Original Article

Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Higher Education in the Asia–Pacific Region: Challenges and Prospects

Ka Ho Mok[a] [iD], Zhiqiang Wang[b] and Deane Neubauer[c]
[a]School of Graduate Studies, Lingnan University, Hong Kong, China.
E-mail: kahomok@ln.edu.hk
[b]School of Public Administration, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, China.
E-mail: pawangzhiqiang@scut.edu.cn
[c]Faculty of Education, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA.
E-mail: deanen@hawaii.edu

Setting out against the context of the rise of anti-globalism and the resurgence of nationalism, the first half of the article reviews and discusses the debates of anti-globalism and the resurgence of nationalism as well as their effects on educational development. The second half of the article provides the overview of the special issue. More specially, it will highlight the major arguments presented by the contributors, who are experts in higher education policy and governance studies. The arguments particularly examine how the governments in the Asia–Pacific region have promoted nationalism, on the one hand, and globalisation, on the other hand. Next, we review how nationalism has resurged in higher education policy debates where globalisation is widely contested in the region.

Introduction to the Special Edition

In the last few years, anti-globalism and the resurgence of "nationalism" have trended across different parts of the globe. General elections showed spreading support for nationalism and populism across Europe and America. Public votes for Brexit in the UK, Trump's victory in the Presidency of the USA and the most recent general elections in Germany and Italy clearly show the growth of populism and the rising tide of national movements. Such social and political movements have inevitably led people to question the value and benefits brought by globalisation (Lees, 2017). However, the rise of anti-globalism is not new, and anti-globalisation movements have actually emerged over the last two decades — a time when people have become critical of the negative consequences of economic

Ka Ho Mok *et al.*
Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Higher Education in the Asia–Pacific Region…
398

globalisation. Various forms of anti-globalisation movements include global justice, alter-globalisation, anti-globalist expressions, as well as anti-corporate critiques, or broader critiques of neoliberal globalisation have emerged. With its many definitions, "globalisation" has undoubtedly affected national developments across the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions. Yet, against the context of anti-globalism, people around the world have begun to question the values and benefits of internationalisation of higher education. Questions such as these have arisen:

Is internationalisation dead in the "post-truth" age?

- Has international education only favoured the elites and marginalised the socio-economically less advantaged?
- Have transnational higher education and overseas study perpetuated inequality?

In response to the unanticipated consequences of the internationalisation of education, the 2016 European Association for International Education Conference stated that "what seems to have died is the European international education community's faith in the inevitability of the cosmopolitan project, in which national boundaries and ethnic loyalties would dissolve over time to allow greater openness, diversity and a sense of global citizenship" (Van der Wende, 2017, 2). Setting out against the context of the rise of anti-globalism and the resurgence of nationalism, the *first half* of the article reviews and discusses the debates of anti-globalism and the resurgence of nationalism as well as their effects on educational development. The *second half* of the article provides the overview of this special issue. More specially, it will highlight the major arguments presented by the contributors, who are experts in higher education policy and governance studies. The arguments particularly examine how the governments in the Asia–Pacific region have promoted nationalism, on the one hand, and globalisation, on the other hand. Next, we review how nationalism has resurged in higher education policy debates where globalisation is widely contested in the region.

Contesting Globalisation: The Rise of Nationalism, Populism and Higher Education

Right after the Cold War in the late 1980s, the dominant powers in Europe and America proudly declared the "end of history" and jubilantly championed the victory of the capitalist model over socialist counterparts. The developed economies in the West collectively promoted the globalisation project by making neo-liberalism as the guiding ideology for managing the economy, public sector and social welfare. During the last decades, the whole world has been transformed by complex processes that fell under the label of "globalisation". A prominent example

Ka Ho Mok *et al.*
Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Higher Education in the Asia–Pacific Region…
399

is that the majority of developing countries embraced the concept of a market economy by following the economies in the West in adopting market ideas and related practices, public management, education and social development. Against such a wider political economy context, global corporate structures, namely "multi-national corporations", acted as prime movers of significant transformations in the economic, social and public arenas (Barnet and Muller, 1974).

According to Castells (2000), globalisation has paradoxically led simultaneously to development and underdevelopment and to inclusion and exclusion, which have resulted in global economic imbalances with detrimental effects on social cohesion. Similarly, Stiglitz (2002), Sassen (1998) and Gray (2002) have criticised the impact of globalisation on developing countries owing to the emergence of an imperfect global governance structure and practices. From a historical perspective, they questioned whether globalisation is an irreversible trend and argued that the same set of processes has weakened or stagnated progress in the developing world. Charles Lemert's book, *Globalisation: An introduction to the end of the known world* (2016), succinctly describes the complex and problematic processes undergone by the whole world through contemporary globalisation experiences. In a similar vein, Gills and Thompson have argued that contemporary globalisation has resulted in highly complicated and contradicting social, economic, political and cultural developments. When reflecting upon the impact of globalisation, Gills and Thompson over a decade ago (2006) argued that,

> Whatever it (globalisation) is that was meant to be signified by this term, it gained full sensibility only when within the realization that over the course of human history one could point to several periods in which 'globalisation' in one or another profound sense had taken place within what was then able to be conceived of as 'the known world' (Gills and Thompson, 2006, p. 3).

Additionally one can note that the adoption of neo-liberalism as a guiding principle in managing education has inevitably widened the gap between the rich and the poor, thus perpetuating social inequality and intensifying competition in the global labour market, a point made clearly by Brown, Lauder and Ashton in *The global auction: The broken promises of education, jobs and incomes* (2011). Meanwhile, the massification of higher education has produced more unhappy youth, especially because it has become more apparent that universities and national governments across different parts of the globe have concentrated funding to groom elite universities to have more resources to promote the international learning experience and collaboration (Welch, 2016; Mok and Han, 2017). However, the same process has raised growing concerns of inequalities and disparities resulting from varying forms of higher education internationalisation (Lemert, 2016; Steger *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, Lowe (2018) points out the denial of the distinctive and socially important role that universities can play when higher

Ka Ho Mok *et al.*
Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Higher Education in the Asia–Pacific Region…
400

education institutions globally enter a time of war for talents. Caught between neoliberalist globalisation on the one hand and rising nationalism on the other hand, Lowe is worried about the existential crisis that currently faces humans and the planet we live on (2018).

In the light of the intensified economic and social inequalities, anti-globalisation forces have led the public outcry for domestic interests commonly shared among citizens in the UK and the USA. In recent elections held in both countries, the dilemma and tension have unfolded between national protectionism and the call for internationalisation and globalism (Aisch *et al.*, 2017; Kay, 2016; Plummer, 2012). Increasingly embracing anti-globalism sentiments, US students have become less interested in studying abroad. According to Hawkins (2017), only 10% of all undergraduates (including community college students) have international learning experience, and 90% will graduate from US higher education institutions with no exposure to another culture, system or language environment. In other words, local students in the USA are becoming more "inward". Unlike their Asian counterparts, US students tend to study social sciences and humanities with concentrations in Europe and in English-speaking programs. Even when US students choose to study abroad, the UK remains the top destination, followed by Italy and France. US students are less interested to study in Africa and the Middle East, whilst only a minority would prefer going to China and other parts of Asia for study, although Asia is seen as a major engine for global economic growth (Hawkins, 2017). Against this wider political economy context, scholars have published work that argues for the "end" of globalisation, including Rosenberg's *Globalisation: A post mortem* (2005) and Ramo's *Globalism foes backward* (2012), among others. Meanwhile, other sociologists and political scientists have identified various problems resulting from globalisation in their works, such as Sassen's *Globalisation and its discontents* (1998), Mittelman's *The Globalisation syndrome* (2000) and Robinson's critical appraisal of globalisation in a 2009 work (Robinson, 2009).

Paul Zeleza, professor of humanities and social sciences and vice chancellor of the United States International University in Africa, acknowledged the contributions of higher education internationalisation in his keynote speech at the NAFSA 2017 Annual Conference and Expo in Los Angeles in May 2017. Zeleza raised the growing concern of "global coloniality" as the unintended consequence of "the reproduction of coloniality on a global scale under neoliberal values and principles of education" (2017, 9). Further, he pointed out the rise of xenophobic nationalism among international students and academics in major destination countries, such as the UK, USA, EU and elsewhere (Zeleza, 2017).

Whilst higher education continues to drive an outward looking, globally connected agenda, recent democratic elections in the UK and USA suggest that the voting public is becoming increasingly sceptical of the growing tide of the internationalisation of higher education. Given that only those families with sufficient resources can send their children abroad for different forms of

Ka Ho Mok *et al.*
Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Higher Education in the Asia–Pacific Region…
401

international learning experience to enhance their global competitiveness, growing concerns have emerged, questioning the value of international learning. Criticisms have emerged along the line of whilst higher education and cities expand their reach globally, institutions are failing to connect and communicate locally. Has the internationalisation of higher education become part of an elite agenda that has failed to address the concerns and needs of local communities and society? Recently, the public in many countries is now placing more value on isolationism and anti-globalism is becoming a trend (O'Malley, 2017). Such phenomena are succinctly captured by Marginson (2018), who argues that higher education is confronting the national/global disequilibria with the rise of populism and the destabilisation of politics in certain countries, tensions over migration, the growing criticism of international education as favouring elites and the intensification of inequalities felt all around the world.

The growing tide of nationalism and populism may have contributed to the decrease in number of students embarking on learning journeys overseas. However, how much of this apparent reversal of internationalisation of higher education can be attributed to the rise of political economic nationalism is still subject to further empirical studies. Hawkins (2017) has noted the rise of national security agencies within higher education institutions in the USA as one additional indication of "inwardness" and interference in the internationalisation of higher education. Although US higher education institutions have not taken a stand against rising nationalism and ethnocentrism, a trend in the "remarginalisation" of internationalism is emerging in US higher education institutions, according to Hawkins (2017). Against this wider political economy context, many world leaders have denounced global citizenship. For instance, Theresa May, the Prime Minister of the UK, once stated, "If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere" in 2016 (cited in Van der Wende (2017, 6). Similarly, President Trump in the USA keeps putting emphasis on "America First", deliberately playing up "nationalism" through trade wars not only with China but also with other trade partners like Mexico, Canada and European Union. Taking the national interests first, President Trump openly undervalues global citizens. In short, growing scepticism against internationalisation can be easily heard when more reports are unveiled of cases of xenophobia and discrimination against foreign students from the South whilst studying in the developed North. Even within academia, more prominent voices are being raised against internationalisation, particularly in questioning the elite cosmopolitan project that favours the use of English as a dominant language and culture, places too much weight on world university rankings with an Anglo-Saxon bias and drives university development through the dominant neoliberal approach and prevailing market forces (Rhoades, 2017).

"Glocalisation", Regionalisation and the Resurgence of Nationalism

Against the context of anti-globalism, calls for regional cooperation and the formation of regional alliances are becoming popular. In relation to this, enrolment data in specific cases in Asia show that the percentage of international students enrolled at the undergraduate level remains remarkably small (with Singapore as the exception) (Hawkins 2017). A national survey conducted in the USA projected a mixed picture showing a 38% decrease in international students studying at US institutions (Redden, 2017). The changing nature of scholarship programs, increasing competition from other countries and emerging concerns about student safety, rising nationalism and anti-immigration sentiments spreading across Europe, the UK and USA have discouraged students from Asia from studying in these places (Hawkins, 2017). Hence, we witness the movements of students to other settings within Asia, especially when governments in China, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea provide attractive scholarship packages to compete for high-quality overseas students. According to Hawkins (2017), China dominated East Asian mobility and the triad of China, Japan and South Korea, where 50–57% of international students come from their two neighbouring countries (83% of international students in Hong Kong come from China) (see also Mok, 2016).

Equally significant are the regional alliances recently formed in Asia to promote deeper and closer cooperation among Asian universities. For instance, the Asian University Alliance (AUA) restricts membership within Asia to foster "unique Asian values" (Chao, 2017). With strong commitment to bring leading Asian universities to promote a liberal arts education combining the best traditions of the East and the West, the launch of the Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities initiated by Lingnan University in November 2017 was successfully held. At present, over 20 foundation members from Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong and Mainland China are working closely to develop regional collaboration. In view of student mobility patterns and calls for regional cooperation, scholars now consider the entire paradigm of "internationalisation" to be flawed, thus conceiving a change in the process in the context of regionalisation, which is better interpreted as "glocalisation" rather than "globalisation" (Hawkins, 2017). Similarly, with the call for regional collaboration and the strong urge to promote national identity among the youth in Hong Kong and Macau — especially when these two ex-colonies have returned to Mainland China after almost 20 years — the Chinese government has made serious attempts to provide favourable policies and measures to attract students from these two SARs to enrol in universities in the Mainland. However, such efforts to develop stronger national identities have failed to appeal to university graduates, especially when they encounter difficulties in job searches and career development after completing their university education (Mok, 2018).

Ka Ho Mok *et al.*
Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Higher Education in the Asia–Pacific Region…
403

About the Issue

Calling for inclusive globalisation: research and student learning experiences

This special issue sets out a theme of "rising anti-globalism and resurgence of nationalism" to critically examine how selected countries in the Asia–Pacific region respond to the growing tide of anti-globalisation. Deane Neubauer, when making his presentation in the captioned symposium, argued that an encroaching nationalism is spreading throughout the world with significant effects and implications for what has been widely accepted as "international education" over the past two decades. Neubauer accepted the premise that growing nationalism is occurring at the expense of what was previously accepted as a less problematic globalised international environment. Central to the discourses of anti-globalism, Neubauer called for the multi-varied notions of globalisation against which this movement is directed, and an examination of the complex symbolic environment of "returning to nationalism" that is emerging through these discourses. Central to the presentation, the bulk of his arguments are focused on the various ways by which higher education as a global phenomenon has developed over these decades, particularly highlighting some negative consequences and policy implications against the context of rising nationalism influencing higher education development and international collaboration (Neubauer, 2017).

In the last few decades, the growth of gross enrolment ratios in higher education (HE) in the Asia and Pacific region reveals an increasing level of economic, social and political confidence within the region. Many governments in Asia believe investments in HE would enhance their national competitiveness in the global marketplace; therefore, different public policy measures are adopted to engage both public and private sectors to create more HE opportunities, resulting in the massification of HE. With a strong belief that HE investments would bring good returns, governments, families and individuals in Mainland China and Taiwan have followed the similar trends outlined above. Increasing number of individuals have gone for overseas studies with strong confidence that international learning would bring them positive returns, enhancing their job search and career developments after obtaining degrees from overseas universities. The article contributed by Xiong and Mok sets out against this socio-political context to critically examine how Mainland China and Taiwan students graduated from UK universities evaluate the impact of overseas studies on their job search and career development. Their research, being part of the broader research programme funded by the ESRC in the UK, analyses how Asian students are completing their studies in the universities based in the UK and their job placements after graduation. Based upon interviews and focus group discussions with university graduates having completed their studies and engaged in job search and employment, Xiong and Mok asked the

interviewees to reflect upon the value of international learning against the growing wave of anti-globalism and heated debates questioning the value of the internationalisation of HE. Comparing with the previous cohorts of returnees who were given better remuneration and benefits, the respondents being interviewed in this recent research experienced the reduction in attractive salary and benefit package. However, the respondents still considered studying abroad relevant and useful, especially when they could choose to work not only in the state or the public sector but also in the companies owned by foreign capital and private firms. Most important of all, they appreciated the "soft skills" earned from the learning process overseas; such findings are consistent to the survey research conducted by Mok *et al.* (2018). Similar studies regarding students' self-evaluation of international learning also show their appreciation of cross-cultural learning, international perspectives and foreign language abilities that they earned from international education (Xie, 2018; Wang, 2014).

It is noteworthy that student mobility is not only popular in the UK having more Asian students enrolling in study programmes in the West. In recent decades, China is also becoming increasingly popular for foreign students, especially from less developed world to study in Chinese universities. The article contributed by Chan and Wu clearly shows the steady increase in international students in China, indicating that many such students are keen to study Chinese culture, languages and medicine. One point that deserves attention here is that many of these international students are not scholarship recipients but are fee-paying students seeking learning opportunities in the Mainland (Fig. 1). Such a trend supports Wen and Shi's argument that China plays a leading role in international higher education, not only acting as a country sending students abroad but receiving/recruiting overseas stayers for learning (Wen and Shi, 2017).

Promoting inclusive globalisation requires a socio-political and socio-economic environment conducive for student mobility; the research conducted by Horta, Jung and Santos in this issue presents four types of mobility, which are analysed simultaneously, and is associated with the current research output quality and visibility of academics working in the city-based higher education systems of Hong Kong and Macau. According their studies, transnational educational mobility is associated with the academics' educational path, whilst intrasectoral job mobility, intersectoral job mobility and transnational job mobility are related to their professional careers. The research output, quality and visibility of academics are based on three indicators pertaining to the publications of these academics in international, peer-reviewed and indexed journals: the number of publications, the cumulative SCImago journal rank (SJR) of these publications (which measures quality from an output perspective) and the citations obtained by these publications (which measures visibility). Their analysis shows that different mobilities have different effects on research output, quality and visibility, and that often these effects can be beneficial to one indicator but concurrently detrimental to another.
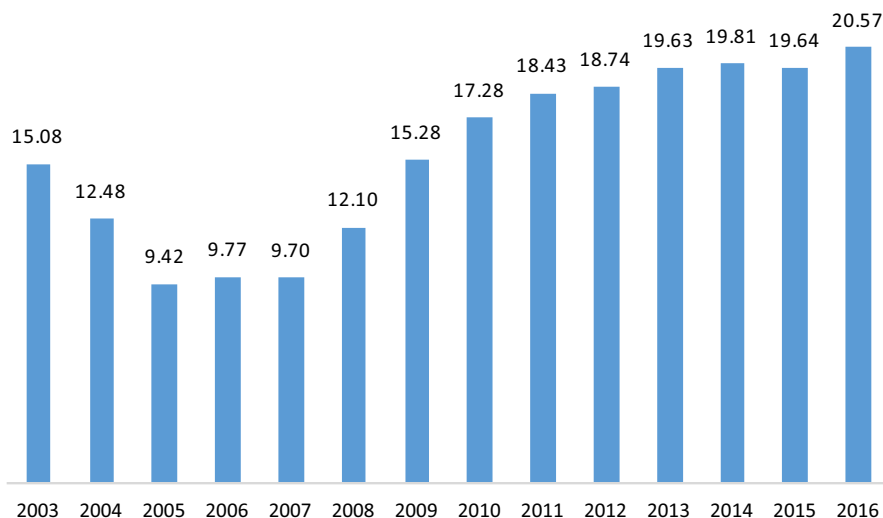
Figure 1. Percentages of sponsored students among all international students enrolled in degree programs in China (2003–2016).
Source: Ministry of Education (2003–2016); Adopted from Chan and Wu (in this issue)

Through nested analyses of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and non-STEM academics, and by sex, Horta, Jung and Santos offer further insights into the associations of these mobilities with knowledge output and outcomes.

Knowledge diplomacy and war for talent

Against the hugely complex political economy context in which globalisation is contested, the Chinese government has adopted a more pragmatic approach in addressing the seemingly unresolved dilemmas between neoliberalist globalisation and resurging nationalism. It has mainly done so by calling for more international and regional cooperation through the "Belt and Road" initiative (BRI). It is against this broader geo-political context that Mulvey sets out to examine the relationship between higher education and diplomacy, with particular reference to explore how the Chinese government invests heavily in recruiting international students to study in Chinese universities, with the rationale that this will lead to improved relations between China and students' respective home countries. However, empirical evidence for, and understanding of, the mechanisms through which international study leads to improved relations between host and sending country is weak. According to Mulvey's analysis, whilst there is a level of agreement within the literature around the Chinese state's intent to use international student recruitment

Ka Ho Mok *et al.*
Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Higher Education in the Asia–Pacific Region…
406

as a means of meeting strategic geo-political goals, little empirical research has actually been carried out with the aim of exploring how China may be accumulating influence through international student recruitment in specific contexts. Through the case analysis of Uganda, Mulvey argues that the geo-political and economic position of Uganda relative to China proved to be an important factor in students' post-graduation engagement with China. Participants were willing to acquiesce in Chinese involvement in Uganda, due to the fact that such acquiescence represented an opportunity to gain employment in Chinese companies, or else do business such as importing goods from China.

In their recent book, Neubauer, Mok and Edwards (2019) used the concept of "knowledge diplomacy" to examine international competition and cooperation in higher education as a new way to understand and envision a future for the globalised higher education sector. Putting their study against the rapidly expanding higher education landscape in East Asia, they first review the current trends in the internationalisation of higher education. They then highlight certain challenges faced by institutions and national governments due to increased student mobility and survey the progress in ensuring quality in higher education throughout the process of globalisation. They also explain how the "soft power" paradigm has dominated the discourse on this topic and why "knowledge diplomacy" has been chosen in analysing the globalisation of higher education, opting for a holistic and collaborative interpretation of the term. Finally, they discuss the various ways by which international cooperation is used in the higher education sector and offer a vision for the future of this field through the lens of collaborative, mutually beneficial knowledge diplomacy (Neubauer, Mok, & Edwards, 2019).

Going beyond "knowledge diplomacy", Ha, Lu and Wo critically examine the relationship between natural resource endowment and China's foreign aid through the lens of foreign student scholarships awarded by the Chinese government to African countries. As China–Africa trade and investment have experienced exponential growth in recent years, there have been growing concerns that China utilises its foreign aid to gain preferential access to Africa's abundant natural resources. Existing empirical research is hampered by the lack of official and authoritative data on China's development aid and the endogeneity problem. By using new discoveries of oil, gas and mineral fields in African countries, which are reasonably exogenous, to instrument for the quantity of natural resources in a 2SLS setup, Ha, Lu and Wo find that apart from oil, the amount of natural resources an African country possesses does not influence the number of government student scholarship they received from China. Through regression analysis, the results are robust to different measures of Chinese access to natural resources in Africa. Based upon these findings, Ha, Lu and Wo offer alternative perspective for understanding the usual criticism against China's foreign aid in Africa.

Similar arguments were presented by Chan and Wu, in this issue, when they critically reviewed the rise of international students from overseas, who enrol as

Ka Ho Mok *et al.*
Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Higher Education in the Asia–Pacific Region…
407

degree seekers as exchange or visiting students. Although many of these overseas students are beneficiaries of Chinese government scholarships, we have witnessed the rise of non-scholarship students who are keen to learn Chinese language and culture and appreciate the humanities disciplines of the giant country. The steady increase in international students choosing China as a destination for international learning is reflected in the number of international students as degree seekers in China reaching a quarter of a million in 2016, roughly 10 times of that in 2003. Chan and Wu examine how China, a developing country itself, has managed to achieve this growth in only one and a half decades, the plans of the country with such a success and implications for the rest of the world, which are topics open for interpretation. Scholars in international higher education believe that the number of overseas students increases as an economy grows, and that the rise of such figures demonstrates the country's success in governance and generosity in international aid. Others argue that the phenomenon is a result of the internationalisation policy of higher education carefully crafted by the host country. Celebrating the country's glorious past and asserting its global leadership, the Beijing government has seriously engaged in attracting, recruiting and retaining international students to enforce its soft power through international education and academic exchange. Chan and Wu's contribution to this issue discusses the pros and cons of the government's strategies in positioning China as a centre for international learning for overseas students.

China and the world: the role of higher education

The rapid higher education expansion, together with continual and serious investments in research and knowledge transfer-related activities in China, has caught increasing attention not only from the Asian region but also from the North America. At the 5th Peking University–University of Wisconsin Workshop on Higher Education recently held at Peking University in Beijing in May 2019, the chosen theme of the Workshop is "China in the World: Rethinking International-Regional Inquiry in the Twenty-First Century". Central to the themes of the Workshop focuses on how the Rise of China's strengths in higher education research and technological advancement/innovation would have affected the geopolitics and the balance of world powers not only in politics, international relations but also in potential shifts of hegemony with the expansion of China's soft power reach by means of strategic knowledge production in foreign languages, humanities and social sciences. As Adam Nelson stated, "China's foray into international regional inquiry may well mark a new era in ways of knowing about the world, as well as the associated geostrategic applications of such knowledge….The chief aim of the 2019 workshop is to encourage critical dialogue between the academics who are carrying out China's initiatives for international-regional inquiry, and scholars from the United States, and Europe, and greater Asia

Ka Ho Mok *et al.*
Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Higher Education in the Asia–Pacific Region...
408

(Hong Kong, Japan) who have expertise in such inquiry as it evolved elsewhere during the twentieth century" (Nelson, 2019, 1–2). In particular, participants in the Workshop had heated debates on China's Belt and Road Initiative, scholars from the USA and Europe questioned the rationale of the B&R Initiative for having the ambition to extend China's soft and hard powers, whilst scholars from China and East Asia offered their perspectives of how China's engagements with global affairs through the B&R Initiative through boosting academic links and knowledge exchange. Mok, for instance, in his presentation reflecting upon the cultural and knowledge exchanges across the countries along the B&R routes have fostered not only student mobility but also research collaboration. According to data on the amount of academic publications indexed in Elsevier's Scopus databases that features co-authors from different countries, some of the biggest growth in collaboration research involving China is in other parts of Asia, Eastern Europe and North Africa, along the B&R routes (Mok, 2019). Based upon a recent report by *Times Higher Education*, nine countries along the B&R routes increased their collaborative research with China by more than 100% during the 2013–2017 period, whilst India and Russia whose research collaborations with China ballooned by more than 90%. One prominent example of enhanced academic links is the University Alliance of the Silk Road formed in 2015, and it has grown up to 150 universities across 38 countries not only along the immediate Belt and Road route but also institutions from as far away like the USA (Baker, 2019). All in all, the serious efforts through knowledge diplomacy put together by the Chinese government for promoting academic links, cultural and knowledge exchange, and research collaborations obviously enhance the people-to-people bonding and assert China's geostrategic position (Mok, 2019).

In response to the growing pressure of globalisation and intensified competition for global talent, the Chinese government has proactively invested in human capital by sending out students through national scholarships to pursue higher degrees. The attraction, retention and recruitment of world leading experts have been recognised by China as main strategies for advancing research capacity, technological breakthroughs and innovation-centric entrepreneurship. Such advancements could transform the manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge-based one. Hence, the Chinese government has rolled out different strategies to concentrate funding support to universities and individuals to enhance their research capability, productivity and innovation-centric entrepreneurial ventures. The article contributed by Jiang, Mok and Shen offers an interesting case showing how Chinese higher education is now responding to the national/global disequilibria, as Marginson (2018) recently described, with the rise of populism and destabilisation of politics, tensions over migration, growing criticism of international education for favouring elites and intensifying inequalities. Their analysis of the relationship between international education and academic job acquisition of PhD returnees in China offers a sociological perspective on how the Chinese government rides over

the rising nationalism and the call for globalisation by grooming Chinese students to become global talents before bringing them back to further enhance the country's global competitiveness.

Conclusion

We conclude this article by placing selected papers of the present special issue into the context of heated debates between globalism and the resurgence of nationalism. The contributors in this issue have critically reflected on how national higher systems have addressed national–global tensions, especially when growing concerns are raised concerning the value and benefits of international and transnational higher education. Hopefully, this special issue offers comparative and international perspectives in understanding the most recent development trends, major challenges and coping strategies adopted by selected countries/regions in the Asia Pacific in managing the internationalisation of education and in addressing the highly complex national/global disequilibria arising from globalism and the resurgence of nationalism.

Acknowledgements

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

References

Aisch, G., Pearce, A. and Rousseau, B. (2017). 'How far is Europe swinging to the right?', *The New York Times*, 23 October, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/05/22/world/europe/europe-right-wing-austria-hungary.html?_r=0.

Baker, S. (2019) 'Is China's belt and road initiative boosting academic links?', *Times Higher Education*, 14 May, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-boosting-academic-links.

Barnet, R.J. and Muller, R.E. (1974) *Global reach: The power of the multinational corporations,* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Brown, P., Lauder, H. and Ashton, D. (2011) *The global auction: The broken promises of education, jobs and incomes,* New York: Oxford University Press.

Castells, M. (2000) *The rise of network society*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Chao, R. (2017) 'A new dawn for Asian higher education regionalisation?', *University World News*, 12 May, http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=2017050822311447.

Gills, B.K. and Thompson, W.R. (eds.) (2006) *Globalisation and global history*, London: Routledge.

Gray, J. (2002) *False dawn: The delusions of global capitalism*, London: Granta.

Hawkins, J.N. (2017) *Mixing metaphors: Globalisation, internationalization, localism—competing impulses in higher education.* Paper presented at the meeting of Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Asian Pacific Higher Education: Resurgent Nationalism in International Higher Education; October, Lingnan University, Hong Kong.

Kay, K. (2016) 'US election 2016: The Trump protectionist party', *BBC News*, 24 March, http://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-35836102.

Lees, N. (2017) '*Globalisation: The rise and fall of an idea that swept the world'*, The Guardian, 14 July, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/14/globalisation-the-rise-and-fall-of-an-idea-that-swept-the-world, Accessed on 17 December 2018.

Lemert, C. (2016) *Globalisation: An introduction to the end of the known world*, New York: Routledge.

Lowe, J. (2018) *Global talents or cannon fodder? Higher education in a time of war*, Paper presented at the International Symposium on Cultivating 'Global Talents' through International/Transnational Higher Education; 7-8 December 2018, University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China.

Marginson, S. (2018) *World higher education under conditions of national/global disequilibria,* London, UK: Centre for Global Higher Education. CGHE Working Paper no. 42.

Mittelman, J. (2000) *The globalisation syndrome: Transformation and resistance,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Mok, K.H. (2016) 'Transnationalizing and internationalizing higher education in China: Implications for regional cooperation and university governance in Asia', in G.W. Shin, Y.C. Oh and R.J. Moon (eds.) *Internationalizing higher education in Korea: Challenges and opportunities in comparative perspectives*, California: Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, pp. 149–180.

Mok, K.H. (2018) 'Promoting national identity through higher education and graduate employment: reality in the responses and implementation of government policy in China', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 40(6):583–597.

Mok, K.H. (2019) *Contesting globalization and rethinking international-regional collaborations: China's approach to internationalization of education*. Paper presented at the 5th Peking University-University of Wisconsin Workshop on Higher Education, Peking University; 25 to 26 May 2019, Beijing, China.

Mok, K.H. and Han, X. (2017) 'A flagship university quest: Challenges and dilemma for a Chinese University.' in J.A. Douglass and J. Hawkins (eds.) *Envisioning the Asian new flagship university: Its past and vital future*. CA: Berkeley Public Policy Press, pp. 105–122.

Mok, K.H., Han, X. Jiang, J. and Zhang, X.J. (2018) 'International and transnational education for whose Interests? A study on the career development of Chinese students', *Higher Education Quarterly* 72: 208–223.

Neubauer, D. (2017) *Resurgent nationalism in Asia Pacific higher education: Whose globalization is at stake?* Paper presented at the International Symposium on Contesting Globalization and Implications for Asia Pacific Higher Education; 19-20 October 2017, Lingnan University, Hong Kong.

Neubauer, D., Mok, K.H. and Edwards, S. (eds.) (2019) *Contesting globalization and internationalization of higher education: Discourse and responses in the Asia Pacific Region*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nelson, A. (2019) *Concept paper for the 5th Peking University-University of Wisconsin workshop on higher education*. Paper presented to 5th Peking University-University of Wisconsin Workshop on Higher Education; 25 to 26 May 2019, Peking University, Beijing, China.

O'Malley, B. (2017) 'TNE and study abroad may perpetuate inequality', *University World News*, 17 June, https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20170617060527350.

Plummer, R. (2012) 'Protectionism: Is it on the way back?', *BBC News,* 17 September, http://www.bbc.com/news/business-18104024.

Ramo, J.C. (2012) 'Globalism goes backward', *Fortune*, 20 November, http://fortune.com/2012/11/20/globalism-goes-backward/.

Redden, E. (2017) 'International enrolments: From flat to way down', *Inside Higher Ed*, 5 September, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/09/05/some-universities-are-reporting-declines-international-enrollments-ranging-modest.

Rhoades, G. (2017) 'Backlash against 'others'', *International Higher Education* (89): 2-3.

Robinson, W. (2009) 'Saskia Sassen and the sociology of globalisation: a critical appraisal', *UC Santa Barbara: Global and International Studies*, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/44j854qc.

Rosenberg, J. (2005) 'Globalisation theory: A post mortem', *International Politics* 42(1): 2–74.

Sassen, S. (1998) *Globalisation and its discontents*, New York: The New Press.

Steger, M., Battersby, P. and Siracusa, J. (eds.) (2014) *The SAGE handbook of globalisation*, London: SAGE.

Stiglitz, J.E. (2002) *Globalisation and its discontents*, New York: Norton.

Van der Wende, M.C. (2017) *Opening up: Higher education systems in global perspectives,* London, UK: Centre for Global Higher Education. CGHE Working Paper no.22.

Wang, Y. (2014) 'Student management and quality assurance of Sino-foreign cooperative university', *Research in Teaching* 37(2): 46–49.

Welch, A. (2016) 'Audit culture and academic production: Re-shaping Australian social science research output 1993-2013', *Higher Education Policy* 29(4): 511–538.

Wen, W. and Shi. (2017) '*A shift from a periphery of centre to a centre in the periphery: A new trend of higher education internationalisation in Asia*', Paper presented at the meeting of Contesting Globalisation and Implications for Asian Pacific Higher Education: Resurgent Nationalism in International Higher Education; October, Lingnan University, Hong Kong.

Xie, Y. (2018) 'The diffusion of innovation: Research on the development characteristics and influential factors of student associations in Sino-foreign cooperative universities', *China Youth Studies* 2: 101–107.

Zeleza, P.T. (2017) *Internationalization of higher education in the era of xenophobic nationalisms*, Keynote address presented at NAFSA 2017 Annual Conference and Expo; 31 May, Los Angeles, USA.