

**The EU, 'Regulatory State Regionalism' and New  
Modes of Higher Education Governance**

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## **Abstract**

Jayasuriya's (2003; 2008) conceptualisation of 'regulatory regionalism' is particularly useful for (i) examining the presence, significance and effect of new higher education governance mechanisms in constituting Europe as a competitive region and knowledge-based economy, and (ii) the role of domestic political economies in this process. Taken together, this 'field' of asymmetric dynamic political inter/action (Chorev, 2007) offers a way of seeing the relationship between Europe as a region on the one hand, and national domestic economies on the other, as mutually constitutive and transformative. In the first section of the paper I examine these mechanisms as they constitute and make governable a (competitive) European higher education space and knowledge-based economy arguing that there are distinctive phases in this project - the outcome of a shift in the balance of social forces, and the subsequent re-calibration and re-articulation of the socio-economic content of the political project.

Focusing on the current moment of this project, I argue that 'regulatory regionalism' might be further be nuanced to take account of the way the 'extra-regional' (neighbourhood economies; distant strategic domestic economies; old colonial relations and networks; new inter-regional formations) are also enrolled, mobilized and transformed, through the deployment of higher education governance tools. At this juncture, the 'extra-regional' in the European project would appear to be driven by a combination of forces and projects: Europe's claim to contingent territorial sovereignty (Elden, 2006) and state-hood; Europe's extension of its political project in relation to other geo-strategic claims; the attractiveness to domestic actors in neighbouring and more distant economies of the usefulness of Europe's higher education tools for brokering internal transformations; the desire of globally-oriented export and import higher education institutions and domestic economies beyond the borders of Europe to align their architecture and regulatory frameworks to maximise market position; and emergence of Europe's normative power on the global stage. I conclude by suggesting that in the case of Europe, this current moment of regulatory regionalism might be best conceived of as 'regulatory state regionalism'.

## Introduction

Jayasuriya's (2003; 2008) conceptualisation of 'regulatory regionalism' is particularly useful for (i) examining the presence, significance and effect of new higher education governance mechanisms in constituting Europe as a competitive region and knowledge-based economy, and (ii) the role of domestic political economies in this process. Taken together, this 'field' of asymmetric dynamic political inter/action (Chorev, 2007) offers a way of seeing the relationship between Europe as a region on the one hand, and national domestic economies on the other, as mutually constitutive and transformative. In the first section of the paper I examine these mechanisms as they constitute and make governable a (competitive) European higher education space and knowledge-based economy arguing that there are distinctive phases in this project - the outcome of a shift in the balance of social forces, and the subsequent re-calibration and re-articulation of the socio-economic content of the political project.

Focusing on the current moment of this project, I argue that 'regulatory regionalism' might be nuanced to take account of the way the 'extra-regional' (neighbourhood economies; distant strategic domestic economies; old colonial relations and networks; new inter-regional formations) are also enrolled, mobilized and transformed, though the deployment of higher education governance tools. At this juncture, the 'extra-regional' in the European project would appear to be driven by a combination of forces and projects: Europe's claim to contingent territorial sovereignty (Elden, 2006) and statehood; Europe's extension of its political project in relation to other geo-strategic claims; the attractiveness to domestic actors in neighbouring and more distant economies of the usefulness of Europe's higher education tools for brokering internal transformations; the desire of globally-oriented export and import higher education institutions and domestic economies beyond the borders of Europe to align their architecture and regulatory frameworks to maximise market position; and emergence of Europe's normative power on the global stage. I conclude by suggesting that in the case of Europe, this current moment of regulatory regionalism might best be conceived of as 'regulatory state regionalism'.

### 'Regulatory Regionalism': An Approach

'Regulatory regionalism' is an approach to the study of regionalism advanced by Jayasuriya to overcome: (i) an over-emphasis on formal regional 'institutions' to the detriment of an "understanding of the *domestic* political mainsprings of regional governance" (2003: 199 [my emphasis]), (ii) a predominant view that regionalism is a process driven from the outside rather than also from within; and (iii) the tendency to see the process of regionalisation as following a particular ideal-type model rather the outcome of regional 'political projects' that reflect and construct regionalization projects as both multifaceted and also multidimensional. Adopting a 'political project' perspective on regionalism;

...allows us to look at regions not as abstract identities but more or less as coherent projects of regional governance. Regional governance projects, in turn, embody particular constellations of power and interests—a framework that has the virtue of locating the dynamics of regional governance within the broader context of domestic political projects (Jayasuriya, 2003: 201).

Drawing on studies by writers such as Felker (2003), Phillips (2003), as well as his own work, Jayasuriya argues that regional political projects emerge as responses to crises of accumulation in domestic and the wider political economy; that is,

...the external imperatives are not to be located in terms of the changing dynamics of inter-governmental relations, but rather in the way the activities and operations of domestic and foreign capital are restructured. It is this internal process of restructuring that creates the new dynamics of regionalisation, which, in turn, lead to the formation of new regional economic spaces rule (Jayasuriya, 2003: 205).

Political projects are advanced by those social forces with the discursive power and material capability to propose and mobilise, institutionalise and govern, territorial, political and market-making claims that are able to secure new regional frontiers in turn enabling and making possible new strategic relational forms, including state organisation and political rule.

In adding 'regulation' to make up the pair 'regulatory regionalism', Jayasuriya draws attention to the extra-economic in stabilizing and reproducing capitalist social relations, and in particular how modes of calculation and governing emerge, how they come to be institutionalized, mediated and modified (Jessop, 2004: 150). In other words, regimes of accumulation are constituted and governed through an assemblage of institutions, projects, practices and subjectivities. That is, political projects do not have discrete and disconnected effects on one scale; rather they are dialectically related to from other scales and levels of political action. Seen in terms of regional political projects, it is to suggest that analyses of the constitution of regions must take into account the dialectical and co-constitutive relation between scales, rather than "...seeing regional governance as just yet another spatial scale that exists independently of the national state" (Jayasuriya, 2008: 21). This point is also made by Chorev (2007), who introduces the idea of 'a unified field of action', with a fluid divide between different levels to register the way in which political projects are asymmetrically dispersed across scales. Drawing on an historical analysis of domestic and international factors in US trade policy formation, she argues that at any one point in history, the nature of the balance between different political levels arises out of the interplay of the dynamic asymmetry and institutional arrangements which in turn will tend to give primacy to one scale over another. This kind of analysis alerts us to the fact that scalar orders are always contested social constructions and that the concentrations of power and capability at particular scales are the outcome of struggles between social forces (Jessop, 2006).

This view chimes well with Cox's (1996) neo-Gramscian analysis of power, production and world orders; with Jessop's (2004) cultural political economy approach which draws attention to the semiotic and extra-semiotic aspects of political economy; and with Sassen's analysis of the shifting relations, historically and temporally, between territory, authority and rights through the mobilization of capabilities, the embedding of logics and the realization and effects of tipping points. I have used these approaches elsewhere, to examine the way in which education is mobilized as a sector in advancing regions' political projects (Robertson, 2006; 2008a; 2008b; Robertson and Keeling, 2008).

So far the idea of 'regulatory regionalism' has focused attention on those domestic economies that constitute part of the regional political project, or in other words those

domestic economies making up the political topography of the region and are *within* its borders. However, what the recent phase of the mobilization of higher education in the construction of Europe's knowledge-based economy reveals, and an argument I advance in this paper, is that the transformation of domestic economies through regulatory power is not confined those within the emerging region. Rather, in its most recent phase, Europe's frontiers and networks of power are increasingly stretching out into, and transforming, the higher education sectors of neighbouring and *other* domestic economies around the globe. Furthermore, this extension into global space, and interaction with domestic restructuring and nascent regional projects beyond Europe, provides a platform for normative leadership by Europe as a region and for Europe to advance, and in turn, act in a state-like way.

### **'Knowledge', 'Economy', 'Europe' : Early Beginnings**

The creation of a coherent and competitive Europe had its antecedents in the 1950s, and higher education initiatives played an important role from the beginning (Corbett 2005; Hingel 2001). However, from the 1950s until the early 1990s, the EU's higher education project was almost entirely intra-regional in its ontology and outcomes. With the notable exception of the United Kingdom (and to a lesser extent France and Germany), the 'internationalisation' of study programmes, curricula, student mobility, and research career paths were primarily oriented towards European partners and Europeanizing processes. Key markers during this period were the institutionalizing of regular meetings between the European education ministers, the eventual creation of the European University Institute in Florence in 1971, and the establishment of the EU's Erasmus mobility programme in 1987 which facilitated the movement of students and staff between universities of the Member States.

The main policy aims embedded in these European-level initiatives were to produce European-minded citizens, engaged with the expanding Community (and European Commission), and committed to the concept of 'European' culture and values. Delors however also "...had a highly developed idea of education and the part it could play in his strategy for advancing European integration via the single market" (Corbett 2005: 121). Thus, two concerns came together, which it seemed higher education programmes could mediate; how to create a European Single Market, on the one hand, and a European citizen, on the other. Harnessing commitment to the European project was viewed as essential in order to combat 'narrow nationalism'; an impediment to the advance of Europe as a political project.

In 1992, a single market and European Union were announced by the Treaty of European Union and signed at Maastricht by the Heads of the European Community's Member States. The Maastricht Treaty acknowledged the European Union's direct role in education, whilst attempting to circumscribe tightly the European Commission's room for maneuver by restricting European-level action to 'supplementary' activities. Whilst the Maastricht Treaty appeared to suggest that the EU's role would be modest, under Delors the European Commission had ambitions to develop a more comprehensive policy for higher education at the European scale.

The 1991 Memorandum on Higher Education shows that higher education "...had already become part of the Community's broader agenda of economic and social coherence" (Huisman and van der Wende 2004: 350). The Commission quickly made an internal assessment of the EU's programmes and developed a new strategy to exploit the

opportunities opened by up the Maastricht Treaty's acknowledgement of the 'European dimension' in education. The Commission also began to look outward, beyond the region. It established higher education collaborative programmes with non-EU countries through initiatives such as: the ALFA programme in Latin America; the development of the Tempus cooperation programme with countries – Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and neighbouring Mediterranean countries; and Asia-Europe relations through Asia-Europe inter-regional structures, such as Asia-Link (Robertson, 2008b). However at this point these programmes tended to be based on cultural cooperation and exchange objectives, and were not well-coordinated with the emerging policy programme for education within Europe.

To make sense of the politics behind the Memorandum and the events that followed, it is crucial we consider the changing nature of the wider economic and geopolitical context that Europe's Member States found themselves in. In 1991-92 the biggest economies (including Germany) experienced a recession which increased the number of unemployed graduates in Europe (Teichler and Kehm, 1995). This provided some legitimacy for the EC's higher education project. However, of greater significance were the wider changes taking place in the global economy as a result of economic globalization, the transnationalisation of production and finance at the material level, and the shift from Keynesianism toward neo-liberalism at the ideological level (Cox, 1993: 259-60). These structural changes in the global economy had direct implications for the EU in that they directly affected the restructuring of the EU. To be competitive in the global economy, Europe had to transform itself along free trade and free market lines. As Bieler and Morton argue, "...the deregulation of the national financial markets was institutionalized in the Internal Market Programme...while the shift toward neo-liberalism was expressed by the very nature of the Internal Market programme and its drive for liberalization and the neo-liberal convergence criteria of EMU [sic: European Monetary Union] focusing on low inflation and price stability" (Bieler and Morton, 2001: 5).

The imperative to advance Europe as a political and economic project more generally, and a knowledge-based economy more specifically, is linked to the USA and Europe's declining share of good's production globally. For this reason, both the USA and the EU share a common interest in expanding the global services economy – including the higher education as a market, as an engine for innovation, and a key sector in developing new forms of intellectual property. And as Hartmann (2008: 210-11) notes, whilst the USA dominates world trade in commercial services - with 14.3% of the world's share (WTO, 2007: 12), the combined share of European Member States (now 27) generates around 46%. This share has increased the aspiration and capability of the EU to also set standards in the emerging global service economy, giving further impetus to the struggle between Europe and the US in providing normative leadership over the development of a service-based economy.

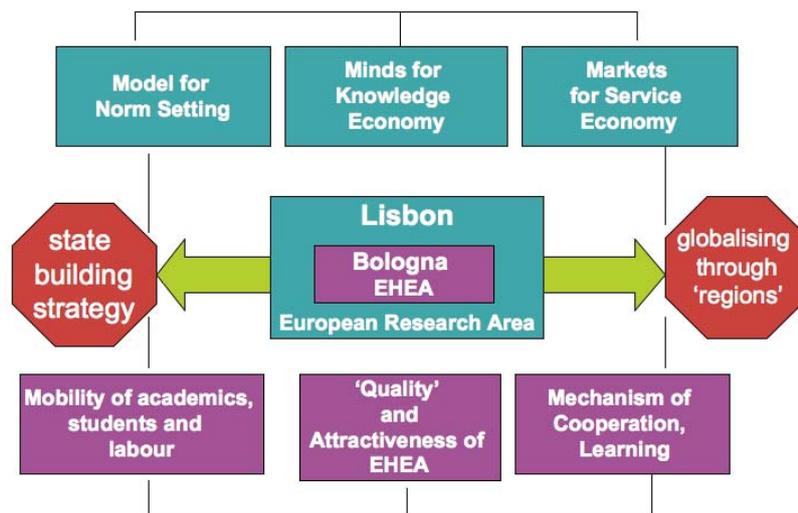
### **New/Lisbon and an Expansive Bologna: Visions and Mechanisms**

In 2000, the European Union's educational activities were given a significant boost by the 'Lisbon Strategy'; part of the EU's wider economic platform, which famously declared: "...the European Union must become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (European Council 2000). The Lisbon

Strategy provided a mandate and agenda for extending the reach of Europe’s policy responsibility deeper into national territory – education - and ultimately outwards to the rest of the world. The Lisbon Strategy confirmed a neo-liberal understanding of higher education's contribution to the socio-economic well-being of the region; building and securing human capital. In January 2000, upon the proposal of the European Commission, a decision was taken to establish a European Research and Innovation Area (ERIA), with the principal, explicit, objective of supporting a knowledge-based economy on a European scale under the framing of a "Europe of Knowledge".

The Lisbon 2000 agenda for higher education was paralleled by the Bologna Process; a distinctive and ambitious project driven by national governments and other key stakeholders to create a common architecture and a European area for higher education. The Bologna Process had its roots in a strategic articulation between domestic and regional agendas. Following a meeting in 1998 in Paris to celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sorbonne, French Minister for Education, Claude Allegre secured the agreement of the German, Italian and the United Kingdom Education Ministers; to commit their countries to a new architecture for higher education (Ravinet, 2008). This architecture would build upon the *Convention for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications* in the European region (Lisbon Convention) which had been signed in 1997. Allegre argued that in order to develop a knowledge-based economy, Europe needed to both emulate the US system and also stem the flow of European graduates to the US.

The following year the Bologna Declaration (1999) committed 29 signatory countries to six “action lines” directed towards establishing a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to be realized by 2010. Within this 'Area', staff and student mobility was to be enhanced by the alignment of national quality assurance, compatible degree structures, the adoption of a credit transfer system, and a common way of describing qualifications to be outlined in a personal ‘diploma supplement’. Taken together, these regulatory mechanisms were viewed as enabling Bologna to act as vehicle for raising the attractiveness of Europe as an education market worldwide (Zgaga, 2006: 10) (see Fig: 1).



**Fig 1: Projects and Processes in Constructing Europe’s Knowledge Economy through Higher Education**

The Bologna Process is a voluntary international agreement, situated outside the European Union's governance framework, although it is largely driven by EU interests and promotes many initiatives (such as the ECTS credit system) originally piloted by the European Commission (Keeling 2006). "Convinced that the establishment of the European area of higher education required constant support, supervision and adaptation to the continuously evolving needs" (Bologna Declaration 1999), the European education ministers decided to meet regularly to assess progress, transforming the Bologna commitment into an ongoing policy process. The Bologna Follow-Up Group has responsibility for advancing this ongoing policy agenda.

Membership of the Bologna Process and the associated European Higher Education Area has since increased to now include, by 2009, 46 countries containing around 5,600 public and private institutions with more than 16 million students. The European Higher Education Area includes Russia and southeast Europe; it thus extends far beyond the European Union as a constitutional entity.

Determining the basis of membership of Bologna, however, has been an important geo-strategic project. As Hartmann (2008) points out, initially membership of Bologna was based broadly on who were signatories to the Lisbon Convention (1997). For historical reasons this included the United States, Canada and Australia, via UNESCO's definition of Europe (US and Canada signed in 1975, Australia in 1986) (Hartmann, 2008: 213). This meant these countries, most importantly the US, had had a say in the drafting of the initial Bologna Process. Mindful that membership had to be more than Europe and the accession countries (in that it needed to include Russia but not its competitor—the US), some skilful political manoeuvring was required. The Lisbon Convention, as the basis for formal membership of the Bologna Process was jettisoned in 2003 in favour of the Council of Europe's *European Cultural Convention*, thereby excluding the US, Canada and Australia. Hartmann (2008: 214) argues that this was one of a series of moves by Europe to challenge the imperial role of the US in standard setting, turning it simultaneously into both a rival as well as a model.

### **The 'Extra-Regional' in Europe's Higher Education Project**

If higher education thus far had been oriented toward managing the territorial project and its politics *within* the expanding region as a result of accessions, from around 2003 onward, the various political apparatuses of Europe, in particular the EC, began to pursue a more explicit 'extra-regional' globalising strategy which has had both direct and indirect effects. The direct effects were the outcomes, both within and outside of Europe, of the explicit strategies to realize a competitive European higher education area and market; such as the Erasmus Mundus programme, the Neighbourhood Policy, the GATS negotiations, mobilization of old colonial links to align with Europe's market interests, and so on. The indirect effects were the consequence of the reactions to this strategy in key domestic economies in the global economy, where Bologna was now viewed as a potential threat (USA, Australia), a model for domestic restructuring (Brazil, China), or the basis for new regional projects around the globe (Africa, Latin America).

The pre-text for this change in strategy can be traced to around 2003, and the increased awareness within the European Commission of declining growth in the services sector in Europe. This awareness is encapsulated in Viviane Reding, Member of the EC responsible for Education and Culture, statement, where she outlined the basis for

'Making the EU a prominent figure in the World Education Market'. Reding argued that "...national governments alone cannot meet the challenges of globalization, new technologies and the single market" (p. 2). For the European Commission, this meant bringing the private sector into its various activities, advancing European-level leadership, and continuing to promote the liberalization of education services through the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

A suite of higher education initiatives were now launched by the Commission, all characterized by strong emphasis on global competitiveness. These were given force, focus and legitimacy following the Mid-Term Review of the Lisbon strategy chaired by Wim Kok (European Commission, 2005). Kok (2004) argued that the Lisbon 2010 strategy had failed to deliver satisfactory economic performance, and that Europe was far from achieving the socio-economic improvements that the Lisbon strategy had promised. Kok announced that Europe was falling rapidly behind both the USA and Asia. The spectre of China and India, as both threat and opportunity (Kok 2004: 12), was now added as a critical new dimension to Europe's external challenges. For Europe to compete, Kok argued, Europe needed to "...develop its own area of specialisms, excellence and comparative advantage which inevitably must lie in a commitment to the knowledge economy in its widest sense" (Kok 2004: 12).

The Presidency Conclusions of the European Council in turn acknowledged the mixed results of Lisbon, and called for urgent actions, endorsing the Commission's proposed 'new' Lisbon Strategy (European Council 2005: 3) which redirected attention almost entirely to 'jobs and growth'. The Lisbon 'Mid-Term' Review enabled the European Commission to play up and play upon the discourse of crisis to lever in a range of new initiatives that not only called for reform of the higher education sector (EC, 2005d), but directed policy attention almost entirely towards investment, innovation and jobs (EC 2005a: 4; Collignon 2006)

The 'new Lisbon' strategy – by promoting 'less, of the same' (Collignon 2006) – firmly embraced a neo-liberal vision of how the European knowledge-economy could be enhanced, and where higher education was represented as critical. The European Commission (2005a) saw universities' role in the production of a European knowledge-economy as derived from and dependent on their relationship to industry (hence the heightened concern with "knowledge transfer"). Universities' operations, governance and incentive structures, and not just their educational and research outputs, became a matter of European-level policy concern.

One week after the March 2005 meeting of European Council, Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso, delivered a stirring speech to the higher education sector at the European University Association convention in Glasgow, entitled 'Strong Universities for Europe' (Barroso, 2005) where he argued that the state of education in Europe compared to other world regions was nothing short of "miserable" (p.25). In a new departure, the Commission began to give direct recommendations about how universities' structures of governance, financing and research management (including performance measurements and incentives) should be 'modernized' to enable Europe to compete in the global competition for minds and markets (European Commission, 2005b; 2006). This included bringing in so called "Third Countries" into cooperation agreements, to stem their flow to the US. Education thus became an important area of 'sectoral dialogue' with a number of Asian countries, including China. The 'Erasmus

Mundus' global exchange programme, launched in 2003 with a budget of EUR 230 million for its first four years, included supplementary funding to increase participation by international students from specific Asian countries including India and China (the so-called "Asian Windows"). Erasmus Mundus was intended to encourage talented students to study and remain in Europe following their studies to contribute to Europe's competitive economy. By 2008 Erasmus Mundus will be supporting more than 100 Erasmus Mundus master's courses.

The EU's global talent strategy also sought to attract leading European researchers back to Europe by refining the "Marie Curie" policy and programme instruments. In the EU's 2007-13 Framework 7 programme of research funding, the international dimension was strengthened, with funds targeted at the 'return and reintegration' of leading researchers who had been working abroad. Furthermore, students who had been studying in Europe for at least four of the prior five years became eligible to apply for fellowship funds from Marie Curie to continue research in European universities. The Commission, against much initial resistance, also developed a proposal for a "European Institute of Technology", to "act as a pole of attraction for the very best minds, ideas and companies from around the world" (European Commission 2005a). A diminished version of the original was launched in 2008 (Jones, 2008). Higher education, thus, becoming deeply incorporated into the European Union's drive to improve its economic position and influence in the world.

Crucial to this process was the remarkable unfolding though uneven embedding of the Bologna Process and its various instruments; the Tuning Programme (2003-) to translate existing disciplines of study into competencies, and the establishment of a European Qualifications Register (2008-) to ensure the quality assurance of higher education providers, is co-constitutive of new objects and subjects of governance. Their combination has also caused considerable discussion in key economies around the world over the implications of this political regulatory project for their own domestic interests and longer-term strategies. This discussion is likely to be fueled by the recent call for tenders by the European Commission to develop a ranking system that could be applied globally (Robertson, 2009). The intention is to challenge the dominance of the Shanghai Jiao Tong and the Times Higher ranking systems in relation to European interests, largely as it is argued especially by the continental Member States (especially France) such ranking systems suit, and consolidate, US interests.

In sum, it is clear that the techniques of regional governance, however, have their potency not only in terms of internal regulation, but have increasingly been viewed as having the potential to challenge the basis of normative leadership in the education services sector. This has been given considerable impetus by the direct and indirect effects of Europe's higher education project on other domestic economies and nascent regional ambitions within the near region, and beyond.

In an EC Communique in 2006, the Commission argued "Ministers see the European Higher Education Area as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world..." and noted that... "The role and visibility of higher education in EU external relations is increasingly toward: neighbouring countries where programmes like Tempus have been charged with an explicit Bologna mandate (European Neighbourhood Policy); industrialised nations (OECD/G8); and with developing countries (Alban, Asia Link etc" (p. 7). The BFUG was also given the mandate to elaborate upon, and agree on, a strategy for the external dimension in order to strengthen the attractiveness of the EHEA.

(BFUG Work Programme, 2005-2007; Zgaga, 2006). This strategy, to be *with other regions* rather than countries (BFUG, 2005; [emphasis added]), was tabled at the London 2007 Ministerial meeting. This means developing regions of priority interest for Europe. The task ahead is to create the conditions for international mobility (mode 4 of the GATS agreement), recognition structures, cooperation and attractiveness.

However, many of the European researchers the European Union was attempting to lure back were based in the United States; well-established as a premier international destination for foreign students and researchers. The United States is also home to many of the world's leading universities, dominating the global rankings since the 1950s (THES 2006; Jiao Tong 2006; Graham and Diamond 1997). According to most commentators, "a performance gradient" continues to separate US research universities from the rest (Herbst 2004). Nonetheless, analyses in the US reveal that other countries were rapidly catching up on a number of fronts (OECD 2006; THES 2006; Spellings Commission 2006), and that "there are alarming indicators of stagnation and actual decline" (Douglass 2006) in the US higher education sector.

In some arenas in the United States, there is keen interest in the developments in Europe. Admiration is also expressed for the rapidity of the European changes and the strength of the political-will back-grounding them (Jaschik 2006). The American Association of International Educators (NAFSA) has also set up a Taskforce on the Bologna Process, and there is increasing interest at the institutional level about the new Bologna credentials and templates. However, to date the effect of the Bologna reforms on the US have been to leverage debate around a crisis in US higher education and the need to review marketing, visa, and admissions processes to stem the decline in share of the higher education export market (Robertson and Keeling, 2008).

This contrasts sharply with the Australian perspective, which views winning market dominance more clearly as a numbers game. In April 2006, Julie Bishop, the then Australian Minister for Education, Science and Training, tabled a paper entitled "The Bologna Process and Australia: Next Steps". This official response to the Bologna Process claimed that Australia must ensure compatibility to Bologna or face the risks associated with being "a Bologna outsider" (Bishop 2006). Viewed in this way, the European higher education developments represent a major threat for a number of reasons. There is a steady flow of students from Europe; being Bologna-compatible enables and enhances these movements, as students would exit an Australian university with a qualification that is acceptable in the European labour market. Second, the Australian government is well aware that the European Commission has used a number of instruments to create linkages and partnerships in the Asian and Latin American regions (Robertson, 2008a) in order to advance EU economic interests. If Europe were to become a desirable destination for Asian students because of its competitive fee structure, status of universities, and the increasing tendency to teach in English at the graduate level, then Europe might also threaten Australia's dominance in the market.

In relation to the Asian region - the region of most strategic concern to Australia - the European Commission has used the Erasmus Mundus 'Asian Windows' programme to recruit Indian and Chinese students to study for Masters' degrees in European universities. The Bologna Process has also been the main topic of conversation at a number of Asia-Europe meetings since 2005. Added to this, some Asian countries have been monitoring the Bologna Process closely, while China has sought observer status at the 2007 EU Ministerial meeting for Bologna.

In April 2007, Australia signed a joint declaration with the EU to become Bologna-compatible and strengthen cooperation to cover issues of quality assurance, benchmarking and indicators, and qualifications frameworks (Figel and Bishop, 2007). These programmes are seen by the Australian federal government as being critical to developing the new 'globally aware' Australian worker and citizen.

The Bologna Process and the creation of a European Higher Education Area has clearly inspired more strategic ways of thinking about regions and the value of creating and institutionalizing the role of education in regional relationships. While education has been on the agenda in forums like APEC (Dale and Robertson, 2002), Bologna offers a different kind of imaginary, creating a regional higher education architecture which offers the possibility for a single market for higher education services and the potential to improve future employability. These developments suggest that the domestic economies, such as Australia and the US, are involved in a complex set of strategic positionings in order to manage the threat (and opportunities) posed by the rapid growth of the European Higher Education Area and the Bologna Process. The entry of the EU into this sphere has clearly 'tipped' the balance of the terrain in a very different direction. It is likely not possible to ignore these pressures - given the multiple ways the EU has been engaged in inter-regional projects in both the Asian and Latin American regions (Robertson, 2006), and the long shadow cast by China. At the same time, economies such as Brazil are using the Bologna architecture as a model for the rationalization of access and to generate new system efficiencies. These developments clearly offer Brazilian graduates an efficient articulation with European graduate studies and labour markets into the future, providing a viable alternative to the US as a destination for study and work.

### **'Regulatory State Regionalism'**

In this final section, I want to return to the idea of regulatory regionalism as a way of thinking in more complex ways about regions and how they are constituted – and in this case Europe. I have argued that the development of Europe as a region must be viewed as a political project whose antecedents can be found in crises in production, including crises in domestic economies. And, as we can see from the development of Europe's knowledge economy strategy through higher education, this is evidently the case. Following Jayasuriya, I have argued that it is crucial that we see Europe, not as a field of action made up of a discrete scale of action, but as a dialectical relation between the multiple scales of activity, in turn constitutive of Europe, a European higher education sector, and European citizens as objects and subjects of governance.

However I have also argued that the socio-economic content of the political project at the heart of Europe's regulatory regionalism has changed over time, the outcome of a struggle between those social forces advancing political projects at multiple scales around the re/direction of Europe's economy. Since 2003 a new phase began to materialize, directed by an explicit 'globalisation' rhetoric and set of projects. This included brokering into regional networks, crucial components of the higher education architecture. At the same time, the momentum and impact which gathered as a result of the visible success of the European higher education project created a set of conditions in the global stage that made it impossible for key players to ignore. I have termed this dimension the 'extra-regional'. This 'well-spring', to use Jayasuriya's term, in combination

with that of the domestic economies within the European territory, has been a strategy and an outcome that works dynamically and dialectically, directly and indirectly.

One final important question remains as to why the BFUG, the European Commission, together with other key European-level actors such as the EUA, all committed to the development of Europe as a political project, have prioritised *regions* rather than *countries* as means of promoting what Zgaga refers to as ‘the echo’ of Bologna globally (2006: 16).

At one level we might read the focus on other regions as a political move, able to invoke a particular kind of legitimacy arising from being a signatory to the Lisbon Convention (1997). In the words of the Convention, approaching other Regions of the world will contribute to Europe’s capacity to “...promot[e] peace, mutual understanding, and tolerance” (Zgaga, 2006: 19).

However, we might also read the prioritizing of regional partnerships as strategic; the consequence of struggles “...over the increasingly variable geometries of governance within and beyond the borders of the European Union” (Jessop, 2005: 225). Regional partnerships draw upon the capabilities of old colonial linkages, their elite diasporas and intellectual networks (for instance Francophone Africa; Lusophone Africa; Latin America). They are also useful mechanisms for constituting and activating new forms of regional re/organization which draw in, and scaffold into existence, European normative frameworks (instruments of European higher education restructuring) and normative power, rather than its alternative; US norm making capability (Hartmann, 2008).

However, I would also argue that negotiating through regions means being able to jump scales (Jessop, 2005: 226), by-passing existing scalar fixes such as those of the nation-state and its Westphalian claim to territory and sovereignty, seeking instead to advance and institutionalize its interests through these new alliances. As this paper has argued, the scalar redistribution of the labour of the state and education is an important aspect of economic and political restructuring (Collinge, 1999). Viewed in this way, inter-regionalisms offer a platform for, and possibility of, a nascent region—in this case Europe—to act in a state-like way, advancing its claim to dominance in an interregional arena that itself operates as a strategically selective terrain, given the characteristics, capabilities and activities of the organizations located on this regional scale.

Elsewhere Jayasuriya (2008: 21) has referred to this as “the transformation of the territorial space in which the state operates”, and that, following Poulantzas’s (1978: 104) insights into the tendency of the state to monopolize the procedures for the organisation of space, “regional governance needs to be conceptualized as a political process that contours a regional space within the state” (Jayasuriya: op. Cit). There is considerable evidence for this claim in the European political project outlined above. As legitimate and authorized representatives of their respective constituencies (that is their Member States, however this is operationalized), this denationalized, multi-scalar state-space exercises ‘contingent sovereignty’ (Elden 2006), through advancing denationalized leadership in this newly constituted ‘accountability community’ (Jayasuriya 2009). We might therefore argue that the current phase of regulatory regionalism, through higher education, is a distinctive, discrete, though not disconnected moment in the formation of a European state that is best represented as ‘regulatory state regionalism’.

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