

# Regionalization & the Harmonization of HE in Asia: Easier Said Than Done

John N. Hawkins

# + Some Conceptual Considerations

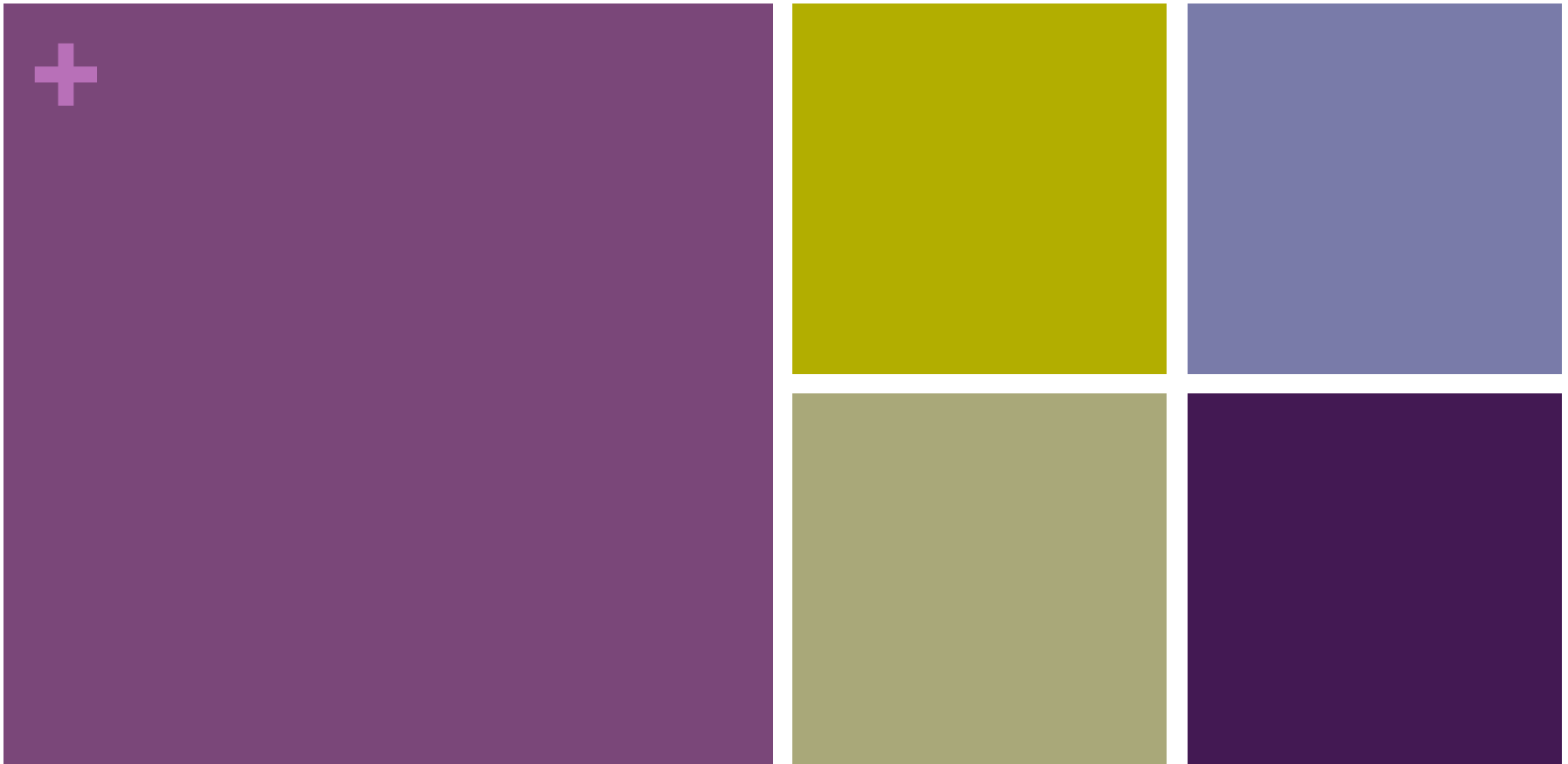
- Is economic regionalization a trend for future?
- Does it mean HE regionalization will follow?
- Arguments: it is already happening vs. nationalism is too powerful for it to make much headway
- Two forces: centrifugal----centripetal
- Clark Kerr made much the same argument

# + Impact of Globalization & Neo-liberalism

- Globalization leads to competitiveness in the form of rankings
- WTO supplemented by bi-lateral trade agreements
- Where do ROs and HEIs fit in?
- Hypothesis: Regional HE and governance more likely to occur in narrow rather than broad sense

# + More Impact

- Both centrifugal and centripetal forces operating at the same time, in continual and constant dynamic tension
- Vogel: centrifugal at work among big three—China, Japan, Korea, namely in historical disputes and military balance of power; this overshadows efforts at RO's contributing to HE harmonization
- Small scale structures best

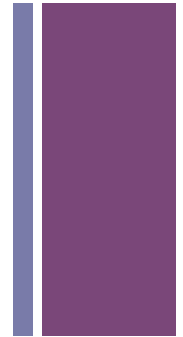


# Forms of Regionalism in Asia

Phases and Types

# + Types

- Economic
- Political
- Geographic
- Security
- Literature & Art
- Popular Culture & Sport
- Education



# + Phases

- Old: 1950-1980
  - Country groupings, peer economies, intra-regional interactions, trade, security, education
  - ASEAN prime example
- New: 1980 on
  - Neo L., economic liberalization,
  - Inter-regional orgs
  - APEC, ASEM, ACD, ASEAN+3
  - SEAMEO RHIED, ASAIHL



- Asia Inspired by EU Efforts at Harmonization
  - Readable & comparable degrees
  - 2 cycles, 3 year undergraduate and 3 year graduate
  - Europe credit transfer system
  - Remove barriers to transfers
  - Cooperate with QA agencies and curriculum development
  - Promote a “European Dimension”
  - Promote Life Long Learning
  - Promote a more open and transparent policy process
  - Promote notion of European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
  
- Is Europe a reasonable model for Asia?
- Recent studies (Scot, Musselin) critique the Europe effort
- “Hijacked” by nation states, “circuits frustrated”



## + ROs & HE in Asia

- Efforts to include HE as part of ROs since 1950's
- ASEAN-ASAIHL 1956; UNESCO, RIHED; AUNI UMAP; ASEAN-EU; Asia Link Program; EAVG; East Asian Consciousness, etc.

# + Summary Goals & Objectives

- Regional lifelong learning collaboration
- Regional credit transfer systems
- Mobility and scholarships for students and faculty
- Cooperative R&D
- Promotion of centers of excellence for e-learning
- Curriculum development
- Regional-wide QA cooperation

# + Progress Has Been Difficult

- Little coordination
- Lack of funding
- Problem of the “big two”: Japan & China, plus the US—half of global GDP and 1/3 of population represents the core of 21<sup>st</sup> century global political economy
- Success of ASEAN and all other ROs put together depend on these three (Rozman)

# + Two Arguments

- “Diversities within Asia far exceed the commonalities. . . .Asia has nowhere near the cultural affinities of West Europe”—Robert Scalapino
- Asian nations clearly have more in common with each other than they do with the West, therefore a good basis for forging substantive regional affiliations

# + Questions Asked in the Region

- How much regional cooperation in HE is already going on?
- What kind of governing principles and policies already exist for RO HE harmonization?
- What do existing frameworks reveal?
- What do the actors (HEIs, ROs, etc.) tell us?
- What can be learned from other settings (i.e. Europe, US, etc.)?

# + Centrifugal Forces

- Vast nature of the region, diversity, etc.
- “Asia is lagging far behind other regions in promoting even basic harmonization” – Nguyen
- Study of 3 ROs (UMAP, AUN, RIHED) reveals lack of participation, elitism, small step approach

# + Eight Shifts Occurring Throughout HE: Implications?

- **Changing characteristics of learners**-very nature of persons presenting to higher education processes is in the midst of significant transformation.
- Variations can be observed throughout the world
- Significantly complicate both aspirations and qualities of efforts to effect regional integration.
- In relatively highly integrated systems (albeit decentralized) such as US dynamics leading to entirely new conversations
  - about what learning is
  - what quality might be under such conditions of change
  - how to measure and certify any of it (Ewell 2010).

# + **Shifting methods and expectations for engaging content**

Even a modest review of this set of change dynamics will direct attention to the complexities of participatory learning including:

- Self-learning, peer to peer (P2P)
- Dissolution of conventional modes of authority/expertise
- Disruption in production, evaluation and distribution of knowledge
- Networking, interactivity as core to learning
- Collaborative, collective, social enterprise (v. individual performance)
- Importance of learning how to re-mix, re-purpose, redistribute information
- Integration of mobile learning into teaching, learning, research and outreach.



# + Determining content

- Within this frame of reference are
- efforts to apprise the effects of such diverse inputs
- as new and emerging digital literacy requirements (visual, information, digital, new media, digital production, programming)
- rapid shifts in the currencies of knowledge
- increased focus on outcomes—and skills and meta-skills
- and implicating the relevance of differential intelligence research.

# + Changes taking place within higher education organizations

- changes taking place that range from:
- demand for evidence-based outcomes from multiple constituencies (parents, government, public, etc.);
- need to oversee and monitor cost control and affordability
- efforts to improve improve the currency and perception of higher education
- the deployment of cost, result-effective of technology
- adjusting faculty resources to succeed in the new ecology;
- efforts to reinvent the college labor force.
- Also: progressive unbundling of components of teaching/learning:
- course design, content delivery, assessment, mentorship;
- outsourcing of components of the educational enterprise (recruiting, marketing, design, delivery and assessment, etc.) (Palmer and Zajonc, 2010).

## **+ Changes in the frameworks of higher education**

Major elements figuring prominently in visions of regional integration:

- notions of new forms of portability for degrees and certificates, greater comparability and compatibility of academic programs, transferability of credit, and transparency of such processes.
- often associated with notions of competency based degrees, and the proposal of new kinds of institutions might arise from active cooperation between existing institutions and those arising out of sympathetic industries.
- sometimes phased in public good language, as in the development of relevant and beneficial institutions—to point of rethinking the commercial bases of intellectual property regimes.
- Linked closely to global and international possibilities of cooperation that may lead to the emergence of new institutional forms (Clayton 2010; Thomas and Brown, 2011).

## + **Changes in credentialing**

- All prefigure fundamental changes in ways that credentialing, quality assurance, and accreditation conducted
- Specific endeavors include:
  - shift from credentialing programs and institutions toward students and their outcomes.
  - constant and continual efforts to create common degree frameworks out of systems that have been developed and nurtured to excel as separate institutions.
  - Effects are occurring simultaneously with increasing pressures to develop forms of international recognition and accreditation to provide recipient institutions with considerable currency in global competitiveness.
- See Lumina Foundation of a common degree framework for the bachelor degrees (AAC&U 2011).

# + Changes in policy

As stakes in the “higher education game” continue to rise, especially with respect to costs and alignment or mis-alignment with rapidly changing employment markets, one can expect

- national policy environments will reflect some of the tensions of change noted above
- new policy interests would be expressed in shifts toward greater accountability and transparency
- demands for better metrics
- evidence of effective returns on productivity
- efforts to sort out proper relationships for public/private partnerships, especially as for profit institutions broaden their cross-border reach and come to be major actors within regional higher education arrangements.

# + Conclusion

- Underscore dynamism of environment
- Unpredictability of interplay between centrifugal and centripetal forces
- With rapidity of changes can make arguments that each of these “shifts” has potential for either centripetal or centrifugal consequences—the “proof” will be in seeing how institutions and systems of national education respond to them.
- Our conviction that all of these shifts derive in some ways from the larger paradigm shift that is occurring within higher education within “the region” of Asia-Pacific and throughout the world.

# + Never Before

- Never before in their long history have universities faced as many challenges as they do now. This is so because we live in times of enormous economic, political and cultural transformations, demanding the very idea of university to be re-imagined. Citizenries and constituents now question the relevance and effectiveness of the University, in ways they have never done before. In such a context, universities do not only need to re-think and re-frame their purposes and governance, but also communicate effectively with the communities that support them. They also need to take a manifestly pivotal role in addressing the key challenges and opportunities of our times: globalization, environmental sustainability, economic development, social inclusion, and human security. Fazal Rizvi (Call for World Universities Forum, Rhodes Greece 8-10 January 2012)