

PH.D. STUDENTSHIP on the Comparative Sociology of Innovation in Israel and Singapore

Nanyang Technological University - School of Social Sciences

Location: Singapore
Salary: SG 24,000
Hours: Full Time
Contract Type: 4 years
Placed On: September 2018
Closes: November 15th 2018

Online Application:

<http://www.sss.ntu.edu.sg/Programmes/Graduate/ProspectiveStudents/Pages/How-to-Apply.aspx>

Hours: Full time

Closing date: 15th November 2018

Interview Date: Skype interviews to be arranged for shortlisted candidates

Start date: August 2019

Project Description: Israel has been noted for the emergence of its 'start-up' culture by virtue of the large numbers of entrepreneurs and successful innovative ventures it has produced. Senor and Singer (2009:i) ask the "trillion-dollar question" of "[h]ow is it that Israel—a country of 7.1 million people, only sixty years old, surrounded by enemies, in a constant state of war since its foundation, with no natural resources—produces more start-up companies than large, peaceful, and stable nations like Japan, China, Korea, Canada, and the United Kingdom?" They address the sociological factors that have conditioned the fabric of Israeli society and incubated this culture of entrepreneurship. They attribute Israel's success to several things: one is the loose hierarchical structure that Israelis learn in their mandatory military service. Another is the high degree of technical training that is included in the special programs that the military provides. Moreover, the experience of military service leaves Israelis with a close network of friends and colleagues with whom ventures are typically launched.

Singapore is similar to Israel in many regards and it too has been lauded as an innovation success, ranking alongside much larger and older countries in R&D indexes and in patent registrations. Singapore also faces similar challenges to Israel: a long-term potable water supply; affordable housing; infrastructure development; and the balance of talent acquisition/talent migration.

This research project problematizes the notion of innovation best practices and investigates the relationship between innovation practices and the broader historical, cultural, and social contexts of Singapore and Israel. What is the relative risk aversion in the respective contexts? What is the role of social network in determining the success of start-up ventures? What is the relationship to institutional structure and authority? How is innovation part of a state-led development plan? How can these questions help better clarify the relationships between national context and global innovation trends?

The student will use ethnographic and quantitative methods to investigate the relationships between innovation trends and the broader national context.

The successful candidate will hold a bachelors or masters degree in the social sciences, preferably STS, sociology, anthropology, or a closely related discipline.

Candidates must have excellent academic writing and communication skills in English. Ideally the candidate will have experience and knowledge of the Middle East and/or Asia and will be prepared for the cultural and linguistic context of the research. Preference will be given to Hebrew speakers and/or speakers of a Singaporean dialect.

For further information about the position, contact Professor Ian McGonigle:
ianmcgonigle@ntu.edu.sg

References:

Senor, D. and S. Singer (2009) *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*. New York: Twelve.