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Scope:

I am speaking today from the American perspective, to relate themes and role of HE to the European context. I am talking about the university (college) sector of HE, both public and non-profit private, not about for-profit or vocational education. I am also focusing on the first degree cycle: the Bachelor / undergraduate degree.

Many of the arguments I make on the public good and social mission of HE will be understood and (I think) welcomed by the members of this group. I do not think I have much to say that you would disagree with as educationalists. I bring up these points today for 2 reasons:

- in the context of reforms, benchmarking exercises and the increasing commodification (market orientation) of HE, it is helpful to remind ourselves of our ideals and inspirational motivations for working in this sector (you don't work in HE for the money...)
- HE is a social priority: when we are asked to "do more with less", we should still be selective about what we do with the limited funds: if the key role of HE is limited by funding, that role had better be defined and served very well indeed.

I will focus on three main points:

1. HE costs money – even when we do not have any
2. HE is a long-term investment strategy – not to be sold too cheaply
3. HE for civic development

1.

HE costs money – including public moneys.

US American HE has long been recognized as highly successful:

- Draws **key researchers and talented academics**
- Attracts **more than 21% of international students** world wide (down from 28% in 2005, but still higher by more than 10% than any other nation and more than 20% higher than all but 9 other countries)

Main factor of this success: almost 60 years of consistent funding – from public/government or public/philanthropic sources.

Post-WWII "golden era" in American Higher Education:

From 1940 to 1990: federal funds for higher education increased by a factor of twenty-five, enrollment by ten, and average teaching loads were reduced by half. Nationalization of higher ed supported the "model of the major research university".

1946 to 1958: non-governmental, philanthropic foundations gave \$85 million to colleges (48 percent of these funds went to Harvard, Columbia, and Berkeley –

strategic investment in excellence)

\$100 million from Rockefeller, Ford, and Carnegie Foundations went to political science departments at same schools: Harvard, Columbia, Berkeley

1947-1948: G.I. Bill: Veteran's Administration paid the tuition for almost half of the male college students in the United States

by 1962: higher education had received \$5 billion from G.I. Bill for veterans of World War II and later the American/Korean War.

Primarily due to the G.I Bill, college enrollment doubled between 1938 and 1948
-> after the war American higher education became a mass phenomenon

Although US HEIs have always charged tuition fees, the costs students paid have always been lower than the actual costs of running and continually improving the HEIs. Financial aid for students was provided primarily in the form of grants – money from the federal government that subsidized the costs of students' education and which students did not have to repay. Only a modest amount of financial aid came in the form of loans that students were obligated to repay.

Since the early 1990s, policy makers and the general public began to perceive HE as more of a private good than a public good. As studies showed that individuals with HE degrees earned more over their lifetimes than people without degrees, the individual benefits of HE came to overshadow the public benefit of having an educated citizenry.

This perception affected the funding structure and the ratio of scholarship grants and loans shifted. Students were required to bear more of the financial responsibility for HE – either by paying the fees upfront or by paying back the government's loans as they began earning money at jobs they were qualified to take as HE graduates (most people pay back their student loans over a period of 10-20 years – I am still paying back my own).

2. HE is a long-term investment strategy

HE is selling itself too cheaply as a mere tool for economic development – when married to overly short-sighted market or political trends.

HE has a virtual monopoly on providing the 'stamp of approval' on people considered qualified for specialized professions and careers.

HE as the main portal to employability – and

HE cannot be tied too tightly to market trends or professional profiles – for at least 2 reasons:

- in our modern world and especially considering the number of times people can expect to change careers (need re-training) and considering the changing nature of work and professional job descriptions, **employability means flexibility** (whether you are an engineer, a doctor, lawyer, or philosopher).

- Market trends in society are not necessarily fair, democratic or even legal. An American HE philosopher warns of the danger of universities blindly following the dictates of the market:

"As long as they must look for measurable and commensurable values, universities that try to maximize the social value added of their students must take their signals from the job market. If employers are racist or anti-semitic, so will universities be in the guise of maximizing social utility. ..." Gutmann (1987) p.183

If HE can keep independent of the market, it serves a useful role as a path toward ameliorating the gap between social standards (what we should do) and social practices (what we really do). Doctors, lawyers and politicians should not – but do sometimes – deceive the rest of us. Businessmen and politicians should not invest unwisely or take risks that put the rest of us in financial danger – but apparently they sometimes do this, too.

Universities cannot do much to prevent these things from happening, but they can offer informed, reasoned critiques on the moral standards of businesspeople, professionals and politicians. This supports public, popular criticism of the transgressions and helps keep professional authority in its rightful place. Universities cannot play this role if they are taking their cues from the (corrupt) market in a misguided effort to maximize social utility.

Former Harvard president Derek Bok has warned that the rapid commercialization of American colleges and universities -- where everything may be up for sale -- threatens to undermine academic values and standards, impair the university's reputation for the kind of objective teaching and research essential for a democratic society, reduce public trust, and increased government intervention.

3. HE for civic development

- are we aiming to produce 'brains' or 'citizens' who know how to use their brains?

Vienna/Budapest Declaration 2010:

We are convinced that higher education is a major driver for **social and economic development and for innovation** in an increasingly knowledge-driven world.

The new era threatens some long-standing purposes of the university in American society.

In 1973, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education identified five purposes that **historically have been served** by higher education.

- opportunities for individual student development,
- the advancement of human capability in society at large,
- enlargement of educational justice,
- the transmission and advancement of learning and wisdom, and

- the critical evaluation of society for the sake of society's self-renewal. The last of these is most threatened when outside stakeholders, especially employers, push university funding toward projects that benefit private payoffs.

Gutmann (1987): "While not a substitute for character training, learning how to think carefully and critically about political problems, to articulate one's views and defend them before people with whom one disagrees is a form of moral education to which young adults are more receptive and for which universities are well suited." p.173

- she goes on to say:

Universities serve democracies best when they try to establish an environment conducive to creating knowledge that is **not immediately useful**, appreciating ideas that are **not presently popular**, and rewarding people who are -- and are likely to continue to be -- intellectually but **not necessarily economically productive.**" p.184

Global citizenship movement in US – marries HE missions for providing professional qualifications (stamp of approval) and liberal arts/responsibility to civil society.

Public voices calling for civic development / global citizenship:

Clinton: creating a shared intellectual framework--not just for policymakers and business leaders and labor leaders and education leaders, but for real people who intuitively know this is true--is a precondition for not only the United States, but others making good decisions going forward.

Obama: A high quality education is not just a matter of being a good worker, it is also a matter of being a good citizen. It is also a matter of being able to think critically, evaluate the world around you, make sure that you can process all the information that is coming at us in a way that helps you make decisions about your own life but also helps you participate in the life of the country.

Judt: Public responsibilities have been drastically shifted to the private sector. Americans and, to a lesser extent, Europeans have forgotten how to think politically and morally about economic choices ... To abandon the gains made by social democrats—the New Deal, the Great Society, the European welfare state—"is to betray those who came before us as well as generations yet to come."

Epstein:

Business school discourse today has a new set of topical lessons, emphasizing the roles played by MBAs in precipitating the global recession and creating financial products that benefited corporations but hurt consumers. "When we bring

students into business school, we narrow their vision,” says Stephen Spinelli, president of Philadelphia University and co-founder of the Jiffy Lube auto service company. “We teach them to focus with increasing blinders until they have pinpoint recognition, but that limits what they can see on the periphery.”

Axtell:

Contrary to the unimaginative thinking of the practical-minded, **the liberal arts and sciences are not luxuries; they are necessities if we would realize our full humanity. Too many colleges and particularly universities graduate men and women with too few tools and too little incentive to complete the lifelong task of self-education.** Eager to escape with their crisp new credentials and first job offers, these unfinished products of the unfettered academic market fail to heed the bumper sticker that warns: “The truly educated never graduate.”

There is a long tradition in liberal arts education of equipping students with skills they will need in life, regardless of their career choices or vocational expertise. Throughout U.S. history from Thomas Jefferson to John Dewey, education has been seen as a vehicle for preparing students to become knowledgeable citizens (Gutmann, 1987). It took a long time, but the explicit mission to teach moral and compassionate, active citizenship developed in direct response to America’s globally dominant political position.

In the modern world, where

any particular body of knowledge is bound to become obsolete, the **object of contemporary undergraduate education** is not primarily to convey content, but to **develop certain qualities of mind**--the ability to think for oneself; to regard the world with curiosity and ask interesting questions; to subject the world to sustained and rigorous analysis; and to use, where needed, the perspectives of more than one discipline; and to arrive at fresh, creative answers.
(Levin, 2008)

Yale President Richard Levin considers liberal education as the source of Americans’ creativity and innovative entrepreneurialism, which contributes to our country’s “soft power”. Joseph Nye defines soft power as our cultural power, the power of example, the power of ideas and ideals. Soft power is more subtle than hard power (described as coercion by military or economic force) because it makes others want what we want (Nye, 2002). The particular position of the United States as the unchallenged world power (Steger, 2008) puts Americans at risk for a particular “type of pathological narcissism”, according to Martha Nussbaum, in which

the person demands complete control over all the sources of good, and a complete self-sufficiency in consequence. This pathology occurs repeatedly in human life. Aristotle saw it in people who thought they could never suffer, and who in consequence, he said, cannot have compassion for others [...] perhaps this pathology occurs with particular regularity in America, where young people are brought up to think that they are part of a nation that is on top of the world, and that they should expect to be completely in control of everything important in their lives, in consequence.
(Nussbaum, 2002, p.5)

The particular need for Americans, as members of a highly privileged economic and social class with respect to the rest of the world, to learn compassion may be why the discussion of global citizenship education is so prevalent here rather than elsewhere in the world. The events of September 11, 2001 taught us very clearly that we are disliked and even hated by some groups and nations. This realization came as a shock to many, if not most, Americans. The very fact that the idea came as a shock provides substance to Dr. Nussbaum's concern that we are particularly prone to pathological narcissism.

It is for this reason that global citizenship education must not be confused with education for global competence. There is even an argument that global citizenship education reconciles the age-old tension between two disparate philosophies of education: that of liberal education (a philosophy that encourages a broad range of knowledge) and that of professional or vocational education. Andrzejewski agrees that "the conflicting educational purposes of jobs vs. citizenship can be alleviated if we encourage students to consider the social and environmental impact of the work they do" (Andrzejewski & Alessio, 1999, p.10).

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