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HOLISTIC EDUCATION – A SUSTAINABLE MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

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ABSTRACT The role of higher education and of universities stands at a critical position in the twenty first century. There exists a need to identify a sustainable paradigm for higher education and the existential role of universities. Additionally, the concept of the 'third mission' is becoming an important indicator across Europe for measuring the success of universities. The need to identify the existential role of universities and the need for a sustainable model of higher education and incorporation of the third mission presents an ideal opportunity for the development of a holistic model of evolution. This article argues that higher education can and should be viewed from a holistic perspective by introducing a new model called 'Telos' that describes the evolution of individuals and societies concerning many features of development from an integral perspective. Societal integration is identified as being part of the existential role of universities, with Telos as a framework applied through the third mission which acts to integrate individuals, businesses and society.

KEYWORDS Higher Education, Holistic Development, Telos, Third Mission, Societal Integration.

THE EVOLUTION OF EDUCATIONAL PARADIGMS

The role of the University in society has gone through various changes in time and stands at a critical point in the twenty first century. One of the significant challenges faced by higher education during the second half of the last century was managing its expansion. Since World War II, the percentage of the population opting to engage with higher education has expanded (earlier on, access to higher education was confined to a limited elite). This expansion

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has predominantly occurred in Europe and the West, compared to the rest of the world, creating significant challenges for universities as it concerns sustainability and resource management. The UNESCO report 'World declaration on Higher Education for 21st century vision and action' (1998) claimed that "owing to the scope and pace of change, society has become increasingly knowledge-based so that higher learning and research now act as essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations. Higher education itself is confronted therefore with formidable challenges and must proceed to the most radical change and renewal it has ever been required to undertake, so that our society, which is currently undergoing a profound crisis of values, can transcend mere economic considerations and incorporate deeper dimensions of morality and *spirituality*". The university, along with evolving higher education paradigms, has shifted in terms of structure and purpose over the years. Reading's (1996) arguments, contained in '*The University in Ruins*', describes how universities arose with the purpose of professionally certifying individuals with degrees in law, medicine and theology. Reading (1996) further argued that a university's purpose was to justify the state that supported and sustained it. The role of the university can thus be observed to be synonymous with the role of the contemporary political structure in a society. In its formative years, the university was an institution that served the purpose of conferring certified degrees in various fields. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the university's role shifted to that of an institute affiliated with the state which funded it. However, the emergence of capitalism has resulted in universities outgrowing the needs of the state [Reading (1996)]. The market model has now impacted the structure of the university, causing universities to become independent from the state.

The prevailing 'triple-helix' model that was created by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1999) describes a university-industry-government structure where the focus is on institutional relationships (laissez-faire or socialist) in which the knowledge sector plays a dominant role. The knowledge sector focuses on using 'knowledge' to generate value, both tangible and intangible. Such values are further used as the engines of economic value creation. The triple-helix model focused on the prominent role of universities in innovation, described as being on par with the other two actors in the model (namely, the state and industry). The collaboration between the three actors results in innovative outcomes, and each actor, besides its original role, has assumed a new role (the role of the other), centered around innovation. Thus, the dependence of universities on other actors (e.g. the state) has declined and the emergence of knowledge sector-based structures has began to influence

the role of universities, particularly in the years following 2000. Etzkowitz et al. (2000) additionally explained that '*the future of the university and the university of the future*' demands that universities evolve from ivory towers to develop an entrepreneurial paradigm. The study used the previously-described 'triple-helix' [Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000)] model to highlight the fact that universities, apart from advancing knowledge, also patent and market such knowledge, indicating a shift towards an entrepreneurial role for the university. Etzkowitz et al. (2000) vouched for the entrepreneurial role for the university, while Teichler (2013), on the other hand, advocated that the basic character of the university has been lost with the current system. As the model has evolved, the need for researching unknown knowledge has been replaced by research related to knowledge, with known outcomes. Teichler's (2013) article on the Utilitarian drift indicates that the priorities of universities have changed drastically from their fundamental existential purpose. Teichler (2013) further elucidates that students and systems are tailored to 'compete' in a contest in which incentives are the driving forces. This article is inspired by the arguments of Teichler (2013), specifically concerning the proposition that the Utilitarian approach is the driver of contemporary university systems.

The current market-driven utilitarian approach enables universities to act as the engines of knowledge in society and to commercialize the knowledge they produce. However, the downfall of such a paradigm is the fact that universities no longer research unknown knowledge. This results in research and its fruits being commercialized, rather than them being truly innovative. The first part of this paper introduces the concept of 'holistic' education and highlights the need for universities to adopt the strengths of previous models of higher education and shape them according to a holistic perspective. The second part describes a holistic educational model whose purpose lies in integrating the university with society. Finally, the article concludes by advocating the need for universities to serve society through holistic education as a part of their 'third' mission.

LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT MODEL

Modern educational paradigms (in which the university serves the funding 'state') have made unique contributions as well as had drawbacks to society. The paradigm shift over the years has been drastic, with the model evolving from one end of the spectrum (university affiliation with the state) to the other (the university becoming utilitarian). Each paradigm has been characterized by its share of successes and failures. Similarly to its predecessors, the utilitarian approach to education has resulted in various impacts on society,

the sub-prime mortgage crisis of 2008 being a recent related example. One of the principal reasons behind the financial meltdown was that utilitarian-educated individuals, as parts of the system, developed financial models focused on known outcomes. This resulted in a shift from employing basic (and fundamental) assumptions about financial systems (e.g. an individual's ability to repay debt) to the creation of products for the market, designed to generate commercial revenue. Banks and financial institutions developed debt products (utility products) with known outcomes without factoring in other variables from the wider system. As a consequence, the markets crashed, destining several banks, institutions, governments and individuals to bankruptcy. The financial system's collapse is a prime example of the failure of the utilitarian system to view knowledge as a whole. While the system has its benefits, as a driver of education it is incapable of justifying the existential role of universities, even according to its own standards – the engine of knowledge.

Another phenomenon that can be attributed to changes in higher education paradigms is 'stress' between an individual's evolution and the collective development of society. The systems and structures that have guided higher education paradigms have viewed individual and societal needs predominantly from an economic (material) standpoint. Maslow (1943) was one of the earliest to demonstrate the presence of different types of motivation in an individual's evolution. His work specifically highlights the hierarchical needs that every individual encounters through his/her life, starting with fundamental physiological needs, leading up to self-actualization. Maslow is among the many authors who have explored the beyond-basic physical needs of individuals. Bowlby (Attachment theory), Adams (Wealth of nations) and Freud (Psychosexual development) are other prominent authors who have discussed the possibilities for the growth of different facets of human development. Ideally, education can play an important role in aiding an individual's growth and integrating him/her into society, thereby fostering the growth of society. However, the evolution of the individual and society have often become degenerated to the extent of systemic collapse. This often results in universities aligning their roles with societal trends. The university aligned itself with the state when the state was the primary actor; later, the university moved beyond the state towards a market-based utilitarian role with the emergence of the knowledge sector. The whole structure takes the form of a recursive cycle whereby individuals and society pull away from each other, resulting in the university adjusting its role accordingly. An alarming warning for the future is the fact that universities are not progressing in the direction of sustainability as concerns individuals and society.

THE NEED FOR A SUSTAINABLE MODEL

The 'stress' prevalent in society presents an ideal opportunity for universities to reinvent their existential roles. The 'stress' between an individual's evolution and general collective development has haunted universities through the centuries. However, it also provides an opportunity for the university to act as an institution that integrates the individual with the collective. The university's role in the post-modern era can be molded so as to serve as a holistic instrument that integrates individuals with society. However, there is no 'elusive' method that the university needs to follow to achieve this goal. Several studies [Maslow (1943), for instance] have hypothesized that the evolution of individuals and societies occurs according to multiple levels of consciousness rather than pure goals of wealth maximization. The university as an institution can choose a 'holistic' ideology to realize this objective. The use of such an ideology would depend on various factors such as the cultural backdrop, globalization, resource availability, personnel, etc. The fundamental goal of this article is to argue that universities can identify their existential roles as media for societal integration. This article does not advocate a radical change in the operational designs of universities in terms of their activities (teaching, research, forming relationships with industry, training etc.). This article simply contends that universities should consider these activities from a holistic perspective rather than an oversimplified utilitarian viewpoint.

TELOS MODEL: AN INTEGRAL APPROACH

Maslow (1943) was one of the earliest to hypothesize that human needs are hierarchically structured and lead from the satisfaction of physiological to mental needs. The theory indicated that human needs extended beyond material and utility-based functioning. According to the hierarchical model, an individual's evolution starts with the satisfaction of physiological needs, progressing to satisfying the need for safety, social needs and finally the desire for esteem and self-actualization. Physiological needs are described as the physical and fundamental needs required for survival. Self-actualization is ranked as the individual's highest need. Though the theory of hierarchy is encouraging from an individual's evolutionary viewpoint, it fails to integrate the characteristics of needs from a holistic perspective.

On the other hand, Auribindo, an Indian philosopher, theorized that human evolution is comprised of several parts of the being connected as a whole. Dev and Pavitran (2011) have used Aurobindo's hypothesis to develop a model

entitled 'Telos' as an alternative paradigm for education. The model views education from an integral perspective, viewing the individual's evolution as various parts of a whole being. The various 'parts' of an individual's needs (referred to as the being) are the physical layers, vital layers, mental layers and the spiritual layers.

The various individual layers are further defined as follows:

Physical layer: This is the fundamental part of being. This layer is similar to Maslow's Physiological needs. The physical part of the being is the material layer of existence. This part of the being can be characterized by physical health, stability in habits, daily routines, inertia, resistance to change and immobility.

Vital layer – This has three further parts, lower vital, central vital, and higher vital

Lower vital. – This is a state just above physical consciousness, primarily driven by sensory aspects. It is driven by sensory pleasures, sensory enjoyment and comfort. This part of the being is also characterized by lower level senses, including fear, pettiness and desire.

Central vital – This layer is the state of consciousness driven by passion and strength. It is characterized by power and force.

Higher vital – This layer is the state of consciousness associated with emotions. It stresses emotions rather than desire. This part of the being can be characterized by love and care.

Mental being – This has three further parts, physical mind (information and data-based reasoning), vital mind (imagination) and pure mind (vision).

Spiritual being – This is the transcendental part of the whole being that transcends time and space, involving the Psychic part of an individual. This can be further categorized into two parts – the spirit that is found in the deeper heart (the deeper self or psyche) and the vast, impersonal, transcendental spirit located outside the range of mind.

In contrast to Maslow (1943), the Telos model views the different attributes of individual development as a whole. Each part of an individual's being is characterized by its own 'force' and 'form' [Pavitran and Dev (2014)]. The individual forces of each part of the being impact each form, resulting in a matrix-based model. Therefore, unlike the theory of hierarchy, Telos matrix views each part of the being in an integrated manner, accounting for the influence of the other parts (for example, the impact of physical force on vital form). From a developmental perspective, this holistic perspective towards development is superior to a hierarchical framework as the implications are deeper.

APPLICATION OF TELOS: THE THIRD MISSION

While the Telos model provides a framework for identifying the evolution of an individual, its application to higher education is potentially profound. Traditionally, institutions of higher education serve two main purposes – teaching and research (according to the modern approach). Apart from these two primary objectives, an evolving school of thought related to the role of higher education is to pursue a 'Third Mission'. The third mission is still a subject of academic debate, specifically regarding the role and operational parameters of the mission. Walshok (2005), as well as Roper and Hirth (2005), have summarized the origins and evolution of the third mission in education in detail. The former states that the third mission must play an active role in "enabling citizens and communities to have access to diverse forms of knowledge in diverse formats and settings throughout their lives". Roper and Hirth (2005) describe the mission's purpose, from "serving the community, to extending and reaching out to it, to engaging it in bidirectional relationships and interactions". The importance of the third mission has been further stressed by the European University Association in a project entitled 'Needs and constraints analysis of the three dimensions of third mission activities'. The EUA report defined the three dimensions as technology transfer and innovation, continuing education, and social engagement. Further, the report emphasized that universities should abandon their long-established ivory tower position for more "relevant and deeper interactions" with society. The third mission is increasingly becoming a significant factor in university rankings and could potentially be used as a strategic method for universities to interact with the business world while preserving their societal contact. While many other authors have attributed different meanings to the role of the third mission, the soul of the mission has been universally accepted as using higher education as a means to fostering society's well-being. Since World War II, higher education has witnessed an 'expansion' in terms of the percentage of young participants. While higher education was formerly reserved for the traditional elite, the expansion has changed the functioning of universities in higher education. The expansion of higher education, coupled with an increasing emphasis on the third mission as an integral part of a university's structure, offers them an outlet with which to become connected to society.

Given that the concept of the third mission is still evolving, and that the necessity remains for universities to reinvent their existential purpose, there is an ideal opportunity for universities to identify their position in society. This article earlier highlighted the need for universities to act as instruments

for integrating individuals with society. The third mission provides the opportunity for universities in higher education to fulfill this role. Though Telos can be applied in different dimensions of higher education, this article focuses on Telos as a framework that can be used to achieve the objective of societal integration. This article proposes three ways in which employing Telos in the third mission can be used to fulfil the existential role of societal integration.

Telos as a framework in individual development: The Telos model (like Maslow's) can be used by universities as a tool to enable students to understand more about the individual self. This is the first way the third mission can serve the community. The concept of Telos can be presented in a short course to students with the view to helping them understand their individual processes of evolution. Understanding the individual self is the first step to reducing the 'stress' between the individual and society as a higher state of personal evolution gives students the clarity they need to pursue their goals in life.

Telos as a framework in community development: The Telos model can be used by universities as a framework for conducting workshops for community interaction. This approach would help the university serve the community more directly. The community will benefit by gaining direct knowledge about their development and evolution. The university, through the third mission, can organize workshops for local communities to help them identify their purpose. This is the second step which may be taken to reduce stress. Through students, the universities can foster individual and community evolution as the next step in their overall integration.

Telos as a framework in corporate development: As the article earlier indicated, universities need not radically change the structure of their courses and research paradigms to identify their existential role. However, we stand at a point in time when 'firms' are the major actors in society, fundamentally affecting the lives of individuals. Therefore, for complete social integration, universities have to interact with firms (corporations) to identify their needs, aims and identity. The Telos model again can be used as a framework from this perspective. Universities can present workshops and seminars for firms that are active in the market by applying the framework. This will ensure a bidirectional flow of information from the university to the firm, and vice-versa that enables pure knowledge transfer and evolution.

Thus the third mission may be used with the Telos framework for personal and community development, while firms can effectively maintain an ongoing dialogue with universities which can gain feedback from the three important stake holders in modern society. The result of using the third mission will enable universities to understand the needs and evolutionary requirements of

their stakeholders. This, in turn, will enable universities to dynamically re-design their structures (including mission, vision and objectives) over time, resulting in a sustainable, functioning model for higher education. The third mission can thus be effectively employed by universities to help them fulfill the existential role of societal integration.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Telos: Third mission and societal integration

The role of higher education and universities in society stands at a crucial point. The emphasis on the third mission across Europe is a welcome sign that universities are willing to complement their existing two-tier structure (teaching and research) by directly reaching out to society. However, the vision and operational efficiency of the mission is still at a nascent stage across Europe. Telos provides a framework for universities that can enable their integration into society and business partners (corporates) for knowledge-transfer and economic sustainability. However, the third mission and the role of universities in societal integration should not be restricted to Europe alone. Europe and the West have changed their higher education paradigms throughout the centuries. The modern globalized society now has new industrialized economies (such as Brazil, China, India, Russia, South Africa and many South Asian economies) which are at the forefront of development and innovation. While these economies are touted as having the potential for development because of their underlying population growth (especially in China and India), it is crucial that they adopt the concept of the third mission and define universities as instruments of societal integration at an early stage, relative to the West. This would help these nations avoid the mistakes made in the West and in Europe, as well as setting higher education off on a sustainable track in these regions.

Telos: The third mission and beyond

Telos as a scientific tool has applications in many areas. The Telos matrix in particular is of importance in developing scientific research frameworks. The notion of the flux between each form and force of being upon the other parts has wide implications from an academic perspective. This flux of force and form, as depicted in the matrix, represents a new tool for mapping individual and collective consciousness. In the arena of higher education, it has two major applications:

From an individual perspective, this matrix can be utilized as a framework

for the personal development of personnel (students and staff). Regarding the existential question about how higher education pertains to societal integration, the answer must firstly be individual development. The concept of Telos and the matrix can be used in self-development courses for individuals.

From a collective perspective, this matrix can be utilized to identify the evolution of universities. The evolution of universities specifically involves framing and re-framing visions, missions and operational strategies at different periods in time. Using the Telos matrix as a framework would benefit universities by allowing them to map their current state of evolution in terms of the aforementioned aspects. Additionally, this framework can be applied in times of university-industry collaborations to understand the relevance of universities to contemporary industry applications. Overall, the matrix can be used as a dynamic evolutionary tool that universities can use to build relationships with individuals and industry.

Thus, using the Telos matrix can potentially benefit higher education by furthering individual and collective development and by helping create a progressive and sustainable ecosystem.

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