Unintended Outcomes of the EHEA and ASEAN: Peripheral Members and their Façade Conformity

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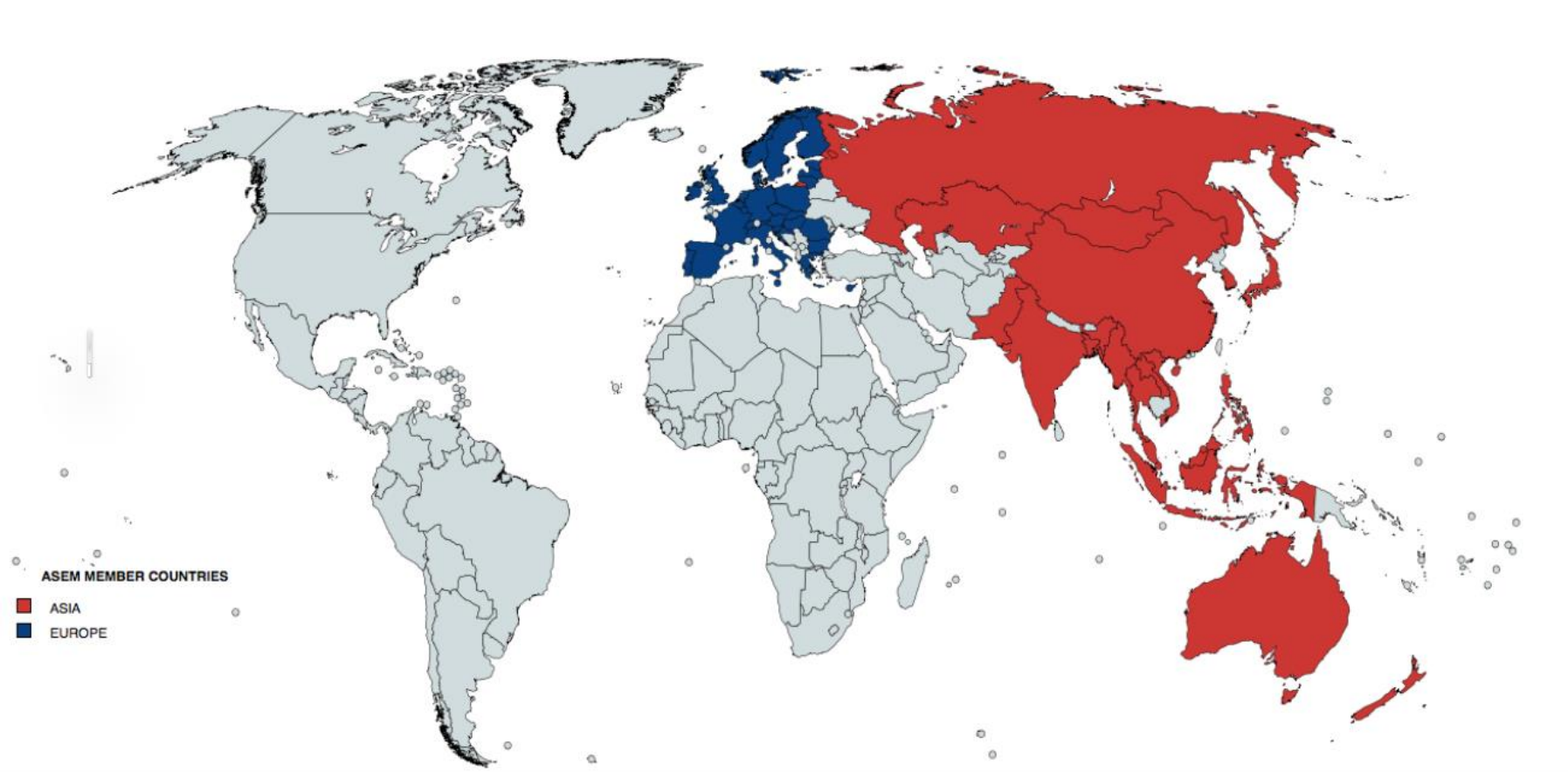

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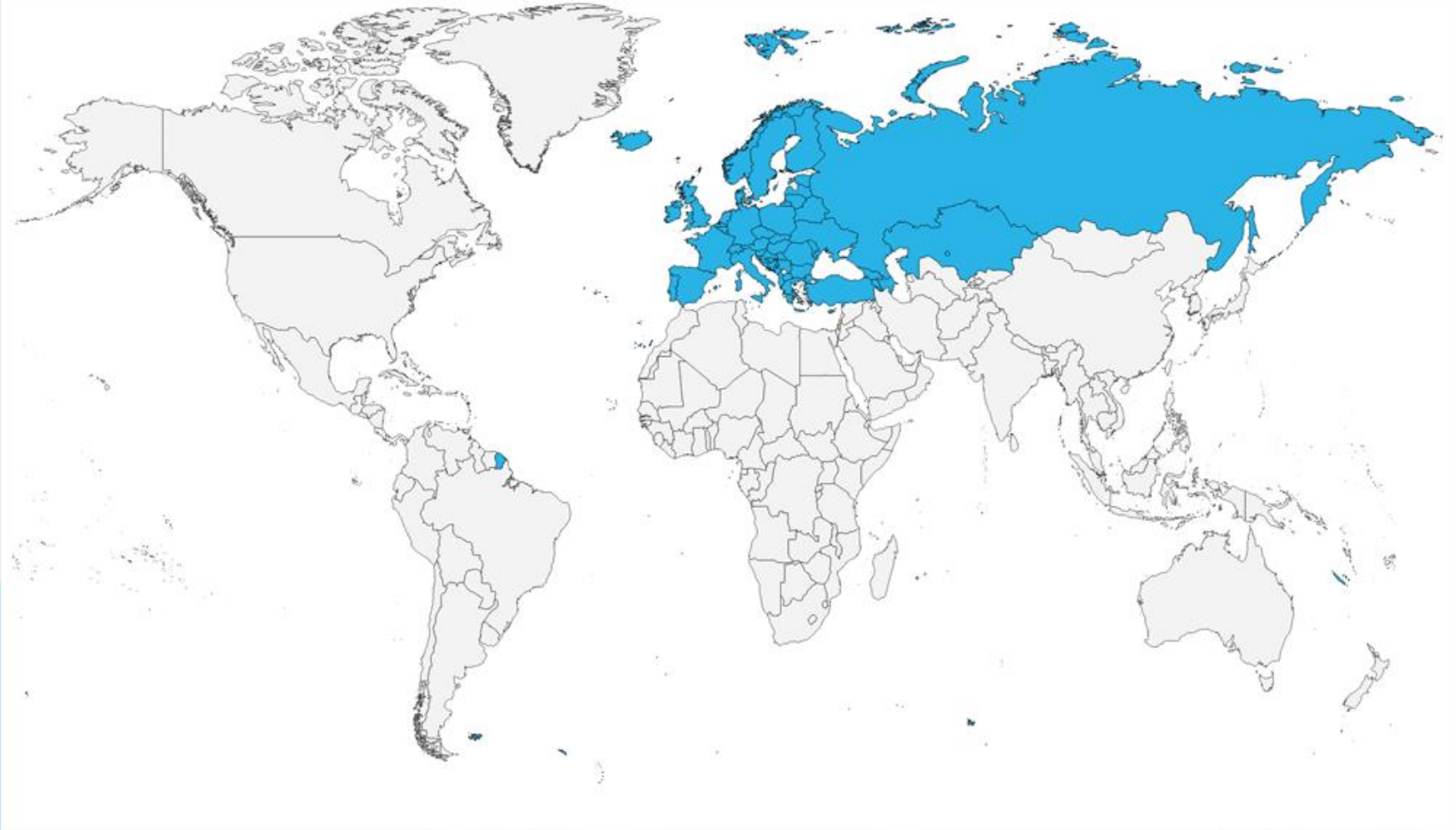
The European Higher Education Area (EHEA)



The Association of South-East Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Common Space for Higher Education

Unintended Outcomes of Regional HE Cooperation

Unintended outcomes:

- unanticipated, unforeseen or different from actors' intentions or expectations;
- positive, neutral or negative consequences of a policy or action;
- not necessarily be framed as failure, but in general as unwelcome or undesired effects (Burlyuk, 2017)

Unintended Outcomes of Regional HE Cooperation

- When investigating unintended outcomes:
  - Need to establish intent or the purpose and objective
  - Objectives and purposes are subject to continuous reassessment
- The Bologna Process:
  - a set of stated objectives (i.e. Bologna action lines and benchmarks)
- ASEAN HE Space: No concrete objectives, rather with only a broad goal 'to build the ASEAN Community'

Unintended Outcomes of the EHEA and ASEAN

- Both the EHEA and ASEAN have encountered unintended outcomes that constitute the **vulnerability, peripheral status and superficial conformity** of newer member countries.
  - newer EHEA members and/or newer members of the EU: '**CEEC**' – Central and Eastern European Countries, others - with the '**post-Soviet**' badge.
  - Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam labelled by the acronym '**CLMV**'
- **QUESTIONS:**
- What causes their peripheral status and façade conformity in the regional higher education processes?
- What other international pressure and influence they encounter that may divert them away from the original regional integration project?

Student Mobility: Regional (Dis)Integration in the EHEA?

- **The Emergence of Clusters within the EHEA**
  - Three main clusters: the largest cluster is concentrated around the Western European countries, a second cluster centres on Russia and encompasses many post-Soviet states + other countries in the east of the EHEA, a third cluster consists of countries in the south of the EHEA (Shields, 2014)
  - Student mobility is self-contained in clusters which increasingly divide the EHEA in sub-regions rather than an integrated area.
  - This emergence of clusters can be seen as an unintended outcome that challenges the concept of 'European Area'.

European dimensions – (Dis)connection in curricular development

- The Bologna toolkit, such as student mobility or '**the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional cooperation' (Bologna Process, 1999, p. 4**) has not created/secured a connection between the EHEA newer members (post-Soviet countries) and the Western/Central European countries.
- What are the 'necessary European dimensions' and how are they adecided?
- The post-Soviet countries with weaker economic, political and cultural ties to Europe would find it more difficult to implement the EHEA's 'European dimensions' in their curricula.

Language compatibility, economic ties among the cluster of newer members

‘Eurasian Economic Union' and student mobility inflows to Russia

Sending Countries	Students to Russia	Ratio	Total number of mobile students abroad
Kazakhstan	59.295	76%	77.965,00
Belarus	18.804	66%	28.548,00
Armenia	4.446	58%	7.653,00
Kyrgyzstan (non-EHEA member)	4.430	45%	9.844,00

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, extracted by author October 2017

ASEAN: From Outward Mobility to Intra-regional Mobility

- The **new educational hubs** in Asia (Singapore, Malaysia): increased student mobility, but student inflows into these hubs are part of talent development and commercialisation agendas primarily serving national interests rather than regional integration.
- This kind of intra-mobility makes more visible the differences between ASEAN higher education systems and increases imbalance of mobility, thus causing the peripheral status of some member countries, such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam.
- The SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED): The ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) is a flagship programme coordinated by SEAMEO RIHED. 68 universities, 10 subject areas, in 6 ASEAN countries and Japan and Korea
- The ASEAN University Network (AUN): 30 member universities.

ASEAN: From Outward Mobility to Intra-regional Mobility

- ‘AUN promotes the elite universities in ASEAN whereas RIHED’s activities are more towards inclusiveness’ (interview, March 2015).
- Although there are no discernible mobility clusters in ASEAN as in the EHEA, the intra-ASEAN mobility is faced with different challenges.
- *First*, due to the lack of a central coffer like Erasmus+, the sustainability of intra-ASEAN mobility depends on whether individual member governments are able to provide financial support for student mobility and for the development of international programmes at their universities.
- *Second, AUN reinforces the divide between ASEAN HE systems,* This divide also constitutes the peripheral status of the newer members.
- *Third*, even when there are ASEAN regional mobility programmes, the emphasis is still stronger outside the region, especially for the students of AUN elite universities.

The Cause of Peripheral Status and Façade Conformity

- The Transformation and Dysfunction of State
- The Rise of Private Higher Education
- Corruption in Higher Education
- Influx of International Influence

The Transformation and Dysfunction of the State

- Major political and economic transformations in the newer member countries:
- These transformations entail the move from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones and from a closed planned economy to an open market economy.
- In the Eastern European context, the new governments relinquished their control over universities and liberalised them, both in academic and economic terms.
- The attitude of 'returning to Europe' or 'catching up with the West' in Eastern Europe was a strong impetus for reforms.
- The CEEC became 'laboratories of reform' for experiments on different ideas in the reshaping the higher education sector .
- The reforms became part of a larger European integration project. The Bologna policy became hegemonic influence and even mandatory criteria. The EU's ‚power of the purse'.
- Higher education reforms have redefined the role of the nation state and reframed the role of the market in higher education governance.
- Unintended outcomes: the so-called 'coercive voluntary' participation and 'façade conformity' to the Bologna rules and standards .

The Transformation and Dysfunction of the State

- In the CLMV countries, higher education reforms also took place during their accession to the ASEAN.
- Different wars and isolation periods have, to varying degrees, destroyed higher education in these countries:
  - In Myanmar, a violent and erratic military regime strategically dismantled the nation's higher education system until 2011
  - Cambodia was estimated to have lost 75% of its higher education lecturers and nearly all (96%) of its students through genocide, persecution and escape from the Khmer Rouge regime.
- The dysfunction of the nation state can arguably be seen as the cause of the low capacity for regional integration, thus peripheral status of the higher education system.

The Rise of Private Higher Education

- The rapid expansion of private higher education providers in CEEC, Post-Sovietcountries, ASEAN.
  - the number of Polish higher education institutions increased from 115 in 1996 to 258 in 2002 and 338 in 2010-2011.
  - The share of students attending private higher education institutions has increased, and accounted for roughly 30% of the total enrolments in Estonia, Poland and Romania.
  - Privatisation in higher education in most CEEC has not resulted from foreign investment, rather it appeared to be a domestic phenomenon.
- In ASEAN:
  - In Cambodia: only 8 public institutions in 1997 to 105 in 2014, of which 66 were private. These private HEIs serve more than 60% of students
  - the emphasis on quantitative expansion over qualitative improvement.
- One major unintended outcome: the local private institutions' reputation and the quality of their programmes cause complications for the regional efforts of the Bologna Process and ASEAN to make degrees and credits transferable between countries.

Corruption in Higher Education

- Increase of corruption in the education sector in many newer members of the EHEA and ASEAN
- Corruption in higher education is time- and space-specific and may be found in private as well as public institutions
- Education corruption is defined as 'the abuse of authority for personal and material gain' (Heyneman, 2004, p. 638)
- In the EHEA (post-Soviet countries) + Vietnam:
  - the discourse 'decentralisation' and corruption in HE
  - the creation of branches of national prestigious public universities in various provinces within the same countries to maximise revenue for the public universities
- Unintended consequence: derailed the transferability of credits and degrees with other countries in the region

Influx of International Influence (EHEA)

16+1 grouping: Cooperation between China and 16 Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) since 2012 .

China-CEEC (16+1)

The 16+1 format cooperation between China and 11 EU Member States and 5 Balkan countries in the fields of investments, transport, finance, **science, education**, and culture.

All these CEEC countries were placed on the eastern side of the 'Iron Curtain' that divided Europe.

Influx of International Influence (ASEAN)

- EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORT TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ASEAN REGION **(**EU SHARE): a €10 million EU grant funded programme (2016-2020)
- 5-year development programme ‚Connecting the Mekong through Education and Training' sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID COMET) for the CLMV group (2014-2019).
- Beside the generous scholarships provided by China, Japan and Korea, closer economic relationships between these countries and the ASEAN region also influence student mobility (ASEAN+3)
  - '[…] we want to see the gravity shifted back to the ASEAN countries, but this is a very difficult undertaking'

(interview with ASEAN Secretariat, March 2015)