studies in language & capitalism

Eduscapes: Knowledge capital and cultures

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Abstract

Accelerating global flows of people and information have formed new communities and networks across social and political borders. Higher education is one such globalized knowledge community in which new patterns of knowledge, accreditation, research alliances, and social relationships are emerging. Education has become a lucrative global trade. New communications and information technologies have enabled new forms of community and knowledge exchange. Old boundaries and sovereignties, whether of nation, class or paradigm communities are eroding as new formations take shape. In this paper I outline the push-pull dynamics of globalization in higher education: the co-constitutive nature of local and global interests and educational formations, disjunctive flows of capital, information, people, and knowledge on the global eduscape, and the new politics of knowledge capital as they affect academic research and the public archive of scholarly publishing and university libraries. I close with reflections on the differential consequences of globalization on: the role of the nation state in higher education provision and reform, the role of education in nation building and national identity politics, and the governability of a global eduscape.

This article was written between two countries, and will be published in a third. It is, like so much of our academic work these days, a kind of transnational educational artefact, tossed into the ebbs and flows of information and data, text and discourse that are at once both everywhere in a pedagogic, digital infoscape, and nowhere. It is both contextual in the broadest global sense, and localized, coming to ground with readers, publishers and editors in a specific context of interpretation. It and its frames of reference will be a matter of recognition for some readers, baffling for others, and a making of the familiar strange for yet others.

In the Singapore where I am writing, the results of the US election, Arafat's demise in Paris, and Thai ethnic-religious violence have very quickly been moved off the front pages and replaced, curiously, by the news that Singapore has placed both of its major universities in the upper ranks of the *Times Higher Education Supplement* league tables. These reports are interspersed with news on privatization of secondary schools, of changing project work requirements for senior students, buried in the midst ads for private tutoring, Australian, American and British distance education degrees, MBAs of all sorts and language schools. In its unique historical and geographic position as city-state, as 'middle kingdom', as regional entrepot shipping point for goods, services, capital and information, Singapore has worked hard to market and redefine itself as the new South East Asian 'educational hub'. The initial policy spin of 'Cambridge of the East' has now been passed by, almost forgotten in the rapid proliferation of educational providers, east and west, north and south. This has had effects on domestic economy, identity, national formation and social organization – with 93% plus of Singaporeans completing secondary school equivalents, university-participation levels pushing into the 30% range, and for the first time, not only Asians, but Europeans, Australians and North Americans coming to study here.

It is in education-obsessed culture, with 'no studying allowed' signs posted at airport fast food outlets to keep students away, with ads on trains and busses advertising distance education degrees, and with overseas universities chasing students through shopping mall storefront operations. As all things in the tropics, things grow, wither, decay at a rapid rate. To any and all observers, this is not just a particular postmodern, high-tech, consumerist version of Asia, of the city, of the city-state – it is the eduscape on steroids. The new global educscape is the topic of this paper.

Introduction

Significant global economic and political changes since the 1980s have had powerful impacts on public institutions of neoliberal welfare states including education. Today, ever increasing volumes of people, ideas, images, and finance flow across national borders forming new communities and networks. Higher education is itself one of the conduits of these global flows. It also constitutes a network of nodal points – connective tissue of a globalized knowledge community in which new patterns of knowledge, accreditation, research alliances, and social relationships are emerging.

In a global educational market where many universities compete for the overseas educational dollar, central strategic concerns include consolidating established markets, developing new markets and new 'niche' educational products, and periodically revising course contents and delivery modes in order to stay ahead of competitors. In many respects international education has become like any other business: adapting corporate techniques such as marketing (recruitment, product promotion, advertising campaigns), 'prestige badging' or 'branding', joining global consortia (e.g., Universitas 21), quality assurance, and product diversification. This means not only reconfiguring the university as a corporate enterprise but establishing companies owned and managed by the corporation. In turn, revenue raising, financial investments, expenditures, and reporting require ever larger legal and financial services.[1]

Arguments for and against the new user-pays knowledge economy abound. On one hand, greater diversity of students opens up a space for cross-cultural learning and exchange. On the other hand, to make the educational product competitive among global educational consumers, many argue that the educational credential and content is beginning to look like a 'global template' – a generic product that has no trace of the local/national character of knowledge and research. Others argue that one of the effects of globalization on education is the challenge to national education systems.

Standardization *and* differentiation are *the* defining features of globalization but current intellectual discourse and media popularizations of globalisation too often over determine standardization. Robertson and Khondker (1998, p. 32) rightly note that globalisation has become a slogan, a soundbite, that has "rapidly become a scapegoat for a wide range of ecological, economic, psychological, medical, political, social and cultural problems". The academic literature on globalisation *has* made gestures to complexity, uneven, ambiguous and heterogeneous 'effects'. But it has also tended to overemphasize homogeneity (of the flows and organization of capital and 'local' economic activity) and uniformity (of identities, cultural experiences, consumer desires and behaviours). So while we might accept that greater educational standardization is part of the globalisation and massification of higher education, educational provision in fact looks very different on the ground where it is culturally, locally, and regionally differentiated (Chan & Mok, 2001; Lee, 2003; Mok, 2003; Mok & Welch, 2003). This, despite what may appear as a seamless 'global-speak' policy document or UNESCO country briefing paper on educational targets, systems, and benchmarks.

Old boundaries and sovereignties, whether of nation, class or paradigm communities are eroding as new formations take shape. Reciprocity and synthesis characterize local-global links and articulations but always within local sites of competing discourses, unequal exchange, and class relations (Appadurai, 1996b). Higher education has become part of and subject to the positional and relativization dynamics (Robertson, 1992) by which sectors and nation-states position themselves in regional alliances and, in turn, in global policy, or aid and trade networks and organizations. Educational providers and consumers seek different but similar strategic educational and economic ends that create positional advantages vis-à-vis each other. The information- or knowledge-based economy of the moment incorporates education in its ensemble of competitive advantages, making educational goods part of relational assets alongside stocks of material, intellectual, or infrastructural assets. As business imperatives and ('free') trade strategies now dominate the *raison d'etre* of universities, new questions and problems arise that require new solutions: What is the evolving framework of the educational marketplace in regards to consumer protection, trade regulation of services, credential regulation, and quality control of educational goods and services? What are the larger implications for one of liberal democracy's foundational tenets by a turn from education as a common and public good in the public interest, to education as a private good exchanged between private providers and consumers on the open market? What are the risks and opportunities? In this paper I outline some of the push-pull dynamics of globalization in higher education: the co-constitutive nature of local and global interests and educational formations, disjunctive flows of capital, information, people, and knowledge on the new eduscape. My reflections are situated and localized in 'Place: Australia'. I begin with snapshots of educscape and internationalization, and then turn to Australia's approach to internationalization. I then discuss the new politics of knowledge capital as they affect academic research and the public archive of scholarly publishing and university libraries. I close with reflections on the differential consequences of globalization on: the role of the nation state in higher education provision and reform, the role of education in nation building and national identity politics, and the governability of a global eduscape.

Eduscape

Appadurai's widely cited conceptual metaphor of 'scapes' (info, techno, finance, media, and ideoscapes) alludes to a more indeterminate space of uneven and disjunctive exchanges, flows, and interests than the hyperglobalists' allusions to globalization as a one-way current emanating from Euro-American centres to undifferentiated peripheries. Promises of open global markets, boundless opportunities for 'freedom', 'choice', 'democracy', and a world devoid of nation-state meddling, subsidies, or protection tariffs typify this position. It is a simplistic conceptual analytic of one-way flows, a discourse of a post-neocolonial imperialism where the means are trade liberalisation and the ends – the terminal vision and dreams – are enthusiastic promises of rapid development and modernization, 'freedom' and 'democracy', and invitations with thinly veiled conditional strings to join the greater world economic order.

Appadurai's scapes and flows by contrast, make conceptual room for apprehending the topography of scapes and the flows that criss-cross them as dynamic and shifting, uneven and countervailing, contradictory and often at cross-purposes and, yet, at the same time they can be uniform and unidirectional. Hence, Appadurai's analytic allows us to see the flows of consumer and symbolic goods, people, ideas or knowledge, as multi-hued, as tide pools or swirling eddies – much like oil on water – that constitute 'scape' formations. Appadurai sees globalization as a "complex, overlapping, disjunctive order which cannot be understood in terms of centre-periphery models" (1996a, p. 32); it is not "a one-way street leading to homogenization" (p. 42). I have argued elsewhere that, importantly, the direction or force of global flows, one's sense of place on any scape are only intelligible from a local site, a place, a point of view: "globalization is as much about difference and ambivalence as it is about sameness and similarities at the level of *local uptakes*, appropriations, identities, and engagements with global processes, structures, and ideologies " (Luke, 2001, p.95). Educational consumers and providers approach international education from different perspectives, interests, vantage points – indeed, as Appadurai and many other cultural globalization scholars have repeatedly argued, social subjects' experience, uptake or interpretation of globalization is always a question of context. Relationships between ensembles of dissonant and congruent flows on overlapping scapes are "deeply perspectival constructs inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors" (Appadurai, 1996b, p. 33). Indeed, scholars of globalization theorize from a place, a point of view, a disciplinary lens, and specific experiences of whatever globalization may mean to them. My use of the term eduscapes, then, is meant to invoke the inconsistencies and incongruencies of that hot export commodity coveted by providers and highly desirable good from the vantage point of consumers: branded international education and credentials brought to you by the 'enterprise university' – we take VISA, Mastercard or AMEX.

Internationalisation

Book based education has long been 'global' in the sense that its expansion out medieval Europe followed the trade routes of European imperialism and colonialism. But even before ventures into the new world, the notion of itinerant scholars, the structure of knowledge organised in seven liberal arts disciplines, or the use of Latin as an international language of scholarly and scientific exchange were foundational to the international character of scholarship and the academy (Altbach, 1989; 1996; Scott, 1998b). The advent of the book in the late 15th century accelerated both standardization and the international exchange of knowledge. Printing presses and book publishing sprang up along cities on the communication and trade pathways of Europe's river systems – an early fluid network of economic and information exchange (Eisenstein, 1980; Febvre & Martin, 1976; Luke, 1989). The legacies of British Empire, the Dutch East India Company, or the Spanish Conquistadors included the building of European model schools and 'higher' education institutions in which to train local elites for the colonial bureaucracies from Buenos Aires to Bombay, Jakarta to Manila. The contemporary university is very much the product of the modernist nation state that developed between the end of the Renaissance and the advent of the industrial revolution. During this period, the university "took on many of its present functions, servicing the professional needs and ideological requirements of the new nation state of Europe and later, of the world" (Scott, 1998a, p. 123). During the 19th and 20th centuries this model was reshaped again as universities became identified with science and technology that, although centred in Europe and America, were transposed and adapted around the world. As such, new world copies of European models of higher education formed an international academic network, indeed a modernist precursor to post WW II 'post'-modern globalisation trends in higher education.

Today, the internationalization of education is again primarily a western initiative driven in large part by withdrawal of financial support by the state. In search of revenue to compensate for massive funding shortfalls, universities – especially in the UK, Canada and Australia -- are combing the world for student revenue. Australia is at the forefront of branding and marketing its educational products through entrepreneurial recruitment strategies that promote Australia as a relatively cheap, safe and geographically easy alternative to study in the UK or US -- particularly after 9/11 'homeland' security and visa restrictions. Finally, internationalization has also become a hot academic topic. In recent years it has mushroomed into a substantial disciplinary discourse and new knowledge base of which this paper and this special edition of *The Asia Pacific Journal of Education* is a part.

Location: Australia

Claims of benefits and opportunities abound in Australian universities' marketing and promotional literature. Marketing and promotional narratives appeal to international students' desire for "student goods" (Marginson, 1997) such as credentials, social capital of networks and relationships, cultural and cosmopolitan 'exposure', and the unique 'Australian experience'. In contrast, domestic narratives about international education define it as a "private good" in a user-pays logic. The dominant *leitmotif* is mainly about what 'they' can do for 'us': "jobs and income for Australians", domestic students "learning about other cultures", "forging new friendships" and "engag[ing] with difference". In this model, education is conceptualized as a commercial enterprise (Marginson & Considine, 2000) that mass produces and niche-markets commodities (i.e., knowledge and student/positional goods) deliverable on-shore, off-shore, through 'any place-any time' e-delivery, twinning programs, or corporate and 'collaborative' university consortia (e.g., Universitas 21;).

In Australia international education is the third largest export industry. In 2003, international students onshore and offshore were worth $AUD 5.2b, up from AUD $4.15b in 2002. In 2003 at total of 210,397 overseas students were enrolled in on-campus programs, an increase of

13.7% from 2002 (Department of Education, 2004). By mid-year 2004, total full degree onshore enrolments had increased by 11% over 2003, a drop of 2% from the previous year (IDP, 2004b). The largest increases from overseas source countries were China (41% growth over 2003) and India (47% growth over 2003), each sending 21,654 and 10,967 students respectively (IDP, 2004b). By 2010, international student revenue is expected to rise to AUD $10 billion. By 2025, global demand for international higher education is expected to exceed 7 million students which is a four-fold increase over demand in 2000 (Bohm, Meares, & Pearce, 2002). In 2002 the Federal Minister of Education enthused that this is “worth more than wool and approaching wheat in terms of export income” (DEST, 2002). With some irony here, wool and wheat, historical and economic Australian icons, are being toppled by an influx of international, that is, primarily ‘Asian’ students – the very neighbours Australia has had a complicated and often frosty relationship with. In 2004, international education and (non-monetary) gold “are the only commodities in the top 10 to experience growth in consecutive financial years” (IDP, 2004a). Public media discourse consistently celebrates the financial windfall of overseas students: “Boom in overseas students”; “The elephant stirs” (in reference to India as the new ‘cash cow’ expected to overtake China’s student outflow by 2025); “Education pumps up export earnings”, and many more variations on the same theme. Australia enrols 10% of all overseas students studying in OECD countries, the majority of whom are permanent residents in Asia (OECD, 2004). Clearly, Asia is Australia’s target customer base.

Despite claims of increased product diversity, consumer choice, niche marketing, and internationalization of curriculum (Gough, 2002, 2003; Rizvi & Walsh, 1998), the drift toward educational homogenization is undeniable and everywhere in evidence. Universities’ corporate branding, recruitment and marketing strategies, ads in overseas newspapers, the sales pitch at educational trade fairs, university mission statements and website genres – all look pretty much the same although the semiotics of brand logos, color choices, symbols and slogans signify product differentiation. Academics are not exempt from the work of corporatizing, branding, commercializing both the institutional and individual product. In Australia at least, academic staff have long grown accustomed to spending more time on committees drafting mission statements and promotional narratives for their department, programs and courses, attending branding meetings or induction sessions for the latest corporate and strategic development plans, and hauling glossy brochures to overseas conferences. Some argue that academic work today is rabidly competitive and less collaborative and collegial (Stormquist & Monkman, 2000). It is less about independent research or building academic networks and more about networking with potential funding agencies, liaising with universities’ commercial arms to pursue commercialization opportunities for their research products, and attending yet another workshop on how to dovetail one's research into the latest branding strategy or how to 'do business' with the private sector (Tight, 2000).

In the enterprise university, the educational product, its mode of production - pedagogy, the performativity of institutional "self-reflection" (cf. Ball, 2000), the construct of the 'international student' increasingly fit a standardized "global template" (Marginson & Mollis, 2001). Quality control processes produce an "avalanche of numbers" (Hacking, 1982) for evidence-based performance claims, submitted first to one's department, then reframed for submission to faculty, university, national funding bodies, government or international mega-organizations (UNESCO, NGOs, World Bank, etc.). Management may call these exercises self reflection – Foucault would refer to them as an insidious form of biopower or the disciplinary regime of the (self) examination (1980). Preoccupation with measurement and performance has become an institutional and individual obsession. Individual 'self-reflection' is mandated through peer review and self-appraisal of one's performance quantified in research income, 'eftsu' student load, higher degree completions, points accrued for publications mapped on the gold standard of ISI indexed journals, and so forth. We have turned the quality audit gaze on ourselves. We are our own enterprise, our own accountants of the debit and credit points system which shapes our academic decisions: the higher degree students we decide to supervise, the grants or consultancy tenders we submit that promise the most lucrative returns, the class loads we manage, the journals we select for manuscript submission (book reviews or pieces for non-refereed professional journals are generally considered 'a waste of time').

In the transition from academy to global business, academic staff have been reprofessionalised as managers of academic capital (Marginson & Considine, 2000) – both individual and institutional. Accrual and management of academic capital factors into crafting individual as well as institutional positional advantage. In that context, self and institutional management and governance are falling into alignment but they continue to conflict with residual academic values. The enterprise university is dominated by executive control, and evades direct confrontation between academics and managers by preserving quasi 'collegial forms'. The upshot, however, is that when the executive has "most of the means to make or unmake university identity and community, individual academic units are reduced to the role assigned to them in the neo-liberal model: local franchises of the mega-company" (Marginson, 2002, p. 128).

In the current climate of 'open' systems of accountability, performance is a kind of ontology, structured at the level of representation (of the institution, the department unit, the individual) in a discourse of excellence, 'world-class', or quality. The very core concept and unit of measurement of universities' management of global strategic advantage is, in fact, "performance indicators". Hence, the entire process of accountability -- an institution's mission, strategic plan, procedures and systems -- hinges on performance, on visible benchmarks and outcomes of quality product delivery. And yet it is within this discourse of performance and 'quality-excellence' management, that groups traditionally marginalized by the academy can benefit from making evidence-based claims about (in)equity issues (e.g., hiring, tenure, promotions, contract positions). Compared to what many now call the 'golden age' of the university, a time when departments and faculties were often run like nepotistic fiefdoms by a single (usually male) head or dean, when workloads, travel or research funds allocations were negotiated privately with individual staff behind closed doors, the new enterprise model of corporate managerialism, 'TQM' (total quality management) and public accountability can be said to have some redeeming features. The vast data banks of accountability can make visible institutional patterns of exclusion and marginalization, and can provide the evidence in support of arguments for equity as a quality issue.

At the same time, there are other arguable benefits of standardization, 'quality' branding and global benchmarking which are especially important for students' post-degree mobility, and for prospective students seeking internationally competitive credentials from accredited and trustworthy 'providers' (Mallea, 1999; UNESCO, 1998, p. 22). The health sciences in particular close ranks to outsiders and often years go by for thousands of English-fluent and highly trained 'immigrant' professionals repeatedly sitting for local professional re-accreditation exams (Mallea, 1999). Transnational globally recognized professional accreditation would eliminate such professional monopoly boundaries which, in turn, would facilitate mobility opportunities as well as ease professional integration and social transition into a new country.

But the crucial question remains: to what extent are those countries that have the most to gain from GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) negotiations to eliminate trade barriers on (credential) goods and (educational) services internationalizing their own sector? In the Australian context, resources targeted at internationalization continue to fixate on marketing and recruitment strategies, expansion of twinning programs, or on-campus services for international students, etc. Issues of curriculum, pedagogy and staffing remain the 'unsaid'. On one hand we might ask: how long can the higher education knowledge economy of teaching and research sustain itself and sustain offshore student interest unless a radical reinvention of its own practices and knowledge base is undertaken that would shift an essentially monocultural, Euro-American orientation to a more genuinely international and cosmopolitan education? And yet, many students from east and south-east Asia do not see the complacent monoculturalism of IT and business courses as a drawback:

> What these students want is entry into Americanized global business circles, especially in finance and trade, and the skills of living and studying in an English-language environment … practical reasons for enrolling in business or computing are indifferent to intellectual rigour, and call upon only a narrow set of cultural sensibilities (Marginson, 2002, p. 126)

Linked to the need to internationalize curriculum is Australia's academic staffing profile. Unlike Singapore, for instance, Australia has no foreign talent policy. There are no financial incentives or policy provisions to recruit the best and the brightest academics from the global marketplace. Moreover, increasing numbers of Australian-based academics are joining the brain-drain exodus to countries like Hong Kong and Singapore as well as the more traditional career destinations of the UK and US. State investments into higher education salaries and infrastructure in Singapore and Hong Kong are strong pulling cards that attract foreign talent (and relatedly, 'foreign' students). Singapore's development of a regional education hub of world-class standards is a case in point. Financial investments into higher education enable the recruitment of world-class scholars, generous funding of research centres and projects which, in turn, attracts the best researchers globally. Add to this the establishment of local campuses by 'ivy league' institutions[2] and, together, this mix generates its own academic capital -- the more high profile, high status and globally 'connected' the higher education sector becomes, the more desirable it becomes among foreign scholars and students who are increasingly alienated and disenfranchised in their own underfunded and overcrowded institutions of diminishing quality, intellectual and financial resources. In contrast, Australia has no overseas tertiary educational providers on its soil (U.S. based Notre-Dame branch plant university in Western Australia notwithstanding). In short, much like the export of primary resources (wool, wheat, ore) on which the nation and economy were built, education is a 'local' product for export only. Protectionism keeps overseas providers out which, as GATS deliberations proceed, will invariably be challenged by multilateral pressure for open trade on goods and services.

The exodus of academic talent from western universities -- traditionally the epicentre of intellectual and research productivity and innovation – to the periphery/'colonies' may well herald the dawn of 'paradigm shifts' whether at the level of disciplinary epistemologies, theory, or research models. Globalization, transdisciplinarity, connectivity, and 24/7 online research networks and communication notwithstanding – the fact is that academic teaching and research, for the most part, are located in a place with institutionalized time and space (classroom or lecture timetables and spaces). In other words, the flight of academic talent and capital from the west to the so-called rest, runs a significant chance of relocating research and intellectual expertise and, at the same time, emptying out the traditional western signifiers of prestige knowledge and know-how. These are part of the new push-pull dynamics of globalization gradually displacing old established center-periphery logics.

Finally, linked to the politics of Australia's 'closed' higher education sector to overseas providers, are political concerns regarding the status on international students studying in Australia. There is no 'self-reflective' debate in Australian universities over the status and rights of international students during and after their study sojourn. Since Australia has become one of the most popular study destination for Asian students, and given the huge earnings they generate, we ought to question whether overseas students are given the classic Australian 'fair go' and treated as international citizens by state and federal policy (Chen, 2002). Do international students have any rights as non-citizens during their period of study in Australia, or are they merely educational tourists? Chen's argument is important: current policies neglect considerations of equity and equality. Post-certification, international students cannot remain in Australia to work in their fields of expertise and consolidate their learning. In the long term Australia's opportunistic treatment of international students may well be a significant loss to its knowledge economy.

Politics of knowledge capital

International education is *education*, driven not only by financial considerations but by pedagogical principles and practices (teaching, learning, curriculum, assessment), and non-commercial goals such as student development, cultural exchange and the needs of newly industrialising countries (NIC). On a global scale international education can be seen as a form of economic exploitation of the educational aspirations of newly industrializing countries – a kind of educational imperialism. And yet international education can also contribute to nation-building in NICs, to increase educational opportunities and outcomes, and thereby increase local competence and global competitiveness of those economies. Several key issues, however, remain salient: (i) the rising cost of an overseas (western) credential bars millions of qualified students from participation in the new global educational marketplace; (ii) rising global aspirations for western training, credentials, and generic global degrees (e.g., in science or business) negate local specialism and knowledge; and (iii) once knowledge and education become commercialized, they are transformed into a purchasable private good –

no longer a public good accessible to all regardless of socio-economic circumstance. The implications for the future of public education and public archives of knowledge such as university libraries and scholarly publishing are dire (cf. James & McQueen-Thomson, 2002; Peters, 2003a; Willinsky, 2002). Arguably, the 'user-pays' rationale has already changed the rules for the dissemination of and access to knowledge generated by academic research which is fast fading as a public good for public access and benefit and in the public interest.

The rapid rate of mergers and take-overs of publishing houses by multinational media conglomerates in the last decade has created growing fault lines between academic researchers and corporate profit-makers which many academics see as unsustainable and, more importantly, unethical. Willinsky (2002) and James and McQueen-Thomson (2002), in incisive analyses of recent changes in scholarly publishing, note that discipline-based journal titles have proliferated in tandem with enormous price rises, increased frequency of issues published per year, and increased intermediate services (e.g., indexing services, citation quantifiers, document delivery, sales consortia, format aggregators and collecting agencies). The Taylor and Francis Group lists 105 journals scheduled for frequency and/or page increases in 2005. Indeed, "more information has become available than ever before, just as access is becoming increasingly exclusive, rationalized and commodified" (p. 194).

Academics are under pressure to publish in top tier ranked ISI journals (Institute for Scientific Information)[3]. Journals have become far more important than book publications in terms of rapid dissemination of new research, and for personal portfolio building: appointment, tenure, promotion. In fact, some journals "have acquired exceptional cachet over the years … that a researcher can win tenure, promotion or a research grant on the basis of a single article in the right publication" (The Economist, 2004, p. 68). A small elite group of multinational conglomerates such as Elsevier, Sage, Kluwer, Taylor and Francis, and Thomson have taken over the book and journals markets and are holding university libraries at ransom through subscription consortia that offer journals at exorbitant costs far in excess of production costs and reasonable profit margins, or else offer cheaper bundled subscription packages which forces subscribers to accept and pay for journals they would otherwise not purchase. In response, universities have begun to form their own buying consortia to reduce costs and minimize duplication of resources. Nonetheless, individual student and academic staff journal subscriptions have declined globally; university library subscriptions in Australia have decreased while expenditure has increased, due in large part to unfavourable exchange rates against American and British currency (James & McQueen-Thomson, 2002).

From 2000 to 2004, the average cost of a journal subscription has jumped roughly 30% to 60% in all disciplines (Divis, 2004). Some journals cost as much as USD $20,000 a year. Biology and health science journals which are at the centre of the genetics revolution increased by 38% and 39% respectively. The average annual subscription for a biology journal increased by USD $400 to USD $1,4000. Math titles increased from USD $880 to USD $1,170, physics journals from USD $1,900 to USD $2,5000, and chemistry from USD $2,000 to USD $2,700 (Divis, 2004). Electronic versions typically add between 10% and 25% to a print subscription. However, this is principally a library borne cost through site licensing since individual users have embraced the 'pay-per-view' concept of document delivery services which allows users a more targeted approach to material they need, although costs of e-delivery have risen sharply from the days of physical movement of books and journals though inter-library loans systems. Publishers' profits are substantial and are generally not published on their websites. The Taylor and Francis Group is an exception. Their 2003 Annual Report notes "robust" 8.8% growth in their journals business from £71 million in 2002 to £77.2 million in 2003. Book turnover grew by a phenomenal 26.3% - from £20.1 million to £96.5 million – due in large part to recent acquisitions, "the contributions from CRC Press, SZP and Bios" (Taylor & Francis Group, 2004, p. 3).

The pace of change in corporate mergers and restructuring of the scholarly publishing industry is unprecedented (cf. Cope & Ziguras, 2002). The Taylor and Francis Group is a good example which merged with Informa Group in May 2004, now renamed as 'T & F Informa' which, according to its website, "is a new international force in the provision of specialist information through publishing and *events businesses*" (my emphasis). Following the Taylor and Francis IPO (initial public offer) on the London Stock Exchange in 1998,

> the Group more than doubled in size with the acquisition of the Routledge Group of companies, which includes Routledge, Spon Press and Carfax. The acquisitions have continued with additions to the growing lists from quality publications including Martin Dunitz, Europa Publications, Gordon & Breach, Curzon Press, Fitzroy Dearborn, Garland Science, Bios Scientific Publishers Limited, Frank Cass and CRC Press (http://www.taylorandfrancisgroup.com/about/history.asp).

Small, long established publishing houses, often bearing the name of the original founder, are like krill in the jaws of deep-sea behemoths. Unable to compete with the publishing giants' new electronic services, bundled subscription deals, cheaper press runs enabled by the sheer volume of inventory titles, and access to global sales and distribution networks, small companies have diminishing competitive advantage. Taylor and Francis' two latest acquisitions are a case in point. Frank Cass & Co. was acquired in July 2003. The company was established by Frank Cass in 1957. It specializes in humanities and social science and publishes 60 journals and about 100 new books a year. In early 2004, T & F acquired the Dekker group of companies. Founded in 1963, Dekker is a New York based publisher of journals, reference and textbooks and encyclopaedias in science, engineering and medicine. Dekker publishes 78 journals and around 200 new book titles annually, and has been a family owned business since 1963. In contrast, Taylor and Francis publishes more than 1000 journals and around 1,800 new books each year (Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), and Elsevier publishes a staggering 2121 journals a year.

Publishers of high status journals have their "pick of the best papers, reinforcing their reputations in a positive feedback loop. They also claim copyright over what they publish, reinforcing their monopoly" (The Economist, 2004, p. 68). In other words, access to published work, including one's own authored work, requires payment. For instance, if I want to make two chapters of a book that I have written available to students in a course reader, first, federal copyright laws prohibit the use of more than one chapter or 10% of a book and, second, the publisher's copyright means that I need to get legal permission to use my own work. Lawrence Erlbaum, one of my publishers, generously waives permission fees for its authors. In most cases, journal and book copyright agreements give publishers the intellectual property rights to produce all or parts of 'the work' in any (print or electronic) format, at any time, and distributed to any part of the global market.

Manuscript copyediting used to be a *gratis* in-house service but is now commonly outsourced to small companies of variable quality. Many publishers now request camera ready copy which off-loads the pre-production process to academics. Poor quality copyediting is a common lament among academics who spend days and weeks reworking professionally edited copyedits. Academic salaries don't begin to cover the cost of time spent on research, writing of papers or books, preparing, copyediting and proofing manuscripts. The only financial compensation of book or journal royalties, in turn, barely covers the cost of one journal subscription. Academics essentially provide free labour to produce a product for a new breed of publishing mega-houses that stream profit revenue to shareholders not stakeholders, or reinvest fractional profit into 'services' that academics can no longer afford. This raises the spectre of the worker's confrontation with the product of her labor which, value-added at the terminus of the assembly line, is no longer hers and is beyond her financial reach.

The once widely touted 'democratization of knowledge' argument, heralded as a globally empowering consequence of globalization, is more appropriately characterized by commodification, centralization, privatization and capitalization of what most universities and governments still consider to be research driven knowledge that should be free and accessible to anyone anywhere (especially government funded research publications). Nearly a decade ago, Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996, p.23) already raised concern about new capitalism's incursions into what ought to count as knowledge (scholarly research), teaching and learning (curriculum): "How should we construe knowledge…in a world where new capitalism progressively seeks to define what counts as learning and knowledge in a 'knowledge economy' made of 'knowledge workers' doing 'knowledge work'". Academics are the very agents of the knowledge economy, doing knowledge work through research and training up new generations of knowledge workers for the knowledge economy. For international students, whether enrolled on-shore or off-shore, free access to scholarly published work ought to be an integral part of their 'globalized' education. Australia's hefty international student fees for higher degree programs do not cover the costly tollways that used to be public knowledge spaces on first-generation 'information super highways'.

The general mood among academics, some governments, university libraries and presses is that the new breed of publishers "have grown a little too fat and happy" and they are striking back (The Economist, 2004, p. 68). Moves are underway through non-profit advocacy groups, legislative bodies and committees in the U.K., Europe, and the U.S. to ensure free public access to government funded research. Many academics already make their work freely available on their websites or upload their work to open access sites, many of which are also advocacy organizations.[4]

As many have argued, the new technologies have opened up access to the world and the word, but created a digital divide that used to refer to equity issues of uneven access to connectivity and hardware. And just as governments and corporate philanthropy (e.g., Microsoft) are beginning to make incremental dents in ameliorating globally spatialized disadvantages of ICT access and participation, a new digital divide emerges that pits academic knowledge workers against corporate knowledge marketeers. The very nature of academic labor, the role of the university, public knowledge, as well as the most fundamental principles of democratic education, are undergoing massive, rapid and far-reaching 'restructuring' with which critical academic research itself barely keeps pace. As 'democratic' governments pull out of their regulatory and financial responsibilities for education and protection of public knowledge archives and spaces, academics are on their own: minions on the knowledge and student for profit production line. However, governments' abandonment of historical commitments to the protection of education and knowledge as sacrosanct public goods has pried thousands of academics out of old comfort zones into new e-knowledge movements by joining non-governmental advocacy groups for open access in order to regain some control and ownership over the product of their labor. Peters (2003b, p. 165) quite rightly observes that:

> In the age of knowledge capitalism the next great struggle after the 'culture wars' of the 1990s will be the 'education wars', a struggle not only over the meaning and value of knowledge both internationally and locally, but also over the means of knowledge production.

Nation-state, governance, cosmopolitics

Education has historically been situated as a national project. In most nation-states one of the primary goals of education has been to construct ideal or imagined communities populated by preferred subjectivities trained in desirable dispositions and aspirations that, together, constitute modern nations. State education around the world, particularly in colonial and postcolonial contexts, has a long history of subsuming difference among its populace into one dominant national identity. Nation building for empire or post-independence states has always pivoted around building allegiance, a sense of belonging and identity around a dominant ethno-nationalist idea or concept (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese, British or Soviet imperialism). Education shapes subjectivities by instilling desirable dispositions, values, attitudes that conform to prevailing political visions and economic imperatives – a powerful biopolitics. Learning about national heroes and achievements, national political structures, wars won and lost, singing national anthems, acquiring knowledge and skills required for work in a national economy, and learning the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (however defined and lived) are core aspects of any generation's educational experience, particularly the years of compulsory schooling. Globalization challenges the national project of education, notions of 'citizenship' (bound to a particular nation-state) and its connection to the practices of education, and the role of public institutions in civil society.

The global informational economy (Castells, 1989; 1996) is said to have diminished the power and significance of the nation-state (Holton, 1998) which has set enabling conditions for neoliberal agendas across the post-industrial and newly industrialializing world (cf. Burbules & Torres, 2000; Kellner, 2000; Kinnvall & Jonsson, 2002). Alongside global trends in the west to reduce public sector funding of education, IMF and World Bank directives, in cosy relationships with the OECD and WTO, have dramatically reduced public sector expenditures (Robison, Beeson, Jaysuriya, & Kim, 2000; Stiglitz, 2002), and 'encouraged' –

if not coerced - governments (i.e., especially donor countries such Indonesia, Thailand, Latin America) to move towards market-driven reforms and deregulation or ‘trade liberalisation’ of higher education (Schugurensky & Davidson-Harden, 2003). Disinvestments by the state of human and social services have opened the way for sedimenting inequalities through privatization and commercialization of public institutions. In the U.S., the re-elected conservative agenda has pushed for educational vouchers (consumer choice), and federal accountability benchmarks linked to student and teacher test scores (Laitsch, Heilman, & Shaker, 2002). In higher education, state delegislation of Affirmative Action policies have reversed 1970s equity agendas and reintroduced an overt politics of class and gender privilege into higher education. Economic and educational opportunities for women in NICs globally remain bleak: illiteracy is mainly a women’s problem, access to basic and advanced education has diminished (Chow, 2003; Pyle & Ward, 2003), women’s participation in international education stands at 42% in the US, 44% in Canada and 46% in Australia (Hyam, 2002), and their areas of study remain in traditional (and poorly paid) areas of health and education (Ehrenreich & Hochshild, 2002; Luke, 2001).

The shift from a modernist, fundamentally nation-centred university that offered the ‘gift’ of education to the colonized elites in the ‘aid’ era of international education to the current business imperatives of a “trade-driven strategy” (Gallagher, 2002) is purported to yield substantial economic benefits for both provider countries (export income) and consumers (acquisition of positional goods and human capital). Yet despite decentralization and talk of ‘free markets’, reduced state funding and commodification, the state continues to exert significant policy and decision-making control over education (Cooper, Hinkson, & Sharp, 2002; Held & McGrew, 2002; Mok, 2003; Mok & Lee, 2003; Peters, 2003a). State control and financial investments in education in Hong Kong and Singapore have expanded considerably (Cheung & Sidhu, 2003; Gopinathan, 1997; Mok, 2003; Mok & Lee, 2003). In Australia, state control over the sector is exerted through a range inverse control measures: putative decentralization, reduced state funding, setting national research priorities, manipulating government funded student places for different states and (regional and urban) universities, or carrot and stick approaches such as promises of increased funding pending universities’ compliance with internal governance restructuring.

By contrast, in countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, state control over a heavily resourced, national public education system remains an important part of nation building, national identity politics, and resolute pursuit of economic globalization (Hill & Lian, 1995; Rodan, Hewison, & Robison, 2001; Rowen, 1998). The irony here is that one of the hallmarks of globalization is said to be the diminishing importance of the nation-state

(Holton, 1998). And yet Singapore and Malaysia, relatively 'cosmopolitan' countries heavily wired to the global economy, have strong national educational systems with strong state control (Green, 1987; Hewison, Robison, & Rodan, 1998; Mok & Lee, 2003; Wee, 2002). Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore have long used education to localize rather than globalize – to put education in the service of ethno-nationalist projects in the context of post-independence nation building (Brown, 2000; Kahn, 1995; 1998). For example, aggressive affirmative action policies in Malaysia and Indonesia result in large outflows of ethnic Chinese students to the U.S., U.K. and Australia. In Singapore current educational reform initiatives (*Thinking Schools, Learning Nation* and *National Education*) are explicit attempts to rebuild national identity and 'values' among new generations.

Concluding Remarks

The university is in transition: from its historical self-definition as a public national good to an entrepreneurial industry with tradeable goods, from a world of students to one of 'customers', from pedagogues to 'facilitators', from teaching to 'delivery', and from a focus on the invention of knowledge to the production of competencies and skills (OECD, 2001). In a global world the mono-lingual and mono-cultural self grounded in fixed and singular identity will be at increasing disadvantage. In this respect international education can be used to facilitate spaces and practices of cultural complexity, complex connectivity, and difference. In other words, a genuine international education should seek to develop in students the capacity to understand and negotiate identity in a global setting, where national differences remain salient but are inflected by a range of other elements.

State responses to the push-pull forces of globalization in terms of education vary considerably. This illustrates the local-global tensions of 'complex connectivity' and 'relativization' – countries' relative positioning within globalization processes vis-à-vis their own history, resources, and geography, and the state's political and economic visions (Luke & Luke, 2000). As higher education becomes progressively uncoupled from national education policy frameworks, it may at worst *lose* or at best *transform* the capacity to use education in the service of national interests other than purely economic ones. And yet newly industrialising (e.g., South Africa, Vietnam) and postindustrial 'cosmopolitan' (e.g., Singapore) countries are devising educational futures in relation to local institution and nation-building as deliberate responses to global educational and economic imperatives (Cloete et al., 2002).

If the 'demise' of nation state sovereignty is evident in many late-capitalist nations, then it begs the question of where that might leave state education in a democratic society.

Historically seen as a human right, public and individual good, state education has served as the 'great' democratic lever for economic development, social mobility and amelioration of social inequalities. Although schools and universities have both reduced and reproduced social inequalities, the state's withdrawal of support for higher education erodes this traditional democratic function by commercializing supply (educational goods) and demand (user-pays customers). The role of the state in deregulating and marketizing education is therefore a powerful illustration of the collusion between governments and market forces in shaping the political economy of education. It also raises complex issues of global governance that extend beyond structural adjustments in local higher education governance (Marginson & Considine, 2000; Martinelli, 2003).

For instance, recent GATS negotiations raise questions about the conceptual carving up of education, with suggestions that the WTO ought to ratify technical trade issues, and that the more nebulous quality aspects of the educational product (accreditation, qualifications, quality assurance) be dealt with by UNESCO, OECD or APEC (Gallagher, 2002). If education is defined as global free-market trade in service – not as a liberal welfare state entitlement for the public good -- then global consumers ought to have (global) consumer rights and protections from ‘faulty’ products and providers. In turn, global quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms might also imply a world trades and practices commission where students/consumers can access mediation, compensation or legal action with an international statutory body or court. The establishment of juridical networks for educational governance is a plausible scenario. In turn, “in the absence of a supranational entity to regulate the supply and use of global public goods” (Held & McGrew, 2002, p. 105), one might ultimately question the governability of the global trade in education.

Notes

1. The University of Melbourne, for instance, had “two or three companies” in 1990 and today has eleven and a financial services staff of 87 (Perry, 2004). Other Australian University Finance Departments: University of Sydney (300 university-wide); University of Queensland (80); University of New South Wales (68); Monash University (50); Australian National University (70); University of Adelaide (120).
2. Spearheaded in 1998 by the Singapore Economic Development Board (SEDB) as part of Singapore’s *Industry 21* strategy, the long-term plan is to establish ten world-class university bases in Singapore. Currently, INSEAD (French Business School) and the University of Chicago Business School have set up campuses. Singapore Management University was developed on a blueprint of University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton Business School but is not a twinning program or WBS branchplant. Australia’s University of New South Wales will establish its own campus by 2007 offering degree programs from Bachelor to PhD with capacity for 15,000 students.
3. The ISI, formerly The Social Science Index, is now owned by Thomson Corporation which posted a USD $2.1 billion profit in 2004 in its ‘Learning’ market alone. About 20% percent of ISI indexed journals produce 80% percent of ISI listed citations.

4. See for example: http://www.publicknowledge.org/; http://www.openarchives.org/; http://www.interpares.org/). Other initiatives include open access sites for research software (*Open Journal* systems at http://www.pkp.ubc.ca), free search and citation analysis tools (http://citebase.eprints.org), and a self-archiving site for refereed research literature that is not subject to journal copyright strictures (http://www.eprints.org).

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