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Soft power building strategy from 2010 to 2020: case of China and Taiwan



Higher Education and Geopolitics

- Raising geopolitical tension in the East Asia has been recorded. Higher education, a non-traditionally political field, is gradually involved in these conflicts. During Covid-19 times, Chinese students were not allowed to enter Taiwan even when students from other states returned to their studies.
- Examine a highly centralised higher education system of geopolitical influences and its national apparatus as agency.
- With the connection between knowledge and R&D capability, higher education leans toward substantial influence that was traditionally categorised in the hard power realm, surpassing the soft power influence.

Political / Educational Issues in the Chronology of Events Between China and Taiwan

2010

China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) revealed

2012

Xi-Jin-Ping starts his first term as the Chinese President and announces the concept of the “Chinese Dream”; China's Twelfth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China revealed

2013

China announces Project for Enhancing International Impact of China STM Journals

2015

China's starts its World First-Class Universities and First-Class Academic Disciplines Construction

2017

Xi-Jin-Ping starts his second term as the Chinese President and interlinks the “Chinese Dream” to the “Two Centenaries”

2018

US-China Trade War starts;

2020

China introduces the concept of “Dual Circulation”

2010

Taiwan's Second Phase of Aim For Top Universities Project

2016

Tsai Ing-Wen starts her first term as the Taiwanese President

2018

Taiwan starts its Higher Education Sprout Project

2020

Tsai Ing-Wen starts her second term as the Taiwanese President; Chinese students are no longer allowed to study in Taiwan;

Soft power

“Soft power is a term that offers a convenient fit for the political needs, beliefs and possible biases of state actors who, in turn, inter-subjectively buttress the notion that soft power is at work by adopting strategies rooted in the claims of soft power approaches. “ (Hall, 2010, p.197)

(1) **Institutional Power:**

Membership in international organisations and the policy options such memberships entail

(2) **Reputational Power:**

The manner in which particular reputations provide states with issue-specific forms of influence

(3) **Representational Power:**

The ability of states to frame issues, advance their own interpretations, and consciously seek to shape the beliefs of others

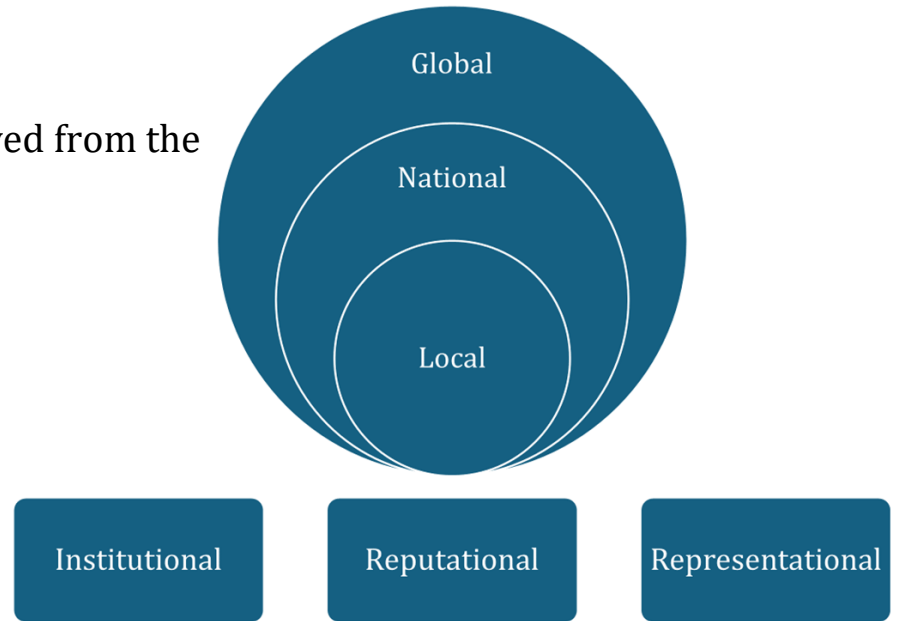
Glouacal Agency Heuristic

- Proposed by Simon Marginson & Gary Rhoades (2002)
 - A geo-spatial theory to explain expanding globalisation in higher education
- Glouacal=global+national+local
- Agency as organized agencies and agency of human actions

- Emphasize the role of nation-states as primary actor
- Highlighting national and local dimension in globalisation

Methodology

- Policy document analysis
- Discourse analysis
- Deductive coding with provisional codes derived from the soft power theory and glocal agency.
- Pattern analysis and emerging codes



Institutional Power

- China:
 - Focusing on the global agency.
 - More emphasis on discourse power. From importing excellence educational resources and international cooperation to increasing the editors in international top-tier journals and increasing committee member in international higher education organisations.
 - Move away from humanitarian aids to decision-making position . From widening international education aids and cultivate technicians for developing countries to “牽頭” (qiān tou, as the head lead of) international or regional scientific projects and constructions.
- Taiwan:
 - Non-existent global agency
 - Focus on local agency in: utilising the university social responsibility scheme to form a team and address local issues.

Reputational Power

- China
 - Quality shifted from “approaching world first class” to “world first class”
 - Strengthening reputational power as a powerhouse of the global economy with natural sciences related to economic growth
- Taiwan
 - From a more quantitative approach to a qualitative approach.
 - Focus shifted from international visibility to internal capacity building.
 - Advance research on specific disciplines to attract international talents.
 - Moved from global (visibility) to national (status): Advance unique research fields to build reputation and status of a university, then through the university status establish international reputation for Taiwan.

Representational Power

- China

- Heavy focus on creating the representational power with Chinese characteristic interpretation.
 - Focus shifted from becoming a strong state on human resources (人力資源強國) to higher education (高等教育強國).
 - Emphasising “world first-class” higher education “with Chinese characteristics” (中國特色、世界一流) and “discourse power”(話語權) to highlight Chinese uniqueness.
 - Consolidating domestic control with social sciences with Chinese characteristics (建設具有中國特色、中國風格、中國氣派的哲學社會科學體系)

- Taiwanese

- Narrative on the global agency changed from community than wider society
 - Focus shifted from universities’ advantage with Chinese language in the growing Chinese community economy to a campus that has true connection (接軌) to the international society.
- Emphasis on the national agency, “the strength of a nation is based on the strength of its universities.”(大學的實力決定了國家的實力)

Narratives in HE policies

● China

- Revisionist approach.
- Institution performance evaluation : rely on inter-party evaluation.
- 2010-2020: Approaching world first class, focus on resource distribution amongst different regions -> Chinese Characteristics, the World First Class (zhōngguó tèsè shìjiè yīliú).

● Taiwan

- Rule-abiding approach.
- Institution performance evaluation: Invite professors / administrators from well-known foreign universities to evaluate, evidence based assessment.
- 2010-2020: World University Ranking focused, chasing international visibility -> National talent focus that combines industrial and national development

Soft Power Utilization between China and Taiwan

- Aligning with political narratives
- China
 - Beyond soft power's "influence", moving into topics such as rule making, discourse power, and impacting the other competitors.
 - Promote Chinese language and learning as a way of international higher education
 - Representational power focused
- Taiwan
 - Align with international standard
 - “接軌” (jiēguǐ), in line with international development
 - Shifted aims to bilingual education with English, occasional mention of promotion on teaching Mandarin
 - Reputational power focused

Education from soft power to hard power

- Aligning with economic development
 - China:
 - Dual circulation
 - Identify the main battle field as social economy(面向經濟社會主戰場)
 - Taiwan:
 - SPROUT: Cultivating talents that meet the industrial development
- Aligning with political narratives
 - China: beyond soft power's "influence", moving into topics such as rule making, discourse power, and impacting the other competitors.

Document list

Taiwan

2010 国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要（2010-2020 年）	<i>Guojia zhongchangqi jiaoyu gaige he fazhan guihua gangyao (2010-2020 nian)</i> [The Outline of the National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)]
2012 国家教育事业发展规划第十二个五年规划	<i>Guojia jiaoyu shiye fazhan di shier ge wunian guihua</i> [The Twelfth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China]
2013 中国科技期刊国际影响力提升计划实施方案	<i>Zhongguo keji qikan guoji yingxiangli tisheng jihua shishi fangan</i> [Implementation Plan of the Project for Enhancing International Impact of China STM Journals]
2015 国务院关于印发统筹推进世界一流大学和一流学科建设总体方案的通知	<i>Guowuyuan guanyu yinfa tongchou tuijin shijie yiliu daxue he yiliu xueke jianshe zongti fangan de tongzhi</i> [The State Council's Notice Regarding the Coordination and Promotion of the World First-Class Universities and First-Class Academic Disciplines Construction].
2017 教育部 财政部 国家发展改革委关于印发《统筹推进世界一流大学和一流学科建设实施办法（暂行）》的通知	<i>Jiaoyubu Caizhengbu Guojia fazhan gaigewei guanyu yinfa "Tongchou tuijin shijie yiliu daxue he yiliu xueke jianshe shishibanfa (zhanxing)" de tongzhi</i> [Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, and National Development and Reform Commission's Notice on Publishing the Implementation Measures of the World First-Class and First-Class Academic Disciplines Construction]

China

2011 邁向頂尖大學計畫	<i>Maixiang dingjian daxue jihua</i> [Aim for Top University Project]
2014 邁向頂尖大學計畫期中考評結果與新申請學校審議結果公布	<i>Maixiang dingjian daxue jihua qizhong kaoping jieguo yu xinshenqing xuexiao shenqi jieguo gongbu</i> [Top University Mid-term Assessment and Result for Evaluation for Newly Applied HEIs]
2016 邁向頂尖大學計畫經費使用原則	<i>Maixiang dingjian daxue jihua jingfei shiyong yuanze</i> [Principles for the Use of Funds in the Aim for Top Universities Project].
2017 高等教育深耕計畫（核定版）	<i>Gaodeng jiaoyu shengeng jihua (hedingban)</i> [Higher Education Sprout Project (Approved Version)].
2018 高等教育深耕計畫審查結果公布	<i>Gaodeng jiaoyu shengeng jihua shencha jieguo gongbu</i> [Review Results of the Higher Education Sprout Project].
2023 高等教育深耕計畫主冊：第一期(107 至 111 年)成果報告暨第二期(112 至 116)年計畫	<i>Gaodeng jiaoyu shengeng jihua zhuce : diyiqi (107 zhi 111 nian) chen guo baogao ji dierqi (112 zhi 116) nian jihuashu</i> [Higher Education Sprout Project: Results Report of the First Stage from 2018 to 2022 and the Proposal for the Second Stage From 2023 to 2027].

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