

FACING GLOBALISATION FROM BELOW: A THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to suggest an approach to face globalisation. The approach is called an approach from below, to mean strengthening of local popular participation, local wisdom and local values. These are important not only to align with the penetration of globalisation, but also to preserve local identity and empowerment. This paper is divided into two main sections. The first is to deliberate on the meaning and impact of globalisation, while the second is to suggest a strategy in facing the globalisation, through an approach from below, involving bottom-up mechanisms, maximum utilisation of local wisdom, and the preservation of local values.

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to suggest an approach to face globalisation. The approach is called an approach from below, to mean strengthening of local popular participation, local wisdom and local values. These are important not only to align with the penetration of globalisation, but also to preserve local identity and empowerment.

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THE MEANING AND IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION Meaning

Globalisation is a very popular academic term, and its meaning therefore seems to be quite diversified, if not vague and imprecise. Mukherjee (2016) refers globalisation as a “process whereby the world is becoming one place”. Featherstone (1990) observes how in this process, the world is compressed into a locality, creating neighbours, interactions, relations and listenings with other localities. According to Moghaddam & Rahman (2012), the process involves increasing interconnection between countries and societies. To Labonte & Torgerson 2005:158), the process does not only increase the connections, but also increase interdependent between nations, businesses and people. Instrumental in these connections

¹ A keynote address delivered at International Conference on Social, Political, Government and Communication Sciences (ICSPGCS 2017) – Strengthening Local Communities to Face the Global Era, organized by and at Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember, Indonesia, 3-4 April 2017.

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and interdependent are the increased economic integration and communication exchange, cultural diffusion (especially of Western culture) and travel. Renren and Martens (2003) term such a connection and interdependent as cross-national cultural, economic, political, social and technological interactions.

All in all, globalisation could be referred to the homogenization of language and cultural identity that accompanies the flux of products, ideas and money (Popa, 2012:243), as well as integration of knowledge that establishes conditions for the rise of a knowledge-driven world economy and society (Evers, 2005:15). Globalization too could be referred primarily to economic system which allows unrestricted free flow, although not equally, of raw materials, manufactured goods, intellectual property, financial transactions, global trade and investment across international borders under the supervision of an international trade authority, resulting in an increased level of interdependence and competitive pressures among nations (Power, 1997:75; Popa, 2012:243). In short, globalization involves rapid integration of nations, regions and localities into the world economy, the increasing density of communication networks and the diminishing importance of national boundaries for the flow of commodities, capital, workers, and information (Evers, 2005:15).

According to Voisey and O’Riordan (2001:28-31), there are at least three theories that attempt to explain globalisation. These three globalisation theories are firstly, the world- systems theories which posits that the world system consists of three world, namely a centre or core, a semi-periphery, and a periphery; secondly, the modernization and globalisation theories which believe that globalisation is actually an outcome of modernity; and thirdly, culture and dual processes theories which argue globalisation as a dual process which centers around culture.

Machida (2012:438-439) on the other hand concludes that there are three thesis of globalisation, viz. homogenization, hybridization, and polarization thesis. Homogenization thesis is established since globalisation creates a similar single culture, or a global culture, around the world by eliminating the diversity of local cultures (Holton 2000). Hybridization thesis criticises the homogenization thesis by arguing that cultural globalisation can lead to “hybridization” (Hannerz 1992, 1996; Tomlinson 1999). Each culture around the world has their own respective strength (Holton 2000), interacting each other at local and global contexts (Hannerz, 1992, 1996), blending various cultural influences (Tomlinson, 1999; Nederveen Pieterse, 2004), and adopting a concept called “global ecumene” (Robertson 1994). Lastly, polarization thesis contends that globalisation can cause intense conflict among different cultures (Holton 2000). Barber (1995) for instance argues that the tension between “McWorld” and “Jihad” would pose a serious threat to democracy, while Huntington (1993, 1996) theorises the emergence of a clash of civilization, especially between Islam and the West.

Impact

As quoted by Machida (2012:436), there is no agreement on the real impacts of globalization (Guillen 2001). Some scholars emphasize on the positive impacts of globalisation (Bhagwati 2004; Wolf 2004), while others view globalization as posing a potential danger (Kim et al. 2000; Rodrik 1997).

Those argue for the positive impacts believe that globalisation has helped open new opportunities for many previously impoverished regions of the world. In Taiwan, for instance, they say,

globalisation has resulted in raising of the standard of living for many (Tsai, Lee, & Wang, 2006:276). In Gulf countries such as Qatar too, globalisation is said to have changed rapidly the poor, nomadic societies to wealthy urban societies, especially with the discovery of oil, accompanied by explosive economic development and growth (Byman & Green, 1999). In addition, supporters of free international trade think that globalisation holds the key for increasing the wealth of world's people (Popa, 2012).

On the other hand, those argue for the negative impacts of globalization believe that free international trade in goods and financial assets does more harm than good. They view free international trade as a vehicle for enriching corporate elites, to the detriment of poor people and the environment. In Taiwan, for instance, globalisation has been found to have affected the work, jobs, and lives of people. Those hardest hit were people whose work or business was in the informal, traditional economic sector such as oyster fisherman and textile factory foreman (Tsai, Lee, & Wang, 2006). This is due to the changing of Taiwan's economy, from a labor-intensive to a capital-intensive and technology-intensive economy (Chang & Tsai 2002). Corporate greed and corrupt international organizations and governments are said to have insured that wealth is not distributed equitably. The power has been shifted to some international authorities, which would control everything. Globalisation to them in fact has destroyed the local freedom and democracy (Popa, 2012).

In addition, globalization too, *inter alia*, has generated a new and intense competition, resulting from global spatial restructuring of labor and production due to rapid development of technologies (Castells, 2000 [1996]; Sassen, 1999; Mittelman 2000), especially the computer-mediated communication technology, which made the "digitalization of economy" and the establishment of regional and international express transports possible (Tapscott 1996).

Apart from the above, globalisation is also rapidly changing and challenging many of the local traditions and cultural values, as is happening in Qatar. Rapid and radical changes that shapes modernisation has simultaneously moulded the Qatari family structure. Their traditional ways of life are under assault from the modernisation, dominated by Westernisation (read globalisation) (Al-Ammari & Romanowski, 2016:1536). A study on

European countries (Sweden, Austria, Portugal, Greece, and United Kingdom) has shown that local responses to globalizing forces depend on the nature of interlinkages in governance from international structures, through multi-lateral organizations to nation states, regions and localities (O'Riordan, 2001). However, as globalisation involves the process of further integration, it can potentially activate the dynamics against globalization (Kellner, 2002). In fact, various cultural elements from different parts of the world are conflicting among different cultures. Each culture attempts to protect its purity, as well as rejecting each other (Holton 2000). The outcome is the creation of a "clash of civilizations" (Huntington, 1993, 1996). Socially and economically, globalization also is found to have significantly reduced the tendency toward ethnocentrism. People are becoming less ethnocentric (read patriotic), as they are exposed to higher levels of exchange of people, information, and cultural influences (Sklair 1991, 2001).

The negative impacts of cultural globalisation have also affected the Muslims. A study by Al Harethy (2001), as listed by, and in the words of Salman & Alkhazalleh (2016:698-699), has found the followings:

1. It deepens the individuals' engagement in physical life and satisfying sensual desires. In contrast, it neglects the existence of the afterlife and despises superstition by attributing the person who believes in the existence of the afterlife by superstition and naivety.
2. It breaks religious barriers by contemplating and manipulating of one's beliefs about the concepts of self, God, and the Prophet.
3. It destroys the young's standing and sanctity by making them grow up with isolation from their religion as well as widening the gap between them and their heritage.
4. It boosts individual's property and value-free culture, even though if it is beyond religious constants and human limits.
5. It motivates youth's capabilities and interests toward indulging them in practicing menial hobbies like dancing and singing that have nothing to do with usefulness.
6. It promotes Western culture in Muslim society. As a result, this shall represent a social deviation that is different in values, customs and traditions from Islamic society; for instance, clothes, patterns of Western food, and methods. This also shall represent a savage invasion on the patterns, styles and methods of Islamic cultural life.

Salman & Alkhazalleh (2016:699) also listed the negative impacts of cultural globalisation on Muslims as found by Al Reqeb (2008), as follows:

1. Reducing the value of different cultures, and imposing the domination of one culture which control globalisation's mechanisms and centers.
2. Spreading Western taste in consumption and in practicing social behavior with others.
3. Depriving developing countries from reaching advancement or progress.
4. Penetrating local cultural infrastructure and intensifying the risks of alienation, invasion and cultural colonialism. Removing cultural civilized identity of Muslim nations and removing personal privacy of Muslim peoples (which are: religions, languages, histories, customs, traditions and morals).

LOCAL STRATEGIES IN FACING GLOBALISATION

The above discussion reflects more adverse than beneficial impacts of globalisation, especially in the case of relatively inferior countries and their people. However, escaping from globalization is almost impossible. McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton (1999:27) for instance argue that few areas of social life escape the reach of the processes of globalisation. In fact, as said by O'riordan (2001), globalization has affected everyone, everywhere. Like it or not, globalization therefore has to be faced, and the best way to face it is by strengthening the local communities, strategically and systematically.

In so doing, this paper suggests a local way of facing the globalization, viz. through an approach from below, involving bottom-up mechanisms, maximum utilisation of local wisdom, and the preservation of local values. This is based on the premise that "locality can evolve in a globalising world, and global outcomes are nothing but the accumulation of countless local actions", as put forward by O'riordan (2001:ix). According to him, the influence of global economic and social forces is moulded by local communities' interpretation of these forces and responses to them. Globalisation and localisation he says unite at all spatial scales. Each local manifestation changes the global context, while local perceptions and aspirations are shaped by global influences. Indeed there

is hardly a real global-local dichotomy. Instead, the processes of globalisation and localisation are necessarily bound to each other. Globalisation on the one hand, says Mukherjee (2016:55), threatens the identity of local cultures by appropriating their rhythm of life to the market economy. On the other, it extends the scope of commercialisation to local cultures. The local activities accumulate to create chaotic but global outcomes (O’riordan, 2001b:3). All in all,

according to O’riordan & Church (2001:3), “globalisation and localization are processes of change that impact on economies, culture and environments in ways that are both global and local”. The locals should have faced such a global-local phenomenon with local strategies based on their indigenous unity and strength.

Bottom Approach

The first strategy is the utilization of bottom-up approach at all levels of local communities. Bottom-up approach here refers to an approach that takes into account local people’s needs, inspirations, and ideas, by involving them in the process of collective planning and decision-making. In other words, bottom-up approach is a grassroots-based approach which deals with the local people themselves, preserving and uplifting their own local wisdom and values, as well as fulfilling their needs and raising their standard of living. Such an approach advocates popular participation and a sense of belonging that will entail with local communities’ unity and strength. These local people - or may be called as the bottom billion

- is recognised and given a chance to empower their own socio-economic and political domains, by providing them with accesses and opportunities in not only implementation stage, but also more importantly at planning and decision making processes.

The recognition and participation of the bottom billion is a necessity indeed. Bottom billion here refers to a world with a billion people living in impoverished and stagnant countries. Collier (2007) has listed 58 ‘bottom billion’ countries – the countries with a low level of development that have fallen into four traps. These traps which cause them to fall further behind are firstly, armed conflict; secondly, natural resource dependence; thirdly, landlocked; and fourthly, bad governance. These are worsened by their inability to adapt to changing environment, especially the climate change which is considered as a ‘threat multiplier’ (CNA, 2007: 6; Buhaug, Falcha, Gleditscha, & Wischnatha, 2010).

It was estimated that in 2007, 70% of the bottom billion live in Africa, but considerable numbers also inhabit countries like Bolivia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Haiti, Laos, North Korea, and Yemen (Collier 2007). Recently however, these bottom billion seem to have shifted to middle income countries (MICs) such as China and mainly India. Apart from that, about a quarter of the world’s poor live in other MICs, primarily in the populous lower middle- income countries (LMICs) such as Pakistan, Nigeria and Indonesia, while another quarter (or less) of the world’s poor live in the remaining 35 LMICs (Sumner, 2012a).

This shift, however, may not necessarily exhibits a substantial number of physical movement of the bottom billion. Instead, it may reflect the improved socio-economic mobility of the countries involved. As argued by Glassman, Duran, & Sumner (2011), after a decade of rapid growth in average incomes, many countries have attained MIC status. Nevertheless, the total number of poor people has not fallen as much as one might expect. In consequence, most of the world’s

poor – the bottom billion - now live in the MICs. In fact, there are up to a billion poor people or a 'new bottom billion' living in the MICs, not in the world's poorest countries.

Irrespective of wherever they live, the bottom billion must not be ignored if globalisation is to be faced with local strength. They have to be mobilised at all levels from below, from accumulating inspirations and ideas, to planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and eventually till the outcomes stages. This is what is meant by a bottom-up approach, an inclusive approach that provides opportunities to the bottom billion at the grassroots to involve in a collective popular participation, determining and accomplishing their own wants and strategies with a high sense of collective belongings.

Local Wisdom

The second strategy is the maximum utilisation of the local wisdom. This is necessary to ensure empowerment of the local bottom billion by their own beliefs, culture, and knowledge, moreover in a state where their beliefs, culture, and knowledge have been dominated as well as eroded through globalisation by exogenous beliefs, culture and knowledge.

One classic example of a systematic domination of the indigenous beliefs, culture, and knowledge is the Bologna Process (originally known as Bologna Declaration). It was founded in Bologna, Italy by 29 European Higher Education Ministers in 1999. Since then the Ministers met every two years beginning in Prague in 2001, Berlin in 2003, Bergen in 2005, London in 2007, Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve in 2009, Budapest/Vienna in 2010 in the form of its 10th Anniversary Conference), and in Bucharest in 2012 (*Europa* 2009). Later on the Bologna Process programmes were joined by others, amounting to 46 countries worldwide, as shown in Appendix 1.

One of the main objectives of the Bologna Process is to revive European influence particularly through higher education, by promoting European dimension in higher education in terms of curricular development and inter-institutional cooperation.

'European' here goes beyond the geographical boundaries *per se*, to encompass peoples, cultures, and belief, including the neo-Europeans such as America and Australia. The objective is attempted through an establishment of European Higher Education Area (EHEA). EHEA was established in 2010. In this area, the staff and students mobility based on European dimension is encouraged, accreditation between European universities is recognised, and European integration is simultaneously increased (Pressnell 2009). Students are free to choose the so-called high quality courses from wide and transparent choices as well as benefiting, they claim, smooth recognition procedures (*Europa* 2009).

Two of their keywords to attract the participation of higher education institutions worldwide are internationalisation (of European thought) and staff-students mobility (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2012). These are strengthened by a generous financial support from European Commission (EU), primarily through the so-called modernisation of universities so as to enable them to carry out the role of a global knowledge community. Through what is known as Erasmus Programme, EU sponsors Bologna Process activities to entail with the production of guidelines such as quality warranty, staff and students mobility, European dimension in higher education, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), and the Diploma Supplement. EU too supports development action in capacity building, with the aim to modernise the contents and education practices in 28 neighbour countries so that the education system in those countries is compatible with the Bologna Process. This

is done through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), and more specific through the Tempus programme, with around €55 million budget annually. In last 19 years, the Tempus programme has sponsored

6,600 universities collaborative projects, involving 2,000 European universities and universities in countries that have collaborated with them. In global context, the main programme that has become the emblem of EU is the world academic collaborative programme known as Erasmus Mundus. EU also supports the universities modernisation programme via the implementation of the 7th EU Framework Programme for Research (European Research Area) and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, as well as the Structural Funds and loans from the European Investment Bank (*Europa* 2009).

Undoubtedly, the endeavours by the Bologna Process is made possible through the globalisation processes. If this is unchecked and being lured by the “attractive” internationalisation, mobility, and generous financial support of the Bologna Process, moreover with the thought of an increased accreditation, local universities would have lost their identity and integrity. It is with this concern that the maximum utilisation of local wisdom is proposed.

Unfortunately, of all the countries, only Indonesian scholars seem to be widely researched and published on the local wisdom at the moment. Their researches and publications range from the studies on local wisdom and environment to marine conservation, education, tourism, and human security as well as specific ethnic wisdom. Dahliani, Ispurwono Soemarno & Purwanita Setijanti (2015), for instance, focuss their research on local wisdom in built environment in globalisation era; Endang Gunaisah, Yazid Saleh, Nasir B. Nayan & Ratu M. Caropeboka (2016) on local wisdom management at local marine conservation area; Parmin, Sajidan, Ashadi, Sutikno & Yoris Maretta (2016) on integration of science and local wisdom in teaching; Sehe, Achmad Tolla, Kamaruddin & Akmal Hamsa (2016) on the development of Indonesian Language Learning materials based on local wisdom; Ayu A. Kurniawati, Sri Wahyuni, and Pramudya D. A. Putra (2017) on the learning outcomes

obtained with the use of comic and Jember’s local wisdom as integrated science learning materials on the level of junior high school; Vincentia Reni Vitasurya (2015) on local wisdom for sustainable development of rural tourism; Himawan Bayu Patriadi, Mohd Zaini Abu Bakar & Zahri Hamat (2015) on pesentren as a religious-based local wisdom that is compatible with human security; Kasma F. Amin, Muhammad Rafi Tang Paturungi Parawansa & Salam (2015) on the culture and local wisdom of Indonesian Buginese; and Suwetha (2015) on the use of Bali/Hindu local wisdom (*Tri Hita Karana*) as a foothold to maintain conformity, congeniality and harmony of our nature.

All the findings of such researches are great assets to be taken into consideration to formulate a strategy from below to face the globalisation. With the rich of the local wisdom, not only erosion of local wisdom is convincingly believed to be avoidable, the blending of the globalised and localized wisdom, if it is inevitable, will benefit the locals more than the outsiders.

Local Values

The third strategy is the preservation and upholding of the local values. In so doing, one has to be cautious not to fall into the trap of the contemporary treatment of the local values. The definition of the local values now seems to be shaped by the needs and trends of the changing world, resulting from the globalisation. In the case of local Islamic values, for instance, their usage seems to mean

more of worldly pursuit than the pursuit of the world Hereafter, let alone the balance between the two.

There are four factors that are attributable to the moulding of such a form of contemporary local values. They are firstly the universalisation of the local values; secondly, the realignment of the local values; thirdly, the accommodation of the local values; and fourthly, the 'scientification' of the local values (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2015).

Universalisation of the local values here refers to the efforts that wrap up into one similar basket all the so-called universal values such as sincerity, honesty, trustworthy, diligent, cleanliness, disciplined, hard work, cooperative, justice, humble, patience, fair, *et cetera*. All the values are treated the same, as if the bottom billion is made up of people with the same worldview and philosophical underpinnings. This is definitely incorrect. The local values themselves actually are entrenched firmly in their respective philosophical underpinnings that entail with a different meaning. In Islam for instance, the value of cleanliness does not mean just the physical cleanliness. Instead, it means cleanliness of both the physical and spiritual domains which is termed as *taharah*, with their distinctive kind of characteristics and methods. This is an example of what is termed by Imam Kamil Mufti (2015) as the core values of Islam. They may look alike with other people's values at operational level, but they are underpinned with different worldview at philosophical level, hence to mean differently from the values of the others. In this sense, even the Religion, Life, Family, Mind and Wealth that are embedded in the *maqasid shari'ah* (objectives of *shari'ah*) - and were used by Ahmet Akgunduz (n.d.) to exhibit the universalism of Islamic values - are actually having their own implicit Islamic meanings. They cannot be equalled to the rights for the religions, life, family, mind and wealth of the non-Muslims.

Realignment of the local values means the adjustment of the local values with the trends of the changing world of globalisation. It is a sort of reaction to acclimatise the local values with the changes. For instance, local values have been gradually aligned with the dominant socio-economic and political culture of the western ethno-centric ideologies. This is one of the outcomes of the reaction to the allegations that the local values have become a 'cultural block' to development and progress. The writing of Ahmad Rafikir and Kalsom Abdul Wahab (2014) could be regarded as reflecting such a reaction. It defensively attempts to show that the local values - in this case the values of Islam - emphasizes on commercial activities vis-à-vis the thinking of many western authors that alleged Islamic teaching as not governing the material aspect or success in business performance. But unlike other authors, Ahmad Rafikir and Kalsom Abdul Wahab (2014) did try to relate briefly the values involved in the commercial activities with the aspects of both worldly and the world Hereafter as well as on iman (faith), *tawheedic* (Divine belief), *ibadah* (worship) and *mardhatillah* (the pleasure of Allah SWT).

Accommodation of the local values refers to an approach called accommodative- modification approach. It connotes an approach that accommodates the values of the others, modify them, and eventually treat them as local values, on justification that they are not contrary to the faith of the local bottom billion. Islamic economics for instance is regarded as embedding Islamic values eventhough it is actually just a *fiqh*-based neo- classical economics, resulting from the blending of Islamic *muamalat* laws with western conventional economics (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2011). This is to mean just an injection of Islamic values based on *fiqh* into the conventional economics structure. In this process, verses of al-Qur'an and Hadith are infused into the

unimpaired structure of the conventional economics. It may be said as '*ayatization*' process, that is justifying the values of the others with the *ayah* (verses) of the Qur'an and Hadith within the established conventional economics structure. In consequence, the Islamic local values are in actuality just an instrument to endorse the exogenous values embedded in the conventional economics.

Lastly, the 'scientification' of the local values refers to attitude that favors scientific deliberation of all the local values. The local Islamic values for instance are only regarded as truth if they could be deliberated logically and proven by observable facts and data. The truth of the values is determined only by '*aqli*' reasoning (mental reasonings) and '*daruri*' (simple) knowledge, hence confining their horizon to only tangible and visible values. Such an action obviously leads to an incomprehensive deliberation of the local values. Simultaneously, it moulds the local values into a more mechanistic understanding, although there are invisible philosophical underpinnings in almost all local values.

The adoption of the local values that are moulded by these four factors are not able to face globalisation. The proposed strategy from below through the preservation and upholding of the local values is not workable as they are no more based on original local worldview and philosophical underpinnings. Instead, it may mean an effort that is based on an incomprehensive meaning of the local values, hence an imprecise diagnose and prescription of the needs and problems of the bottom-billion. The preservation and upholding of the local values in the proposed strategy from below therefore means the safeguarding and vindication of the original local values based on their own respective worldview and philosophical underpinnings.

CONCLUSION

Globalisation is undoubtedly inevitable. It has happened, is happening and will happen indefinitely. Globalisation - especially in the form of global economic and social forces - is affecting everyone, everywhere (O'riordan, 2001). In fact, as rightly argued by Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton (1999:27), few areas of social life escape the reach of processes of globalisation. These processes are reflected in all social domains from the cultural through the economic, the political, the legal, the military and the environmental. Day to day they are dominating the life of people, including the bottom billion, all over the world. In recent years, globalisation has become an accelerated process (Polanyi, 1957; Mittelman (2000).

Consequently, a kind of a global socio-economic and political culture is created (Featherstone, 1990). Globalisation has resulted in the establishment of transnational structures and the global integration of cultural, economic, environmental, political and social processes on global, supranational, national, regional and local levels (Rennen and Martens, 2003). Globalisation has led to the point where events in one part of the world have considerable effects on other regions and societies (Baylis, 2007).

This paper therefore proposes to face the globalisation with a strategy from below. However small the endeavour may be, it is believed to be able to affect the process and form of globalisation, or at least to determine local bottom billion own way of life through fortification and maximum utilisation of their own respective local bottom billion popular participation through a bottom-up approach, supported by their local wisdom and original local values.

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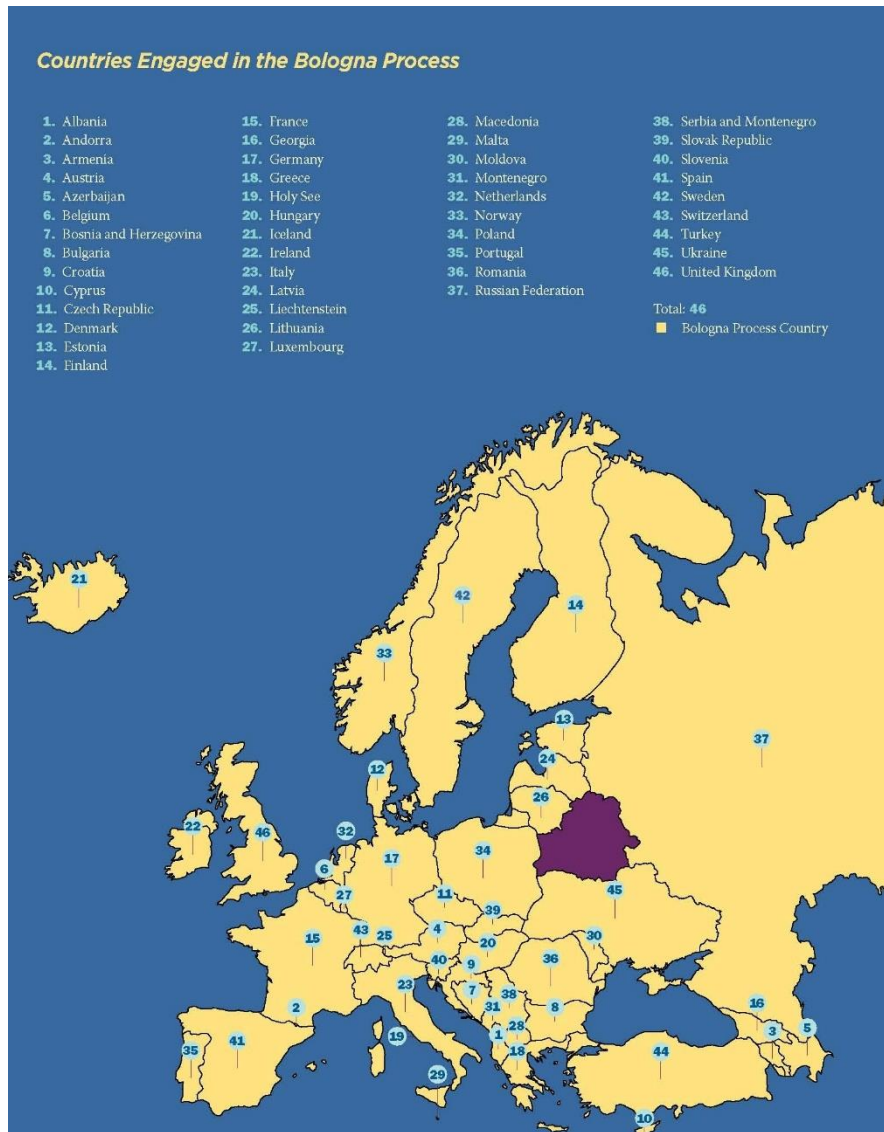
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46 Member Countries of the Bologna Process



Source: NAUSA: Association of International Educators (2007)