



NTU Singapore: *NEAR EU Research*

NEAR EU Third Meeting (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Dr. Meng-Hsuan Chou

9 October 2017

Singapore BRC

(Research Topic)

To unpack the **emergence**, **evolution**, and **impact** of **Singapore's internationalisation strategy** in the higher education sector.

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(Research Design)

To examine developments at three levels:

- **Policy**: how has the SG govts successively developed and calibrated their approaches to ensure that its HE sector is internationalised?
- **Institutional**: how did NUS and NTU translate the govts' drive and efforts to internationalise the HE sector?
- **Individual**: how do students perceive their universities' internationalisation efforts in light of their employment prospects?

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(Research Methodology)

Multiple sources and mixed methods:

1. Secondary analysis:

- Published academic and policy studies on SG's HE policy and internationalisation strategy;
- Official documents (publicly available): government, NUS, and NTU.

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(Research Methodology)

Multiple sources and mixed methods:

2. Semi-structured interviews:

- University officials from NUS and NTU;
- How these universities balance ‘global’ demands with ‘local’ concerns;
- To offer additional perspective of internationalisation strategy from university perspectives.

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(Research Methodology)

Multiple sources and mixed methods:

3. Survey:

- NUS and NTU students from a variety of disciplines (STEM, Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences);
- To determine student perceptions of universities' internationalisation efforts in enhancing their job prospects in SG, in the region, and farther abroad;
- To use as proxy for assessing the impact of SG's internationalisation strategy.

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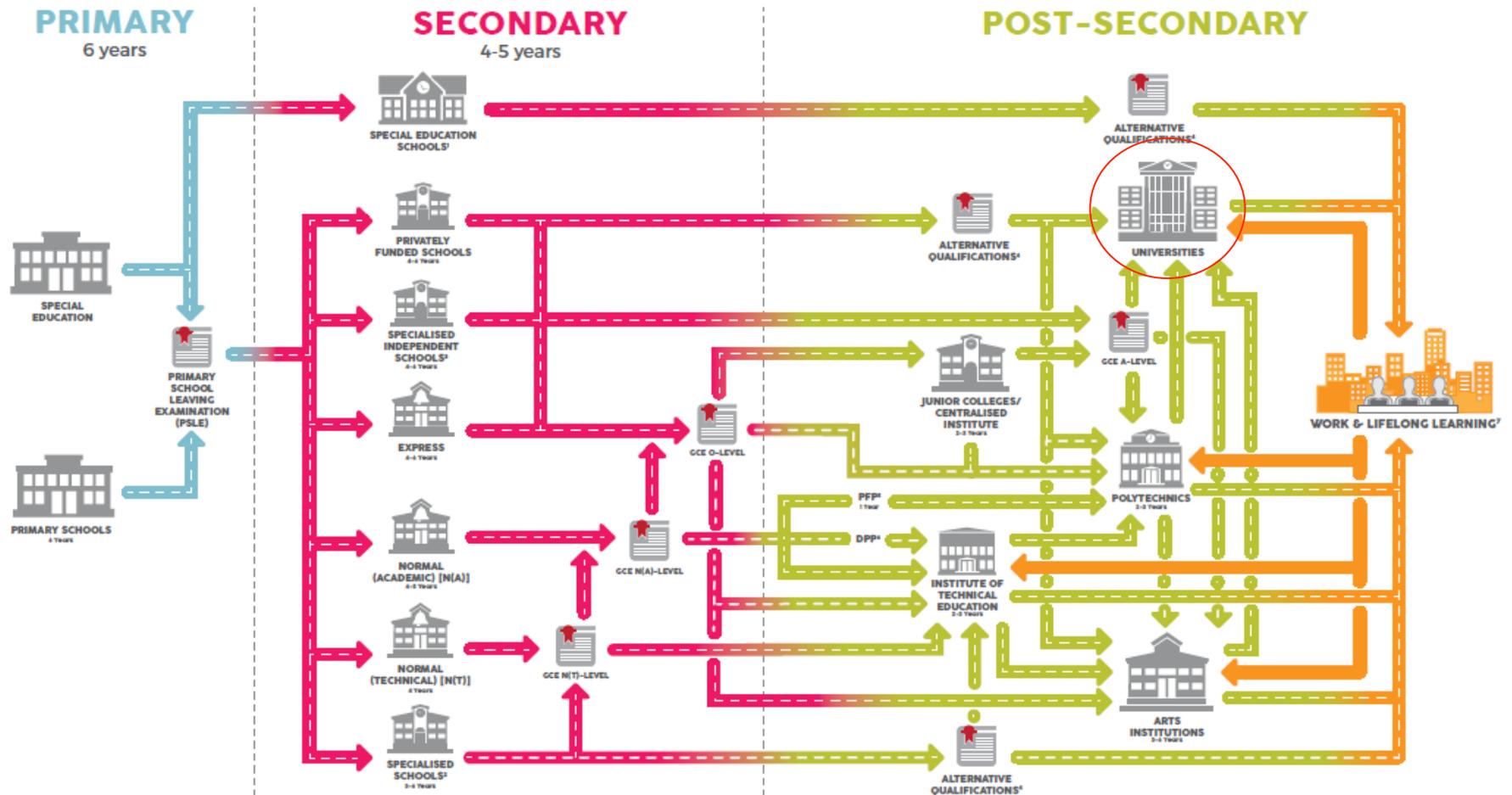
(Initial findings: Singapore's context)

1. 'small island with no natural resources' except a strategic location, Singapore's survival has always depended on its usefulness to major powers' (Gopinathan 2007)
2. 'early recognition of the value of English...as an economic resource'; this recognition is 'counterbalanced by the insistence that all students learn a second language, Mandarin, Tamil or Malay' (Gopinathan 2007)
3. 'Education reform in Singapore is primarily a way of **retooling the productive capacity** of the system' (Gopinathan 2007)
4. To overcome (from the 1990s onwards): 'the **relative inflexibility of the system**, the lack of entrepreneurial flair or risk aversion among school leavers, the lack of creative capital due to the overly academic orientation of the curriculum and new questions about the appropriate mix of skills and knowledge required for doing well in the new economy' (Gopinathan 2007)

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(Initial findings: SG HE system)

Singapore's Education System : An Overview



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(Initial findings: SG HE system)

- There are six local universities in Singapore
 - National University of Singapore (NUS)
 - Nanyang Technological University (NTU)
 - Singapore Management University (SMU)
 - Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)
 - Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT)
 - SIM Univ. (UniSIM), Singapore Univ. of Social Sciences (SUSS)
- Autonomous universities
 - ‘These universities **receive government funding**, but are **autonomous**, which **gives them the flexibility** to strategise, innovate, and differentiate themselves, as they pursue excellence in education, research and service’ (MOE 2017)

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(Initial findings: SG HE policy)

- **‘Thinking Schools, Learning Nation’** (1997)

1. Emphasis on **critical and creative thinking**
2. Use of **information technology** in education
3. National education (**citizenship education**)
4. **Administrative Excellence**

(These reforms **addressed primarily pedagogy** and not the issues concerning structural flexibility and choice)

- **‘Global Schoolhouse’** (2002)

1. To finance an identified group of **‘world-class universities’**: (a) ‘niche centres of excellence’, (b) NUS, NTU and SMU (‘bedrock’ universities), and (c) ‘additional private universities’ (teaching and applied research)
2. To **attract 150k fee-paying int. students** by 2015 to study in SG
3. To **re-model the entire SG education system** so as to inculcate the following attributes: risk-taking, creativity, and entrepreneurialism

(**Series of challenges**: foreign universities – Johns Hopkins closed, Univ. of New South Wales closed, Tisch School of the Arts Asia ended its MA courses, Univ. of Chicago moved its executive education to HK, and the controversy of Yale-NUS college re academic freedom; quality assurance issues; never achieved 150k target)

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(Initial findings: University level developments)

- In the mid-2000s: move towards **loosening government regulations** of HEIs →
- **University Autonomy**, Governance and Funding (UAGF) Steering Committee: recommended that NUS and NTU are corporatised (like SMU) and become AUs
- AU status: **universities control remuneration** and the use of block funding
- This led to a **massive internal review** at these HEIs (NTU: tenure review process in 2007)
- **Funding models**: combination of MOE funding and external grants from Research Councils (MOE Tiers 1, 2 and 3; NRF; SSRC)

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(Initial findings: NUS)

- **Oldest and largest**: nation-building and flagship university
- Raffles Institute → University of Singapore → NUS (in 1980) when UoS and Nanyang University merged
- A **broad profile**: schools of PP, business, medical (2); SG's national and comprehensive university
- Comparatively **decentralised and least proactive** (primarily known as host of international university alliances → the CREATE complex)
- Leadership style: **subdued and path-dependent**
 - Comparatively decentralised, real power resides with faculties and schools
 - Subdued and path-dependent
 - This may be changing as a result of the latest QS rankings in which NTU has overtaken NUS in 2017
- 'We are **a very good university** but have difficulties in identifying real areas of excellence'
- While NUS has benefited from govt. reforms, the notion of controlled, state-orchestrated, competition has triggered the rise of NTU

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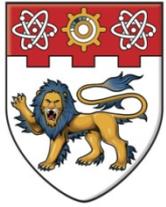
(Initial findings: NTU)

- **Founded in 1991**; but dates back to 1960, originally set up to train the bulk of SG's engineers
- 1980: closed down and was merged with UoS to form NUS
- Heritage: NTU (in its old form) catered to SG's Chinese population (marginalised at the time) and this is **reflected in its leadership style**
- Leadership style: **more hierarchical** (especially in comparison to NUS's collegial and British colonial model of faculty discretion)
- **Increasingly a broad profile**: in addition to the many engineering and sciences schools, there are also the schools of social sciences, humanities, arts and design, communications, business, and medicine
- NTU's development:
 - **Strong recruitment** (at both top levels & junior faculties, e.g. NAPs)
 - **Strong leadership**: several re-organisational initiatives, policy, and culture → known as 'Bonanza'; there are many initiatives and overarching long-term goals, but there are often no clear relationships between them

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(Preliminary observations)

- Increasing **similarities** between NUS and NTU
- Developments in these two universities are suggesting the trend towards **pluralistic higher education and research system**
- There is generally **less emphasis on cohesion** and planning, but this may change



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NTU Singapore: *next 12 months*

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(The first 12 months: Sept 2016 – Sept 2017)

Needs analysis:

1. The need to raise awareness about 'Europe', European integration, and the EU
2. The need to raise awareness about higher education policy and the role of Universities in internationalisation

Singapore BRC's objective:

- To train and equip future administrators and professionals (in ministries, in universities) with *background knowledge* (history, politics), *practical knowledge and skills* about:
 - Bologna Process
 - European Union
 - European integration
 - European higher education policy cooperation

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(The first 12 months: Sept 2016 – Sept 2017)

Training module on the European Union:

- When: 12 January to 13 April 2017 (13 weeks)
- History, main EU institutions, and ‘Europe of Knowledge’

Training module on the Politics and Global Higher Education Market:

- When: 26-27 June 2017
- Six specific sessions on the following topics
 - HE and the new knowledge economy
 - Governance changes in higher education
 - Role of stakeholders and their orgs. in the politics of HE
 - The politicisation of HE
 - HE and policy design: the case of migration
 - HE regionalisms: Europe and Southeast Asia

Total trained: 117 future administrators & professionals

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(The first 12 months: Sept 2016 – Sept 2017)

Dissemination – Conferences:

1. **NEAR EU kick-off meeting** (Darmstadt, DE: 4-5 Nov 2016)
 - ‘Bologna Process: a regionalism perspective’
2. **Int. Studies Association** (Baltimore, MD, USA: 22-25 Feb 2017)
 - ‘A regionalism perspective’ in panel ‘HE meets neoliberalism: int. perspectives on transformation and contestation in global academia’
3. **NEAR EU second meeting** (Beer Sheva, Israel: 26 April 2017)
4. **Int. Conf. of Public Policy 3** (Singapore: 28-30 June 2017)
 - ‘Are inter-regional policy dialogues effective? The case of HE’
 - ‘The politics of HE policies: an intro to multi-level, multi-actor & multi-issue dynamics’
5. **Council for Eur. Studies** (Glasgow, UK: 12-14 July 2017)
 - ‘What is the role of the EU in the global market for HE and research?’
6. **ECPR 11th general meeting** (Oslo, NO: 6-9 September 2017)
 - ‘Consequences of Internationalization of Political Science Education: the case of SG’
 - ‘Going beyond Europe: what does comparative regionalism offer to European integration in the knowledge domain?’
 - ‘Examining effectiveness of inter-regional policy dialogues in HE: What does it mean?’

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(The first 12 months: Sept 2016 – Sept 2017)

Dissemination – **Publications:**

1. **‘Higher Education Governance and Policy: an Introduction to Multi-issue, Multi-level and Multi-actor Dynamics’** (with Jens Jungblut, Pauline Ravinet, and Martina Vukasovic), *Policy and Society* 36(1): 1-15
2. **‘Higher Education Regionalism in Europe and Southeast Asia: Comparing Policy Ideas’** (with Pauline Ravinet), *Policy and Society* 36(1): 143-159
3. **‘Comparative Higher Education Regionalism: Is Europe the Model?’**, *Forum*, Magazine of The European Association for International Education, April 2017, pp. 25-27
4. **‘The Politics of Higher Education Policies: Unravelling the Multi-level, Multi-Actor, and Multi-issue dynamics’** (with Jens Jungblut, Pauline Ravinet, and Martina Vukasovic), blog post on *Ideas on Europe*, March 2017

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(The next 12 months: Sept 2017 – Sept 2018)

- **Training**: ‘Higher education regionalism: Europe, Asia, and Southeast Asia’ (to train: ~100 future administrators and professionals)
- **Research**: develop and administer survey (with other BRCs?), link the regional dimension w/SG developments (feasible?)
- **Dissemination**: IPSA (Brisbane, July 2018), ECPR (Hamburg, August 2018), Singapore’s ASEAN chairmanship (Fall 2018)

Thank you!

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