

Chapter 13

Academic Migration and Reshaping of Pedagogy and Epistemology: An Insider-Outsider Perspective

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Abstract This chapter highlights major contemporary migration features in the context of globalization that have created new cultures in cosmopolitan societies today, characterized by multiculturalism, pluralism, inclusivity, and dynamic and continuous change of cultural elements in society. The new migration features brought about by globalization have changed the migrant patterns of societies and will have significant impact on migrants and both the sending and receiving societies. To highlight a few, long term migrants have been replaced largely by short term migrations; migration destinations have in many cases become mid-way stops rather than irreversible destinations. As a result, the old concepts of brain drain have been increasingly replaced by brain circulation, signifying that an age of back and forth flow of talents is emerging, replacing the old days with irretrievable talent outflows. In addition, internationalization has become a common agenda across the world, with cities competing for gaining talents in the brain circulation orbits. This has also affected the discourse agenda in universities in particular, with discussion gradually shifting from economic gains in internationalization to the development of new epistemologies that reflect a diversity of cultures. In the context of this migration shift, this paper delineates the author's personal experience, as an educational expatriate in the academic diaspora, in the different localities of his workplace, namely Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore. The chapter both reports on and analyzes his observation of the above-mentioned changes from the perspective of an insider-outsider participant observer.

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13.1 Introduction

In 2003, the United Nations established the Global Commission on International Migration to study the phenomenon of international migration, in order to provide a framework for the formulation of a global response to the issue. The Commission Report was published in 2005, entitled *Migration in an Interconnected World: New Directions for Action* (GCIM 2005). The Report has provided many insights and new perspectives about the scale, impact and interconnectedness of globalisation and migration. The Report points out that the world has been transformed by the process of globalisation. States, societies, economies and cultures in different regions of the world are increasingly integrated and interdependent, particularly referring to the development trends below:

- There are almost 200 million international migrants, a number equivalent to Brazil, the fifth most populous country in the world. It is more than double the figure recorded in 1980.
- Migrants are now to be found in every part of the globe, some of them are moving within their own region and others travelling from one part of the world to another. Around 60 % of the recorded migrants are located in the world's most prosperous countries, and the other 40 % in developing regions.
- Asia has some 49 million migrants, Africa 16 million and Latin America and the Caribbean region six million.
- Economic restructuring has been identified as a major factor for migration, but there are significant cultural factors affecting migration, such as gaining new experiences and encountering unfamiliar cultures.
- Other factors for increased migration include the growth of global communications networks, global transportation, and global social networks and diasporas that have made it easier for people to move to another country and to adapt to a new society.
- The pattern of migration has also changed. Whereas earlier migrants were 'permanent settlers' in the destination countries, there is a growing phenomenon of temporary migrants, such as international students and scholars.
- Increase in international migration has led to the emergence of 'global cities', characterised by a significant degree of diversity, that are described as socially dynamic, culturally innovative and economically successful.

Faist (2000) has identified three generation-typologies of migration. The first generation of migration was mainly characterised by the 'push-pull' factors, representing the age of industrialisation where migration was seen in terms of emigration and immigration. The second generation of migration was affected by the centre-periphery perception, with emigrants flowing from less developed states to states that are more economically developed. The third generation of migration deviates from the former two types, being regarded as 'migration in social spaces', which is transnational in nature, considering migration not as singular journeys, but as a part of life of the migrants that would blur the distinction between origins and destinations. Instead of seeing migration as a linear movement, the third generation is post-modern, seeing migration as an emergent and complex phenomenon, with circular flows of persons, ideas, goods and symbols across nation-state borders (see also

Castles 2002). Likewise, Pries (2008) describes transnational migration as a kind of movement towards the creation of ‘social space’ rather than ‘geographical space’. In addition, Castells (2000) observes a shift towards ‘space of flows’ as compared to the conventional emphasis of ‘spaces of places’.

The concept of circular flow in migration is important, as it changes the perception about people movement from a gain-loss perspective, which was based upon the notion of permanent settlement and also a linear concept, to a win-win perspective. As the Commission Report puts it, the notion of ‘brain drain’ is increasingly replaced by the notion of ‘brain circulation’, caused by the phenomenon of temporary migration, and with the possibilities of migrants returning to their own country on a regular or occasional basis, sharing the benefits of the skills and resources they have acquired while living and working abroad (GCIM 2005).

Against this background of concept shift in migration towards a non-linear complex phenomenon of circular talent flows, temporary migration, and social space, this chapter aims to analyse how these concepts may be applied in understanding the role of education in the context of globalisation. My personal trajectory – a PhD student trained in the field of comparative education in the United Kingdom, and having been engaged in academic appointments in Hong Kong and Australia, and now in Singapore – informs my analysis. It will be based upon the academic agenda that I have developed while working in these countries – as a temporary migrant and an academic migrant using the concept of migration, and a ‘global scholar’ using the concept of globalisation. The chapter is also developed from an insider-outsider perspective. I was educated and raised in Hong Kong, and am absolutely an insider of Hong Kong, but the opportunity to study and work overseas allowed me to reflect upon and analyse Hong Kong from an outsider perspective. As a comparativist, I have taken interest in educational policy and development in a broad range of countries, especially those in the Asia-Pacific region, such as Australia and Singapore. I began with learning about the two countries as an outsider, but the opportunity of working in them, and experiencing cultural immersion, has allowed me to understand more about the two countries as an insider. This interaction of insider and outsider perspectives allows me to keep challenging my earlier perceptions about these three places, and identify commonalities and differences, in the process of developing and analysing research agendas in each location.

13.2 The Emergence of ‘Academic Migrants’ in the Internationalisation of Education

In his analysis of the development of higher education in the twenty-first century, Altbach (1998) has identified trends which concur broadly with the globalisation literature, as follows:

- *Changes in the university student profile.* Students come from much more diverse social class backgrounds, and the proportion of women in the student population has dramatically increased. Although student activism has declined over the last few decades, there is a rise in student consumerism in higher education.

Students worldwide have become more concerned with the usefulness of higher education in the employment market and they have demanded a more vocationally useful course of study.

- *Changes in the professoriate.* The decline in government funding to universities has led to increased vulnerability of the professoriate – decrease in full-time permanent positions; increase in part-time and non-permanent positions; and consequentially the professoriate in general “the best and brightest” are less frequently attracted to academic careers. On the other hand, the academic profession has become more diverse in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity.
- *Internationalisation.* Knowledge has become increasingly international and links among academic institutions worldwide continue to expand. The number of international students and scholars continue to grow. This is a positive aspect of contemporary higher education, although at the same time it increases demands for financing.

In sum, there is an increased flow of international students, and also of the professoriate in the internationalisation process of higher education. It is interesting to note that education has become a significant reason for migration, especially temporary migration, creating a kind of ‘academic migration’. There are obvious reasons for students who wish to study overseas. Some would study overseas because of wider opportunities available elsewhere as compared to their own localities. Others would want to go overseas simply for exposure reasons. And in the globalised world, employers also look for human resources that would have global exposure, and this encourages many students to aspire to overseas experience, including gap year experiences as this would enhance their job opportunities in the global job markets.

In respect to the professoriate, the decline of the traditional professoriate, as described by Altbach, has given opportunities to people from outside of their localities to teach in higher education institutions. This is also related to globalisation and the trend in migration shifts. Aharonov (2010) has particularly identified the growth of education expatriates in his study on the implications of migration for education. According to Aharonov, expatriation refers to people who spend part of their life living and working in other countries. But an expatriate is characterised as the person ‘who comes today and leaves tomorrow’. He/she is not a sojourner, but rather a transient who comes for a defined mission or purpose and leaves after it is done. Even if he/she stays, he/she can indeed leave at any time. He/she is characterised as ‘permanent in his impermanency’.

Aharonov (2010) further argues that from a global perspective, the mobility of more educated people is significant. The largest corporations today are multinational corporations who hire millions of employees from all over the world, and thus facilitating their mobility is important for economic development.

With the growth of education expatriates working in higher education institutions, and with the growth of temporary migration, this group of scholars may well be termed as ‘academic migrants’, a terminology that Mason and Rawlings-Sanaei have adopted in editing this book, in examining the role of education expatriates in

the contexts of globalisation and internationalisation. Below I would like to offer my reflection on what I have experienced and learned while living and working in Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore, and what I might contribute to the three locations as a comparativist, an education expatriate and an academic migrant. The approach taken in this chapter is to provide a reflective account of my personal experience as a participant observer and an insider-outsider.

13.3 From Internationalisation to Culture-Based Education: The Experience in Australia

A highlight of my teaching experience in Australia was the supervision of several PhD students, one of whom, Aharonov, researched education expatriates for his PhD study. Aharonov was an international student from Israel. His interest was initially focused on the group of teachers sent by the Israeli Government to teach Israeli culture and the Hebrew language to emigrants (for his study, he focused on those migrating to Australia). Very soon, he found that he had to work on the migration literature, and such related issues as cultural adoption and migrant adaptation. Very soon, he found that cultural adoption and adaptation is not a unilateral process in that migrants are not only recipients of cultural adoption and adaptation. They also have an active role to play, contributing to the gradual cultural shift of their ambience as well. The possible contribution of a migrant to their migration destination is an important insight, as this might significantly change the thinking and culture of the receiver. For example, Australia as a country of migrants always identifies itself as a country that supports multiculturalism. Australia is no doubt characterised by western democracy due to a substantial population from the west (broadly speaking), but there is significant acknowledgment of the need to preserve indigenous cultures. With an increased migrant population from Asia, Australia also acknowledges the significance of the Asian cultures.

With many universities setting internationalisation as a significant development agenda, Australia has become particularly known for its recent expansion in overseas enrolments and export of educational services. In 2002, Australian public higher institutions enrolled 185,000 international students as compared to 29,000 12 years earlier, amounting to 21 % of the total student enrolment in higher education, one third of whom were studying in offshore programs. International students contributed A\$2 billion to Australian universities. In addition, further substantial amounts were spent by these students and their families in living expenses when residing in Australia (Harmon 2005). In 2010, the number of international students enrolled in the higher education sector in Australia had jumped to 227,230 (Marginson and McBurnie 2003).

Internationalisation of higher education is a means to many ends, and thus represents broad interests and varied perceptions in Australia. First, internationalisation is a means of raising revenue for the higher educational institutions. Internationalisation

is in this sense a commercial export of higher education services, reflecting Australia's policy shift from aid to trade since the mid-1980s. The commercial basis of internationalisation has led to the expansion of international students in the higher education system. Second, internationalisation of higher education functions as a means of enhancing the international outlook of the exporting country, international impact and international relations. The second function is closely related to the first one. On the one hand, the commercialisation of education is established as a means of sensitising the nation to global competition. On the other hand, the expansion of higher education exports is also a means of enhancing the international impact of Australia. Third, internationalisation is also a means of enriching cultural understanding with the corollary of an awareness among Australian academics to internationalise the higher education curricula (Lee 2008).

From a cultural perspective, investigation of different aspects of the internationalisation of higher education in Asia has been regarded as significant for the understanding of localisation and contextual impacts in globalisation, and advancing cultural understanding across cultures. In the context of contemporary taxonomies of globalisation, (for example that of Sklair 1999, which distinguishes between the World Systems model, Global Society, Global Culture, and Global Capitalism), it is the latter two that stand out. Economic and cultural globalisation form key elements of the changing context for international relations in education.

While teaching at the University of Sydney during 2005–2007, there was intense discussion among academics about the recruitment of international students for economic reasons, without attention to their learning needs. As alleged by Park (2009), taking an internationalisation perspective, there is more emphasis on the integration of Australian students with international students, than the internationalising of learning content and context. There has not been much discussion and effort to understand the practice of internationalising the learning context in respect to international students' cultural background and the internationalised learning environment. There are many factors which interfere with internationalisation in the learning context such as English proficiency, culture difference and the lack of awareness of these issues both in the wider public and among academics. This kind of question is important to address, as this will have significant epistemological implications. For example, Welch (2004) challenged the basis of knowledge that is based upon western traditions, and called for the need to examine the development of knowledge from various cultural perspectives.

Shortly after joining the University of Sydney, my colleagues (D. O'Connor and L. Napier) and I were funded by the University to work on a project entitled 'Transformation towards internationalisation: The individual and the classroom' which led to a publication edited by Waugh and Napier (2009). We surveyed and interviewed students in the Faculty of Education and Social Work and invited them to come together to share their learning experience. It became clear to the academics involved that it was necessary to reconstruct epistemologies that take into account students' cultural backgrounds and that the international students are cultural assets for these goals to be achieved. We also realised that teaching international students is a process of learning for ourselves, at least to understand how students from

different cultural backgrounds differ in their reactions to an academic issue. Thus, as in the case of academic migrants, international students should be viewed as teaching resources. In this way, we can make the best use of the diverse cultural environment in the classroom as a learning context for everyone.

A recent report published by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, namely *Civic and Citizenship Draft Shape Paper* (ACARA 2012) adopts the concept of multiple citizenship, which acknowledges that citizenship perspectives can be affected by personal, social, spatial and temporary situations (Cogan and Derricott 2000). More importantly, instead of seeking a legal definition of citizenship (by birth or naturalization), the paper emphasizes that citizenship is a “state of being” (para. 15). This emphasises that the contextual situation plays an important part in the shaping of citizenship concepts. The notion of citizenship in the report highlights the significant implications of temporal situations in the conceptualization of citizenship. Most immediately, it integrates multiple dimensions of citizenship that reflect the reality of Australian society, acknowledging diversity and at the same time calling for inclusivity. The inclusivity of diversity echoes very well with the theme of the national citizenship booklet: *Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond* (Commonwealth 2012). Inclusivity provides a common bond for Australian citizens. The shift from the traditional legal definitions of citizenship to a “state of being” (para. 15) characterises an existential participatory definition of citizenship. This means that citizenship is not simply a legal identity, but a personal identity, and at the same time it emphasises the need to respect other citizens’ personal identities within the society. It therefore posits citizenship as a fluid concept open to change depending on both the country and personal situations. Notwithstanding all these allowances for change, notions of citizenship are based upon democratic beliefs, rights and liberties (Commonwealth 2012). The outcome of informed and active citizenship is to “improve society” (para. 19), with a common goal to shape the future society for the common good. Interestingly, harmony is identified as a distinctive citizenship feature in Asian cultures (Lee 2012). It is noteworthy, however that harmony in this respect is mentioned in respect to local, regional and global communities rather than citizenship relationships per se.

The discussion on internationalisation leans towards inter-cultural education. This echoes Stier’s (2006) assertion that internationalisation is about intercultural communication and intercultural competence. He concedes that internationalisation requires the teaching of six i-Characteristics:

- Intercultural (themes and perspectives),
- Interdisciplinary,
- Investigative (curiosity and passion for new cultural experiences and knowledge),
- Integrated (national and international students),
- Interactive (teacher-student; student-student) and
- Integrative (theory-practice).

Thus, internationalisation is not ‘complete’ without traversing cultural boundaries, and an orientation towards intercultural learning.

13.4 Reshaping Pedagogy That Integrates Chinese and International Practices: The Experience in Hong Kong

It is well established in the globalisation literature that the localisation which occurs in the process of globalisation counters the effects of the dominance of globalisation. The dichotomy implies conflicts and polemic tensions between what is supposed to be global and what is supposed to be local. However, my experience of working in Hong Kong and observation from there suggests that localisation and globalisation may not necessarily be in conflict, but on the contrary can be complementary.

Although Hong Kong had been a British colony for over 150 years, Hong Kong has been still “very Chinese” at least in terms of its demography, with 98 % of the population being ethnic Chinese. Although English is an official language, and a common language in trades and business, Cantonese is still the lingua franca of the community. And it was only after the transfer of sovereignty to China in 1997 that Mandarin has become more widely spoken. I have conducted a comparative study between Hong Kong and Shanghai in terms of internationalization, and found that teachers from Shanghai were more concerned to know about international affairs whereas Hong Kong teachers were more concerned about values issues (Lee and Leung 2006).

A seminal work in the field entitled *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences* (Biggs and Watkins 1996) is based upon observations from two educational expatriates from Australia and New Zealand respectively, about the process of learning among Chinese students in Hong Kong. Biggs and Watkins highlighted two aspects of the so-called “paradox of the Chinese learner”: (1) Chinese learners are often taught in conditions not conducive to good learning according to Western standards, such as large classes, expository methods, relentless norm-referenced assessment and harsh classroom climate, yet they out-perform Western students, at least in science and mathematics and have deeper, meaning-oriented, approaches to learning; (2) Chinese learners are generally perceived as passive rote learners, yet they show high levels of understanding. Five years later, the paradox of the Chinese learner was extended to the Chinese teachers in a follow-up volume entitled *Teaching the Chinese Learners: Psychological and Pedagogical Perspectives* (Watkins and Biggs 2001). Here the authors found that the tightly orchestrated teacher-centred teaching allowed students to be active, even in large classes. Moreover, Western teaching innovations such as constructivist teaching methods and problem-based learning were found to work well with the Chinese learners if carefully implemented by the Chinese teachers concerned (Watkins and Biggs 2001).

Following up on these observations, Mok and I published a special journal issue, entitled *Construction and Deconstruction of the Chinese Learner: Implications for Learning Theories* (Lee and Mok 2008). In this special journal issue, we found more diverse and complicated issues in relation to Chinese learners. Mok et al. (2008) found that quiet students in the classroom does not equate with passive

learners. There are social reasons behind it. They did not ask questions mainly because they did not want to interrupt the teachers in the course of teaching and they did not want to deprive other students in the class from learning what the teachers have to teach them, uncomfortable that they would occupy the class time because of their own questions. Instead, after the class, the students will compare notes with each other, and sometimes ask further questions to their teachers outside the classroom. They are indeed active learners, only their classroom behaviour is somewhat passive. Harbon (2008) depicted how the deepening of teacher/student relationships could enhance learning (Harbon 2008). Mak moved further to demystify concepts of the Chinese learners, arguing that the Chinese learners, even though they may be different from learners of other cultures, still needed to resolve problems common to all learners (Mak 2008). Moreover, Chinese pedagogies were not easily stereotyped. Rather they emerged in response to changing educational contexts and to changing demands on teaching and learning (Chan 2008).

In sum, the articles solicited for the special journal issue argued that studying pedagogies for Chinese learners made a special contribution to a more general understanding of teaching and learning theories. In particular, cross-cultural studies can show how self-concept theories can be revisited or reconstructed. For example, Wang and Lin (2008) found that students of some high performing countries in mathematics could have relatively low self-concepts, and vice versa, whereas within country, i.e. intra-culturally, students' self concepts and learning achievements are positively correlated (cf. Lee and Mak 2008). Moreover, Chan (2008) argues that there might not be such thing as 'Chinese learners'. Teaching strategy considerations among her sample teachers required adaptation and integration of various learning strategies. Even within a Chinese cultural context teachers need to adopt a transformational approach in teacher development and/or teaching strategy development that integrates a cultural orientation with the changing educational demands and expectation that a society like Hong Kong undergoes.

13.5 Being International with Local Roots: The Experience in Singapore

During my short period of living and working in Singapore, I have observed the embracement of internationalisation¹ as a circumstantial developmental path in Singapore, with a strengthening of domestic harmonisation and the adoption of a global stance. Singapore never fails to surprise me, demonstrating her deliberate embrace of an 'external, non-domestic agenda', such as globalisation and the institutionalisation of English as a language in public life (Tham 1989).

Singapore is a multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural country. During her nation building years, Singapore's multiracial society comprised mainly the

¹The terms globalisation and internationalisation are used interchangeably in the context of this chapter.

Chinese, while the Malay, Tamil and the others formed the rest of the population. Multiracialism, multilingualism and multiculturalism were held as pillars to build a cohesive and progressive nation (Chan 1989). The English language was adopted as the language for official purposes as a means to ensure survival for a resource scarce nation and also to uphold multilingualism and multiculturalism (Tham 1989). The English language is regarded as ethnically neutral, and serves to connect people of diverse ethnic groups and languages (Gopinathan 2011; Shotam 1989). Governing this diverse population requires great sensitivity and balance, where equal attention must be given to the diverse ethnic/cultural groups residing in Singapore. Tan highlights the practice of multiculturalism which encompasses governance that upholds the equal treatment of all racial groups in its policies and in practice.

‘Multiracialism’ celebrates a harmonious society made up of distinct ‘racial’ groups... These ethnic identities and their respective practices are encouraged to flourish in the private sphere. In the public realm, decisions, selections, and promotions are made in ways that officially do not disadvantage any particular racial community. (Tan 2010b, p. 275)

Nation-building demands shared values across cultures for Singaporeans to share the same ground and this includes: collaboration, forbearance, mutual sensitivity and respect towards ‘building a democratic society’, as stated in their pledge. The government’s emphasis on attaining economic development through education and meritocracy have provided the public with a shared social goal for building a harmonious society based on justice and equality that supersede one’s ethnicity (Tham 1989). Internationalisation therefore provided a future-oriented vision for Singaporeans while helping its population to meet the demands of the twenty-first century global workplace and society.

Singapore’s education agenda may be considered as national with a global outlook. As Koh (2007, p. 186) describes it, “The Singapore way of participating in global capitalism is tactical because it uses a range of social, economic and education policies and translates them into national imperatives or into discourses of crisis.” With regard to citizenship education, Singapore takes on a holistic approach incorporating civil, moral and national education with personal development, social-emotional learning and character education. The perception of ‘consumer citizenship’ has expanded to echo the prominence of marketisation as Singapore internationalised (Baieldon and Sim 2010). Tan comments that “Globalisation is recognised as a double-edged sword that is seen as being beneficial to the well-educated and mobile Singaporeans. They were labelled the ‘cosmopolitans’ for their relative adaptability and receptivity to globalisation and their English language proficiency” (Tan 2010a, p. 85). Koh (2007) added that this is the ‘metapragmatics of globalisation in Singapore.’ Cosmopolitan Singaporeans described in the *Singapore 21 Report* exemplifies the ‘culture of internationalisation’ (Singapore 21 Committee 1999). Grounded in international literature and an array of teaching methodologies adopted by Singapore teachers, Singapore’s citizenship pedagogies in schools are diversified. In Sim’s (2010) study of social studies teachers in Singapore, four pedagogical typologies were found to characterise Singaporeans. Sim (2010) terms them expository and highly controlled, rationalistic and persuasive, interactive and

participative and constructive and experiential. I have argued in my scholarship of Asian citizenship pedagogies that Asian educators are kept abreast of international pedagogical literature however, they often make informed choices regarding its application and implementation (Lee 2010). This appears to describe the context of Singapore as well.

In the short span of my stay in Singapore, I have come to note the striking difference between Hong Kong and Singapore. While the cultural agenda of the 'Chinese Learner' may be conveniently applied to Hong Kong, the cultural makeup of Singapore is much more diverse in nature and dynamic with its active emigration and immigration. As the Dean of Education Research at the National Institute of Education, I am responsible for the management of research projects within the Institute. I have observed from many research projects that the academic and policy discussions in Singapore illuminate the importance of applying empirical evidence in academic, pedagogical research in order to inform policy making within the Institute and the Ministry of Education.

The constant reminder is that Singapore is a small state and its survival is highly reliant on its ability to attain international standards to achieve and complete internationally. It appears to reflect Singapore society's emphasis on social harmony, while blurring cultural differences to minimise cultural conflicts. Similarly, in the research on schools and classrooms in Singapore, there is a deliberate restraint against demarcating cultural explicitness in relation to specific ethnic groups. For example, schools and classrooms are not being profiled culturally.

The Chinese Learner is a deliberate research perspective on citizenship identity in Hong Kong, a perspective which deliberately highlights cultural identity (as opposed to political identity). In Singapore, relatively little research has been conducted to profile the Singapore Learner or Asian Learner based on cultural heritage as a divergent educational characteristic of the society analogous to the Chinese learner. However, the Singapore education system is distinctive in itself. Even though Singapore adopts a British 'O' level and 'A' level examination system, the papers are quite different from those examinations conducted in the U.K. Thus we cannot assume direct knowledge transfer of the Singapore education system from the West.

As the education nucleus of Asia, Singapore has positioned internationalisation of education as a strategic policy agenda. Cribbin (2008) describes this nucleus that Singapore has cultivated as a 'secondary hub' as opposed to the commonly known 'primary hub'. This implies that Singapore functions as a *platform* for students to 'come through' rather than 'come to' Singapore as a *destination* for overseas students. Rather than expanding its own education system, Singapore takes on a unique approach to invite prominent and esteemed universities from the United States and Australia to inaugurate its branch campuses in Singapore. Therefore, in contrast to the intensifying discussion in Australia regarding intercultural education that has evolved from internationalisation, Singapore is relatively silent (with the exception of the private sector) in its discussion on understanding cultural elements in a globalised world. Cultural respect appears to be embedded in their value system, where Singaporeans have been inculcated to value divergent cultures within their society.

This has caused them to demonstrate mastery in their traits, knowledge and skills as an international citizen (a view that has been debated by my Australian colleagues as being Western-based).

13.6 Conclusion: The Role of Academic Migrants in Enriching Scholarship and Teaching

The above discussion was generated by the insights of the editors of this book Felicity Rawlings-Sanaei and Colina Mason, who specifically requested an analysis of an academic migrant from personal experience, knowing that I have lived and worked in three countries. Their suggestion of this particular approach has prompted me to combine my training in comparative education with the research I have conducted while living and working in the three countries, and recall seriously how the interplay of insider-outsider perspectives inform my understanding of the interplay of globalisation and localisation, as well as internationalisation and nationalisation.

The thinking process in shaping this chapter has also led me to think about how a culture-based epistemology and intercultural education agenda could emerge in the process of internationalisation of education in Australia; and how the search for cultural roots and the Chinese Learner agenda have emerged during the 150 years of British colonisation in Hong Kong. Moreover, it has prompted me to consider how the globalisation and internationalisation agenda, on top of nation-building, gradually becomes an overarching national goal that is pragmatically seen as an advantage for Singapore to enhance its immersion in the global arena, on the one hand, and an indirect way to achieve harmonisation in an ethnically diverse population, on the other. Further, what I have learned while working in the three cultural settings has provided invaluable insights as a migrant scholar to note how the emphasis on internationalisation in Australia has led to growing awareness of intercultural education; how the search of cultural roots in Hong Kong as a British colony has led to the reinforcement of the localisation and cultural agenda in an international city; and as a city state, how Singapore has chosen to adopt globalisation and internationalisation agendas that would balance out ethnic diversities.

A few decades ago, the economic miracles of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Japan caught the world's attention as East Asia's Four Little Dragons. A tremendous amount of research and analysis appeared over the years, seeking to better understand the common success factors of the four economies. Interestingly, the findings have been mixed, and no commonly accepted growth formulae have been developed. The general conclusion was that these successful economies were able to make use of the opportunities available in the world market, and develop economic strategies that particularly fit their own social, cultural and political settings and economies which have all contributed to their success.

My observation about the development of scholarship and teaching in Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore has arrived at similar findings – the three countries all have different approaches in developing epistemology and pedagogies that are relevant to their own contexts. However, the interesting observation is that universalism and particularism in the three countries interact in their own ways to arrive at different emphases, with all three having differing combinations of the two: namely, a culturalist agenda is developed from an international agenda in Australia; a cultural approach to learning is developed in an international city, Hong Kong; and an internationalised agenda is developed due to the existence of cultural diversities in Singapore. Having said that, this observation by no means implies that internationalisation is not important in Australia and Hong Kong, nor that culturalism is not important in Singapore.

Being an academic migrant, I have found much enrichment in my cultural experience, while living and learning in the three cultural contexts. What I have found most enlightening is that any cultural context is very complex, and that caution should be exercised in making generalisations as diversities are embedded within a seemingly unified culture. At the same time, being an academic migrant, I take courage in realising that I should not be a passive recipient in the migrant destination. To the contrary, being an active citizen, I offer my perspectives that come with my diverse backgrounds to enrich the cultural dialogue wherever I stay. As a teacher, having awareness of the significance of cultural diversity enhances my ability both to understand students, and to be understood by them. I am often in awe at the significant insights gleaned through cultural perspectives in the process of learning and teaching.

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