

# GOVERNING HIGHER EDUCATION IN SE ASIA

State Capacity, Devolution and  
Transparency in the Global Era.

## HIGHER ED. CONTEXT

- Higher Ed. as a pillar of the much touted 21<sup>st</sup>. Century knowledge economy.
- Worldwide demand for Higher Ed. continues unabated.
- But states find it increasingly difficult to maintain sufficient funds, thus widening gap between enrolments and resources.

## GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (1)

- Worldwide inequalities mean that not all systems, nor all universities are equal.
- The elite, research-intensive university is very limited (USA perhaps 60, UK Russell Group, Australia G8).
- Strong connections exist between them, and they account for much knowledge production (national performance indicators, + international indices SSCI, SCI etc)

## GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (2)

- This elite group of universities is entirely restricted to most developed countries.
- Informal definitions of quality, traditionally: the best staff, students, & facilities (cultural as well as academic).
- Thus, socially as well as academically elite (cf. role of University of Tokyo in Japan, Oxford in UK, Harvard in the USA).

## GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (3)

- The cost of developing such universities, with their expensive libraries, research facilities is huge, and has been built up over centuries:
  - “ By their very nature, science and technology have always demanded significant and ongoing investment to establish, maintain and expand the ‘engine’ of physical infrastructure – including laboratories, libraries and classrooms. They also need a rich (and expensive) fuel of textbooks, computers, equipment, and other supplies.”<sup>[1]</sup>  
<sup>[1]</sup> World Bank, *Higher Education in Developing Countries*.  
p. 71.

## GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (4)

- No SE Asian university is in the top 100 of the Shanghai Jiaotong Index, only 1 among the top 200.
- In each of the 5 SE Asian countries (I., M., T., P., and V.), there is a vast range in quality.
- In each, one or two universities are national icons: U. Malaya in Malaysia, VNU. in Vietnam, Chulalongkorn U. in Thailand, etc.
- Each is the pinnacle of national H/Ed. system, produces much of the country’s social and econ. elite. (cf. Castells’ 4 functions of the University)

## GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (5)

- The North has ten times the proportion of R & D personnel (scientists and technicians) per capita as the South (3.8%, compared to 0.4%)
- It spends about four times the proportion of GDP on R & D (2.0% compared to 0.5%).
- It registers 97% of all patents in the USA and Europe, and, together with the newly industrialising countries of East Asia, accounts for 84% of all scientific articles published. [\[1\]](#)  
[\[1\]](#) *Ibid.*, p. 69

## THE ASIAN CONTEXT

- 900 million Asians still live on less than US\$1 per day (75% of the global total)
- nearly 40% of the population is under the age of 18
- 75% of the world's illiterates, two thirds of whom are poor women, live in Asia
- millions of children who complete primary school can neither read or write, and millions more drop out each year, due to poverty
- half of all children in the region are not enrolled in secondary school, most of them poor.
- almost 40% of children aged under five are malnourished, and hence unlikely to achieve their full intellectual potential
- some governments expend more on their military, than on their children
- only 6.5% of Asian Development Bank (ADB) spending has been for education. [\[1\]](#)  
[\[1\]](#) Asian Development Bank, (2001) *Education Sector Policy Paper* (Draft). Manila, ADB, 2001, p. 3.

## GLOBALISATION EFFECTS

### (1)

- Several forms of globalisation (Sklair), of which 2 are critical to H/Ed reforms:
  - 1. Economic ( the extension of global capitalism), fostered by international agencies such as WB and ADB:

“Long term and concessionary loans for higher education can help governments invest in higher education, in a more sustained and consistent fashion, while debt relief can be negotiated in exchange for systemic higher education reform.”<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> *Higher Education in Developing Countries*, Pp. 57-8.

## GLOBALISATION EFFECTS

### (2)

- Cultural globalisation, in particular how identity is being re-shaped by the ‘Global- Local nexus.’ It is sustained by two trends:
  1. the rise of ICT, leading to a sense that time and space are now compressed.
  2. The rise of English as a global language.
- The combination of the above are leading to a rise in (trans-border) H/Ed programmes in English (OECD 2002).

## DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURES S-E Asia 5

<i>Country</i>	<i>Total Population (millions) 1975</i>	<i>Total Population (millions) 2000</i>	<i>Annual Population Growth Rate (%) 1975-2000</i>	<i>Population under 15 (as % of total) 2000</i>
<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>12.3</i>	<i>22.2</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>34.1</i>
<i>Thailand</i>	<i>41.1</i>	<i>62.8</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>26.7</i>
<i>Philippines</i>	<i>42.0</i>	<i>75.7</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>37.5</i>
<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>134.6</i>	<i>212.1</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>30.8</i>
<i>Viet Nam</i>	<i>48.0</i>	<i>78.1</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>33.4</i>

Compiled from UNDP *Human Development Report 2002*

## Students at Public and Private HEIs, S-E Asia 5, 1997-8

<i>Country</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>
<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Philippines</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Thailand</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Viet Nam</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0</i>

Source. A. Gonzales, "Private Higher Education in the Philippines" Altbach, P., (Ed.) *Private Prometheus: Private Higher Education and Development in the 21<sup>st</sup>. Century*, Greenwood Press, 1999, p. 116.

## Growth of Private H/Ed., S-E Asia 5, 1995-2005

- Private H/Ed in the Philippines now comprise over 80% of total enrolments.
- Private H/Ed enrolments in Viet Nam now total 12%, but gov't. plans are for much more growth: 30%+ by 2010.
- Malaysia now has 11 private universities, 5 branch campuses and more private H/Ed. enrolments than public (if Diploma and Certificate levels included).
- Indonesia has also seen significant growth in private H/Ed.

## PAPERS AND CITATIONS S-E ASIAN 5

Country	Number of Papers 1981	Number of Papers 1995	Number of Citations 1981-8.	Number of Citations 1993-7
<i>Indonesia</i>	89	310	694	3,364
<i>Malaysia</i>	229	587	1,332	3,450
<i>Philippines</i>	243	294	1,379	2,893
<i>Thailand</i>	373	648	2,419	8,398
<i>Viet Nam</i>	49	192	203	1,657

(Source: *Higher Education in Developing Countries*, Pp. 125-7).

## EXPLAINING DIFFERENCES

- How do we account for the differences?
  1. Viet Nam poorest, and only free of war for 25 years. A socialist market system, committed to public H/Ed.
  2. Philippines high coverage, but very little quality (e.g. NOOSR accepts 2 of approx. 1,000 Philippines HEIs, as of degree standard). (Crony) capitalist system, 80%+ private enrolment.

## SOME SIMILAR PRESSURES

- I INTERNAL
  1. Demographic (as indicated above)
  2. Increasing gap between demand, and gov't. capacity (willingness?) to pay.
- II EXTERNAL
  1. Pressure for (more) structural adjustment
  2. Pressure for more programmes in English, including by foreign providers. (GATS)

## THE RESULTS of PRESSURE

- Swiftly changing balance of public and private H/Ed. (Malaysia, Viet Nam).
- Blurring of borders between public and private HEIs. (Indonesia, Thailand public HEIs offering 'extension' courses, as state inputs decline in real terms.
- Regulatory pressures increasing. Examples of corruption (Indonesia, Viet Nam).

## CONCLUSION

How is governing H/Ed system in 21<sup>st</sup>. Century different, especially in SE Asian context?

1. Reduced state capacity, but increased demand --> privatisation
2. Low income, limited state capacity, and training --> difficulties in governing for quality, exacerbated by rise of private (trans-national) Ed., and corruption
3. In this context, challenges to governance in SE Asian H/Ed . remain profound