Higher Education in Asia: Quality, Excellence and Governance

Darryl S. L. Jarvis
Ka Ho Mok *Editors*

Transformations in Higher Education Governance in Asia

Policy, Politics and Progress

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For Oscar and Flannan
Darryl S. L. Jarvis

To Jasmine, Esther and Lucinda
Ka Ho Mok

Preface

As the fastest-growing region in the world, Asia represents a complex assortment of states collectively experiencing rapid social and political transformation. Not surprisingly, Asia's recent history is often cast in tombs that announce the 'rise of Asia' or the 'new Asian century', reflecting the region's economic dynamism in industrial production, manufacturing, assembly and the increasing proportion of global economic activity that it generates. But while Asia's most recent history has been written largely in relation to its increasing importance in global supply chains and as 'factory to the world', the region's immediate future resides in higher-order economic activities, in science, technology and through leadership in research and innovation. Rapid growth in Asia's economies has thus equally been reflected in rapidly expanding higher education systems, rising participation in tertiary-level education, the development of high-performing tertiary education systems and world-class universities.

These trends, however, have not been uniform. Highly disparate national systems of governance, institutional capacities and levels of political and economic development continue to define the region. The challenges each country face may thus be contiguous insofar as similar sets of aspirations often define policy debates about desired sector outcomes, but set against wide-ranging political, economic and institutional realities.

As the contributors to this volume acknowledge, despite the prevalence of a common set of aspirations, the policy pathways to realizing internationally leading higher education systems remain opaque and often vexed. Higher education systems are not simply compilations of knowledge factories that can be set in place by edict or resource allocation. The academic enterprise remains peculiar, if not idiosyncratic, with knowledge production, discovery, scientific breakthroughs and innovation often non-responsive to linear technocratic planning or systems design. System, institutional and programme quality, for example, are not typically 'fixed' by adding resources alone, or high-quality academic labour 'produced' by simply allocating quota in the hope of achieving short-term knowledge/innovation outcomes. Were it so simple, higher education systems would be much less diverse,

performance more equal and competitive knowledge attainment more equitably distributed.

Often to the distress of policy-makers, developing high-performing higher education systems rests on much less quantifiable or tangible policy levers: soft-institutional and governance technologies able to support the development of academic labour; informal network configurations between government, universities and industry that leverage research capacity; didactic feedback systems able to calibrate training, curriculum and university teaching with the skill attributes of graduates and national development agendas; and mentoring cultures that nurture knowledge development and research collaboration—in other words, the mushy ethereal stuff to which simple policy prescriptions or metrics of analysis are not well suited.

Variation in policy and governance approaches to higher education thus witnesses profound structural differences in the composition and organization of Asia's higher education systems, along with diversity in the mix of public versus private provision, equity and access, institutional and programme quality, and the development and treatment of academic labour.

Governing higher education in Asia thus continues to be a complex, multifaceted and challenging set of policy problems, set amid fast-changing regional and international dynamics and deepening competition for global leadership in research and innovation. We hope this collection of papers contributes to a broader understanding of Asia's rapidly changing higher education landscapes and of their emerging and potential trajectories.

Hong Kong, China

Darryl S. L. Jarvis
Ka Ho Mok

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Chapter 1
The Political Economy of Higher Education Governance in Asia: Challenges, Trends and Trajectories

Darryl S. L. Jarvis and Ka Ho Mok

Introduction

At a conference on 'University Cooperation and Asian Development' (UCAD) sponsored by the Asia Foundation at the University of Hong Kong in 1966, some twenty-nine university delegates from around Asia, Australia and the USA, and representatives from leading organisations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Ford Foundation, pondered the merits and practicalities of inter-university cooperation, with the links between regionalisation, internationalisation and the development of Asia's higher education sector an implicit rationale of the conference (Nelson 2013, p. 242). As Nelson noted, the conference was telling on a number of fronts. Of the twenty-nine academic participants, for example, twenty-three held advanced degrees from American universities while the other six held advanced degrees from either Cambridge or Oxford; only one delegate held a doctoral degree from an Asian university (University of Tokyo), underscoring the continuing dominance of Anglo-American leadership in the sector (ibid). On another front, several delegates noted the strange paradox of economic modernisation in some Asian states but the absence of more robust growth in the academic scope of universities. One of the delegates from Japan, for example, lamented the narrow 'focus on technology in Japanese universities' to the detriment of growth in the social sciences and humanities, creating sectoral and institutional imbalances *a*typical of their Western counterparts (cited in ibid., pp. 244–245). Some noted the need for more material assistance not just in terms of resources but in developing the institutional and governance contexts that would

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enable the rapid evolution of Asian universities and their competitive international positioning, while still others identified the need for indigenisation—that is, rather than studying abroad, programmes should be provided by Western institutions for students *in Asia* so that they received more 'pertinent and applicable' training relevant to the local conditions they would encounter upon graduation. Above all, the overriding theme for delegates to the conference was how to harness cooperative regional and international arrangements in order to leverage resources, know-how, institutional knowledge and capacities that would allow Asian universities to catch up with their Western counterparts.

As this chapter will argue, the context, themes and purpose of the 1966 UCAD conference retain contemporary significance. Despite the emergence of several leading, highly ranked Asian universities, Asia continues to be a region largely comprised of what we term 'failed education states'; that is, despite narratives that celebrate Asia's economic transformation and modernisation, or which point to Asia's increasing centrality in the global economic system, this is not necessarily reflected in its higher education systems. In this chapter, we adopt a contrarian perspective, not to rebuke the economic realities of a fast-transitioning region so much as to question the assumed causality between economic growth and Asia's impending leadership in higher education. We thus situate our analysis in a Polanyian theoretical framework to counter what we argue are superficial and analytically ill-informed assumptions about the developmental trajectories of Asia's higher education systems, highlighting instead the sociopolitical and institutional contexts that variously constrain and shape outcomes in Asia's higher education sectors. Successful higher education systems, we argue, are rarely if ever the outcome of singular policy instruments, and still less of top-down resource strategies (add resources and stir). Rather, they represent a myriad of governance systems, policy instruments, institutional endowments and sector-specific academic cultures situated amid complex state–society relations. Indeed, insofar as issues of governance, state–society relations and the relationship between the state and university determine outcomes for sector performance, the institutional autonomy of universities, academic freedom and thus the prospects for research innovation and leadership, our analysis highlights continuing and substantial hurdles for the successful development of higher education systems in Asia. In particular, we draw attention to a preponderance of governance deficits—albeit unevenly experienced in the region—which manifest as various forms of illiberalism and often combined with patrimonial social relations and centralised administrative traditions. Taken together with non-secular state practices, censorship, political intervention and persistent practices of non-merit-based promotion, these diminish the prospects for systemic or institutional innovation and pose serious barriers to sector development, irrespective of the trajectory of economic growth and potential increases in resource availability.

Further, we argue, a broad survey of Asia's evolving higher education landscape reveals not only great unevenness, as might naturally be expected, but also sectoral bifurcation, particularly in terms of developmental trends in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) compared to the social sciences and humanities. This bifurcation is most obvious in terms of quality, highlighting the importance of

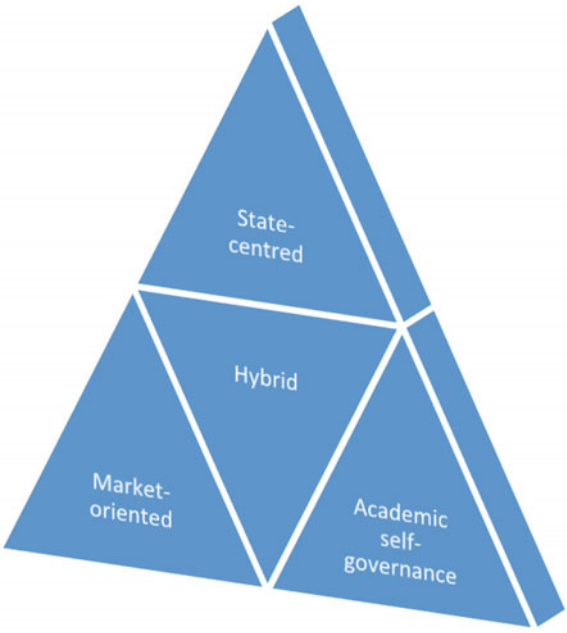

Fig. 1 Higher education governance typologies

political, social and institutional contexts as important determinants impacting the evolution and trajectories of Asia's higher education systems and institutions.

To demonstrate our argument we survey several higher education systems across Asia, grouped by region (Southeast and Northeast Asia) and analysed in relation to a series of qualitative institutional, political and social contexts: firstly, what we term higher education governance indicators such as merit-based recruitment, promotion and remuneration, censorship, institutional and academic autonomy (among others); and secondly, quantitative performance-based indicators such as bibliometric and research performance, reputational and esteem rankings. We draw upon the comparative conceptual framework developed by Dobbins et al. (2011) that sees governance of higher education (HE) as interrelated processes of control, coordination and the allocation of autonomy between three levels—the state, professoriate and university management—and broadly reflected in three typologies of governance: (a) state-centred; (b) market-oriented; and (c) academic self-governance (Dobbins et al. 2011). We use these as a broad analytical rubric through which to understand patterns of HE governance in Asia (see Fig. 1 and Table 1).

While our analysis is far from comprehensive, given its geographic scope and the limitations of space, our primary concern is to highlight a more complex and arguably more compelling set of contextual circumstances that shed light on those forces shaping the performance of higher education systems and institutions in Asia in order to offer a more nuanced analysis of HE developmental trajectories.

Table 1 Higher education governance typologies

	State-centred model	Market-oriented model	Academic self-governance model
Institutional structures of the university			
Dominant decision-making actors	State	State/university management	Community of Scholars/Professional chairs
Organisational structure	State agency	Enterprise	(Corporatist) state–university partnership
Dominant management approach	Bureaucratic	Entrepreneurial	Collegial, federation of chairs
Primary mission of the university	Satisfying state socio-economic objectives	Provision of services to 'academic consumers' and satisfying market demands	Academic freedom and long-term commitment to the production of knowledge
Patterns of control and quality evaluation			
Who controls/evaluates?	Ministry	(State or quasi-governmental) accreditation/evaluation bodies	Self-evaluation by university. Academic peer review (within broad regulatory framework set by the state)
What is controlled?	Academic processes	Quality of academic products	Quality of research output, publications
When does evaluation take place?	*Ex ante*	*Ex post*	Not systematised; university dependent
Focus of quality evaluation	National/state objectives	Local, regional, global economic demands; efficiency, flexibility	Meeting scientific/research objectives
Relations to the state and society			

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

	State-centred model	Market-oriented model	Academic self-governance model
State control instruments	Manpower planning system design	Incentives for competition, quality improvements	Financial, legal framework
Orientation and utility of teaching and research	State defined	Market demands	Scientific/intellectual advancement
Economic and employer stakeholders			
Function	Control	Marketing	Limited (potentially: external defenders of the institution)
Appointed by	State	University management	Academia
Funding			
Main funding base	State budget (university budget integral part of state budget)	Competitive and diversified (tuition, donations, research grants, private entities, state)	State budget (with own university budget)
State funding approach	Itemised (low budgetary discretion for universities)	Lump sum (high budgetary discretion for university management)	Mixed-type (high budgetary discretion for university)
Allocation within university	Input-based → Output-based (objectives defined by the state)	Output-based (objectives defined by university)	Input-based (objectives negotiated by the state and universities)
Strategic investments	State defined	Multifaceted (undertaken by university management, faculties, via spin-off companies, technologies, centres)	Occasional, chair-based (occasionally undertaken by chairs and departments, university managers)
Personnel autonomy			
Recruitment of high-level academic staff	Appointed by state	Elected by faculty/ university management	Elected by professoriate

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

	State-centred model	Market-oriented model	Academic self-governance model
Recruitment of high-ranking administrative staff	Appointed by state	Elected by university management	Elected by professoriate
University autonomy to dismiss high-ranking academics	No. State competence; frequent tenure (dismissal for ideological non-compliance in authoritarian/ non-democratic or patrimonial sociopolitical contexts)	Yes (for lack of productivity, poor outcomes; limited tenure privileges)	No. Frequent tenure (dismissal only for severe misconduct)
Professional background of rectors/ deans	Public administration	Management	Scholar/ chair holder
Participation of academic staff in administrative management	Limited	Moderate	High
Substantive autonomy			
Setting academic profiles/curriculum design	State/academia	University management/academia	Academia
Setting strategic goals	State	University management/academia	Academia
Determining the research profile	State/academia	University management/academia	Academia
Setting accession conditions, size of institution and core specialisations	State	University management/academia	Academia

Source Adapted from Dobbins et al. (2011)

The False Logic of Economism: Economic Growth and Higher Education

At the time of the UCAD conference in 1966, Asia's lagging higher education systems reflected several intertwining historical legacies: the North–South (centre–periphery) divide and the international division of labour which had advantaged the West as the hub of scientific knowledge and academic standing; the Cold War politics of the era and Western aid which often 'migrated' Asian talent to study (and work) in the West through philanthropic and soft-power scholarships; Asia's uneven economic development and under-investment in the sector which depressed sector expansion, participation, career and research options; and Asia's traditionally bureaucratised, hierarchical and seniority-based governance cultures which tended to obfuscate innovation or sector reform.

Fifty years hence and the world has changed—and, apparently, dramatically so. The ills that beset Asia's higher education sector would appear to have dissipated—if not absolutely then significantly. The international division of academic labour that accompanied the Cold War and which saw Asian powers such as China and Vietnam (among others) locked within the Soviet sphere of influence and linguistically insulated from English-language scientific communication has largely abated (Altbach 2016b, pp. 3, 8–9). More broadly, the centre–periphery relationship that defined Anglo-American and Asian academic spaces has frayed, with the emergence of successful universities and research centres and with educational attainment in various Asian states deepening in terms of rates of participation and quality measures. The predominantly insular nature of Asian HE systems has also been impacted (albeit unevenly) by international trends associated with competitive global and regional rankings, an increasing emphasis on teaching quality, research productivity and graduate learning outcomes. Indeed, to the extent that research on HE in Asia has a common undergirding rationale, this is overwhelmingly themed around issues associated with expansion, massification, growing investment and excellence in research—and even the emerging possibility of global research leadership (Kim 2016; Kitamura et al. 2014; Neubauer 2012).

The reasons for such optimism are not hard to discern. Asia's new-found wealth has transformed the region. In 1980, roughly 20% of global economic activity was accounted for by Asia, compared to 32% by Europe. By 2012–13, these positions had been inverted (Swanson 2015). And while the USA remains the single largest economy in the world, accounting for approximately 24% of global GDP, by 2029 China is expected to surpass the USA to become the world's largest economy—although its GDP per capita is expected to remain at approximately 35% of that of the USA (Willige 2016). Asia's economic dynamism, in other words, is likely to be structurally transformative, not just to the constellation and distribution of global economic power, the locus of production, manufacturing and assembly, but also to knowledge production and research, potentially displacing the West's leadership in higher education or at least posing significant competition to it. Popular narratives thus hold that the rise of Asia has reached the 'scales of global knowledge' (Lehmann

2017), with many of Asia's universities, if not already at 'the top of the class', then destined to be so (Levin 2010). Forecasts suggest that Asia will be the 'next higher education superpower' (Bhandari and Lefebure 2015; Cummings 2010; Marginson 2011b) with countries such as China poised to dominate global research leadership with as many as forty-two world-class universities by 2050 (Asian Correspondent 2017; Grove 2017).

Ashley, Polanyi and the Dangers of Linear Forecasting

The optimism inherent in such prognostications is clearly informed by what we might term an *economic essentialism* in which economic growth is implicitly correlated with various forms of institutional modernisation and deepening institutional capacities, but also with a techno-scientific rationality in which the interests of the economy discipline or at least supplant politics and discrete institutional types to form more or less similar systems of sociopolitical management and functional institutional outcomes. The logic of economism, in other words, tends to set aside politics, political context, the specificity of social relations or of discrete institutional forms. As Richard Ashley observes, the logic of economism exaggerates 'the economic sphere's importance in the determination of social and political relations' and correspondingly underestimates 'the autonomy and integrity of the political sphere' (Ashley 1983, p. 463). For Ashley, there are three implicit modes of economism:

> variable economism, where political outcomes are said to be attributable wholly or predominantly to economic causes, logical economism, where … political life is interpretable only insofar as it can be comprehended within the framework of economic logic, and historical economism, involving a double limiting of state practice … [in the] … reproduction of an economistic social order. (ibid.)

Ashley explored the fallacy of the logic of economism in the case of international relations and US triumphalism in the post-Cold War period, when various liberal theorists argued that the establishment of a free market multilateral world order would act as a fulcrum disciplining more economies to rule-based governance—dominated by the USA—and captured in Francis Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis in which the economic rationality of globalisation was sublimating politics and nation states (Fukuyama 1992; see also Keohane 2002; Keohane and Nye 1977).

Ashley's analysis, of course, is a novel restatement of Karl Polanyi's rejection of economic determinism. In his study of the origins of free market capitalism and its seemingly insurmountable domination of the European order, Polanyi eloquently highlights the contingent nature of what he termed the 'great transformation' and the historically specific series of sociopolitical processes which had embedded market-based orders within certain political contexts (Polanyi 1957). There was, in other words, no determination of social and/or political relations by the market, but only ever of exchange relations by political and social accommodations—the stuff of history and political contestation.

Both Ashley's and Polanyi's insights bear repeating, especially since so many of the social 'sciences' embrace the logic of economism as the main epistemological lens by which to understand the forces propelling change, probable historical destinations and the character and composition of social and institutional orders that will 'naturally' follow. The popular embrace by social, political and economic commentators of linear economic forecasting, for example, in which contemporary economic growth data are extrapolated to project the future ranking of economies or the structural composition of the global economy, misses entirely the central place of politics, social orders and institutional contexts in mediating historical outcomes. The World Bank's infamous forecast in 1961, for example, that Burma (Myanmar), Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the Philippines were the 'most likely candidates in Asia to follow Japan into sustained economic growth', in part reflecting their economic performance, consistently superior GDP per capita income compared to other Asian states and robust export sectors, bore no relation to subsequent trajectories. Rather than 'taking off' in the Rostowian sense, each of these states became 'developmental disasters', descending to the brink of failed states and into dire poverty—where they remain to this day (Coclanis 2013; Rostow 1971). Similarly, Jim O'Neill's celebrated forecast in 2001, based on ten years of economic growth data, that Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (the BRICS) would dominate and transform the global order by 2050, seems likely to be proven wrong (O'Neill 2001). By 2015, for example, O'Neill was forced to revise the idiom to the 'IC' (India and China) economies, noting that Russia, Brazil and South Africa had faulted as emerging economic powerhouses due to various political factors (O'Neill 2015).[1]

The point, of course, is that the logic of economism provides scant evidence of any natural causality between economic growth and institutional or systemic outcomes, while linear economic forecasting highlights the dangers of assuming that historical, political or social outcomes are 'attributable wholly or predominantly to economic causes' (Ashley 1983, p. 463). Put another way, it is not economic growth which kickstarts forms of institutional modernisation or innovation, but transformations within sociopolitical institutional contexts that facilitate the emergence of specific modes of productive economic activity. There is thus ample precedence to reject, or at least be sceptical of, analytical frameworks that posit a natural causality between economic growth and Asia's projected performance in higher education and research. Indeed, we suggest this is a less than useful prism by which to understand the political, social and institutional forces mediating change in higher education in Asia and the substantial barriers to reform and innovation that persist.

[1]The BRICS formed into a loose international coalition (initially without South Africa) in a summit in 2008; it collaborated to create the BRICS Development Bank in 2014, driven and substantially resourced by China, and now referred to as the New Development Bank, headquartered in Shanghai. Much like its namesake idiom, however, with domestic political and economic disruptions in Russia, Brazil and South Africa, the international significance of the forum relative to other multilateral groups has diminished (see Abdenur and Folly 2015).

The Political Economy of Higher Education Governance: Southeast Asia

Popular depictions of a 'rising Asia' or an 'Asian century' are replete with what Lee calls 'conceptual ambiguity' since they give 'the illusion of political and perhaps even ideological cohesion' (Lee 2016, p. 9). As a geographic and economic moniker, 'rising Asia' thus requires serious and sustained contextualisation in order for the vast diversities of wealth, development, politics and state–society relations to be fully understood. Indeed, outside of Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, the city state of Singapore and Hong Kong SAR (China), few other geographic entities in Asia have transitioned into a high-income economy—defined by the World Bank as economies with a GNI per capita greater than US$12,475 (World Bank 2016).[2] In economic terms, the 'Asian Century' has thus been geographically discrete, mostly confined to Northeast Asia and most recently to wealth creation in China (predominantly Eastern China). Southeast Asia, by contrast, has remained mired in widespread poverty and underdevelopment, especially in Indochina (Cambodia, US$1140; Laos, US$2150; Vietnam US$2060; and Myanmar US$1190), with countries such as Indonesia (US$3400) and the Philippines (US$3580) performing somewhat better but clearly outpaced by levels of economic development in Malaysia (US$9860) and Singapore (US$51,880).[3]

Indonesia: Systemic Failures and Enduring Obstacles

Perhaps not surprisingly, apart from Singapore and Malaysia, higher education systems in Southeast Asia thus continue to suffer resource challenges, are not competitive in terms of attracting international talent due to low levels of remuneration, and generally struggle in terms of quality (Heyward and Sopantini 2013). In Indonesia, Southeast Asia's largest economy and the world's fourth most populous nation, for example, the sector has consistently performed poorly despite repeated policy attempts since the mid-1990s to increase 'quality, responsiveness, and accountability of its universities' and efforts to have several Indonesian universities ranked within the top 500 globally within a decade (Negara and Benveniste 2014; Rakhmani 2018; see also Rosser, this volume). The establishment of a national-level task force, political announcements supporting sector reform and changes to the constitution in 2002 requiring the government to commit 20% of its total budget to education have generally failed to produce net positive outcomes (Logli 2016; World Bank 2013). Currently, not a single university in Indonesia is ranked in the top 500 World University Rankings, with the country's three most esteemed universities (University of Indonesia, Bandung Institute of Technology and Universitas Gadjah Mada) ranked

[2]The only other examples are Brunei Darussalam (US$32,860) whose wealth is singularly attributable to resource extraction (oil) and Macau, SAR, China (US$65,130) which derives 88% of its entire GDP from 'gambling services'.

[3]GNI per capita, Atlas method, current US$; see World Bank (2017).

Table 2 The world university rankings: Southeast Asia 2018

Country	Number of HEIs in top 801–1000	Number of HEIs in top 601–800	Number of HEIs in top 401–600	Number of HEIs in top 201–400	Number of HEIs in top 101–200	Number of HEIs in top 51–100	Number of HEIs in top 1–50
Cambodia							
Indonesia	3						
Laos							
Malaysia	1	5	1	1			
Myanmar							
Philippines		1					
Singapore						1	1
Thailand	5	3	1				
Vietnam							
Total	9	9	2	1		1	1

Source Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2018. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2018/world-ranking#!/page/0/length/25/sort_by/scores_citations/sort_order/asc/cols/scores

between 801 and 1000 (see Table 2) (OECD/ADB 2015; Times Higher Education 2018, p. 205).[4] Despite legal requirements, spending on higher education remains low by regional and international standards (0.3% of GDP as of 2009), adversely impacting investment in research and development (0.09% of GDP as of 2012) (Logli 2016). While spending on higher education as a proportion of the central government budget has increased from 0.92% in 2007 to 2.76% as of 2011, compared to neighbouring Malaysia or Singapore the sector continues to be under-resourced (OECD/ADB 2015, pp. 197–198, 207).

With low levels of investment, Indonesia struggles to produce sufficient academic labour to populate the sector or allow for rapid expansion. The number of domestically trained PhDs in 2013, for example, was a mere 1765 from a population base of 261 million. As the World Bank notes, this contrasts poorly with countries such as Brazil which, with a much smaller population, annually train some 10,000 new PhDs. (Negara and Benveniste 2014, p. 35). As a consequence, only 10% of academic labour in Indonesia's public universities hold a Ph.D., a third have a Bachelor's degree, with

[4]We recognise that university rankings are not the ultimate measure of excellence or achievements in teaching and research. Rather, they capture a broad cross section of performance metrics in research, teaching, internationalisation and other related esteem measures. We use only the Times Higher Education World Universities Rankings (THE WUR) data; we believe this is the most objective of all the available university rankings indices insofar as it does not use surveys based predominantly on reputational perceptions but metrics drawn from five areas weighted as follows: teaching (30% of the total score), research (30%), citations (30%), international outlook (7.5%) and industry income (2.5%). See https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/methodology-world-university-rankings-2018. (See also Hazelkorn 2017; Marope et al. 2013; Pratt 2013; Pusser and Marginson 2013).

the remaining holding diplomas or other post-secondary qualifications (Negara and Benveniste 2014, p. 35; OECD/ADB 2015, p. 214). Such low rates of advanced doctoral training have obvious implications for research quality and productivity, with the country producing on average just 1000 papers a year between 1996 and 2011, increasing to 11,765 articles in 2016 (see Table 3)[5] (Yasih and Mudhoffir 2017). But while there is evidence of an upward trend in the overall number of research outputs, research productivity continues to lag substantially behind neighbouring countries. According to the Global Innovation Index, for instance, Indonesia is 'grouped between "under performers" (Venezuela and Algeria) and "learners" (Malaysia and Thailand)' (Global Innovation Index as quoted in Moeliodihardjo 2014, p. 3; see also OECD/ADB 2015). Relatedly, the level of international research collaboration has also been declining, with the percentage of papers that are internationally co-authored falling from approximately 81% in 2003 to 57% in 2011 (UNESCO 2014, p. 84).[6] Perhaps more importantly, the impact of the research produced is one of the lowest in Southeast Asia. According to bibliometric measures produced by SCImago, for example, the 11,765 published articles received just 4604 citations, lower than the absolute number of citations for published outputs in Vietnam (4970) and Thailand (11,331) (Pelupessy 2017). This is also confirmed by the OECD, which notes that a large proportion of the scientific research produced in Indonesia falls below the world average in terms of relative citation impact (OECD 2013a, p. 166).[7]

These realities contrast sharply with Indonesia's otherwise robust recent economic performance, with increasing domestic private consumption and annual GDP growth rates hovering above 5% since 2004 (World Bank 2018). Indeed, the economic narratives surrounding Indonesia are invariably of ever-deepening success; 'the largest economy in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)', one of the 'best economies in the G20' and 'predicted to become the world's fourth-largest economy by 2050' (de Haan 2017, p. 2; Legowo-Zipperer 2017; Oberman et al. 2012). Clearly, the causes of underperformance in Indonesia's higher education system are not related to declining national economic capacity. Rather, they relate to the political, institutional and social contexts that govern the sector. Several of these are readily apparent; in particular, the governance legacies set in place as a result of Suharto's New Order, political contestation vis-à-vis public and private interests, as well as interventions by multilateral organisations to encourage private sector participation in higher education provision (Robison 1986; Robison et al. 2005).

[5]The World Bank estimates that research productivity per academic staff is roughly around 0.4 research outputs per year, well below international standards (Negara and Benveniste 2014, p. 36).

[6]The extremely low base of research output is also noted by the OECD in the organisation's country background report, which highlighted that 'an increase in research output and research papers in recognised international journals written by Indonesian researchers', in part reflected 'co-operation with foreign researchers', and grew 'from 578 research papers in 2000 to 1142 papers in 2008'—significant growth to be sure but still lagging behind equivalent-sized economies (OECD/ADB 2015, p. 202).

[7]Indonesia performs least well relative to other countries in Asia in terms of citations per document. In 2016, for example, citations per document were 1.26 (Pelupesssy, 2017).

Table 3 Research output rankings, Asia 2016

Rank	Country	Documents	Citable documents
1	China	483595	472441
2	India	148832	137824
3	Japan	126294	116692
4	South Korea	81099	77727
5	Taiwan	36902	35003
6	Malaysia	29739	28585
7	Singapore	20985	19167
8	Hong Kong	17632	16183
9	Thailand	14608	13678
10	Indonesia	12185	11765
11	Vietnam	5768	5508
12	Philippines	3021	2790
13	Macao	1268	1199
14	Brunei Darussalam	519	456
15	Cambodia	387	368
16	Myanmar	306	286
17	Laos	267	253
18	North Korea	40	40
19	Timor-Leste	28	25

Source SCImago Journal & Country Rank (Scopus, Elsevier B.V): https://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php?year=2016&region=Asiatic%20Region

Indonesia's Governance Legacies

One of the obvious barriers to sector reform insofar as public universities are concerned remains the stifling level of centralised control over all facets of university activities exercised by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) and the Director General of Higher Education (DGHE). The MoEC, for example, determines the budget allocations to each public university and issues budgets which are based on permitted line-item expenditures and overseen by the DGHE and the state auditor. As Negara and Benveniste note, public higher education institutions (HEIs) have 'very little financial autonomy' with government funding for public and private HEIs 'rigidly pre-allocated into an annual line-item budget' with HEIs 'not permitted to make adjustments to these budgets', which, because of their short-term nature, 'makes funding long-term programmes much more difficult (regardless of the programmes' performance)' (Negara and Benveniste 2014, p. 45). This allows the MoEC to stipulate university activities and performance indicators and thereby align specific institutional goals and objectives with those of the MoEC. Further, the MoEC regulates the programme offerings of HEIs, their duration and degree requirements,