgetary control	Institutions should stay within budgetary parameters but should decide how resources are allocated
The Ministry is responsible for the higher education system	Institutions are responsible for their activities
Legitimacy through compliance	Legitimacy through a proven track record

Upholding the Public Purpose of Higher Education

A second significant issue facing higher-education concerns questions about the core purpose of our colleges and universities. The public purpose of higher education has been a matter of great debate in the US and Europe (Hartley & Huddleston, 2010). One driver of this trend is due to shifts in how higher education is financed. In the US, students and their families have been asked to bear a larger share of the financial burden. As individuals have paid more for higher education and as competition for students has increased, the concept of "student-as-customer" has arisen. Higher education has gone from being seen largely as a public good (i.e., something that a country should invest in for the benefit of everyone) to a private good (i.e., a personal investment people make to further their own earning power). Simply put, higher education is being

defined in narrow economic terms – a ticket to a good job (Bloom, Hartley & Rosovsky, 2006).

There has, however, also been a rather remarkable counter-trend aimed at reclaiming the historic public and civic purpose of colleges and universities (Hartley, 2009; Hartley, Saltmarsh & Clayton, 2010). The aims of this movement have been to define the work of universities not only as places that prepare graduates for jobs, but also as institutions responsible for encouraging lives as engaged citizens.

There has been a dramatic expansion in the use of service learning – incorporating community-based activities into academic courses. Rather than simply reading about social challenges in a sociology course, a student might work in a team with a community-based organisation on a particular issue in the community, thereby linking theory and practice. This movement has also caused shifts in how scholarship is defined. Rather than only using peer-reviewed publications and grants as markers of faculty-member productivity, many institutions are valuing other ways that faculty members use their expertise in the service of the communities and regions.

The growth of these activities is nothing short of remarkable. Campus Compact is one of the largest associations in the US promoting civic engagement activities. In 1991, Campus Compact had 235 institutional members. A survey of those institutions found that only 16 per cent of students were involved in service activities (nearly all of it episodic volunteer activities like cleaning a park or serving food at a soup kitchen). Only 15 per cent of institutions had offices supporting this work. Perhaps most revealing is the fact that 59 per cent of members characterised the involvement of their faculty as "little" or "not at all".

...a student might work in a team with a community-based organisation on a particular issue in the community, thereby linking theory and practice.

Today, Campus Compact has more than 1,100 institutional members, nearly a quarter of all colleges and universities in the US. These institutional members report that a third of students participate in service and service-learning courses annually; 95 per cent have an office or centre coordinating these activities; 64 per cent of institutions take activities, such as teaching service-learning or engaging in

community-based research, into promotion and tenure decisions; and 90 per cent of institutional strategic plans mention civic responsibility as a core institutional purpose (Hartley, 2011).

This movement did not happen by accident. It was fuelled by numerous new networks and associations that supported these changes: networks of college and university presidents (e.g., Campus Compact), and networks that support different kinds of universities (e.g., the American Democracy Project, Project Pericles, The Research University Civic Engagement Network). At the institutional level, it required the leadership of presidents and provosts who not only understood the value of civic engagement as an ideal, but who were also adept at leading institution-wide conversations about its importance and who knew how to effectively work through the governance process to alter policies, procedures, and programmes in order to institutionalise change.

Creating a New Cadre of Effective Institutional Leaders

Creating responsive universities that are innovative, responsive to the needs of regional economies, and also committed to strengthening the civic life of their regions require developing leaders who can take on this important and difficult work.

A particular challenge in the US is the "greying" of the institutional presidencies. The American Council on Education (ACE) conducted a survey of college and university presidents in 1986. At that time, only 13.9 per cent of presidents were 61 years of age or older. In 2006 (the most recent survey), the percentage in that age group had grown to nearly half (49.3 per cent). Presidents younger than 51 constituted only 8.1 per cent of the total population, compared with 41.6 per cent in 1986. In sum, during the next 5 to 10 years, we will witness a dramatic turnover in institutional presidencies (ACE, 2007).

Despite the need for seasoned and effective leadership, the institutional investment in leadership development is inadequate. The ACE survey (2007) found that only at doctoral-granting universities did a majority of institutions (58 per cent) have some sort of leadership development programme; while only 38 per cent of Master's granting institutions and only 28 per cent of Baccalaureate programmes had such programmes. The bottom line is that, overall, the vast majority

of institutions offer no formal leadership development programmes at all. In fact, most systems around the world depend on presidents or rectors to learn on the job. It is an open question whether this system will be adequate to address the complexities of the times.

Another challenge in the leadership pipeline is convincing individuals to pursue a presidency. Most presidents come up through the ranks as faculty member, chair of a department, dean, senior academic officer, and finally president. A survey of chief academic officers (CAOs), however, found that only one in five went on to become president (Eckel, Cook & King, 2009). The principal reason is that they do not want the job. Two-thirds felt the nature of the work was unappealing. A quarter indicated that they were concerned about the "time demands of the position" and a similar proportion did not want to "live in a fishbowl" – the focus of constant scrutiny by others.

The fact is that CAOs who are responsible for academic matters often do very little of the work of presidents, such as working closely with the board leadership on developing long-term strategy, and working collaboratively with donors and others who want to support the institution's mission. In short, they do not have a clear understanding of what the presidency job entails.

A whole series of reforms are needed in order to strengthen the senior leadership pipeline in order to prepare our future academic leaders. This includes:

- Restructuring the CAO position so that individuals in these jobs share in the work of the president and develop a clearer understanding of that position.
- Creating opportunities to cultivate management talent at all levels. Chairs of departments and deans need to be encouraged (and rewarded for) identifying people who are able to step up and take on important tasks, such as curriculum reform, technology initiatives, and so forth. Leadership needs to be cultivated as an organisational quality, and norms and values that encourage innovation and support risk-taking are vitally important for advancing this work. Some institutions are experimenting with programmes that allow promising junior colleagues to "try" administrative positions for a time.
- Helping academic staff members understand the business model

under which they operate, and to understand the larger issues facing the institution. An annual "state of the university" address is insufficient. Although faculty members are at times criticised for opposing change championed by senior administrators, it is often the case that they are not given sufficient background information about the larger financial situation or the status of the market to understand why the decision is being proposed. Faculty members need to be partners in change and, as such, they need access to data.

- More information will not help if people do not have a clear idea of what they are collectively trying to achieve. Leaders must engage in dialogues about the core purpose of their institution and what needs – local, regional, and national – they aim to address.

Conclusion

Creating opportunities for people to lead in new areas, creating institutions where a clear understanding of the larger strategic issues facing the institution are understood by all, and establishing a clear and compelling sense of mission are the key drivers for establishing responsive universities and leaders who can ensure they achieve their potential.

References

American Council on Education (ACE). (2007). *The American college president: 2007 edition*. Washington, DC: Author.

Bloom, D., Hartley, M., & Rosovsky, H. (2006). Beyond private gain: The public benefits of higher education. In P. G. Altbach & J. Forrest (Eds.), *International handbook of higher education* (pp. 293–308). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Eckel, P., Cook, B., & King, J. (2009). *The CAO census: A national profile of chief academic officers*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Estermann, T., & Nokkala, T. (2009). *University autonomy in Europe I: Exploratory study*. Brussels, Belgium: European University Association.

European University Association (EUA). (2007). *The EUA Lisbon Declaration – Europe's universities beyond 2010: Diversity with a common purpose*. Bussels, Belgium: Author.

Fielden, J. (2008). Global trends in university governance. *Education Working Paper Series, 9*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Hartley, M. (2009). Reclaiming the democratic purpose of American higher education: Tracing the trajectory of the Civic Engagement Movement. *Learning and Teaching, 2*(3), 11–30.

Hartley, M. (2011). Idealism and compromise and the civic engagement movement. In J. Saltmarsh & M. Hartley (Eds.), *To serve a larger purpose: Engagement for democracy and the transformation of higher education* (pp. 27–48). Philadelphia, PA: Temple Univerisity Press.

Hartley, M., Gopaul, B., Sagintayeva, A., & Apergenova, R. (2014). *Learning autonomy*. White paper prepared for the Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan.

Hartley, M., & Huddleston, T. (2010). *School-community-university partnerships for a sustainable democracy: Education for democratic citizenship in Europe and the United States of America*. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe Publishing.

Hartley, M., Saltmarsh, J., & Clayton, P. (2010). Is the civic engagement movement changing higher education? *British Journal of Educational Studies, 58*(4), 391–406.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2003). *Education policy analysis*. Paris, France: Author.

N. V. VARGHESE

Private Higher Education in Asia*

Introduction

Higher education enrolment increased globally from 100 million in 2000 to 195.6 million in 2012 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics [UIS], 2014). The addition to enrolment in the Asian region was higher than that in other regions. In 2010, for example, Asian countries (East Asia, the Pacific, and South and West Asia) accounted for 41.9 per cent of the global enrolment, and their share increased to 46.6 per cent in 2012. In fact, the Asian region accounted for 60 per cent of the increase in global enrolment.

The success of the Education For All programmes, spearheaded by UNESCO, and the emergence of the knowledge economy are, no doubt, important reasons behind the fast expansion of the sector. The universalisation of primary education and expansion of secondary education put pressure on the higher education sector to expand. Similarly, the transition towards knowledge economies implied a shift in employment prospects from the manufacturing sector to the service sector and an increase in the qualification levels of employees beyond post-secondary levels of education. This, too, put tremendous pressure on the post-secondary sector to expand.

Public institutions did not have sufficient places to accommodate students demanding a post-secondary level of education. Often, the various

*This article is based on a forthcoming paper by the author titled "Reshaping higher education in Asia: The role of the private sector" that will be published in the *Working Paper Series* by The HEAD Foundation.

kinds of skills demanded in the labour market were not closely aligned to the courses offered in the universities, nor did they require a long-term study programme leading to a degree. This promoted an expanded and diversified system of higher education, especially private higher education. The increased income levels of the households and the emergence of the middle class as a majority facilitated market-friendly reforms in all sectors including higher education. The market-friendly reforms in higher education are manifested through privatisation of public institutions and the promotion of private higher education institutions (PHEIs).

This article deals with issues related to private higher education: the privatisation of public institutions and private higher education, and some aspects of private higher education, namely, quality, equity, and financing. The final section highlights some challenges for the future development of higher education in Asia.

Privatisation and the Private Sector in Higher Education in Asia

Private higher education appears mainly in two forms: (a) measures to privatise public institutions, and (b) promotion of PHEIs. Privatisation implies applying market principles to the operation of public institutions of higher education while the ownership and management of the institutions remain with the public authorities. The cost recovery measures, cost-sharing initiatives, and income generating activities in public universities are manifestations of privatisation efforts.

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a steady shift towards privatisation of public institutions in many Asian countries. In Cambodia, the government introduced fees in 1996; while Laos introduced fees to the national universities in 2011; in Thailand, the Autonomous University Act of Thailand permitted universities to mobilise their own resources in the 1990s (Suwantragul, 2009); and in Vietnam, institutions were given full control of their own budgets from 2005 onwards. In Indonesia, public universities became legal entities in 1999, empowering them to introduce cost-recovery measures (Susanto & Nizam, 2009), while Singapore introduced corporatisation to the universities in 2006, and the Universities Act in Malaysia was revised in 1995 to corporatise universities and to adopt corporate practices in public

universities (Lee, 1998, 1999, 2004). All public universities in Japan are corporatised (Mok, 2007), and the Chinese government was a relative newcomer in legislating the establishment of private universities in 2002 (Li & Yang, 2013).

The private sector implies the non-state sector in higher education. The institutions are owned and operated by private individuals or agencies. In most cases, this sector does not receive funding from the government and does not rely on state funding for its growth and expansion in any case, although it might receive partial public funding support in some countries at times (Varghese, 2001).

When PHEIs do receive financial support from the government, such as in countries like India, however, they operate like public institutions managed by private individuals and agents, and can be universities or non-university institutions offering professional training courses. Private universities offer courses leading to a degree, while non-university institutions offer courses leading to a certificate or a diploma.

Across Asia, more than 35 per cent of higher education students enrol in the private sector...

Across Asia, more than 35 per cent of higher education students enrol in the private sector, and almost 60 per cent of the region's higher education institutions are private. Government promotion of private providers in higher education and the growth of private higher education are much more significant in Asia than in other regions of the world (Levy, 2010).

From the 1990s, many countries in Asia, which hitherto had only public institutions, started establishing PHEIs. Some countries such as Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea had a strong tradition of private higher education where a majority of students were admitted to private institutions, and enrolment levels were rising in private universities. In 2010, nearly four-fifths of the students in South Korea and Japan, nearly three-fifths of the students in Indonesia, and two-thirds of the students in the Philippines were enrolled in PHEIs.

Many countries introduced new laws to establish private institutions. Private universities were not permitted in Cambodia until the law was amended in 1997 and the first private

university (Norton University) was established in 1997 (Chealy, 2006), while the Laotian Prime Minister's decree legalised private universities in 1995. In Malaysia, the Act of 1996 legalised private universities; in Thailand, the Private Higher Education Act was amended in 2003, legalising private providers and PHEIs; and Vietnam legalised private universities in 2005. The only country in this area where the private sector has not entered is Myanmar.

Characteristics of Private Higher Education in Asia

Types of PHEIs

There are different types of PHEIs, traditionally classified as elite, religious, and demand-absorbing (Levy, 2006). A more recent and modified typology by Levy has been conceived in terms of the following categories – elite and semi-elite, religious and cultural, and non-elite and demand-absorbing (Bjarnason et al., 2009).

The non-elite and demand-absorbing PHEIs are the largest and fastest growing segment of private higher education in Asia in recent times. Many of them are in the non-university sector and help expand access to higher education. The study programmes are vocational in nature and the durations of the courses are short. These institutions, the fastest-growing segment of PHEIs in Southeast Asia, levy relatively low level of fees and attract students from lower-middle-class families.

The quality of PHEIs is always a question mark in many countries in Asia.

Religiously affiliated PHEIs are common in many Asian countries, especially in Indonesia (many are linked to the Islamic faith), the Philippines (most are related to the Christian churches), and Thailand (some are associated with Buddhism). Most of the PHEIs in Japan, South Korea, Cambodia, and Vietnam, on the other hand, are not religious-oriented or owned by religious groups.

Some PHEIs in Asia are established by ethnic groups, since public universities do not extend sufficient access to them. Ethnic communities in Indonesia and Malaysia, among others, establish their own PHEIs and also extend financial support to their community members to pursue their education (Asian Development Bank, 2012).

Most PHEIs are self-financing, relying on student fees as the major source of income. Some are for-profit while others are non-profit. In the case of

for-profit institutions, profits rather than education is the main objective, thus earning them the label of "pseudo universities" since they treat education as a business (Altbach, 2005, p. 23). It is also true that many PHEIs maintain a formal non-profit legal status while functioning like for-profit entities.

At times, PHEIs provide an easy route for the entry of cross-border institutions. In some cases, the domestic PHEIs are affiliated with a foreign institution. Globally, foreign universities are establishing their branch campuses overseas. In countries such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Qatar, and the UAE, branch campuses of many foreign universities, mostly from Australia, the UK, and the US, have been established. Malaysia has branch campuses of universities including Nottingham University from the UK, and Monash University and Curtin University from Australia; Singapore has branch campuses of the University of Chicago and INSEAD, among others; and many Asian and African countries have branch campuses of Bond University and Monash University of Australia.

Quality and relevance of education provided in PHEIs

One of the perceived advantages of PHEIs is that they offer quality programmes and relevant courses to prepare their graduates for jobs. Empirical evidence, however, shows that this is not always the case.

The quality of PHEIs is always a question mark in many countries in Asia. Many PHEIs try to minimise costs to increase profit or to survive in the market. The strategies followed by many PHEIs include increasing student enrolment without adequate investment in infrastructure and teachers. In some instances, PHEIs are operating in very bad physical conditions (including operating from garages and from primary and secondary school compounds). They very often employ part-time teachers and, at times, borrow teachers from public universities (Welch, 2011).

Quality assurance and accreditation policies in most countries in Asia cover private institutions. In Cambodia, the Accreditation Committee assesses and accredits all higher education institutions, while in Indonesia the Accreditation Board accredits each programme. In Malaysia, quality assurance has three levels: programme accreditation, institutional audit, and self-accreditation. In the Philippines, however, accreditation is optional for PHEIs. Unfortunately,

the fast-expanding sector and the demand-absorbing non-university higher education segment is not always covered by the accreditation processes.

Unemployment among PHEI graduates is high in Asia, such as in Indonesia and the Philippines. Surveys among the employers indicate that the unemployment of PHEI graduates is primarily due to poor skill levels. A World Bank study (Postiglione, 2011) noted that of the 250,000 students that graduate in Thailand every year, many of them remain unemployed, and nearly 80 per cent of Thai firms experienced difficulty in filling job vacancies due to the mismatch between skills needed by the firms and the skills produced by PHEIs.

Equity concerns and private higher education

An expansion of the system, in general, is accompanied by an overall decline in the inequality of access to higher education. Empirical studies (Arum, Gamoran & Shavit, 2007) have shown that expansion does not reduce class inequalities until the advantaged groups reach a point of saturation. According to the maximally maintained inequality (MMI) hypothesis, saturation is defined as "the point at which nearly all sons and daughters of advantaged origins attain the educational level under consideration" (p. 3). Therefore, in the absence of intervention policies, an expansion of the system in an unequal society need not lead to a reduction in inequalities.

When inequality of access to PHEIs in an expanding system is increasing, the expansion benefits the rich; when it is stable, the expansion benefits the poor as well as the rich (Shavit, Arum & Gamoran, 2007); and when it is declining, it is inclusive and allows access to higher education to a larger proportion of students from lower social strata. In the Asian countries which have universalised higher education, inequalities of access to PHEIs are reducing for all sections of society.

The private sector has a dual role in its relation to inequality of access. Since financial capacity determines admission, an expansion of the system through PHEIs may increase inequality. While many students whose grades are poor are financially able to get into higher education because many PHEIs relax their admission criteria, the poor are deprived of access even when they have obtained higher grades for their scholastic performance. The inequalities of access to PHEIs and

...one group that benefits... from higher education expansion, with or without any affirmative action, is women.

success in higher education also have implications for the labour market.

Another issue related to inequalities of access is when the privileged take advantage of public funding and subsidies meant for the less privileged. In addition, as the number of admissions increase, the system has to expand causing subsidies to be reduced and cost-recovery measures to be introduced, thereby taxing the less privileged more. Furthermore, it should be noted that while massification of higher education is publicly funded in the developed world, it is increasingly funded through cost-recovery measures and limited state financing in the developing world.

Empirical evidence (UIS, 2012) shows that the one group that benefits – often more than other groups – from higher education expansion, with or without any affirmative action, is women. For example, the gender parity index (GPI) in higher education in 2010 exceeded 1.0 globally and in most regions, except for the Arab States, South and South West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa.

Financing and private higher education

Cost recovery accounted for a low share of expenditure on higher education in most of the Asian countries until student fees increased in the 1990s (World Bank, 1994). Some countries in the region had student loan schemes, which were introduced on a large scale as a mechanism to recover cost. The student loan scheme helped the students to pay high fees in the public institutions (privatisation) and ensured the expansion of PHEIs. These countries include the Philippines, which has a student loan scheme (Kitaev, Nadurata, Resurrection & Bernal, 2003), and Malaysia and Indonesia, which have student loan schemes for students in both public and private institutions. One of the few examples where a majority of loan scholarships is distributed to secondary school students (minors) is Thailand; this raises ethical issues on the desirability of young children being made debtors.

The cost-recovery measures and the expansion of private higher education reduce pressure on the government to invest in higher education. Banks and governments nowadays are supporting private institutions through

student loans. In some countries during the East Asian crisis, the government extended student support programmes to ensure the continuation of students in private institutions, to pay fees, and to ensure the financial survival of these institutions (Varghese, 2001).

Conclusion: The Challenges Ahead

Higher education has been expanding globally at a fast pace. The share of the Asian region to this expansion is higher than other regions. In 2010, the Asian region accounted for nearly 47 per cent of the total global enrolment and 60 per cent of the increase in global enrolment between 2004 and 2010. This expansion is impressive but also brings many challenges along with it.

The paper shows that the expansion is due to privatisation measures adopted by the public institutions and due to the growth and expansion of PHEIs.

The expansion taking place in Asian countries does not rely entirely on public funding. The privatisation measures in the public universities and private universities reduce the pressure on the governments to fund higher education. While this may be a welcome change, in the absence of targeted interventions to subsidise those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, it may lead to increased inequalities in present and future generations.

Many private universities offer courses in market-friendly subject areas and mostly at the undergraduate, diploma, or certificate levels. In many instances, the private universities operate in poor conditions, such as poor state of infrastructure and less qualified teachers. While there is a need to encourage the private sector, there is a need to regulate them to provide quality education at relatively affordable prices. There is a need for governments to increase investments in higher education, and more importantly to target public subsidies to favour those who need them the most.

The major challenge for most countries will be to manage massification of higher education.

There is a need for added emphasis on increasing enrolments in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) subject areas. In many countries, enrolment in these study programmes is very

low and will have implications for economic development, especially in the technologically oriented and globalised economic situation. A shift in focus to these subject areas requires heavy investment. Unfortunately, many PHEIs are not investing in these areas. In this respect, there is a need to target public investment more closely in these areas which may not be a priority investment for those who look for profits.

The major challenge for most countries will be to manage the massification of higher education. Those countries where higher education is still seen only for the elite are moving towards a stage of massification, and new providers and institutions are coming up. The need for developing a regulatory system is essential to manage massification. The public authorities in these countries need to invest more of their time on regulating the market for higher education. A lack of regulation may lead to a crisis in higher education while an attempt to over-regulate will force the private providers to leave the field.

Therefore, any implementable regulatory measures need to consider a trade-off between what is desirable and what is feasible in a given situation.

References

Altbach, P. G. (2005). The private sector in Asian higher education. In P. G. Altbach & D. Levy (Eds.), *Private higher education: A global revolution*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Arum, R., Gamoran, A., & Shavit, Y. (2007). More inclusion than diversion: Expansion, differentiation, and structure of higher education. In Y. Shavit, R. Arum & A. Gamoran (Eds.), *Stratification in higher education: A comparative study* (pp. 1–38). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Asian Development Bank (ADB). (2012). *Private higher education across Asia: Expanding access, searching for quality*. Manila, The Philippines: Author.

Bjarnason, S., Cheng, K., Fielden, J., Lemaitre, M., Levy, D., & Varghese, N. V. (2009). *A new dynamic: Private higher education*. Paris, France: UNESCO.

Chealy, C. (2006). Cambodia. In *Higher education in South-East Asia* (pp. 13–34). Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO Asia & Pacific Regional Bureau for Education.

Kitaev, I., Nadurata, T., Resurrection, V., & Bernal, F. (2003). *Student loans in Philippines: Lessons from the past*. Paris, France: IIEP UNESCO.

Lee, M. N. N. (1998). Corporatization and privatization of Malaysian higher education. *International Higher Education, 10*, 7–8.

Lee, M. N. N. (1999). Private higher education in Malaysia. Penang, Malaysia: Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Lee, M. N. N. (2004). Global trends, national policies and institutional responses: Restructuring higher education in Malaysia. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 3*(1), 31–46.

Levy, D. C. (2006). The unanticipated explosion: Private higher education's global surge. *Comparative Education Review, 50*(2), 218–240.

Levy, D. C. (2010). *East Asian private higher education: Reality and policy*. Washington, DC: World Bank Flagship Project on East Asia.

Li, M., & Yang, R. (2013). Governance reforms in higher education: A study of institutional autonomy in China. In N. V. Varghese & M. Martin (Eds.), *Governance reforms in higher education: A study of institutional autonomy in Asian countries* (pp. 67–84). Paris, France: IIEP UNESCO.

Mok, K. H. (2007). Questing for internationalization of universities in Asia: Critical reflections. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 11*(3–4), 433–454.

Postiglione, G. (2011). *Asian higher education: Heightening external efficiency*. Manila, The Philippines: Asian Development Bank.

Shavit, Y., Arum, R., & Gamoran, A. (2007). *Stratification in higher education: A comparative study*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Susanto, S., & Nizam, M. (2009). Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia. In N. V. Varghese (Ed.), *Higher education reforms: Institutional restructuring of higher education in Asia* (pp. 53–80). Paris, France: IIEP UNESCO.

Suwantragul, B. (2009). King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand. In N. V. Varghese (Ed.), *Higher education reforms: Institutional restructuring of higher education in Asia* (pp. 133–160). Paris, France: IIEP UNESCO.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2012). *Global education digest 2012: Comparing education statistics across the world*. Montreal, Canada: Author.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2014). *Global education digest 2014: Comparing education statistics across the world*. Montreal, Canada: Author.

Varghese, N. V. (Ed.). (2001). *Impact of the economic crisis on higher education in East Asia: Country experiences*. Paris, France: IIEP UNESCO.

Welch, A. (2011). *Higher education in Southeast Asia: Blurring borders, changing balance*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
World Bank. (1994). *Higher education: The lessons of experience*. Washington, DC: Author.

MOLLY N. N. LEE

Hybrid Universities in East Asia

Introduction

There is no doubt that Asian universities have made tremendous progress in terms of student enrolments, research output, and in the quality of educational programmes. Statistical data from 1999 to 2009 shows that tertiary enrolment rates have increased from 14 to 28 per cent in East Asia and the Pacific, from 19 to 22 per cent in Central Asia, and from 9 to 13 per cent in South and West Asia (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2011).

As higher education systems expand, a need for better regulation arises so as to ensure the provision of quality higher education. Many countries in the region have established quality assurance and accreditation agencies to monitor and assess the quality of educational programmes offered by their universities. A number of the Asian countries have also invested heavily in research and development (R&D), both within and outside universities. It was reported that the economies of East/Southeast Asia and South Asia – including China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan – represented 34 per cent of the global R&D total in 2011, up from 25 per cent in 2001 (National Science Foundation, 2014).

With many Asian nations growing in economic strength, there has been renewed interest in cultural roots. Universities are at the apex of the education system, and in a context of greater globalisation, there is interest in positioning them as national institutions. One question is often raised: Are Asian universities similar or different from those in Western countries?

There are two schools of thought regarding the characteristics of Asian universities. One line of argument is that Asian universities have their roots in the West, and the impact of Western academic models are found in various aspects, including the patterns of institutional governance, the ethos of academic profession, the rhythm of academic life, the procedures of examination and assessment, and university autonomy and academic freedom that are especially prized in Western institutions.

...it is also clear that many Asian countries have adapted the [Western] model to meet local needs and realities.

In the 20th century, it was the US research-intensive university that other countries sought to emulate. Studies have shown that various models have been imported by many Asian countries during the colonial period, as well as by China, Japan, and Thailand, even though these latter three countries were not colonised. The French model was imported by former French colonies such as Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, while Dutch influences are apparent in Indonesia, and the American influence in the Philippines. The British model was adopted by India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong. The German model has had its impact in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Neubauer, Jung & Hawkins, 2013).

Altbach (1989) has asserted that the continuing impact of the West is still very significant throughout Asia, as exhibited in the pervasive and subtle influences of the English language, the idea of the university as a meritocratic organisation, the importance of scientific research, the notion of academic freedom, and institutional autonomy.

The other school of thought argues that while Asian universities may have been based on Western models, it is also clear that many Asian countries have adapted the model to meet local needs and realities. This is particularly the case in countries with strong intellectual traditions such as those with Confucian, Buddhist, Christian, or Islamic traditions.

In the case of the Buddhist tradition, it was reported that in 2006, China, India, Singapore, and Thailand announced a plan in 2006 to revive

the renowned Nalanda University which existed in the northern Indian state of Bihar in the 5th century until it was ransacked and burnt to the ground in 1193 by invaders (Mishra, 2013). The revived Nalanda University will be a global institution focusing on research, pan-Asian integration, sustainable development, and the revival of Oriental languages. The revival of Nalanda University is seen by many as the restoration of the ancient intellectual exchanges between two great civilisations of Asia – India and China.

As for the Islamic tradition, there is Al-Azhar University which was established in Cairo, Egypt in the 10th century. It is one of the first universities in the world and the only one to survive as a modern university that includes secular subjects in the curriculum. Today, it is the chief centre for Arabic literature and Islamic learning in the world. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how the model of Western universities has evolved in the different East Asian contexts that have various strong intellectual traditions.

In addition, the Confucian tradition in higher education dates back to the Han Dynasty, primarily in the form of the civil service examinations in China. The examination system was a mechanism to recruit men of ability and virtue on the basis of merit, rather than on the basis of family or political connections, to be members of the state bureaucracy. These civil examinations also played a central role in the social and intellectual life in traditional China. The civil examination system lasted from AD 650 to 1905 in China, and also spread to neighbouring countries such as Vietnam, Korea, and Japan.

A recent study by Marginson (2011) identified "the Confucian Model" of higher education as evident in East Asia and Singapore. Marginson identified four interrelated features of the model as follows:

1. a strong nation state which steers and controls the development of higher education;
2. high tertiary-participation rates with a large private sector and household funding;
3. high-stakes public examinations; and
4. a strong state support for research.

According to him, the model is not a simple adaptation of the Western university to East Asian realities; but rather, it is an organic hybrid of old and new and of East and West. It has been pointed out that some of

the characteristics of the model are related to Asian values, such as the role played by a strong state presence and centralised governments in pursuing collective well-being (Chan, 2013).

The concept of a "developmental state" was used by Gopinathan (2007) to analyse the various educational reforms that took place in Singapore during the post-independence decades. According to him, a developmental state is one which gains legitimacy through its ability to promote and sustain socioeconomic development, such as in Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong. In these states, the close linkage of economic policy and education policy is very evident. He argued that the East Asian state was a strong and autonomous state, and was able to govern the market and not be subservient to it.

In the case of Singapore, the state was able to make itself relevant to its citizens via its capacity to deliver sustained economic growth and to share the fruits of that growth. The Singapore state was able to formulate education policy both to bring about social cohesion in a multicultural society and to provide the skills needed as industrial modernisation commenced.

The Concept of Hybridisation

The concept of hybridisation is commonly used not only in the natural sciences, but increasingly also in the social sciences, in fields such as cultural, media, and globalisation studies. Hybridisation is defined as "the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices" (Rowe & Schelling, 1991, p. 231). This principle can be extended to structural forms of social organisations, including universities.

The concept of hybridity can also be applied to universities, in particular those that are located in East Asia.

In cultural studies, cultural hybridisation refers to an amalgam of cross-cultural influences which are blended, patchworked, and layered upon one another (Yazdiha, 2010). The notion of cultural hybridity in postcolonial theory is that of culture arising out of interactions between "colonisers" and "the colonised". In communication theory, hybridity is used as a device for describing the local reception of global media texts as a site of cultural mixture (Kraidy, 2002). This notion is further extended to the studies of cultural globalisation where hybridity is taken as a clear product of global and local interactions.

Kraidy (2005) maintains that "since hybridity involves the fusion of two hitherto relatively distinct forms, styles or identities, cross-cultural contact, which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries, is a requisite for hybridity" (p. 5). In the analysis of globalisation, cross-cultural contact occurs through the movement of people, ideas, and practices across national borders.

Hybridity has emerged as a privileged site for conceptualising global and local articulations. The interactions between foreign and domestic influences can produce a variety of outcomes. For example, the media-culture industries in regional centres such as Brazil, Mexico, and Hong Kong have increasingly indigenised Western genres.

A study of the media-culture industries in Hong Kong shows four patterns of indigenisation: (i) the *parrot* pattern, referring to a wholesale mimicry of foreign culture by local industries, both in form and content; (ii) the *amoeba* pattern, describing a modified form but a non-changing content such as the adaptation of a foreign movie for local consumption; (iii) the *coral* pattern, describing cultural products whose content is changed but whose form is untouched; and (iv) the *butterfly* pattern, a radical hybridisation that makes the domestic and foreign indistinguishable (Lee, 1991).

The concept of hybridity can also be applied to universities, in particular those that are located in East Asia. In many cases, strong religious influences have penetrated certain universities in the region, such as the Islamic universities in Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as the Buddhist universities in Sri Lanka and Thailand. The architectural designs of some of these universities also reflect their particular identities. For example, many of the Islamic universities sport a central dome, which is a typical feature of Islamic architecture that dates back to the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. Similarly, many of the Chinese universities have large sweeping roofs that have a vast curvature that rises at the corners of the roof sitting on top of modern buildings.

The interpersonal relationships among colleagues and those between faculty members and students can be quite different in the Asian settings as compared to those in the Western contexts. In many of the Western university settings, collegial relationships are commonly found

among the academics, but in the Asian campuses, the interpersonal relationships can be quite hierarchical. In the case of faculty members and student relationship, it is usually quite informal in a Western setting, but this is not the case in Asian settings where the relationship can be quite formal and long-lasting.

It can also be observed that the Asian value of collectivism is prevalent among Asian academics. In the Western context, the scholarship of the individual is of paramount importance as reflected by the research and publication record of that particular academic. In the Asian context, however, the number of co-authorships among Asian scholars far exceeds those among their Western counterparts. In the West, merit-based criteria are used to hire and promote faculty, and to recruit students. In the Asian context, however, personal relationships seem to play a very important part on who gets appointed or promoted. While academic freedom is central to teaching and research in the West, it is not the case in the Asian context because the freedom of the academics is very often curbed by political interference in university affairs.

These are a few preliminary observations of possible hybridities that exist in East Asian universities. In-depth research is therefore needed to explore, validate, and identify more of such hybridities.

Some Hypotheses on Hybridisation

In what ways do Asian universities differ from those in Western countries? When and why do such differences emerge? Looking at the cases of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines, a research cluster was initiated by the Asia-Pacific Higher Education Research Partnership (APHERP) – in which I am involved – and has identified some hypotheses to answer those questions:

1. Asian universities are different from Western universities because of hybridisation where Western academic models interact with local Asian traditional cultures in different social settings.
2. Asian universities are not only influenced by global trends in higher education, but also by Asian values that are embedded in the Islamic, Confucian, or Buddhist traditions.

If hybridisation is the interaction between Western academic models and traditional Asian cultures

resulting in institutional hybrids, then what are these institutional hybrids in different national settings? A further question is: Which are the likely sites of hybrid formation in a higher education institution?

The research cluster postulates that hybrid formation would occur in the following domains:

- hybridity in governance and management;
- hybridity in programmes and curriculum;
- hybridity in teaching and learning; and
- hybridity in research and service.

The aforementioned APHERP research project will examine what a hybrid university would look like in a society that is embedded in the Confucian, Islamic, or Buddhist traditions. The projects will also explore the sites of hybrid formation at the institutional level to identify the various kinds of institutional hybridities that may have emerged. We will be better able to understand the phenomenon of hybridisation, through the findings of these research projects.

References

Altbach, P. G. (1989). Twisted roots: The Western impact on Asian higher education. *Higher Education, 18*, 9–29.

Chan, S.-J. (2013). Between the East and the West: Challenges for internationalizing higher education in East Asia. In D. Neubauer, J. C. Shin & J. N. Hawkins (Eds.), *The dynamics of higher education development in East Asia* (pp. 29–49). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gopinathan, S. (2007). Globalisation, the Singapore development state and education policy: A thesis revisited. *Globalization, Societies and Education, 5*(1), 53–70.

Kraidy, M. M. (2002). Hybridity in cultural globalization. *Communication Theory, 12*(3), 316–339.

Kraidy, M. M. (2005). *Hybridity, or the cultural logic of globalization*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Lee, P. S. N. (1991). The absorption and indigenization of foreign media cultures: A study on a cultural meeting point of the East and West: Hong Kong. *Asian Journal of Communications, 1*(2), 52–72.

Marginson, S. (2011). Higher education in East Asia and Singapore: Rise of the Confucian model. *Higher Education, 61*(5), 587–611.

Mishra, A. (2013). Revived Nalanda University will balance local and global research. *University World News Global Edition, 259*. Retrieved from http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130213115825860

National Science Foundation (NSF). (2014). *Science and engineering indicators 2014*. Retrieved from http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind14

Neubauer, D., Jung, C. S., & Hawkins, J. N. (Eds). (2013). *The dynamics of higher education development in East Asia: Asian cultural heritage, Western dominance, economic development, and globalization*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rowe, W., & Schelling, V. (1991). *Memory and modernity: Popular culture in Latin America*. London, UK: Verso.

UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS). (2011). *Global education digest 2011: Comparing education statistics across the world*. Montreal, Canada: Author.

Yazdiha, H. (2010). Conceptualizing hybridity: Deconstructing boundaries through the hybrid. *Formations, 1*(1), 31–37.

ALAN RUBY

Will Universities Survive the 21st Century?

Introduction

Will universities survive the 21st century? A prudent academic answer to this provocative question is "probably". A more instructive response is "let's talk about that". And that conversation is essentially what the HEAD Foundation started at its public forum in May 2015.

My contribution to that discussion covered the essentially conservative nature of universities and colleges, the public and private purposes of higher education, and the recent phenomenon of massive open online courses (MOOCs).

Conservative Institutions Are Likely to Persist

Universities are conservative in the sense that they create, protect, and transmit knowledge across generations. The faculty works to create and codify knowledge, linking it to and testing it against the existing body of knowledge. By sharing knowledge with others and helping them to understand its importance and usefulness, the faculty preserves knowledge and makes it available to future generations. The act of teaching is, in one sense, conserving knowledge.

This conserving function tends to make universities and colleges slow to change. They are what Gérard Roland (2004) calls "slow-moving" institutions: those that change "slowly, incrementally, and continuously" rather than "rapidly and irregularly" or "discontinuously". Universities are slow moving because they deal with the acquisition of knowledge, values, culture, and technology. All four are relatively slow to change although technological innovation can be abrupt and irregular.

And all four tend to move in tandem as beliefs about what matters in human interactions influence and shape culture, the use of technology, and the search for new knowledge. This interconnectedness is another factor for why universities are slow to change. In short, the mission of universities and the means they use to carry out that mission makes them cautious and conservative, and this is likely to persist over time.

This persistence was famously captured by Clark Kerr's (1982) observation in the 1980s that of the 85 Western world institutions that had continued unchanged since the Year 1500, 70 were universities "still in the same location, with some of the same buildings, with professors and students doing much the same things and with governance carried on in much the same ways" (p. 24).

Institutions of higher learning have also persisted in Asia. The Han Dynasty's Imperial University was established as a pathway to civil service occupations that grew, diversified, and persisted in various forms until the early 1900s. Hanoi's Temple of Literature built in 1070 had a similar function, as did Okinawa's scholar bureaucrat community Kumemara – both ceased to operate on those sites in the late 1800s.

While the longevity of these types of institutions is grounded in their role as protectors and transmitters of knowledge and values, it is also embedded in their public purpose.

Institutions with a Definite Public Purpose Will Persist

Broadly conceived higher education has long had a public purpose: it was to do some tasks that were for the common good, for the community, or the people of the nation. Those things included what many, including my colleague Matt Hartley (2009), refer to as "preparing an enlightened citizenry", that is, educating generations of young people to be able to govern themselves and lead others. Higher education also prepared people for the professions such as law, the church or temple, and for public office and public service. These functions plus the role universities played in creating and preserving knowledge benefitted all. As a consequence, public expenditure on higher education was seen as a legitimate use of tax revenues.

When higher education was only taken up by only a few (the elite), the public investment was modest but the public benefit readily apparent. This generated political and often public support for universities and

encouraged them to continue as they were – largely unchanged.

In the last 50 years in the most industrialised nations, participation in higher education has widened and deepened. More people have aspired to post-secondary education. Economies have diversified and moved away from agriculture and manufacturing to knowledge- and service-based industries increasing the demand for well-educated people. Governments also saw that there was an untapped "pool of ability" that was not being served: young people who were from a range of social backgrounds and who were able and willing to benefit from higher education. They were a source of comparative economic advantage for nations that could be realised through increased expenditure on universities.

Consequently, participation in higher education increased rapidly from the 1950s onwards. In most industrialised nations, it became a mass phenomenon, with 30 to 40 per cent of young people continuing education past secondary school. And in recent years, this proportion has increased to 50 to 60 per cent. Some of the growth in demand was met by new types of institutions – universities that emphasised teaching rather than a combination of research and teaching, and offered pre-professional programmes such as nursing and accounting.

In the last 50 years in the most industrialised nations, participation in higher education has widened and deepened.

While this increased participation was desirable, it was (and still is) expensive. It placed greater demands on public expenditures at a time when some populations were ageing and health costs were increasing. The public benefit of a larger well-educated workforce was also not always so readily apparent. Yet the private benefit, the individual's increased income or improved lifestyle, was clearly observable. Inequities were also increasing as higher education tended to be taken up by children from more affluent families.

A common response to this set of circumstances was to shift the cost of higher education to the individual or the family. Tuition fees became common and were (and still are) often a substantial part of a university's operating budget. Public expenditure was supplemented by private

investment encouraging a market view of higher education where the student was a client purchasing services from the university provider.

This commercialisation coupled with the growth of career-oriented courses and limited public funds because of economic volatility and regional financial crises eroded the clear sense of public purpose that had previously protected most universities from disruptive change. It opened the field to the growth of private and for-profit higher education in developed and developing economies.

In some cases, for-profit universities were "demand-absorbing", providing opportunities for young people who could not get into a public university (Levy, 1986). Others used distance learning techniques to cater for groups unable to attend conventional universities. Whatever the platform or target population, the growth of this type of "university" further diminished the clear sense of public purpose.

The open question is whether a shift in mission from a principal focus on preparing citizens and serving the common good to a mission that mixes individual benefit, private good, and broader public purposes will hasten the demise of the traditional university. Proponents of the relatively new wave of MOOCs see them as alternative way of increasing access to higher education and reaching underserved populations.

Are MOOCs an Alternative Pathway?

The defining characteristics of MOOCs are evolving but they are essentially discrete sets of content (courses), aimed at large numbers of users (massive), usually with no tuition cost and with few or no requirements to access the content (open), delivered via various digital platforms (online).

They are successors to the earlier forms of distance education like correspondence schools – with radio- and television-based courses – and open universities like those in South Africa and the UK. All designed to use "new" technologies to increase access to higher education.

Downes, Siemens and Cormier are credited with originating this wave of innovation. In 2008, they launched a connectivist MOOC (cMOOC), which aimed to use technology to create a learning community where individuals would participate just as they would in a traditional tutorial or seminar (Downes, 2012, p. 9).

Some years later, large online courses that used a traditional lecture format emerged. For example, in late 2011, Stanford's Sebastian Thrun and Peter Norvig launched the first xMOOC (MOOCs that are extensions of traditional university courses), "Introduction to Artificial Intelligence", with 160,000 users. The success of the course led to the establishment of competing MOOC platforms. Thrun founded *Udacity* in 2012, Stanford's Daphne Koller and Andrew Ng founded *Coursera*, and MIT and Harvard founded *edX*.

Coursera, a for-profit entity, now offers 1040 courses through 119 university partners. There are 25 course categories: the biggest is the Humanities with more than 180 courses, Teacher Professional Development with over 90 course, and Arts with 50 plus courses. In total, *Coursera* attracts more than 13 million users.

Although impressive, the high numbers of offerings and users do not immediately trigger the transformation of traditional universities. Scale does not equate to impact. In this case, it raises the question of completion. What proportion of users progress through the courses and complete?

With a set of talented colleagues (Perna et al., 2014), I helped address this question by examining 16 MOOCs offered at the University of Pennsylvania between June 2012 and June 2013. These courses had over 700,000 registered users, people who had signed on and agreed to the code of academic conduct. Of these, over 540,000 started a course but course completion rates were low, no matter how we measured it. This holds for the rate users accessed the last lecture, attempted the last quiz, or attained a final grade of at least 80 per cent. Across the 16 courses, only 5 to 18 per cent of registrants clicked on the last lecture.

The low "completion" rates and very high attrition rates in the first week or two of courses may reflect the novelty of MOOCs: they attracted curious users who had no intention of completing. As browsing was cost free, there was no impediment to visiting courses. For this and other reasons, some (e.g., Koller, Ng, Chuong & Chen, 2013) argue that completion rates are inappropriate measures of a MOOC as they do not reflect users' intentions and learning goals such as personal growth and short-term career or vocational needs.

While there is great value in offering access to first-rate content

and inspiring learning material without questioning the benefits many individuals have gained from MOOC experiences, the nature of the offerings still falls short of the desired outcomes of either a liberal education or a pre-professional programme.

Three quarters of *Coursera*'s current offerings are discrete units of content including the popular social psychology course from Wesleyan University and the "learner recommended" course "The Music of the Rolling Stones 1962–74", offered by the University of Rochester. The list of courses is eclectic and varied.

MOOC "credits" from these discrete courses do not readily aggregate into national credentials validated by an assessment or accreditation agency. Nor are they aligned to a national qualification framework that allow for occupational mobility and free movement of labour between employers. Instead, they offer badges of completion, symbols of time served, or endorsements by peers. The latter can be valuable parts of the learning process and good measures of learning when moderated and supported by formal rubrics, or they can be an aggregation of informed and less informed judgements, such as dining reviews on *Yelp* or some other crowd-sourced social media site.

...the nature of [MOOC] offerings still falls short of the desired outcomes of either a liberal education or a pre-professional programme.

A quarter of the courses on *Coursera*'s platform offer "verified certification" and about 10 per cent are "eligible for specialisation". Verified certificates are available when the user achieves a passing grade in a course, verifies every assignment by a unique typing pattern and photo identification, and pays the fee set by the participating university.

Specialisations are packages of courses that are a coherent set of experiences leading towards the mastery of a particular technical skill or competence. An example is John Hopkins University's Data Science sequence of nine courses with two pre-requisites and a capstone assignment.

Both verified certificate courses and specialisations have fees and barriers to entry: requirements for personal identity data and, in the case of the Data Science example, pre-requisites. This reduces the "open"

characteristics of these MOOCs which, in turn, reduces participation – the "M" for massive starts to shrink towards "L" for large. The reduction in scale and the introduction of fees start to make MOOCs seem like another version of distance learning, a phenomenon that has not fundamentally changed universities in the last 150 years.

Conclusion

There are many elements to this debate about the persistence and resilience of "the university". I deal here with three only. The conservative nature of universities and colleges as creators, protectors, and transmitters of essential knowledge and values has enabled them to endure largely unchanged for centuries. This is true for the modern Western universities and for the imperial colleges of China and Vietnam.

The reduction in scale and the introduction of fees start to make MOOCs seem like another version of distance learning...

The broad public purpose of universities to prepare informed and well-educated citizens and to contribute to the common good has for many years justified public expenditure on higher learning. As participation in higher education increased, as individual benefit became more apparent, and as competition for public funds intensified, the notions of a higher education market place began to erode the clear public purpose. Universities of differing shapes and missions emerged including for-profit entities, single discipline colleges, and teaching-only programmes.

MOOCs are the latest attempt to increase participation and to reach underserved populations. Completion rates are low and the shift towards fee-based courses has re-oriented MOOC providers towards those who can pay. They offer a cheaper pathway to content than conventional universities, but they do not offer a nationally or regionally recognised credential.

These are just three elements of a wider debate. It is a worthwhile debate, as is all discussion about the shape and direction of significant social institutions. Forced to make a conclusion, or a prediction, about the longevity of universities, I would join with the 19th French writer Alphonse Karr: "the more things change, the more they remain the same".

References

Downes, S. (2012). *Connectivism and connective knowledge: Essays on meaning and learning networks*. Ottawa, Canada: National Research Council, Canada.

Hartley, M., (2009). Reclaiming the democratic purposes of American higher education: Tracing the trajectory of the civic engagement movement. *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences, 2*(3), 11–30.

Kerr, C., (1982). "The uses of the university" two decades later: Postscript 1982. *Change, 14*(7), 23–31.

Koller, D., Ng, A., Chuong, D., & Chen, Z. (2013). Retention and intention in massive open online courses. *Educause Review, May/June*, 62–63.

Levy, D. C. (1986). *Higher education and the state in Latin America: Private challenges to public dominance*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Perna, L. W., Ruby, A., Boruch, R. F., Wang, N., Scull, J., Ahmad, S., & Evans, C. (2014). Moving through MOOCs: Understanding the progression of users in massive open online courses. *Educational Researcher, 43*(9), 421–432. doi: 10.3102/0013189X14562423.

Roland, G. (2004). Understanding institutional change: Fast-moving and slow-moving institutions. *Studies in Comparative International Development, 38*(4), 109–131.