Introduction: global regionalisms and higher education

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, a growing number of researchers interested in transformations in world orders have focused their attention on the growth of supra-national (as opposed to sub-national) regions, and the role of education in this process. Indeed, just over a decade ago, two of us (Dale and Robertson, 2002) published a paper reflecting on such developments, arguing that state-created regional organizations were significant agents in powering and steering the forces that make up global capitalism. In the paper we pointed out that each of these organizations operates in a geographical 'regional' space that is itself constructed (for instance the 'Asia Pacific' or Latin America), that such regions are the deliberate creation of national governments ceding some authority and sovereignty to the bodies orchestrating and mediating their development, and that these global regionalisms differed from each other. These differences were not only the result of the kind of emphases they placed on the form of economic relations, but also because political, cultural and historical dynamics mediate the nature of their institutional forms and other social relations.

Our paper went on to examine in greater depth what were at the time three prominent regional groupings – the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum – through an exploration of their form and purpose, the dimensions of power at work (such as decisions, agenda-setting, rules of the game), and the nature of the effects on national and sub-national education systems, whether directly on education policies (such as new curricula, discourses of inclusion, quality assurance mechanisms) or the broader politics of education (such as how social sectors like education were being recalibrated by, or indeed calibrating, bigger political projects).

Looking back at this period, it is clear a great deal has changed. APEC, for instance, heavily backed by the United States, Australia and Singapore, is now less significant as a regional organization, whilst the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has become increasingly important. As 2015 came to a close, the ASEAN Economic Community was launched. It was also clear some forms of regionalizing are not (national) state-led but rather involve a range of other actors, with or without the state. It is also clear that, over this period of time, higher education has begun to play an increasingly more central role in different kinds of regional projects, for example through student and staff mobility programmes, the development of quality assurance mechanisms, regional qualifications frameworks, sharing best practice, and in some cases, introducing systems of credit transfer for students.

But one thing is also clear: our interest in region-building and novel forms of inter-regionalism, and the role that higher education is playing in this, has continued to grow. We were hooked. Regional projects and the spaces that they were creating beyond the national state – from Africa to Latin America, Europe, Central Asia, the Arab world, South East Asia and Oceana – are not just fascinating political developments. They also pose interesting intellectual challenges regarding how best to understand quite what they are, and how to research them. Were they spaces or 'areas', as in the European Higher Education Area or the African Higher Education and Research Space? But what kind of area, or space? Why have they emerged, and at this point in time? What is the source of their authority and legitimacy? How do the agendas of these higher education regional projects get set, and by whom? What is the relationship between different higher education regional projects and spaces, how are these brokered, and by whom?

Answers to some of these questions came as a result of a closer engagement with the EU's higher education and economic projects through workshops and conferences (including in Madison, Wisconsin), funded research projects, and contributing as experts to the European Commission and the European University Association. At close range, we could see and meet other key players who were instrumental in the rapid expansion of Europe's 'education space' through instruments like the Bologna Process launched in 1999 (Bologna, 1999). To change the degree architectures of its 29 signatory countries (expanding now to some 48 countries) through this Bologna Process was nothing short of astonishing, especially given the difficulties institutions inevitably present for any grand-scale reform initiative. And in this case, higher education was being enrolled in a regional integration project which had emanated from national governments: a proposal from Claude Allègre, then France's Minister of Education, Higher Education

and Research to higher education ministers from Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom. His proposal, 'Towards a European University', culminated in the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 (Corbett, 2005). This was state-led, to be sure, but was given energy and direction from below rather than above (Ravinet, 2008).

Histories, of course do not write themselves. They are made by actors under circumstances not entirely of their own choosing, to paraphrase the well-known line. Over the past decade and a half, higher education has been viewed by leaders of many developed economies as an important sector through which to resolve bigger challenges regarding global competitiveness through the creation of knowledge-based economies and societies. But we could also see very interesting new developments emerge, including forms of South–South cooperation especially in the Latin American region. Yet what is particularly intriguing, from our point of view, is the way this regional scale was being constituted as an important platform upon which solutions to the challenges facing governments and their higher education institutions were being sought. And what of the implications for (sub)national governments when their higher education institutions and efforts are being governed at a supra-national scale?

Much of our research effort went on to concentrate on Europe as a way of exploring these questions (see Robertson, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2010; Robertson and Keeling, 2008; Dale and Robertson, 2009). We were soon joined by a band of eager researchers, many of whom appear in this book, as keen as we were to look beyond the obvious – Europe – to already existing but under- or unstudied, newer, and novel forms of higher education regionalisms around the globe, from the Gulf Region to MERCOSUR, ASEAN, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), the Barents Region, Council of Europe (CoE) to the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), and new forms of inter-regionalisms. All include higher education in their agenda, albeit it in somewhat different ways, and at different levels of development.

REGIONS, REGIONALIZING, INTER-REGIONALISM

Encountering theoretical and empirical work on regions and region-making means encountering a bewildering lexicon (for example: regions, regionalism, regionalization, inter-regionalism, regionness) as researchers try to capture projects, processes, actors and institutions at work in the making of a more or less coherent regional territorial space. We might call this 'a region *in* itself'. But when a region acquires an identity, and acts

'as a region *for* itself' (Cammack, 2015), it has what Hettne (2005) calls 'actorness', for example when a region acts on the world stage as an entity.

Rather than provide an exhaustive account, we leave the various elaborations to the appropriate chapters in this volume. But a brief account will get the reader started. At its simplest, regions can be seen as the outcome of formal and/or informal arrangements to cooperate on economic, political and cultural affairs. Dent defines regionalism as the 'structures, processes and arrangements that are working toward greater coherence within a specific international regime in terms of economic, political, security, socio-cultural and other kinds of linkages' (Dent, 2008: 5).

Regionalism is often differentiated from regionalization, as the tangible material and human flows that cross borders within a region and in doing so generate an evident and usually deepening intra-regional integration pattern when viewed from a global perspective. For example, family firms in Southeast Asia trade heavily amongst one another, and help to bind together the region's economy. This form of regionalization, however, is differentiated from the regionalism associated with ASEAN; an institution with a reform agenda created by nation-states. Regionalization driven by private actors (investment flows including overseas university campuses) is often supported and reinforced by states (for example, Australian university campuses in different Southeast Asian countries). Furthermore, the density of interactions by non-state actors often leads to a demand for common institutions and formal institutional cooperation. For instance, when student mobility or worker mobility increases, states and their institutions may well sign agreements regarding mutual recognition of qualifications.

Clearly regionalism and regionalization are interdependent, though the nature of each phenomenon and their relationship varies across space and time. Indeed they are so interdependent that some scholars deliberately blur the terms with a focus on legal and regulatory dynamics at a variety of scales. As Breslin and Higgott (2000) put it, regionalism is an interactive process consisting of:

1. De facto economic integration on the one hand (at both global and regional levels) and *de jure* processes of regional institutionalized governance on the other.
2. Emerging (vertical) meso-levels of authority between the state and the global order (trans- or supra-national regionalization) on the one hand, and between the state and the local level (sub-national regionalization) on the other ('glocalization').
3. Emerging (horizontal) authority across extant territorial jurisdictions (natural economic territories or growth triangles).

While we agree broadly with this, we prefer to differentiate regionalism from regionalization in this text to help enhance our ability to communicate about some of their driving forces with greater clarity.

Inter-regionalism is a phenomenon obviously linked to regionalism (Gaens, 2011). Once a regional agenda and architecture is constructed (for example, the EU), regions often reach out to other regions to facilitate the development process via the building of linkages. Examples of inter-regional linkages include the European Union–Gulf Cooperation Council (EU-GCC), European Union–Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC) and ASEM, which Que Anh Dang (Chapter 7 in this volume) examines. ASEM was established in 1996 by 25 countries from Asia and Europe, along with the European Commission, and has continued to morph into a very different kind of institution from the one its founding members launched. Indeed Dang argues that what has emerged is not simply a mix of Asia and Europe regionalism but a new set of social relations not reducible to the sum of its parts.

Inter-regionalisms are seen as a response to complex interdependencies caused by globalization (Rüland and Storz, 2008). It broadly consists of three strands: bi-regionalism, trans-regionalism and hybrid inter-regionalism (Rüland, 2010). Bi-regionalism denotes region-to-region dialogues between two more or less clearly defined regional entities and is organized in a hub-and-spoke relationship, mainly around the EU (ibid.), although that model is altering as partner regions, such as MERCOSUR, ASEAN and NAFTA, lead the charge to develop new hubs (Doidge, 2007). In bi-regional cooperation there are usually no common overarching institutions; both sides rely on their own organizational infrastructures (Rüland and Storz, 2008). Examples here include the EU–ASEAN, EU–MERCOSUR and EU–NAFTA.

Trans-regionalism refers to a process of dialogue with a more diffuse membership which does not include only regional organizations but also member states from more than two regions (Dent, 2004). Trans-regional forums tend to develop a modicum of organizational infrastructure, such as a secretariat (virtual or physical) or other (often informal) coordinating mechanisms. An example here is APEC which has a permanent secretariat in Singapore.

Hybrid inter-regionalism is a residual category that includes intercontinental forums, such as Africa–EU and EU–Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (EU–CELAC), or strategic partnerships of the EU with individual countries (EU–United States, EU–Russia, EU–China, EU–Japan, EU–India and EU–Mexico).

Many forms of regionalism are shaped by, and emerge out of, regional trade agreements (RTAs). The World Trade Organization (WTO) has a

register of RTAs and it is useful to look at it to get a sense of their scope and scale. According to the WTO, an RTA is 'an agreement concluded between countries not necessarily belonging to the same geographical region' (WTO, 2016):

> The coverage and depth of preferential treatment varies from one RTA to another. Modern RTAs, and not exclusively those linking the most developed economies, tend to go far beyond tariff-cutting exercises. They provide for increasingly complex regulations governing intra-trade (for example with respect to standards, safeguard provisions, customs administration, etc.) and they often also provide for a preferential regulatory framework for mutual services trade. The most sophisticated RTAs go beyond traditional trade policy mechanisms, to include regional rules on investment, competition, environment and labour. (WTO, 2016)

As of 1 December 2015, some 619 notifications of RTAs (counting goods, services and accessions separately) had been received by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade/World Trade Organization (GATT/WTO). Of these, 413 were in force. These WTO figures correspond to 452 physical RTAs (counting goods, services and accessions together), of which 265 are currently in force (WTO, 2016). Amongst the best-known regions are the European Union, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), NAFTA, MERCOSUR, the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

RTAs have become increasingly prevalent since the early 1990s, though many regional agreements and their forms of organization have a longer history, including the League of Arab States (1945), the Organization of American States (1948), the Council of Europe (1949), the European Union (1957), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (1967), and the Gulf Cooperation Council (1981).

Regional forms of cooperation and their agreements seem to have come in waves. They begin in the period immediately after the Second World War. In the 1960s a new wave follows with the rise of Asia. Later, in the 1990s, regions emerge again as a response to the globalizing of neoliberalism and a commitment to freer movement of trade over national boundaries. Most recently regional cooperation agreements are again a response to global processes, this time as a result of the collapse of the World Trade Organization's trade and services negotiations. In this most recent period, a huge number of bilateral preferential trade agreements have also been negotiated that include higher education as a services sector.

However, there are clearly very different speeds of integration (as well as disintegration or stalling, if we take the APEC case), with quite different degrees of: the ceding of authority from national states to these

regional bodies; numbers of members and patterns of membership; accession agendas; spheres of competence especially in relation to social policy sectors such as higher education; and also institutional arrangements. Yet there are also some important similarities, especially when governance instruments, such as quality assurance mechanisms, are transferred or borrowed from one region to the next. These differences have presented researchers with major challenges regarding conceptualizing and theorizing regions.

CONCEPTUALIZING AND THEORIZING REGIONS

The expansion of inter-state activities at the regional level, and novel and new forms of regional cooperation and organization since the 1990s, have resulted in the proliferation of concepts and approaches. Börzel nicely captures this when she states:

> There is new and old regionalism, regionalism in its first, second and third generation; economic, monetary, security and cultural regionalism, state regionalism, shadow regionalism; cross-, inter-, trans-, and multi-regionalism; North, South and North–South regionalism; informal and institutional regionalism – just to name a few of the labels. (Börzel, 2011: 5)

Add to this mix different disciplines, from area studies to politics, international relations, anthropology, economics and sociology; and competing paradigms, such as functional, positivist, constructivist, neorealist, (neo) Marxist; and it is clear that there are many approaches to, or angles in on, the study of regions and regionalisms. In the next section we briefly sketch out the main contenders in the field, and show how those working on higher education have tended to position their work in relation to regions, regionalisms and regionalizing.

REGIONS AS FUNCTIONAL UNITS OF (MULTILEVEL) GOVERNING

Much of the early work on regions emerged in the mid-1950s and focused upon two things: Europe and integration, and building the region as an endogenous process through institutions aimed at using trade as a means for creating post-war security. Hettne (2002) coined this the 'old regionalism' in contrast to a 'new regionalism' which he argued characterized the state of the world in the last decade of the twentieth century onwards (see Table I.1).

Table I.1   Old regionalism and new regionalism compared

Old regionalism, post-1945–1990s	New regionalism, 1990s onwards
Bipolar world; Cold War; strong national states	Multipolar world made up of national, regional and global actors
Created from above through super-power engagement	Voluntary process from within the emerging region; cooperation to tackle global challenges
Inward and protectionist	Open and export-oriented
Specific and narrow objectives	More comprehensive, multidimensional societal processes
Concerned with relations between nation-states	New forms of special organization that are part of a global structural transformation that includes non-state actors

Source: Based on Hettne (2002).

What are the differences between old and new regionalism? For Hettne, they refer to differences in the state of world order (bipolar versus multipolar), the move from government to governance, from closed to open economies, from narrow regionalism to multidimensional regionalisms, and from concerns over relations between nation-states to new forms of global structural transformation. In short, they reflect the collapse of the post-Second World War rapprochement amongst Westphalian nation-states and their (in many cases) commitment to state-led Keynesianism or developmentalism to a post-Soviet, post-Cold War, neoliberal, globally competitive world. This shift to the 'new regionalism' has had huge and little understood implications for higher education; once the basis of post-war nation building projects, universities and higher education systems more generally have increasingly found themselves hitched as economic engines to the nation's strategies for economic survival, as many of our chapter authors show in great detail.

Theoretically, the dominant approach to what Hettne calls 'old regionalism' is neofunctionalism. To appreciate the distinction between functionalists and neofunctionalists we can say functionalists view integration as an inevitable and unpreventable result of those developments that impose more and more functions on national states, in turn pushing national states into cooperation with international functional institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Neofunctionalists, however, argue that the institutions that are created, and the 'spillovers' from economic integration to political unity, drive

integration even further, and come to be seen as more powerful engines than national states. New elites and political alliances form at this new regional scale, giving rise to multiple levels of governing, with the end result that new competences are shifted to this level. As integration proceeds, a new centre is also created from which a 'new political community' arises. This kind of approach is quite popular amongst scholars interested in studying the governing of European higher education (see Enders, 2004 as one example).

The father of the neofunctionalist account of region-building is widely regarded as United States (US)-based Ernst Haas (see his 1958 book *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950–1957*). Haas's aim was to provide an explanation for regional integration in Europe after the Second World War, and from there, to explain regional integration and development more generally, including in Latin America (Haas, 1958). However, over time Europe was to become the region where political and economic integration was the most fully developed. As a result, Europe has come to be closely associated with the study of regional integration and region-building, and as the archetypal region (Cini and Perez-Solorzano Borragan, 2004: 83).

Of course neofunctionalist approaches to the study of regions have not disappeared, and indeed it could be argued that this is the dominant perspective still to be found in the *Journal of Common Market Studies*, the flagship journal for EU scholars. Yet neofunctionalism has its limitations: not only does it tend to focus on integration (endogenous processes), but it finds it difficult to explain why Europe's national states tend to abandon collective problem-solving in times of crisis; an issue we again see following the global financial crisis of 2008 addressed by Robertson, de Azevedo and Dale in Chapter 1 in this volume, on European higher education and Europe's response.

REGIONS AS GOVERNING BLOCS IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD ORDER

In the context of a changing world order, together with a growing sense of the limitations of the functional accounts of regionalism, a 'new regionalism' approach has been developed by scholars such as Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) and James Mittelman (2000), amongst others. They argue that new regionalism has emerged out of major changes in world orders arising from globalization, with the region and its polity a Polanyian (1944) double movement against the advance of neoliberalism. As Hettne observes:

There are some conclusions from this contrasting of old and new regionalisms which are theoretically significant for the study of contemporary regionalism: the focus on the multitude of actors, the focus on the 'real' region in the making rather than the formal region defined by the list of member states, the focus on the global context as an exogenous factor not really considered by old regionalism theory, concerned as it was with regional integration as a merger of national economies through economic cooperation with nation states. (Hettne, 2002: 326)

Hettne's new regionalism combines endogenous with exogenous factors: those internal forces and motives that influence the process of integration (and are embedded in the concept of 'regionness') which we have called 'a region in itself', and the external challenges to which integration might be the answer (arising from the dynamics of globalization and regionalization projects in other parts of the world). This latter, 'inside-out', and not just 'inside', is particularly important to the study of higher education region-making activity, and helps to explain the evolving nature of higher education regional and inter-regional developments around the globe.

Hettne also argues that we can differentiate between regional arrangements by 'levels of regionness' (2002: 327). This is a staircase of regionness that makes up a 'natural history of regionness'. Here a region is conceptualized as evolving and changing; it is both a regional space in a geographic area, as well as a set of relations that can become more (or less) complex over time. A regional society can also emerge that has cultural, political and economic dimensions; perhaps anchored in a community that is an enduring framework for the creation of a transnational civil society. At its highest level of 'regionness' Hettne argues that it might have a regional institutional polity, much as the EU does, that arises out of attempts to control and promote globalization (ibid.: 329). For Hettne, these different stages of regions – from space to complex, community and polity – are a basis for comparative regional studies (ibid.: 327).

Work on the new regionalisms has been important, not least because it has moved conceptual work forward by viewing regions as made from both the inside and the outside. But the new regionalisms have also placed regions, as regional blocs, at the centre of the world order. Yet in reflecting on this, Cammack (2015: 2) argues this analytical push may well have been 'a step too far'. In putting 'regions' at the centre, what it failed to do is put regions in their place; as 'one means amongst others to achieve state or global transformation' (ibid.). He argues that it is important to 'focus analytical efforts primarily on the latter. Regionalism old and new has taken a wide variety of only loosely related forms embracing both security and political economy, and is not sensibly squeezed into a single frame or encompassed in a single theory' (ibid.).

In a paper published in 2005, Hettne returns to new regionalism as a concept and proposes its dissolution, largely because it has exaggerated the differences between 'old regionalism' and 'new regionalism'. His proposal is to move away from a focus on differences and look instead at the role of the regional in global transformations (Hettne, 2005: 543). In doing so, Hettne (ibid.: 554) brings into view a range of actors, other than the state, in regionalizing projects. Welch's Chapter 8, together with Motter and Gandin's Chapter 13 in this volume, highlight the importance of having a more open-minded way of thinking of regional projects and processes; in this instance, where shared borders create the conditions for certain kinds of exchanges.

The distinction Hettne makes between actors on the regional arena, and regions as actors in their own right, also enables us to see how some regions manage to acquire for themselves not only the resources but also the capacity to act, especially in different contexts. Inter-regional projects are one arena providing a stage, and enabling the capacity to act. In this volume, Chapter 7 by Dang on Asia–Europe, and Chapter 4 by Charlier, Croché and Panait on Europe–Africa, both explore these dynamics. In the case of Europe–Africa, Charlier, Croché and Panait point to the asymmetries in power between the two regions, as well as a high level of imposition by Europe on Africa regarding the Bologna Process, reinforcing old colonial relations.

But the question of for whom, how, with what purpose, and through which actors a regional project is being pursued is important, with the answer differing depending upon what social events and related phenomena are being analysed. As Motter and Gandin's Chapter 13 in this volume illustrates, the Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA) is a new regional university funded by the Federal Government of Brazil. Its mission is to develop a Latin American understanding of the world, and it is a novel form of regionalism. It is also largely a cultural and political, rather than economic, institutional project because of its location on the border between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, in Foz do Iguacu. Its academic staff, the students and the curriculum are all aimed at constructing a 'Latin American' and 'Latin American regional' understanding of the world, in contrast with a Northern hegemony centred on modernity and progress. Similarly, as Muhr (Chapter 12 in this volume) shows, a revamped MERCOSUR, along with the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) region promoted by the former President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, is a fascinating set of South–South political projects: to develop a very different form of regionalism which promotes both economic development and social welfare across the region as a contrast with, and counter to, neoliberal conceptions of the world. Sundet (Chapter 9 in this volume) also provides us with a unique insight into the

ways in which higher education institutions in the Barents Region – from Russia to Norway – cooperate on developing governance structures in universities and in so doing broker a form of 'higher education diplomacy' as a means to ensuring ongoing relations in this region.

REGIONS AS SPATIAL FRONTIERS IN STATE PROJECTS OF TRANSFORMATION

But what if it is the national state pursuing a regionalizing project? Robertson, de Azevedo and Dale (Chapter 1) explore this regarding Europe; Jules (Chapter 10) examines this with regard to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Perrotta (Chapter 11) in relation to MERCOSUR, and Muhr (Chapter 12) with regard to ALBA. Much work on regions tends to privilege a particular – in this case, regional – level as discrete from, and thus separate, to other scales such as the national or the global. Yet if Hettne's new regionalism is concerned with grasping hold of the ways in which the 'inside out' or 'out there global' is implicated in region-making, what it does less well is focus attention on the dialectical relation between scales, and engage with the question of why it is that a regional scale or regional frontier emerges as a particular governing response to economic and political problems within the national arena.

   'Regulatory regionalism' has emerged as a promising theoretical response to this conundrum. Jayasuriya (2003, 2009) and Hameiri (see Hameiri and Jayasuriya, 2011; Hameiri, 2013; Hameiri and Wilson, 2015) have sought to overcome an overemphasis on formal regional 'institutions' to the detriment of what they regard as an 'understanding of the *domestic* political mainsprings of regional governance' (Jayasuriya, 2003: 199). By domestic they mean sub/national challenges that need to be resolved through new spatial governing projects. They have thus adopted a 'political project' perspective, which:

> 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)

Furthermore, Jayasuriya (2009: 344) situates 'the process of state transformation – or rather the political topography of the state – at the centre of the study of regionalism'. In other words:

> 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 of rule. (Jayasuriya, 2003: 205)

Yet as Hameiri (2013: 314) makes clear, 'states and regions are not identical and timeless phenomena; both are manifestations of struggles over the territorial, institutional, and functional scope of political rule'. That is to say, a region (as in this case, the supra-regional scale) is a socio-spatial manifestation of a particular organization of state rule, just as the national scale is. By focusing attention on a politics of regionalism that is simultaneously regional and national, with regional units deep inside national, and 'regional disciplines within national policy and political institutions', Hameiri and Jayasuriya (2011: 21) aspire to avoid a zero-sum approach typical of both the old and the new regionalisms.

However, Cammack (2013) points out that despite being a promising line of enquiry into regionalizing, regulatory regionalism only half-delivers on its analysis of the changing topography of the state because it does not single out a particular regional project as being more theoretically and practically important than others. Nor do Hameiri and Jayasuriya identify a particular logic at the heart of the national state's regionalization processes which, in Cammack's (2013) view, is the creation of the conditions for the expansion of an evolving world market. Regulatory regionalism as an approach would need to develop a more explicit account of the capitalist state and its relation to capital that does not simply invoke 'statecraft'. We argue that it is not just a question of the state and its capacity to 'govern' that is at issue, but that the state governs on behalf of capital to secure ongoing accumulation through the expansion of world market-making, although in doing so it also needs to manage the core problems that it faces: accumulation, legitimation and social cohesion (Dale, 1982). In the case of regions like the EU, this means developing mechanisms, such as the Open Method of Coordination to secure governing, and promoting ideas like the European dimension to help develop a shared set of values and social cohesion.

REGIONS AS SOCIALLY CONSTITUTED THROUGH IDEAS, INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL NORMS

A great deal of the work of regional actors and their institutions is to produce, or construct, new meanings about the region, including a regional identity, such as Europe and European, Bolivarian, the ASEAN way, and so on. This matters particularly in the study of education, as it is one of

the key institutions and systems mobilized to help broker and create these new norms, and societal understandings. Scholars interested in the construction of the social have drawn upon social constructivism as a theoretical resource. Social constructivists draw on the work of conventional constructivist theorists, such as Martha Finnemore (1996), interested in the role of norms and identity in shaping political outcomes (Checkel, 2006: 58). In drawing attention to the socially constructed nature of regions, Checkel (2006) argues this highlights a particular analytic that can be applied across regions and not just the EU.

Social constructivists argue they are best-placed to study European integration as 'a process' because they are predisposed to think about how humans interact in ways that produce structures, such as norms (Rosamond, 2006: 130). Social constructivists are thus interested in how collective understandings and identities are created through the use of language, the development of ideas, powers of persuasion and the establishment of norms (Rosamond, 2006: 130). In other words, social constructivists study the ways in which European-level norms, ideas and discourses penetrate the various national polities which make up the EU (Rosamond, 2006: 131), whilst the EU itself acts as an arena for communication and persuasion (ibid.). Through the internalization of these norms, actors acquire their identities and establish what their interests are.

This view – that a region develops through the establishment of norms rather than changing as a result of external factors, such as the Cold War and increasing globalization – is core to social constructivism and can be contrasted with more rationalist views which place greater emphasis on these external factors. This body of work has had considerable influence on higher education scholarship around region-building. Dale's Chapter 3 in this volume on the development of Erasmus Mundus, as a means of developing not only a European Masters degree and joint doctorates, but also students and alumni whose identities are socially reoriented toward Europe, is a case in point. Similarly, research on programmes such as the EU's Erasmus Mobility scheme benefit from adopting a constructivist approach to understanding region-making through the ways in which ideas and institutions interact and have constitutive powers.

THIS VOLUME: VARIEGATED REGIONALISMS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

We began this Introduction by pointing out the growing role that higher education as a sector is playing in a range of different regional projects. As the chapters in this volume reveal, higher education institutions,

think tanks, professional associations, international organizations, firms, student unions and civil society organizations, amongst others, are being enrolled in developing and constituting older and newer, or novel, forms of regionalisms, all showing considerable variegation as a result of their unique cultural political economies.

Higher education regional sectoral spaces are thus being made, higher education inter-regional spaces are being created, and new higher education institutions with regional identities are being shaped, to name a few of the processes at work. Yet, oddly enough, theorizing has tended to lag behind, and empirical work is curiously silent on these higher education regional and inter-regional developments occurring around the globe. Considering the role of higher education in the development of a more knowledge-based services economy, this is a problematic gap in ongoing analytical work.

In part this is because, as Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond (2010) and Söderbaum and Sbragia (2011) note, scholars on inter/regionalisms tend to speak past each other, with scholars opting for one camp over another rather than seeing each perspective as a 'take' on a more complex and varied whole. Scholars of regionalism have also paid insufficient attention to the role of higher education in regionalizing, whilst scholars of higher education have for their part given inadequate attention to the theoretical resources from the different intellectual fields concerned with understanding regions and regionalizing.

The outcome of this double gap (regionalism scholars not paying sufficient attention to higher education; higher education scholars not paying sufficient attention to regionalisms) is a missed opportunity in multiple ways: to see education as a particular kind of sectoral regional project and space, and from there, to appreciate how the study of higher education regional projects – sectorally and institutionally – generate new theoretical insights into regional projects, their cultural, political and economic dynamics, as well as logics, mechanisms and outcomes. And whilst functionalist explanations likely do not sit well with those offered by regulatory regionalists, in truth each of these perspectives offers important insights into processes of regionalizing for scholars of higher education.

Higher education regional projects are also spatial projects of governing at a regional scale; they are simultaneously cultural, political and economic, though not reducible to capitalist projects or indeed the products of 'Western' modernity, although there is a great deal of contestation as to whose ideas get traction. Higher education regional projects are also socially constituted and emerge out of the interaction between ideas and imaginaries, as well as strategies that are advanced and reproduced through new social norms. They can involve the whole sector on a grand

scale, or be institution-to-institution projects involving several countries. They also vary across space and time. There is no single theory or methodological approach to capture this variety; rather, regionalizing projects and processes, and thus regions, are what we have elsewhere referred to as variegated regionalisms (see Robertson, 2014): the outcome of ongoing interactions with existing spatial, temporal, social and structural relations, norms and ways of making sense of the world.

This collection of chapters, which we sketch out briefly below, makes a unique contribution to these lacunae. Though incomplete in terms of representing the range and extent of regional projects under way, we hope this will stimulate the reader to delve into a rich set of chapters. Together they show the variegated nature of higher education regionalisms around the world as a result of diverse projects, processes and their politics, and what genuinely new insights can be revealed about our current world (Robertson, 2014).

The book begins with Susan Robertson, Mário de Azevedo and Roger Dale's Chapter 1 on Europe, and the creation of a European Higher Education Area and European Research Area. They trace out the detail of these political projects that are aimed at developing a globally-competitive Europe, on the one hand, and what they call a higher education regional sectoral space, on the other. Drawing upon and developing regulatory regionalism, they show how this regional space is an ongoing outcome of transformations of the state, its strategies of governing, and claims to statehood. They argue that over time, multiple spatial frontiers are strategically advanced and struggled over, and that more recently the regional frontier is losing rather than gaining greater governing capability as a result of governance changes within national state borders around higher education, as well as the ongoing politics of austerity projects.

The book then turns to Susana Melo's exploration of the Bologna Process (Chapter 2), widely regarded as the most prominent example of higher education (HE) regionalism. Employing new regionalism theory in order to go beyond the limitations of 'Bologna as model' approaches, she sets out the bases of the model it represents, and delves into its significance which she argues is rather different from that usually claimed for it: the harmonization of European HE systems. She discusses in detail how the 'informal regionalization' that Bologna represents contributes to the closer integration of European universities into the dynamic of globalization, and that this has taken precedence over de facto regionalism. She also asks about what new insights studying higher education regionalism might offer to the study of regionalisms more generally.

Roger Dale (Chapter 3) brings into view a rather different European regional project; the EU's Erasmus Mundus programme. Dale argues

that Erasmus Mundus (EM) can be seen as an authentically (European) regional sectoral programme because it was irreducible to action at other scales, including the national. Fundamentally, the contract on which EM was based was made between the European Commission (EC) and the consortia of three universities in the different European countries which provided the courses. National states were at best only passively involved, and the programme was implemented through what is called by the European Commission 'comitology procedures', meaning sets of commitments against which progress is judged.

It is worth noting that the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area are the key drivers of global regionalisms and interregionalisms, hence our explicit decision to initially prioritize coverage of what has been happening in this part of the world.

A significant development in regionalisms is the emergence of inter-regionalism. Jean-Émile Charlier, Sarah Croché and Oana Marina Panait (Chapter 4) focus on EU–Africa inter-regionalism, and show how Africa is placed in an asymmetical relationship to global initiatives and policy-shaping actors, instruments, and spaces, such as the European Commission, the Bologna Process and the Bologna Policy Forum. Charlier and colleagues point out that the Bologna Process has not remained in Europe; rather, Africa has been the recipient of an explicit extra-regional strategy which Africa finds difficult to ignore. Using Foucault's work on governmentality and sovereignty, Charlier et al., argue that, paradoxically, Bologna exists in Africa in a purer form than it does in Europe, and that it is an instrument of imposition in the African case that has in turn given rise to a loss of African sovereignty. The chapter raises important questions concerning Africa's need to own its development agenda with the authors considering the role that a differently formed political project and governing strategy might play in shaping the region and what role higher education could play in this.

Morshidi Sirat, Norzaini Azman and Aishah Abu Bakar (Chapter 5) explore the way in which harmonization processes of higher education systems facilitate regional integration in Southeast Asia. They argue that regionalism in ASEAN was first driven primarily by political and security considerations, before being followed by economic justifications, and then other concerns. Although the idea of creating an ASEAN common space of higher education is inspired by the Bologna Process and the establishment of the European Higher Education Area, its implementation is constrained by a top-down approach, the wider political situation, the sovereignty of individual ASEAN member states, and the uniqueness of their higher education systems, which they identify as 'territorial constraints'. The authors call for more active participation of other stakeholder groups,

particularly students and higher education institutions, in the regional harmonization process.

Roger Chao (Chapter 6) raises the role of ideas in region building, and explores the way in which economic rationales of higher education regionalization in Southeast Asia have shifted over time. Through analysing the activities of regional actors, such as the South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization – Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED) and ASEAN University Network (AUN), he shows that the changing ASEAN higher education discourse reflects the evolution of ASEAN regionalism, in turn shaping regional higher education policies and practices. ASEAN regionalism has evolved from its security rationale to economic regionalism, eventually incorporating the establishment of the ASEAN community in December 2015. Yet funding for the majority of ASEAN higher education regionalization initiatives tends to be from self-interested nations and extra-regional partners, including Australia, Japan and the European Union, all directing ASEAN initiatives toward increased linkages with their respective higher education systems.

Que Anh Dang (Chapter 7) draws on the concepts of 'emergence' and 'emergent properties' from critical realism to theorize the construction of regions. She argues that a region is an emergent entity whose existence depends on its constituent parts and the relations between them. Regionalizing is, therefore, a set of processes in which a set of constituent parts join together to constitute a new entity and new properties are produced. Dang's chapter explores the relationships between regionalism and the higher education sector, in turn offering an innovative conceptual understanding of the 'regional sectoral space' between Asia and Europe, designated an 'ASEM Education Area'. Her analysis of the ASEM case and its informal institutions – mainly meetings and joint projects – highlights the role of key actors (the senior officials and the secretariat) and their deliberate efforts at constructing a new entity with sufficient capability to change discourses and trigger changes to national higher education systems.

Novel forms of regionalization are also emerging. This is charted by Anthony Welch (Chapter 8) who discusses the merits of what he calls 'borderlands' research as a means of extending regionalism theory, focusing on the case of China–Vietnam relationships. He explores the complexity of Sino-Vietnamese via the 'pillars' of economy, knowledge mobility, Chinese regional diaspora, the regional perceptions of Chinese minorities, territorial disputes and, in particular, the history of Chinese–Vietnamese relations in higher education, especially their shared influence of Confucianism. On the basis of these arguments, Welch advances a conception of the differences

between 'irregular' and 'regulatory' regionalism, based on the differences in the gap between claims and outcomes in much ASEAN-focused research, and the potential of borderlands research.

Marit Sundet's Chapter 9 is unusual in two respects: first, the region it addresses, the Barents Region is less well known than most of the others covered in the book; and second, it focuses in detail on the minutiae of the negotiation of region-building through the development of a Norwegian–Russian degree of Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies as a means of building bridges across international borders. Her major focus is on how the degree, and the region, are constructed through the activities of the network of coordinators – where 'the real internationalization takes place' – who develop and produce the degree.

The issue of different levels of 'regionness' over time is present in Tavis Jules's Chapter 10. He traces the nature and consequences of the shift he detects from 'immature' to 'mature' regionalism in the Caribbean, with the former characterized by the failure to implement regional decisions at national level, and the latter by local implementation. He shows that this shift arose from the increasing complexity of the demands placed on regional organizations. While the mechanisms of cooperation and collaboration have remained relatively consistent, Jules argues that the expansion of the range of regional blocs within the Caribbean has reached the point where it makes more sense to think in terms of 'pan-regional' or 'pan-hemispheric' integration.

Regional projects and their material form are also shaped by asymmetrical power relations and interests of participating states and other actors. Daniela Perrotta (Chapter 11) provides a deeply theorized and richly detailed account of the highly complex landscape of HE regionalism in Latin America. She distinguishes three contrasting historical projects: 'hegemonic regionalism', which essentially seeks to advance free trade; 'post-hegemonic' regionalism, seeking to reclaim welfarist projects; and 'counter-hegemonic regionalism', which seeks more far-reaching reforms. Following a broadly regulatory regionalist account, she addresses these issues through detailed accounts of MERCOSUR's 'birthmark' stage, characterized by the shift from development to competition; its 'brandmark' phase, through the development especially of quality assurance mechanisms; and the 'Bolognization of MERCOSUR', with a focus on mobility.

South–South cooperation refers to political projects that eschew the dominance of neoliberalism as an organizing politics. Here Thomas Muhr (Chapter 12) offers a fresh and insightful look at what he calls the 'changing geometries of Latin American–Caribbean regionalism' as a form of South–South cooperation. Muhr focuses specifically on the role of Brazil and Venezuela in the recent reinvention of MERCOSUR,

and its relationship to the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP), where in both Brazil and Venezuela, university education is established as a fundamental right and state responsibility. His point throughout the chapter is that although South–South cooperation is often constructed as separate, incompatible, and competing, this form of cooperation reveals the commonalities, inter-relatedness, and convergence, of these third-generation regionalisms. This is largely because these are counter-hegemonic projects that have an explicit 'other': a neoliberal political project that has underpinned what more broadly is referred to as 'open regionalism'.

Many accounts of regionalizing focus on cross-national contexts. Here Paulino Motter and Luis Armando Gandin (Chapter 13) offer a unique insight into a novel form of institutional regionalism: the development of a 'regional university', the Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA), launched by Brazil in 2010. UNILA is an experimental higher education institutional space politically, academically and in terms of governance arrangements for the university. It draws staff and students from across Latin America and the Caribbean and teaches in both Spanish and Portuguese languages. Politically, it draws on the utopia of an integrated and united Latin America in its diversity and plurality. Yet, because Brazil is the main funder, questions are also raised about Brazil's motives around the development of a regional hegemony. Academically, the curriculum aims to research, and develop, a Latin American epistemology of knowledge. Finally, students, administrators and academics together engage in governing UNILA as a form of participatory democracy. Yet as Motter and Gandin argue, although this highly innovative experimental institution is not without its challenges, it is an important counter to hegemonic projects aimed at the regionalizing of the neoliberal university.

Tahani Aljafari (Chapter 14) examines a particular form of regionalism found in the Gulf States. She shows they find themselves put together in the face of inside and outside threats and challenges. These include issues of security both at home and in the region, and in more recent years, challenges over the development of their economies that do not depend on the extraction of oil and gas. However, as Aljafari also shows, the particular nature of their political economy, as rentier states, means their capacity to cooperate at the supra-regional level is limited by stronger commitments to domestic interests and innovations, including in the governance of higher education. She argues that whilst this is a region in a rather symbolic way, it is more useful to think of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as an arena where competition rather than cooperation tend to be the norm and thus shapes what is possible.

Ultimately, these chapters are designed to provide an array of insights on the variegated nature of higher education regionalisms in the global context. These regionalisms are both outcomes and drivers of structural change: they are political-economic programmes and projects that unleash processes designed to harness higher education to in some cases help build regional and globally-competitive knowledge economies, and in others to develop social and cultural cooperation and new forms of identity. The implications of these transformations are complex and worthy of much more attention that they have received to date.

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