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THE COMPARATIVE ORIGINS OF OPEN UNIVERSITIES IN CANADA
AND THE UNITED STATES

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the archivists and historians of open, distance, and flexible higher education – past, present, and future.

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Abstract

This historical comparative study analyzes the political, social, and economic origins of eight open online non-profit English-speaking universities established during the 1970s and 1990s in Canada and the United States. This research project also identifies and compares their institutional antecedents, purposes of learning, and educational characteristics. Canada and the United States are widely recognized in the 21st century for higher education excellence. Their experiences with open online non-profit universities are part of that story. However, American institutions are not often referenced in the literature about open universities. Whereas the two nations share similar historical developments in higher education and distance education specifically, the origins of their open universities have yet to be compared. This study adds a missing piece to the history of distance education while simultaneously contributing to UNESCO's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals by identifying the converging and diverging contextual factors that influenced the origins of these open universities. Open universities are viable and attractive models within the higher education landscape in the context of the 21st-century knowledge society and the economic constraints dominated by neoliberal policies. This research will help higher education policymakers consider establishing, transforming, or expanding their open universities, perhaps even more pressing, given the current need to retool workforce segments due to the economic pressures of a knowledge society and the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Documenting and analyzing the institutional origins gives the higher education community more knowledge about these open online non-profit higher education options.

Keywords: open universities, history, distance education, Canada, United States, historical methodology, neoliberalism, higher education

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Glossary

Constructivism: A theoretical approach whereby “people actively and agentially seek out, select and construct their own views, worlds and learning, and these processes are rooted in socio-cultural contexts and interactions” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 23).

Credentialism: The economic view that higher education credentials signal to employers the potential for human capital (Gillies, 2015).

Degree/certification competency-based organization: A university that maximizes competency-based approaches for assessment of student learning (Meyer, 2009b).

Distance education: “any educational process in which all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and/or time from the learner, with the effect that all or most of the communication between teachers and students is through an artificial medium, either electronic or print” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 22).

Distance teaching university: An autonomous institution that uses distance teaching strategies (Keegan & Rumble, 1982, p. 24). It may refer to a multi-institutional arrangement as in a consortium (Rumble & Harry, 1982). The term is often used interchangeably with open universities in the distance education literature.

Dual-mode university: An institution that uses both distance and on-campus modes of delivery.

Extended traditional university: A traditional university that offers continuing education and extension programs primarily catered to nontraditional learners (Meyer, 2009b).

Extension programs: Programs within a traditional university that were designed to “carry out knowledge to the people” (Van Hise, 1990, p. 22).

External degree: A university degree that “is outside the campus and that can mean anywhere outside” (Houle, 1973, p. 427). External degrees are designed to cater to nontraditional learners.

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The students may obtain an external degree in a variety of ways such as by attending distance education programs and transferring in a higher allocation of credits from another institution compared to traditional universities.

Financial stratification of universities: The comparative measure of financial resources available to universities. Increased stratification refers to unequal distribution of resources.

Fugitive literature: “Unpublished, uncatalogued, and for the most part uncollected documents” (Pittman, 2003, p. 29).

Human capital theory: An economic theory that promotes government investment in education based on an anticipated economic return in the form of innovation, competition, and wealth generation.

Humanist approach to education: A view that education should serve the individual via the love of learning itself and not for explicitly economic or social utilitarian purposes.

Knowledge-based society: Social and economic needs for individuals to constantly obtain and manage knowledge.

Liberal approach to education: A view that education should serve economic and social purposes.

Liberalism: A social and political philosophy that originated during the Enlightenment. It promotes civil liberties, individual rights, democracy, and free enterprise. It is also referred to as classical liberalism.

Neoliberalism: An economic theory that translates classical political liberalism ideals into political and economic policies that favor market-based decisions over government-based decisions, with the intention of removing government decision-making and instead protecting capital and individual rights.

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Nontraditional learners: Individuals who are older than the traditional university student age of 18-22 and typically must balance professional and personal obligations while pursuing their learning.

Nontraditional learning: The type of learning that “replaces, extends, supplements, or builds upon learnings acquired in traditional ways” (Wedemeyer, 1981, p. xix).

Nontraditional university: An umbrella term for various types of accredited universities that cater primarily to nontraditional learners. The term includes those that offer external degrees, those that offer evening and weekend as well as off-site but still face-to-face programs, open universities, distance teaching universities, and virtual universities.

Open admissions policy: Type of university admission policy with minimal entrance requirements. It is intended to expand access to higher education to individuals who might not meet more rigorous entrance requirements such as a minimum grade point average or minimum entrance test scores.

Open university: An institution that is open to people, places, methods, and ideas. It is often a single-mode university with flexible approaches to study that cater to nontraditional learners using distance education techniques and may have an open admission policy.

Regional: The geographic terms delineating states or provinces. It is smaller than national and larger than local.

Single-mode university: An institution that uses one mode of delivery, which is usually the distance mode of delivery.

Teleology: Historical interpretation based on assumptions that history shows trends in society’s progress or decline (Wilson, 1999).

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Virtual university: A single-mode institution that emerged in the 1990s as a new type of distance teaching university that usually lacks a campus where students would go for teaching and learning because all teaching and learning is electronically mediated using the Internet (Meyer, 2009b; Moore, 2003).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Open universities in Canada and the United States have contributed to the mass expansion of higher education using distance methods to meet the needs of nontraditional learners since the 1970s. An analysis of their comparative political, economic, and social origins, institutional antecedents, purposes of higher education, and characteristics of openness may benefit practitioners and policymakers looking to establish an open university or reconceptualize an existing institution as an open university. This study employs the United Kingdom's Open University (UKOU) "core ethos" (Bean, 2014, p. xii) and mission in defining an open university as being open to people, places, methods, and ideas (The Open University, 1969).

This study comparatively analyzes the origins of eight nontraditional higher educational institutions that were open to people, places, methods, and ideas to varying degrees. Athabasca University (AU) and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia (OLI of BC) were established in Canada during the 1970s. The State University of New York Empire State College (SUNY ESC), Thomas Edison State College (TESC), Regents External Degree (REX), and the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) were created in the United States during the 1970s. Western Governors University (WGU) and the United States Open University (USOU) were established during the 1990s as the United States attempted to move closer to universal access to higher education. Their institutional type varied at their origins because some were established as distance teaching universities, whereas others were degree/competency-based or extended traditional institutions.

At their origins, the universities selected for this study utilized adult education approaches, including self-directed learning, flexibility, and recognition of informal learning, to provide nontraditional students with personal growth opportunities and professional skills via

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recognized credentials while simultaneously filling important social needs. Some of the institutions implemented an industrial model to achieve economies of scale.

This analysis uses a conceptual framework of the tensions between the philosophical traditions of liberalism and humanism, which translate into purposes of higher education, amidst the backdrop of what Trow (1973) called the mass expansion of higher education. This study fills a gap in the history of distance higher education by identifying the political, economic, and social circumstances that influenced or aligned with the establishment of the selected eight institutions. It argues that the regional circumstances were more important than the national context for most of the institutions established during the 1970s whereas the reverse was true for those created during the 1990s.

Background of the Problem

Daniel and Macintosh (2003) identified insufficient education capacity as the greatest global moral crisis of the 21st century. They predicted a shift away from campus-based higher education toward open learning systems such as those employed by open universities (Daniel & Macintosh, 2003). If their argument is accurate, policy makers and educationalists would benefit from understanding the history of open and distance education and how it has contributed to the mass expansion of higher education.

Trends within the history of higher education during the modern era demonstrate sustained expansion of access that started during the Industrial Revolution and subsequently exploded worldwide after World War II (Thelin, 2019). The expansion of mass higher education occurred from the 1950s to the 1990s, with the apex between the 1950s and the 1970s (Kerr, 2001; Thelin, 2019). Trow's (1973) framework characterizing the transition of higher education

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from elite, to mass, to universal education serves as one piece of the conceptual framework for this study and is discussed later in this chapter.

Chronology shows that the expansion of mass higher education occurred in traditional and nontraditional institutions simultaneously. Informed by the philosophical traditions of liberalism and humanism, yet regularly constrained by historical contextually-based political and economic demands and social norms, universities across the globe have systematically increased formal education programs in a variety of ways to individuals that were previously excluded from higher education. Since the advent of formal correspondence and extension programs during the mid-19th century, distance higher education has played an important role in expanding academic programs to individuals previously underserved for social, economic, and geographic reasons (Moore, 2003).

Openness, Flexibility, and Distance Education in Post-Industrial Societies

Flexible lifelong learning is important to meet shifting post-industrial economic and cultural demands (Edwards, 2015). Open and distance learning can facilitate lifelong learning (Zawacki-Richter, 2022). Research about the history of the field of open, flexible, and distance education can help identify opportunities to meet post-industrial society needs (Heiser, 2021).

Openness, which will be further articulated in Chapter 2, means different things and manifests in various ways, but all the definitions share an underlying philosophical commitment to opening up learning to more individuals. "One of the central activities of open education is converting formerly inaccessible learning opportunities into public goods via the means of digital technologies" (Kalz, 2022, p. 5), meaning that open educational initiatives share a democratizing purpose of opening up learning so they are widely accessible to the public. The institutions in this study employed various elements of openness and were created as nonprofit public goods.

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The terms open, flexible, and distance education are often used interchangeably even though scholars debate precise definitions (Calder, 2000). All formal educational practices are inherently open or closed in some way; an institution might include elements of openness or flexibility but not utilize distance learning and vice versa (Calder, 2000; Edwards, 2015; Guri-Rozenblitz, 1993; Zawacki-Richter & Jung, 2023). When combined and operationalized into policies and practices, flexible, open, and distance education powerfully manifest underlying values of a democratizing mission to expand access using flexible learning methods for nontraditional learners confronted by barriers of time, place, and social factors (Daniel & Macintosh, 2003; Diehl, 2011; Heiser, 2021; Kalz, 2022; Keegan, 1983; Moore, 2003; Rumble, 1989; Wedemeyer, 1981; Zawacki-Richter, 2022; Zawacki-Richter & Jung, 2023).

An open learning institution helps individuals overcome time, place, financing, and socio-cultural barriers that impede higher education participation (Paul, 1993). Even though open learning might be seen as an ideal type that does not exist in formal learning, an educational system may still be classified as open if it is "more open than a previous alternative" (Paul, 1993, p. 116) regarding the following dimensions: accessibility, flexibility, and learner control over content. Even with elements of practically-based closure policies such as prerequisites or time limits on course completion, open and distance universities incorporated essential elements of openness such as missions to serve nontraditional learners, often with open admissions, as well as flexible assessment including prior learning demonstrated via portfolios, competency testing, and generous transferability policies (Heiser, 2021; Paul, 1993; Rumble, 1989; Zawacki-Richter & Jung, 2023). The institutions in this study exemplified these dimensions of open learning in various ways and offered new alternatives to nontraditional learners.

Classifying Open Universities

Open and distance universities exemplify one unique outgrowth of higher education expansion. Since their global proliferation during the 1970s, they have come to serve millions of students worldwide in the 21st century. While the origins of specific open universities and distance teaching universities are documented in the literature, other nontraditional, alternative, and innovative institutions created during the mass expansion exhibited essential elements of openness but have not yet been described in the literature as open universities.

As of 2023, Contact North provides a searchable database of 74 open universities around the world (<https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/universities>). It contains the founding dates, student enrollments, location, mode of delivery such as print, radio, or online, and institutional contact information. This database showed that, as of 2020, these open universities collectively provided higher education opportunities to over twenty-six million individuals. This is an impressive effort contributing to the humanist goal of education for everyone while also supporting the economic and social purposes of higher education.

The Contact North website also pointed out that although the UKOU's establishment in 1969, which will be explained further in Chapter 2, is often acknowledged as the first open university, the searchable database shows antecedents. The University of South Africa (UNISA) was established in 1873. It provided examinations and subsequently expanded to correspondence courses in 1946. The Centre national d'enseignement à distance in France was established in 1939 as a distance learning institution. The Anadolu Universitesi Yunus Emre in Turkey was founded in 1958 and provides both distance education and on-campus options for students. Other influences include the Extension Movement in the United Kingdom, correspondence courses, and external degree programs (Bell & Tight, 1993; Rumble & Keegan, 1982; Weller, 2020).

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These examples, among others, illustrate how the UKOU was the beneficiary of antecedents in distance education and help to contextualize the numerous factors and influences that contributed to the UKOU as a unique model for open and distance education during the mass expansion of higher education. These examples also illustrate the importance of using historical chronological thinking skills to accurately depict events in the past and show connections across time.

Most relevant to this study, Contact North identified three open universities in Canada, two of which, AU and Thompson Rivers University (the successor of the OLI of BC), are included in this study because they are English-speaking institutions. It is curious that Contact North identified only one open university in the United States, the Open Orthodox University. That institution was perhaps misclassified in Contact North's database because its name refers to the Jewish Open Orthodoxy sect rather than any educational characteristics of open universities. Although that is difficult to verify considering that no evidence was discovered that the institution still exists as of 2023. More significant is the fact that several other American universities exhibit key characteristics of open universities such as open admission policies, flexible methods, and missions that cater to nontraditional students using distance education techniques. In other words, they are open to people, places, methods, and ideas. Of the six American institutions in this study, only the short-lived USOU has been acknowledged as an open university.

Scholarly literature exists for all eight universities considered in this project. Their origins and developments are published in institutional histories, case studies, journal articles, and in some cases dissertations. However, only AU, OLI of BC, and USOU have been acknowledged in the literature as open universities. These three institutions have been compared to other open universities, distance teaching universities, or virtual universities (Meyer, 2009a;

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Mugridge & Kaufman, 1986; Mugridge, 1997; Rumble & Harry, 1982). Distance education scholars have acknowledged the other five universities for their nontraditional approaches to distance higher education (Leibbrandt, 1997; Moore, 2003). Scholars may have overlooked these institutions as open universities because they were established as nontraditional and alternative entities that did not follow the UKOU's model.

Need for Historical Research

This study contributes to the historical research of distance education in Canada and the United States. Scholars have coalesced around the idea that 21st-century policymakers are myopic about the history of distance education (Moore, 2003; Pittman, 2003). Policymakers, who allocate resources to public education and thus shape the vision of the purposes of higher education, tend to base distance education decisions on technology rather than strategy for serving society's needs. Moore (2003) identified this paralysis as stemming from "a failure to understand what distance education represents, in turn due to an almost universal lack of understanding of its history" (p. 45). Policymakers would likely benefit from understanding that distance education represents a democratizing trend for nontraditional learners within the expansion of mass higher education.

Moore (2008) later noted "that very few articles of a historical nature have been published in the past twenty years in any of the main journals" (p. 68). This is most likely due to distance education practitioners' lack of training in historical inquiry (Moore, 2008). Saba and Shearer, two distance education scholars with decades of experience, lamented the 21st century trend of educationalists thinking they invented new instructional strategies rather than realizing numerous innovations already existed for nearly a half century (Heiser, 2021). Saba and Shearer specifically called for research that traces the shift towards distance education's focus on filling

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workforce needs rather than providing a generalized and humanist-focused learning (Heiser, 2021). Knowing the history can inform evidence-based practices (Xiao, 2022; Zawacki-Richter, 2022). Furthermore, American distance education theorist and practitioner Charles Wedemeyer argued in the first Speaking Personally interview for the *American Journal of Distance Education* that the field of distance education benefits from research because "without it, we cannot pick up our field, raise its level, and improve its practicality" (Moore, 1986, p. 4), meaning there is an ongoing need to revisit the lessons of the past to inform the present and contemplate actions for the future of the field.

Historians of higher education have generally ignored the history of distance education (Pittman, 2003). American and Canadian traditional universities and other types of universities that eventually evolved into open universities did not emerge in entirely different contexts. On the contrary, universities shared major developments regarding the purposes of higher education, expansion of mass higher education, and the contexts within which they were founded. Although historians of higher education have acknowledged the contributions of traditional universities' extension programs, which represent one type of distance education, historians of higher education overwhelmingly focus on residential four-year institutions (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008; Thelin, 2019). They have overlooked the intersections of the history of open and distance education with the history of higher education more generally.

Few scholars of distance education have employed historical methodology (Moore, 2008). Only a few educationalists and historians of distance education have contextualized distance education within the broader context of the history of higher education as well as the national and regional political, social, and economic contexts of distance education in Canada and the United States.

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This study contextualizes the origins of eight open universities within their national and regional political, economic, and social histories. It also identifies and compares their institutional antecedents, purposes of learning, and educational characteristics. It shows historical changes over time among the institutions founded in the 1970s and those created during the 1990s. The comparative analysis is informed by the dialectic between the humanist perspective, learning for the sake of learning, and the liberal perspective, learning for social and economic purposes of education. The tensions from this dialectic became more pronounced by the 1990s with the solidification of neoliberalism as the overarching economic policy context that demanded market-driven decisions and consequences for higher education (Giroux, 2002; Hursh, 2017; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Raimondi, 2012).

Given the identified gaps, combined with that fact that by the dawn of the 21st century the eight institutions selected for this study all attained status as online universities that exhibited key characteristics of openness, expanding the scholarship about these unique Canadian and American contributions to higher distance education is timely and important. This project employs historical methodology and bridges the gaps between the history of distance education, the history of higher education, and the contexts.

Positionality

My experiences teaching history to adults online for nearly 20 years steered my interest in this topic. I have been awed by the ways nontraditional learners overcome time, place, financial, and socioeconomic barriers. The students pursued higher education for many reasons including employment, setting an example for the younger generations, and a simple love of lifelong learning. These observations informed the research questions for this study.

Research Questions

There is one main guiding question with three sub-questions for this proposed study.

- How did the national and regional, i.e., state and provincial, economic, political, and social circumstances influence and align with the origins of the open online nonprofit English-speaking universities in Canada and the United States?
 - What were the institutional antecedents to these universities?
 - How did each university articulate their purposes of education for their prospective students? Were their purposes geared toward humanist individual fulfillment for the love of learning, liberal social and economic needs, or both?
 - How did the context of the institutional origins shape the articulated purposes of education? How did the contexts and the articulated purposes of education compare to each other?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

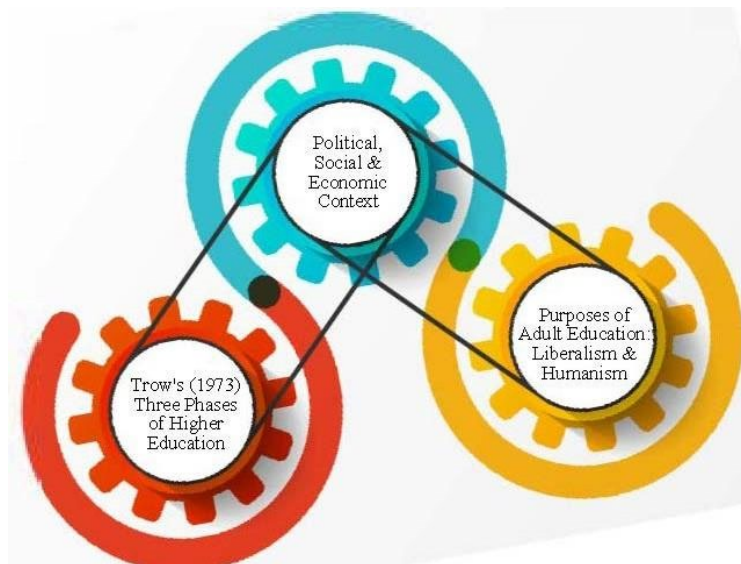
This study employs a constructivist theoretical framework. Constructivism is a theoretical approach whereby “people actively and agentially seek out, select and construct their own views, worlds and learning, and these processes are rooted in socio-cultural contexts and interactions” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 23). The constructivist approach aligns with the interpretive paradigm and historical methodology utilized for this study. It includes extensive analysis of institutional primary sources to determine each university’s articulated purposes of higher education (see Appendix A) and secondary sources consisting of institutional histories and additional sources for historical context (see Appendix B). The interpretive paradigm and historical methodology are elaborated in Chapter 3.

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This study is guided by a three-pronged conceptual framework. The first concept is Trow's (1973) three phases of higher education. The second concept is the dialectic between the liberal and humanist purposes of education. The third concept is the historical backdrop of the political, social, and economic context that shaped the origins of the institutions in this study. As depicted in Figure 1, the political, social, and economic context influenced whether higher education institutions emphasized workforce needs, learning for the love of learning, or both as the mass expansion of higher education occurred in response to the macro level conditions in society.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Trow's Three Phases of Higher Education

Martin Trow was a prominent sociologist who studied and influenced higher education systems in the United States and Europe. Trow (1973) identified characteristics of three phases

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of higher education, which changed from elite to mass to universal higher education. The unique qualitative and quantitative differences characterized each phase are summarized in Table 1.

Although focused on the system of higher education in the United States, the phases also apply to other North Atlantic industrialized countries (Scott, 2019).

Table 1

Trow's (1973) Three Phases of Higher Education

Characteristic	Elite Phase	Mass Phase	Universal Phase
Population of age group	Less than 15%	Approximately 15%	Approximately 50%
Societal perception	Privilege	Right	Obligation
Purpose	Ruling class character formation	Technical and professional skills	Adapt to technological and societal changes
Selection criteria	Academic merit	Programs for social equality of opportunity	Open access
Enrollment timing	After high school	After some work or travel	Sporadic
Curriculum	Highly structured, liberal arts	Flexible and choices	Collapsed sequencing
Pedagogical relationship	Mentoring	Large lecture	Independence, technology mediated, correspondence courses
Institution type	Homogenous	Comprehensive and diverse	Blurred boundaries between the institution and society; little sense of community

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Institution governance	Part-time administrators, small administrative structures	Full-time administrators with large bureaucracy	Financial managers, division of labor for economies of scale, public media
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The qualitatively different characteristics of higher education in each phase mirrored societal values that changed over time.

Trow's (1973) three phases are general and not a simple linear progression. Elements of elite education persist into the mass and universal phases (Scott, 2019). Furthermore, societal values changed over time with varying degrees of support, or lack thereof, for elite, mass, and universal higher education at specific points given historical contextual factors. Some of these influences are discussed further in Chapter 2. The phases are important for this study because the eight selected institutions illustrate the expansion of mass education while pursuing the goals of universal education.

Liberalism and Humanism

Another piece of the conceptual framework is the dialectic between the humanist and liberal purposes of higher education. The philosophical traditions of liberalism and humanism denote tension regarding the purposes of higher education. The tension stems from competing social, economic, and individual purposes for higher education. Learning for social and economic benefits falls into the liberal purposes of higher education whereas learning for the sake of learning falls into the humanist purposes of higher education.

Liberalism has dominated education policy since the mid-20th century (Holden & Biddle, 2017). Drawing on classical liberalism, but mutating it toward market-driven decisions, human capital theory and then neoliberalism were particularly influential in framing the United States' national policy context of the mass expansion of higher education. Human capital theory, which

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first appeared in education literature in 1960 due to Theodore Schultz, has been a guiding force for modern educational policy (Gillies, 2017). The human capital model of education promotes government investment in education based on an anticipated economic return in the form of innovation, competition, and wealth generation (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1960; 1961). Individuals are supposed to benefit from higher wages while society benefits from their higher economic output (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1960; 1961). This model does not address social value or individual equity (Gillies, 2017). Although, human capital theory and civil rights movements were compatible (Marginson, 2019).

On the other hand, humanism is concerned with the development of the individual for the sake of creativity, critical thinking, self-development, and independence (Gage & Berliner, 1991). Humanistic education fosters personal growth and self-directed lifelong learning (Huitt, 2009). The open universities selected for this study originated in the context of educational policy dominated by the human capital model of education, yet some simultaneously sought to help their students pursue humanistic outcomes. This study examined institutional missions and degree programs to categorize and compare their purposes of higher education. In doing so, it addressed Saba and Shearer's (Heiser, 2021) call for research that traces distance education's shift from humanist-focused learning to focusing on workforce needs.

Adult Higher Education in Post-Industrial Knowledge Societies

Open universities expanded access to nontraditional students, defined as those individuals who do not attend traditional residential programs after completing their K-12 education. Open universities intentionally designed flexible programs catering to busy nontraditional students with competing employment and family obligations.

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The broader context of a knowledge society influenced the establishment of open universities. A knowledge society is defined by social and economic needs for individuals to constantly obtain and manage knowledge (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Vaira, 2004). These needs were important given the ways that technology transformed life and work, particularly since the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent explosion of global communications technology. Within the backdrop of the dominance of corporate capitalism, people managed knowledge in increasingly efficient and profitable ways. Higher education has been especially influenced by economic rationalism since the spread of neoliberalism and human capital theory. Economic rationalism permeated government policies across North America and western Europe with the establishment of global institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund after World War II (Olssen & Peters, 2005).

The institutions were both confined by, and saw opportunities within, the political and economic context of promoting entrepreneurial and pro-capitalist policies. Vaira (2004) notes that “the process of entrepreneurialization is, in turn, enforced by knowledge society discourse, which supplies higher education institutions with a new legitimating criterion for their roles, tasks and institutional identity” (p. 491), meaning that universities must respond to the demands of a knowledge society by preparing students for individual economic success. Universities in the United States and Canada that today are open and online, emanated in a context of post-industrial and knowledge society economic demands while embracing a philosophical commitment to opening up access to adult learners who benefitted from expanded access to distance higher education opportunities. Some of these universities did so in a way that utilized an industrial model of distance education for economies of scale (Peters, 1967; Daniel, 1996).

Political, Social, and Economic Historical Context

The historical context shaped the developments in higher education that led to the mass expansion of higher education and the establishment of open and distance teaching universities. Steered by Keynesian economic policies and human capital theory, Canada and the United States utilized their national post-WWII wealth to simultaneously expand social welfare programs and educational access to socially marginalized groups (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008; Kerr, 2001; Marginson, 2016; Thelin, 2019). These initiatives enhanced the public common good and produced two of the world's highest ranked systems of higher education. By 1989, a mid-point of the creation of the institutions in this study, between two-thirds and three-quarters of the world's best universities were in the United States because of the national wealth, large population, and government support (Rosovsky, 1989). Although comparable statistics for Canada were not identified for this study, both Canada and the United States maintained rankings in the top five countries for higher educational systems into the second decade of the 21st century (Millot, 2015).

Most of the nontraditional universities selected for this study that were created in the 1970s and 1990s gained crucial political support to secure funding for their establishment. The six open universities created during the 1970s were established in the Keynesian public good context and contributed to the vibrancy and quality of the mass expansion of higher education in Canada and the United States. By the 1990s when the other two American virtual open universities were created, neoliberalism displaced Keynesian and human capital theory influences. Neoliberalism reduced funding for social welfare programs and higher education as well as redefined the public common good in favor of the market (Barnes & Bowles, 2014; DuBois & Dumenil, 2016; Fergus, 2014; Giroux, 2002; Hoffman, 2001; Hursh, 2017;

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Marginson, 2019; Morris & Tang, 2022; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Raimondi, 2012; Walsh, 1982; Wei et al, 2004). As depicted in Figure 1, the historical social, political, and economic context is central because it influenced the other concepts.

Significance

This study contributes to the body of knowledge about the origins of open online nonprofit universities in several ways. The United States and Canada are globally recognized for higher education excellence. Their experiences with nontraditional and open universities are part of that story, but this research project is the first to compare these institutions. In doing so, it provides a resource to reduce the consistent myopia noted by 21st-century distance education scholars regarding the professional history of the field (Heiser, 2021; Moore, 2003, 2008; Pittman, 2003). This study increases the visibility of that history in the United States and Canada. This research also bridges a gap in the existing scholarship of the broader history of higher education by contextualizing the origins of the eight open universities within their national, regional, and higher educational landscapes.

The post-industrial economic shift in countries such as Canada and the United States required the educational system to adapt to new macro level conditions of a knowledge society. Saba and Shearer noted that compared to the modern educational system that standardized education, distance education was well-positioned for this shift because it had long employed individualized instructional techniques (Heiser, 2021). However, 21st century distance educators have tended to utilize new technologies within the constraints of the older standardized model of education. This is problematic because it may result in technology, not pedagogy, steering the learning methods. Distance educators can now utilize adaptive learning technologies that

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facilitate individualized learning goals and the assessment of learning in ways that are not bound to the seat-time for credit standard (Heiser, 2021).

Furthermore, the lines between distinctly traditional and distance teaching universities are blurring due to digital technologies resulting in more higher education institutions embracing distance learning techniques and elements of openness (Calder, 2000). Outside of higher education, military, political, religious, educational, and industrial organizations in more than 100 countries utilize some form of distance and open education (Calder, 2000). Understanding the history can help policymakers and practitioners identify new opportunities to serve the needs of post-industrial learners. They can look to the past for potential practices that apply to another context or rule out possibilities that would not likely work in a new context (Xiao, 2022). Similarly, some practices transcend contexts because of the nature of human learning (Xiao, 2022).

The project may also contribute to UNESCO's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2015) by identifying the converging and diverging political, economic, and social characteristics that shaped the origins of the institutions in this study. This research emphasizes the values of openness that are increasingly important in the 21st century. Values are important because they steer institutional decisions, policies, and practices (Paul, 1993). By examining their own institutional values, practitioners may identify new opportunities to incorporate more openness (Paul, 1993). Such an endeavor would be complemented with a thorough understanding of the historical influences on and examples of openness, which are presented throughout this project. Institutions may capitalize on their openness to secure government support (Rumble, 1989). Professional educational organizations such as the International Council of Distance Education, the Commonwealth of Learning, Contact North, and Open Learning

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Consortium could draw on this study as they consult with developing countries and rural regions within industrialized countries to expand open, flexible, and distance learning initiatives for the public common good.

Higher education systems need to be more flexible, adapt and use current and new technologies, embrace student-centeredness, and promote personalized life-long learning and credentialing to prepare for technological and social changes brought by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Whalley et al., 2021). Documenting the comparative origins of Canadian and American open universities may help other regions of the world as they expand mass higher education using distance education, which is even more pressing given the context of the need to retool workforce segments due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Industrializing countries may learn from the institutions in this study that overcame seat-time credit requirements by offering more flexible methods to assess learning. The converging and diverging experiences of the open universities in Canada and the United States lend insights into how these nations valued the creation and dissemination of higher education knowledge as articulated in their missions and degree programs, given their respective historical contexts. It could inform future implications regarding education, political decision-making, and economic workforce considerations in these two countries.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

The inaccessibility of digital and physical primary source documents constrained this study. Inevitably, some sources were not saved for posterity or were lost after other scholars utilized them. I was unable to locate sources for the Maryland University of the Air and only located a few sources for the SUNY of the Air program. Institutional documents from the origins

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of the USOU remain at-large. The primary sources from the origins of the OLI of BC were misplaced during a physical move during the summer of 2020. However, scholars published literature using those primary sources before the sources were lost. Limitations are elaborated further in the Phase 2 section of Chapter 3.

Delimitations

A narrow research focus facilitates an actionable plan for completion. The inclusion criteria are identified in Phase 1 of Chapter 3; several delimitations narrowed this research. Although for-profit universities with open admission policies contributed to the mass expansion of distance higher education for those who might afford private tuition, I excluded them. The for-profit nature of their capital gains motivation creates tension with the democratic spirit of expanding access to higher education. This study only includes English-speaking universities in Canada and the United States. Thus, the Université TÉLUQ in Canada is excluded. Although sources likely exist in French that might be translated, the anticipated additional time to secure and translate those sources do not warrant their consideration for this narrowly focused dissertation. Only baccalaureate degree-granting institutions are included. Therefore, community colleges are excluded even though they expanded adult higher education access via open-admission policies. This study does not consider the institutional journey from whatever mode of delivery each university started with, e.g., correspondence courses, on campus, or external degree, to online learning. Such a project would require more attention to organizational change and leadership and less attention to the political, economic, and social contextual factors that influenced their origins, which serve as the focus for this dissertation.

Future Chapters

Chapter 2 is a comprehensive thematic analysis of the existing literature relevant to this study. Topics include the history of higher education generally, and specifically the history of distance education and open universities, openness in education, adult education, and the social and economic purposes of higher education that were philosophically influenced by humanism and liberalism as well as neoliberalism and human capital theory.

Chapter 3 details the use of historical methodology. It outlines the philosophical roots that laid the groundwork for history as a modern discipline, the research questions, and four research phases that culminated in this narrative interpretation. It also identifies ethical considerations.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the six open universities created during the 1970s in Canada the United States respectively. Chapter 6 does the same for the two virtual open universities established in the United States during the 1990s. Each of these chapters follows a similar design that moves from the national context to the regional context to the institutional origins. These chapters also include comparisons towards the end. Chapter 7 comparatively analyzes the institutions and their contexts, purposes of learning, elements of openness, and changes over time from the 1970s to the 1990s. It also offers conclusions, highlights the significance of the study, and outlines research opportunities.

Conclusion

At the dawn of the 21st century, the eight open universities in this study were online non-profit English-speaking institutions that infused openness, flexibility, and distance learning in various ways to expand access to nontraditional learners. Six originated during the 1970s in the context of Keynesian investments in the public good and the other two were created during the

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1990s' context of neoliberalism. They all contributed to the mass expansion of higher education. Some sought to balance humanistic and liberal purposes of higher education, while others focused exclusively on workforce needs. Whatever their purpose, they all offered programs to help individuals succeed in a post-industrial knowledge society. The remainder of this study investigates and comparatively analyzes the origins and articulated purposes of higher education of the selected eight open universities in the United States and Canada using historical methodology to fill gaps in the literature. It provides information for practitioners and policymakers that seek to expand adult higher education using open and distance practices while being cognizant of their national and regional contexts.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Five prominent themes in the literature inform this research study about the national and regional political, social, and economic circumstances that shaped the origins of open nonprofit English-speaking universities established in the United States and Canada during the 1970s and 1990s. The themes include the philosophical and historical influences on higher education, the history of distance education, openness in education, the social and economic purposes of adult education in a knowledge society, and neoliberalism and human capital theory. These themes are informed by scholarship stemming from disciplines such as history, education, sociology, economics, and philosophy.

Theme 1: Philosophical & Historical Influences on Higher Education

Themes within the history of higher education show continuity and change regarding the purposes of higher education with divergent philosophical roots in the European medieval universities, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and neoliberalism as exemplified by human capital theory in the 20th century (Kerr, 2001). One prominent theme is the balancing of liberal education traditions amidst changing economic contexts that demanded professional training. The writings of Clark Kerr (2001) are particularly influential on this research endeavor.

Kerr was a prominent scholar of higher education in the mid- and late-20th century and President of the University of California system at the time of its great expansion during the 1960s. Kerr (2001) summarized multiple strands of history that came together to create the modern university, which he called the “multiversity” (p. 5). Key philosophical and historical influences spanned the ancient (before 500 CE), medieval (500-1500 CE), and modern eras (after 1500 CE). Over time, universities moved from elite to mass education.

Premodern Influences

Universities emerged in Europe during the medieval period. They replicated existing social hierarchies by catering to the elite and included features such as lectures, examinations, master teachers, students, and administrative structures that persisted into the modern university (Kerr, 2001). Some mainland European universities specialized in specific areas of academic expertise whereas England developed a residential university model that did not specialize in one area of academic expertise. Oxford University and Cambridge University exemplify the residential model for undergraduate education. The British transported this model to North America during the colonial era (Harris, 1976; Thelin, 2019). Taken together, European universities were known for combining philosophical disputes with studies of the classics, theology, and preparing individuals for elite occupations such as the clergy, law, and medicine (Jergus, 2017; Kerr, 2001). Even though premodern universities included some professional training, they focused on preparing elite future leaders with general knowledge geared towards character development (Kerr, 2001). Universities have served a consistent range of purposes such as training public servants, perpetuating religion, promoting local and national interests, and creating and disseminating knowledge from the 13th to the 21st century (Ashwin, 2022; Kivinen & Poikus, 2006). However, universities expanded who they served over the centuries.

One especially important philosophical voice comes from John Amos Comenius, who bridged premodern and modern theoretical debates as he lived during the cusp of the transition from the medieval era to the Enlightenment period (Jergus, 2017). Comenius was an early proponent of mass education, which was unusual when education was limited to training clergy and the elite. Comenius believed that everyone, regardless of social background, age, gender, or

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ability, should have access to education for all things general and education should continue throughout the lifetime.

The issue of education for the economy, which fits into the liberal purposes component of the conceptual framework of this study, that dominated 20th-century policy was not on Comenius' radar given his historical context of the late-16th and early-17th centuries. However, his views on the purpose of education are still important. Comenius advocated general education because "learning leads to humanity and enables to emend the confusion of the world" (Jergus, 2017, p. 4). Making sense of the world's problems and fixing those problems could only happen with reason, science, action-based politics, and ethics. Comenius' ideas about the purposes of education and equality of access to education informed 19th- and 20th-century initiatives to expand mass higher education, lifelong learning, and extension programs (Jergus, 2017).

By the time of the Enlightenment in the 1700s when new ideas about liberty, individual rights, and freedom from tyrannical monarchies sparked revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic, European universities were entrenched in their own oligarchies that resisted the social and political forces of the Reformation, Renaissance, and new ways of knowing resulting from the Scientific Revolution (Kerr, 2001). While initial bastions of conservative culture, the European universities responded to changing societal contexts during the 19th century as the Industrial Revolution transformed Europe. In this context, a new kind of higher education institution emerged in Berlin in 1809 under the guidance of Wilhelm von Humboldt.

Wilhelm von Humboldt was a philosopher, linguist, and government official who advocated for public education. The new German university model harnessed the social and political forces of nationalism with science and technology-driven industrialization and bureaucratic efficiency to emphasize the expansion of public education, graduate education,

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research, and the broad exchange of knowledge (Kerr, 2001; Ruano-Borbalan, 2022). The German model also created the academic department as an institutional unit. This system, like the English residential model, also made its way to North America (Kerr, 2001; Ruano-Borbalan, 2022).

Only a few decades after von Humboldt steered the establishment of the university in Berlin, Cardinal John Henry Newman served as the first rector and shaped the origins of the Catholic University of Ireland, which was established in 1851 (Kerr, 2001; Thelin, 2019). Unlike the German model, Newman harkened back to previous eras when the purpose of the university was not to harness science, technology, and research for economic and political demands, but rather to promote a humanist pursuit of knowledge for the sake of learning. According to Kerr (2001), Newman's vision was more akin to the elite model of higher education at Oxford and Cambridge, with curriculum focusing on moral philosophy and the liberal arts to shape the moral character of the future leaders.

Known for his eloquent articulation and idealistic commitment to pursuing humanist learning (Kerr, 2001; Thelin, 2019), scholars disagree about whether Newman's ideas were important for the development of the modern university in North America. Thelin (2019) argued that "there is scant evidence that Newman's ideas were actually implemented at his own university, let alone any in the United States" (p. 88). In contrast, Kerr (2001) suggested that Newman was historically significant for higher education in the United States because Newman intentionally resisted the growing support for the economic purposes of higher education in favor of the social purposes of higher education. Liberal arts proponents, especially at some Ivy League institutions in the United States, turned to Newman's writings to substantiate the view that the purpose of higher education was to focus on individual students using a generalist

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curriculum (Kerr, 2001). Proponents of liberal arts rejected catering to society's demands for increasingly specialized technical expertise and professional training (Kerr, 2001).

The influences from the English residential model, the German research university, and Newman's insistence on humanist learning intertwined to create the modern university in the United States (Kerr, 2001). While small denominational colleges using the English residential were already established during the early British colonial era in the mid-17th century (Thelin, 2019) and some public land-grant universities preceded the Civil War (Kerr, 2001; Thelin, 2019), the German model was too enticing to ignore during the late-19th century. Johns Hopkins University, established in 1876, was the first American institution to employ the German model (Kerr, 2001). It emphasized the academic department, graduate research, scholarly publications, and rigorous academic quality for the medical profession. At nearly the same time, the unique and democratic American land-grant movement expanded thanks to three federal legislation pieces, which are discussed in the next section. The British residential model, the German research model, and the land-grant legislation articulated competing visions for the purpose of higher education. The competing visions came together to create the modern publicly funded university that focused on undergraduate liberal arts general education and graduate research specialization designed to fulfill both the social and economic purposes of education (Kerr, 2001).

From Industrial Revolution to Knowledge Society: The Creation of the Modern University in the United States

Three key turning points exemplified the expansion of access to higher education in the United States: the three pieces of legislation in the late-1800s that established federal funding for public universities, i.e., the two Morrill Acts and the Hatch Act in the late 1800s, the G.I. Bill,

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and the 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education. These turning points were policy expressions of support for the expansion of affordable mass higher education (Kerr, 2001; Thelin, 2019). From the late-19th century to the mid-20th century, the modern American university proliferated and accomplished the goal of expanding affordable access to higher education. Although in doing so, the higher education system in the United States became more stratified (Davies & Zarifa, 2012). To contextualize federal funding for public universities, it is important to first identify the backdrop of the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution

The philosophical influences on higher education during the Industrial Revolution centered around two key themes that are prominent throughout this study. The first is how society should use education for the common good to deal with the social inequalities resulting from industrialization and unbridled capitalism. The second is the expansion of higher education beyond the elite population because of the changing economic conditions brought about by industrialization. T.H. Green, who was part of the British Idealism movement, contributed important philosophical arguments about education during the Industrial Revolution (Mace, 2017).

The British Idealism movement drew on classical liberal ideas from the Enlightenment (Mace, 2017). Green transformed classical liberalism into a New Liberalism as he argued for a common good based on a positive conception of freedom rather than the absence of restrictions. Green saw education as a noncompetitive public good that bettered society because education creates the conditions for individuals to contribute to the common good (Mace, 2017). Green believed that the common good could be determined by a moral validity test on two grounds.

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First, any action could be assessed on whether it contributed to the betterment of society. Second, any individual should not directly benefit from someone else's loss (Mace, 2017).

Green argued that education was crucial for creating the conditions necessary for individual good character and self-actualization, which could only manifest within a community because humans are inherently social creatures and education is a social act (Mace, 2017).

Diverging from the classical liberal position that society consisted of self-interested individuals, Green believed that society was comprised of “a community of mutually indebted citizens: an integrated whole sharing a common good” (Mace, 2017, p. 5) and that collective action was the only way to remove social barriers that impeded self-actualization. In doing so, the state could remove social barriers that prevented self-development and contribute to the common good.

Social barriers inhibited self-actualization for the working class during the Industrial Revolution because wealth gaps widened (Cohen, 2004; Edwards et al., 2021; Zinn, 2003). For example, workers in the United States regularly toiled in unsafe conditions and harsh living circumstances. At the same time, compulsory primary education gained interest as Progressive Era reformers in the United States sought to eliminate child labor (Edwards et. al., 2021). The Progressive agenda during the early 1900s also sought to establish workplace safety regulations, labor union rights, anti-trust policies, and increased accountability for government officials (Edwards et. al., 2021; Zinn, 2003). The goal was to curb the worst inequalities exacerbated by industrialization. In response to the socio-economic context, workers organized cooperatives, labor unions, and ethnic mutual aid societies that often promoted self-help, advocacy, education, and collective action designed to empower the proletariat in their ongoing struggle for better working and living conditions. Working class and middle class Progressive Era reformers

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typically supported the expansion of services for the common good (Cohen, 2004; Edwards et al., 2021; Zinn, 2003). Green expressed similar arguments in Britain.

Green not only advocated a crucial role for education in society, but also argued the state should promote compulsory primary and optional equality of opportunity secondary education regardless of an individual's background to achieve social levelling (Mace, 2017). Green, however, also adhered to the classical liberal principle that any action designed for the common good should not inhibit someone else's opportunities (Mace, 2017). His ideas about education as a non-competitive public good necessary for the common good can be seen in the 20th-century calls for education as a universal human right that stands in stark contrast to neoliberal choice policies that became popular since the 1970s. Green's ideas are also reflected in the expansion of state-funded higher education guided by human capital theory (Mace, 2017), which will be addressed later in this chapter.

The Industrial Revolution transformed the ways people lived and worked in the second half of the 19th century. Technological advancements replaced human labor with machines, resulting in an industrial economy. Workers had to be trained for this new economic landscape. Higher education, prompted by federal guidance, responded with new curriculums which emphasized science, business, managerialism, professional credentials, and an expansion of educational opportunities to the working-class (Ruano-Borbalan, 2022; Thelin, 2019). The expansion of publicly funded land-grant universities in the late-19th century addressed these economic needs (Thelin, 2019).

Morrill Acts and the Hatch Act

Until the late-19th century, the higher education system in the United States consisted mostly of denominational and liberal arts colleges and universities modeled after the English or

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Scottish institutions designed to serve elites and train clergy (Thelin, 2019). The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, also known as the first Morrill Act, shaped the modern higher education system in the United States. The first Morrill Act created new publicly-funded universities designed for society's changing economic needs and established government support for higher education that shaped the nation's transition from elite to mass higher education. The goal was to expand affordable access while simultaneously promoting new practically-based curriculum initiatives to support the changing industrial economy (Thelin, 2019).

The first Morrill Act was a democratizing force in higher education because it expanded access via new land-grant universities, even though such institutions existed prior to this piece of legislation (Thelin, 2019). For example, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 established township lands for schools and Congress appropriated lands for higher education in seventeen states between 1796 and 1861. State colleges already existed, which is why so many states have two major universities, e.g., one established prior to the first Morrill Act and the other established because of it. While not revolutionary in the use of the land-grant model, the Act sparked a period of higher education innovation and expansion (Thelin, 2019).

This landmark legislation, which was the product of intense lobbying and political opportunity, established a federal role for public higher education combined with distinct state responsibilities (Thelin, 2019; Williams, 1991). The first Morrill Act provided federal incentives for states to sell their lands and use the proceeds to fund a new land-grant university or designate an existing institution as such. The Morrill Act of 1862 identified that the goal:

shall be, without excluding scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach students such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order

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to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits of and professions in life. (The Morrill Act of 1862 as cited in Rohfeld, 1990, p. 13-14)

Thus, the curriculum included utilitarian endeavors such as agriculture, mining, mechanics, and military instruction while also being broad enough to support the liberal arts. The working class was the intended target, which shows an early concerted effort to expand mass higher education. While creating a relationship between the federal and state governments as it pertained to higher education, it did not cause federal interference or oversight beyond the initial compliance. The states maintained oversight obligations per the 10th Amendment of the Constitution (Thelin, 2019).

The first Morrill Act was the product of political opportunity and intense lobbying more than any deep and shared ideological commitment to expanding higher education for economic or social purposes (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008; Thelin, 2019). Legislator Justin Morrill had previously proposed funding for agricultural colleges in 1857, but President James Buchanan vetoed it in 1859 when he succumbed to southern political pressure resisting federal incursion into states' rights just a few years before the Civil War began in 1861 (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008). Thus, the Civil War presented an opportunity to pass the Morrill Act because the southern states seceded in 1861 (Thelin, 2019). The historical context of the origins of the Morrill Act illustrates the political nature of the development of the higher education system in the United States.

Furthermore, federal support for additional land-grant universities was the product of intense lobbying by a small group of university leaders who argued for federal funding during the late-19th century (Williams, 1991). This interpretation challenges the notion that the Morrill

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Act was the product of numerous legislators reacting to broader social and economic factors. Rather, the leader of Pennsylvania State College, George Atherton, successfully formed a small lobbying group to convince the federal government to invest in the expansion of higher education (Williams, 1991). Persuaded by the lobbying efforts, Congress passed the Hatch Act of 1887 and the Morrill Act of 1890. The former created the first continuous federal funding for land-grant agricultural experiment stations while the latter created funding for broad curriculum initiatives, including the liberal arts, that steered the state land-grant institutions towards becoming comprehensive universities. When taken together, the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, the Hatch Act of 1887, and the Morrill Act of 1890 established federal funding for the affordable expansion of higher education that provided practical and traditional liberal arts education (Thelin, 2019; Williams, 1991).

The expansion of access to higher education that began during the Industrial Revolution continued well into the 20th century as higher education institutions offered formal learning opportunities to previously marginalized groups of people such as women, minorities, and working adults. The fulcrum of this expansion occurred between the 1950s and 1970s, marked by an explosion of new institutions, with what has become known as mass higher education (Kerr, 2001).

The American Dream of Mass Higher Education

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly referred to as the G.I. Bill, stimulated the expansion of mass higher education in the United States. This piece of legislation addressed pressing post-World War II national concerns about transitioning to a peacetime economy and providing social order for returning veterans thereby hopefully avoiding a disastrous repeat of the Bonus March in Washington DC when WWI veterans camped out at the

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capitol in embarrassing tent cities demanding benefits during the Great Depression (Edwards et al., 2021; Thelin, 2019). The G.I. Bill provided veterans with medical benefits, unemployment benefits while factories retooled, and educational benefits based on years of service (Thelin, 2019). Like so many pieces of legislation about higher education, this bill was the product of political compromise and narrowly passed by one vote because some lawmakers objected to the educational provision (Thelin, 2019).

Universities responded favorably and eagerly recruited veterans. Some, like Harvard University, emphasized a flexible admission standard such as with a recruiting brochure titled *What About Harvard?* that stipulated “intellectual brilliance is [not] required for admission – or for success after admission. Character, experience, promise, all-around performance are vital” (as cited in Thelin, 2019, p. 264). These flexible admission standards showed that even an elite institution was concerned with adult learners’ unique attributes and learning needs.

The G.I. Bill was not without limitations. Racialized ideologies and the legal doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ prevailed and countless African American veterans were unable to exercise their G.I. Bill educational benefits due to discriminatory university admission policies that excluded African Americans (Highland, J., & McDougall, 2015; Thelin, 2019). Despite the popularity of the G.I. Bill, it did not become a model for the expansion of mass higher education beyond veterans (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008; Thelin, 2019). The government missed another opportunity to equitably expand mass higher education with the 1947 Truman Commission Report.

The 1947 Truman Commission Report advocated the expansion of mass higher education; it proposed immediately abolishing all barriers, both formal and informal, to higher education opportunity and doubling enrollments nationally within a decade (Brubacher & Rudy,

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2008). Even though the Truman Commission Report advocated affordable tuition with the intention of expanding access, the federal government did not formally adopt any corresponding policy because state governments maintained responsibility for affordable higher education (Thelin, 2019). This initiative was still historically significant despite the failure because it was the first federal attempt at national education policy, which per the 10th Amendment of the Constitution is the states' responsibility.

Even so, the federal government's role in the expansion of mass higher education became a national priority (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008; Thelin, 2019). Brubacher and Rudy (2008) argued that "the federal government had carved out for itself, by the middle of the twentieth century, a domain in the higher learning far exceeding the wildest dreams of those who had advocated a national university in the earliest days of the American Republic" (p. 233). The federal government did so by increasing research funding to universities, outsourcing federal employee training to universities, and loaning funds for the construction of buildings required for the mass expansion of higher education (Brubacher & Rudy, 2008). Although Brubacher and Rudy (2008) and Thelin (2019) did not address the impact of the G.I. Bill and the increased federal influence specifically on distance education, the expanded access of higher education served more nontraditional learners who likely benefitted from traditional universities' extension programs. Another historically significant event for mass higher education occurred during the 1960s.

The dream of the mass expansion of higher education took another step closer to materializing with Clark Kerr's California Master Plan of 1960. Kerr (2001) called the modern comprehensive university in the United States, the historical inheritor of the events and philosophical influences described above, a "multiversity" because it served so many different

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constituents. He defined the modern university in the United States as “a whole series of communities and activities held together by a common name, a common governing board, and related purposes” (Kerr, 2001, p. 1). The related purposes were not always coherently organized. The multi-university concept led to a popular misperception that equated university with higher education, despite the numerous types of institutions that comprise the higher education system (Ashwin, 2022; Barnett, 2004). The dream of affordable mass higher education serving multiple purposes came to fruition in California during the 1960s.

The California Master Plan of 1960, also called the California Idea, boldly went where no higher education system had gone before. The California Master Plan of 1960 was not the first to propose expanding access to all individuals who sought higher education in a state. For example, in 1903 Charles Van Hise, President of the University of Wisconsin in Madison and the first president of the National University Extension Association conference in 1915, advocated offering higher education to every individual state-wide (Diehl, 2013). Even so, the California Master Plan “guaranteed that there would be a place in college for every high school graduate or person otherwise qualified to attend” (Kerr, 2001, p. 202). It did this via a three-tiered system that emphasized quality and distinct missions for each tier in the system. The community colleges were open access and graduates were guaranteed admission into the next tier that offered bachelor’s degrees. The comprehensive public university campuses provided undergraduate four-year degrees. Certain institutions in the third tier were designated for graduate education and research. The California Idea was supported with public funding, thus providing affordable mass education in a newly coherent system (Kerr, 2001).

The California Master Plan embodied both the social and economic purposes of higher education during the time of the largest expansion of higher education. The Plan set up the

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California higher education system “as a kind of public civil society, universal but separate from government...This was a different kind of ‘public’ to that of state government: democratic in purpose, access, and transparency and in the sheer range of its social engagements” (Marginson, 2016, p. 19). By offering open admission via the community colleges, the democratizing social purposes of higher education embodied in the California Idea explicitly aligned with the broad civil rights movement that fought to eliminate inequalities based on race, gender, and class (Kerr, 2001).

The Plan also contributed to the economic purposes by helping more students accomplish their professional goals, filling and stimulating economic labor needs, while simultaneously contributing new knowledge from top researchers (Kerr, 2001). Furthermore, the system was designed to expand in a self-regulating manner “to meet social demand, affordable in both private and public terms, while providing for the vocational needs of the state by the state” (Marginson, 2016, p. 40). While not intended as a theory due to its practical nature, Marginson (2016) suggested the California Idea was the first general theory of higher education.

Even though Kerr’s dream of affordable open access mass higher education came to fruition for about 25 years and inspired similar movements elsewhere, the dream started collapsing when California tax policy changed in 1978 and reduced financial support for the public higher education system (Marginson, 2016). The rise of neoliberalism, the privileging of the private good, and disregard for the common good delivered one blow after another resulting in a fundamental shift in public policy that no longer saw affordable open access higher education as a justifiable public good (Giroux, 2002; Hursh, 2017; Marginson, 2016; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Raimondi, 2012). The rise of neoliberalism is discussed in detail later in this chapter. The next section explores the expansion of higher education in Canada.

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Development of the Canadian Higher Education System

The Canadian higher education system is less well-developed than the American system due to slower institutional establishment. French, British, Scottish, and American influences shaped the Canadian higher education system. Key turning points include the founding of religious educational institutions, the British North American Act of 1867, the establishment of provincial universities, and the expansion of mass higher education. These events illustrate a shift in higher education from an initial “hostile climate” to a “sophisticated system” (Harris, 1979, p. xxiii). Canada’s lack of both a national higher education policy and regulatory accreditation framework created a fragmented system where provincial governments determine most policies (Elbrekht, 2015).

The earliest educational institutions in Canada were denominational, intended to train clergy and future leaders (Harris, 1979). The French established denominational colleges under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church with a “civilizing mission” aimed at converting indigenous people to western European values (Jones, 2014). In 1635 the Jesuits established the Collège de Québec with a classical studies program. While the French resisted incursion from British culture, the British were concerned about potential American disruptions (Harris, 1979). After the Treaty of Paris in 1763 formalized British control of former French North American colonies, the British maintained some French-founded institutions and added English Protestant institutions. Fleeing British loyalists from the American Revolution strengthened the British agenda to inculcate their values and saw development of their own institutions as one way to accomplish their cultural preservation goals (Harris, 1979; Jones, 2014).

Canadian higher education developed into a recognizably modern system during the 19th century. British colonial legislatures established degree-granting private denominational colleges

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during the late-18th century and throughout the 19th century. Their curriculum included the mainstays of classics and religious studies while gradually adding sciences (Harris, 2014). Amidst political questions about funding religious institutions, politicians established the first secular universities in the mid-19th century. Although, the majority of institutions remained small and primarily church-funded (Jones, 2014).

British and Scottish higher education traditions both supported and hampered the development of Canada's higher education system. Constrained by limited financing, the Canadian secular institutions did not follow the Oxford and Cambridge model (Harris, 1976). Canadians opted for the more economical Scottish model because it did not include expensive fellowships and salaries for professors who only lectured once per week. Furthermore, the Scottish curriculum was already broad and included contemporary new fields such as natural history. Early Canadian adult education initiatives in the 1840s and 1850s included community lectures along the British tradition. By 1860 the typical Canadian secular curriculum still focused on the classics because of the tradition throughout Great Britain of separating liberal arts and vocational apprenticeships. Thus, the curriculum did not serve the economic needs of the growing Canadian population who desired more professional training (Harris, 1976). A landmark piece of legislation in 1867 brought the higher education system in Canada one step closer to meeting the growing nation's economic needs.

The British North America (BNA) Act of 1867 created the Dominion of Canada and stimulated the higher education system (Jones, 2014). The BNA Act established boundaries between the federal and provincial governments and relegated education policy to the provinces to serve regional and local needs. Unique and differing regional cultural values were thus

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perpetuated by provincially controlled educational institutions (Ellis, 1986). However, the federal government retained specific higher education responsibilities.

The Canadian federal government maintained authority over certain aspects of higher education. Direct federal support established the Royal Military College in 1874 and the creation of the Advisory Committee for Scientific and Industrial Research in 1916 (Jones, 2014). Furthermore, the federal government indirectly funds academic research and higher education operations via grants and transfer payments (Ellis, 1986). In the late-1800s and early-1900s, the newly created western provincial governments borrowed models from the United States and Great Britain that separated university and political systems as they established one secular university per province to serve the needs of increased immigration and prairie settlement (Harris, 1979). Provinces, however, maintained that immigration and bilingual education were federal responsibilities and therefore should be funded by the federal government (Jones, 2014). Multiple levels of financial control involving the federal transfer payments and provincial budgets resulted in complex funding arrangements.

The American land-grant model shaped the purposes of Canadian western provincial universities that established extension, agricultural, and engineering programs to meet the economic and social needs of provincial populations (Harris, 1979; Jones, 2014). According to Harris (1979), the western provinces valued applied science due to the “civilizing” goals of prairie settlement. Applied science programs appeared sporadically beginning in the 1840s, but eventually flourished during the 1880s and 1890s (Harris, 1979). Professional programs grew in the areas of teaching, law, medicine, arts, and dentistry (Harris, 1979). Even with this expansion, by World War II the diverse Canadian higher education system was still small and predominantly served the political elites (Jones, 2014).

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Mass higher education in Canada became a more pressing matter of public policy after World War II because of increased investment in higher education expansion to fill social and economic needs (Jones, 2014). Responding to the context of the knowledge society demands for technological, scientific, and information skills, existing institutions expanded their capacity to admit more students while provincial governments established new institutions (Elbrekht, 2015). At the same time, the federal government supported returning World War II veterans with pension, medical, and educational benefits.

Developments within the history of Canadian federal support for veterans paralleled some trends within the United States and diverged in unique ways. Like in the United States, advocacy for veterans' benefits increased especially after World War I. For example, the Canadian government provided pensions to disabled soldiers, offered limited vocational training, and attempted to respond to outcries from veterans who struggled with new agricultural operations in the prairies during the unfavorable agricultural markets of the 1920s and 1930s (Canadian Forces Advisory Council, 2004). The Canadians preceded their American counterparts by authorizing civil service hiring preferences for veterans. The Canadians offered this benefit after World War I whereas the Americans added it after World War II. These responses to World War I veterans were historically significant because federal administration of the benefits initiated strict provincial-federal demarcations in the realms of healthcare and education (Canadian Forces Advisory Council, 2004).

Amidst a sense that World War I veterans did not receive adequate benefits, the Canadian government issued Privy Council order 7633 in 1941 to rehabilitate with training all returning military personnel based on the nature, length, and duration of service using a guiding philosophy of "opportunity with security" to help boost morale and ease labor market tensions

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(Canadian Forces Advisory Council, 2004). Training provided the opportunity for employment while security was ensured for those who were disabled or for their family members in the event of death. Privy Council order 7633 was the first piece in a larger planning process to deal with the social and economic implications of over one million returning veterans. Adult education, at least for veterans, was thus a priority for the public common good.

The Veteran's Rehabilitation Act (VRA) of 1945 extended benefits further with monumental consequences for the higher education system in Canada. This legislation offered Canadian veterans either vocational training, which usually lasted one year, or the opportunity to pursue a higher education degree (Lemieux & Card, 2001). The benefits included a \$60 per month living allowance while pursuing training or higher education, access to loans, and tuition grants as well as an annual \$150 per capita supplement to institutions (Canadian Forces Advisory Council, 2004; Lemieux & Card, 2001). Similar to the response in the United States, universities in Canada reduced admission requirements for veterans and utilized the per capita supplement to increase remedial and short-term courses to prepare veterans for higher education study (Lemieux & Card, 2001).

The impact of the VRA on higher education in Canada was significant for several reasons. First, approximately 70,000 veterans took advantage of vocational training and approximately 50,000 veterans enrolled in higher education, resulting in university enrollment more than doubling after World War II (Lemieux & Card, 2001). Second, the VRA and corresponding "opening up of Canadian universities to the returning WWII veterans had a 'spillover effect' that raised the demand for university education among groups who previously would not have attended university" (Lemieux & Card, 2001, 2001, p. 321). As other population segments desired higher education, universities subsequently elicited financial support from

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provincial and federal governments to further expand access (Jones, 2014). Third, the VRA was significant for the historical development of Canadian social welfare policies. The Canadian Forces Advisory Council (2004) described the VRA as a “unifying force in the country...[and] a building block of the Canadian welfare state” (p. 2). In addition to providing opportunity with security, the VRA promoted equality between genders, stimulated medical innovation, advocated new ways of approaching disabilities, and experimented with social welfare benefits that subsequently were expanded beyond veterans (The Canadian Forces Advisory Council, 2004).

Two events further invigorated higher education during the 1950s (Jones, 2014). The federal government responded to a 1951 recommendation from the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Sciences, and Letters by providing direct grants to universities. In 1956 the National Conference of Canadian Universities projected enrollments doubling in the next decade due in part to the Baby Boom generation. Responding to this increased demand for access, provincial task forces planned systems that would include new institutions such as applied and community colleges, expansion of programs within existing institutions, and non-university vocational training programs (Jones, 2014).

By the 1970s, Canadian higher education public policy importance was notable in several ways (Jones 2014). Private denominational institutions declined while government-funded non-profit secular institutions flourished to meet society’s need for mass higher education. Funding mechanisms shifted from direct university grants to unrestricted provincial grants usually based on population with the Established Programs Financing arrangements of 1976-77. Jones (2014) explained that institutional autonomy varied by type. Like the British and American models, Canadian universities retained institutional autonomy. In contrast, provincial governments controlled colleges to implement provincial policy agendas. Although federal financial support

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decreased in the 1970s, this mass higher education persisted into the 1990s when the federal government again changed funding mechanisms placing more responsibility on individuals due to shifting economic realities. Even with individuals paying more, this system resulted in Canada's post-secondary participation rate noted as one of the highest in the world by the early-20th century (Jones, 2014). In addition to the notable trend of increased participation, Elbrekht (2015) argued that the development of Canada's higher education may be characterized by democratization and multiculturalism.

Stratification of Universities in Canada and the United States

Financial stratification within higher education is the comparative measure of financial resources available to universities (Ashwin, 2022; Davies & Zarifa, 2012). There is an inverse relationship between stratification and the distribution of resources, meaning that increased stratification refers to unequal distribution of resources (Davies & Zarifa, 2012). Mass expansion led to new types of higher education institutions, which increased stratification and sometimes perpetuated existing social inequalities (Ashwin, 2022). Both national systems of higher education experienced increased financial stratification and structural inequality of institutions over time from 1971-2006, but Canada's disparities were fewer than the United States (Davies & Zarifa, 2012). According to Davies and Zarifa (2012), national funding norms created the stratification differences between Canadian and American universities.

Canada shows a more equitable distribution of resources due to a "path dependency" norm of parity, meaning that all types of higher education institutions received roughly equal allocations of funding that were consistent throughout the time period of 1971-2006 (Davies & Zarifa, 2012). In other words, there was little difference between funding for universities, colleges, and vocational institutions. According to Davies and Zarifa (2012), this parity

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dampened the external forces of inequality that might otherwise have resulted in allocating more resources to institutions that catered to the economic needs or perpetuated existing elite dominance within higher education, as happened in the United States.

This stratification of universities and the resulting national differences are important for this study because of the timing. The 1970s was the end of the golden age of the expansion of mass higher education. Furthermore, the stratification lends quantitative evidence that illuminates the inherent contradiction of expanding mass higher education, which is a democratizing act for the public common good, while perpetuating existing inequalities exacerbated by neoliberal economic policies that created competition for limited public resources.

Philosophical and Historical Influences Comparison and Summary

The development of higher education systems in Canada and the United States illustrates that increasing access to higher education required political and financial support. Both countries employed some federal funding while also privileging state and provincial implementation of higher education resulting in “governance and funding structures [that] have local idiosyncrasies resulting from a mixture of history, leadership, educational needs, geographies, politics, and economies” (Poulin & Michelau, 2009, p. 78). Both countries followed a similar pattern regarding the mass expansion of higher education after World War II.

The two countries’ economic contexts changed over time in similar ways. Universities established in the late-18th century and early-19th century started to prepare workers for the widespread infusion of technology with increased professional programs. After World War II, the United States and Canada transformed into technology-driven knowledge societies. Higher education institutions sought to balance the social and economic purposes of higher education

amidst changing political, economic, and social contexts. During the height of expansion from the 1950s to the 1970s, higher education embodied the marriage of both the social and economic missions. However, policies subsequently guided by neoliberalism divorced these missions and economic missions prevailed. The rise and impact of neoliberalism are discussed at the end of this chapter.

Theme 2: History of Distance Education

The history of distance education is connected to technological affordances that dictate communication possibilities and pedagogical theory applications to distance learning. Generations of distance education are predominantly characterized by technology (Anderson & Simpson, 2012; Nipper, 1989; Taylor, 2001). First and second-generation distance education promoted one-way, or slow two-way, communication and relied on behaviourist and cognitive approaches to teaching. Three 20th-century pioneers, Holmberg, Peters, and Wedemeyer, advanced the field of distance education during the first and second generations as they created antecedents for open universities (Diehl & Cano, 2019). Third-generation distance education utilized computer-mediated technology, which afforded interactive communication and a shift to social constructivist teaching for distance learning. Daniel's (1996) iron triangle concept is especially relevant to open universities. The establishment of correspondence courses and extension programs that catered to adult learners were also significant turning points in the history of distance education that laid the groundwork for autonomous distance universities with open admission policies in the United States and Canada.

Generational Frameworks

Anderson and Simpson (2012) argued that “knowingly or unknowingly, people draw on distance education’s history and heritage” (p. 10). These authors outlined generations of distance

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education and seven key heritage signposts that scholars might use to determine the value of past events to inform future decision making. Although they did not use historical methodology, their overview of these main characteristics of generations and value-adding heritage signposts inform this study. Anderson and Simpson (2012) acknowledged the significant contributions to generational frameworks from previous scholars. For example, Nipper (1989) was the first to employ a generational framework, proposing three generations differentiated by correspondence, broadcast, and computer mediated distance education. Anderson and Simpson concluded that the first two generations were “fairly universally accepted” (2012, p. 2), but that scholars diverged on the third generation due to “different strands of development in different contexts” (2012, p. 2). For example, Moore and Kearsley (2005) focused on a systems approach to the third generation whereas Taylor (2001) proposed fourth and fifth generations based on flexible online learning and intelligent digital technologies respectively. Anderson and Simpson (2012) also acknowledged the seminal work of Anderson and Dron (2011) outlining the three generations of distance education based on cognitive-behaviorist, social constructivist, and connectivist pedagogies rather than technologies. Anderson and Simpson’s (2012) delineations will be utilized for this study.

Adhering to the three-generational framework, Anderson and Simpson (2012) identified key characteristics of each era of distance education. The first generation was marked by correspondence education, didactic teaching, expanding access to working-class individuals and women, land-grant universities in the United States, industrialized education, and the origins of research in distance education from teachers reflecting on their practice. The second generation consisted of broadcast technologies, further expanding access to previously underrepresented individuals, a team-based approach to designing distance learning, and the establishment of

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professional organizations and scholarly journals devoted to disseminating research in the field of distance education. The third generation, or “subsequent generations” (Anderson & Simpson, 2012, p. 4) signaled a paradigmatic shift to social constructivist approaches to distance learning afforded by computer-mediated communication, student support, individualized learning, trends in openness, data analytics, and mobile technologies. The authors cautioned that industrial models of education continued to prevail amidst the third generation. Even so, all generations share a common thread of distance education’s democratizing commitment to expanding access and equity. Anderson and Simpson (2012) also identified the following seven signposts of distance education’s heritage that provide value when planning for future distance education: social justice and equity, technology use and mediation, interaction, teamwork, a systemic process, scholarship, and a focus on people. Although these seven signposts are not the focus of this research project, the signposts are characteristics of some of the selected institutions identified for this study.

Sumner (2000) added another important contribution to the history of distance education with a study using Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action. This theory stipulates that the lifeworld is characterized by consensus, social intercourse, and communicative action whereas the system is inherently noncommunicative, coercive, and based on instrumental or strategic action. The system perpetuates existing power structures whereas the lifeworld involves everyday communication (Sumner, 2000). The author explained how “Habermas contends that the lifeworld is engaged in a complicated and potentially destructive relationship with the system” (Sumner, 2000, p. 269). Sumner’s application of Habermas’ theory has implications for distance education because application of the theory can illuminate whose needs are being met by distance education institutions in historical context.

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Although Sumner (2000) agreed with other scholars' assessments of the three generational categories of distance learning, the study contributed two new critiques to the field. First, Sumner argued that several scholars (Holmberg, 1989; Keegan, 1990; Sweet, 1989; Verduin & Clark, 1991; Willis, 1993) heroized the origins and trends of distance education; although Sumner neglected to include evidence of this heroization. Second, distance education has served the system at the expense of the lifeworld throughout history because of technological affordances that promote one-way communication rather than two-way communication (Sumner, 2000). Even though third generation distance education is marked by computer mediated communication which affords two-way communication (Anderson & Simpson, 2012), Sumner (2002) argued that distance education institutions are preoccupied with surviving the system's capitalist competition in a knowledge-based globalized economy focused on professionalism, credentialing, rationalism, individualism, militarization, and human resource management.

Sumner's strict dichotomy of distance education serving either the system or the lifeworld raises a question. Can distance education serve both? Sumner (2000) only briefly acknowledged in the conclusion that they can coexist and argued that "the lifeworld should be the priority when making educational decisions" (p. 281). From that viewpoint, distance education institutions throughout history were obsessed with institutional survival and not promoting communicative action that could help solve serious social, economic, and climate problems. Although, Sumner (2000) held out some hope that distance education might pivot to providing the kind of communicative action that Habermas envisioned would enhance the lifeworld.

Interestingly, Sumner's work did not address the goals and methods of any distance education institutions. Nor did this study acknowledge publicly-funded distance education

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institutions that expanded access to higher education, simply noting that all distance education institutions likely had admirable intentions. Furthermore, the study made wide-sweeping generalizations about all distance education institutions for purposes of conceptually applying Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action.

Distance Education Pioneers

Three 20th-century scholar-practitioners pioneered research in the field as they bridged the first and second generations of distance education. Börje Holmberg is known for his work with correspondence study in Sweden and developing an often-cited theory of distance education (Keegan, 1983). Holmberg advocated student-centered guided didactic conversations between teacher, whether that means the tutor or other supporting representative of the institution, and learner that emphasized empathy (Diehl & Cano, 2019; Keegan, 1983). Otto Peters (1967) is known for proposing the industrial model of distance education in Germany. Charles Wedemeyer is notable for his contributions to American distance higher education, particularly with adult extension programs in Wisconsin and his influence on the UKOU (Diehl, 2011; Diehl & Cano, 2019; Moore, 1999; Wedemeyer, 1982). These three scholars were contemporaries, actively supported each other with their research initiatives, contributed prolific and seminal pieces to the field of distance education, promoted the scholarship of the field, and advocated for the democratizing expansion of access to nontraditional learners (Diehl, 2011; Diehl & Cano, 2019; Keegan, 1983). The scholarship of Holmberg, Peters and Wedemeyer laid the groundwork for the foundations of open universities. Peters and Wedemeyer are most relevant to this study about open universities in the United States and Canada.

Otto Peters (1967) articulated an industrial model of distance education. Although he found that campus-based higher education teaching did not change due to the Industrial

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Revolution, he argued that learning via correspondence education was fundamentally altered by industrialization (Bernath & Vidal, 2007; Diehl & Cano, 2019; Keegan, 1983; Peters, 1967).

Peters employed two key industrial concepts, division of labor and utilizing technology for efficiency, to understand the preparation and delivery of distance education, especially during the second generation of distance education (Peters, 1967). The division of labor meant that no longer was the professor akin to the master craftsman who created a product from start to finish. Instead, work processes were mechanized based on rationalization and work duties were distributed across teams that each contributed some aspect to the preparation of course materials (Peters, 1967). The division of labor was further evident in the lack of relationship between professor and the student. The professor contributed to course material preparation and the student relied on tutors for assistance. According to Peters (1967), technology could be harnessed for assembly line mass preparation of course materials and administrative functions. Scientific methods could be utilized to monitor and improve course effectiveness (Peters, 1967). Open universities subsequently embraced these elements of the industrial model of distance education to cost-effectively scale up operations (Daniel, 1996; Keegan, 1983; Perry, 1997b; Tait, 2018).

Decades after Peters proposed the industrial model of distance education, he reflected on the positive and negative social implications of industrialized distance higher education. Peters (1997) highlighted the positive outcomes as promoting social mobility and egalitarianism. He also cautioned that industrialized distance higher education “produces students who fit perfectly into a competitive achievement-oriented society” (Peters, 1997, p. 77). He questioned if shared knowledge declines because of an increasingly isolated and disintegrated society. His concern was for isolated distance education learners because one mission of any university should be “the

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educational goal of developing full and balanced persons with a sense of social obligation and responsibility” (Peters, 1997, p. 78). These concerns directly relate to the social purposes of higher education in an industrializing or already-industrialized knowledge society context.

Charles Wedemeyer was the leading American distance education scholar-practitioner during the same time as Peters. Unlike the pragmatism of Peters’ (1967) application of industrialization to distance education systems or Clark Kerr’s pragmatic approach to the dream of expanding mass higher education in California (Marginson, 2019), Wedemeyer was more idealistic. Moore (1999) described Wedemeyer as

a passionate advocate of applying technology as a tool for opening opportunity and promoting democracy in education...an ardent activist for freedom to learn, and for access to education regardless of age, race, gender, nation-ality, physical disability, income, social class, employment, or place of residence. He was not only an intellectual giant, but also a builder; a man who engineered a new educational system that would give opportunity to those whose only chance to learn was ‘at the back door.’ (p. 1)

Wedemeyer’s thoughts about back door learners stemmed from his consideration that geographic or socioeconomic barriers should not deny anyone the opportunity to learn (Keegan, 1983; Wedemeyer, 1981). He was devoted to improving learning conditions for nontraditional learners.

After serving in World War II with a position requiring attention to military personnel training using distance education methods, Wedemeyer took a job at the University of Wisconsin, where he spent the next several decades shaping the future of distance education (Diehl, 2011; Diehl & Cano, 2019). Within Wisconsin, he expanded access to previously

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underserved adult learners via renowned extension programs around the state, positively transformed the reputation of correspondence courses, incorporated broadcast television into distance learning via the Articulated Instructional Media initiative (AIM), and employed an industrial team approach to course preparation and delivery (Diehl, 2011; Diehl & Cano, 2019). The timing of these initiatives is notable because they all occurred prior to the founding of the Open University of the United Kingdom in 1969. Wedemeyer (1981) also proposed the Theory of Independent Study, advocated open education, and emphasized that nontraditional learning has a much longer history than traditional learning. His 1971 Theory of Independent Study introduced the idea of physical separation between the learner and teacher, which has become a defining characteristic of distance education (Diehl & Cano, 2019). Additionally, he held leadership positions with the National University Extension Association (NUEA) and the International Council of Correspondence Association (Diehl & Cano, 2019).

At the international level, Wedemeyer influenced the founding of the Open University of the United Kingdom (UKOU) as the first Kellogg Fellow at Oxford University in 1965, when he shared examples of lessons learned from the AIM project and suggested contacts that could help the founders of the UKOU (Moore, 1999; Diehl, 2011; Diehl & Cano, 2019). The UKOU successfully avoided two key AIM weaknesses thanks to Wedemeyer (Diehl, 2011; Diehl & Cano, 2109). AIM did not own its production facility and lacked institutional financial autonomy. He strongly urged the UKOU team to avoid those obstacles, which they did (Diehl, 2011; Diehl & Cano, 2019). In 1969 Wedemeyer returned to England and conducted seminars for the UKOU team about theory, educational media production, faculty development, and support programs. He continued to consult from afar and fielded requests from American political leaders desiring to learn about the success of the UKOU (Diehl & Cano, 2019).

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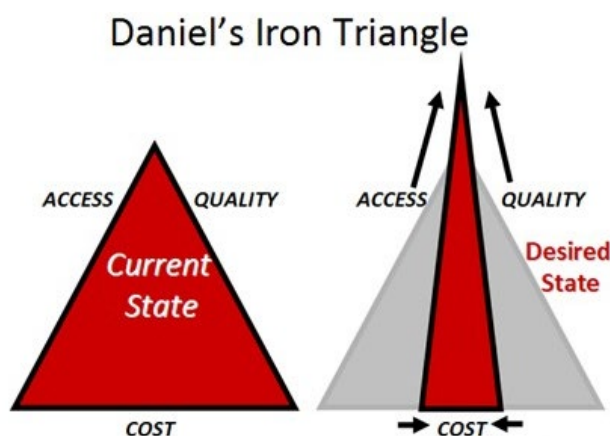
Wedemeyer's international influences extended beyond the UKOU. He consulted on distance higher education projects in Venezuela and at UNISA, which is South Africa's open university mentioned in Chapter 1 (Diehl, 2011). He also consulted with the U.S. State Department in 1975 when he conducted demonstrations in Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand (Diehl & Cano, 2019). Furthermore, he sustained supportive collegial and personal relationships with distance education theorists Holmberg, Peters, and Moore that furthered the field of distance education, especially with theory development (Diehl, 2011; Diehl & Cano, 2019; Keegan, 1983). Wedemeyer is notable for his contributions to American distance education and the global field of distance education.

The Iron Triangle

Another key development in the history of distance education is the iron triangle, shown in Figure 2, which refers to a graphic representation of a distance education conundrum regarding quality, access, and cost (Daniel, 1996).

Figure 2

Iron Triangle



Note. From “Head of Gold, Feet of Clay: The Online Learning Paradox,” by T.M. Power and A. Morven-Gould, 2011, *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 12(2), 19–39. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v12i2.916>

The idea behind the iron triangle is that if any one side increases, there are negative repercussions for the other two sides. However, Daniel argued that technology afforded economies of scale for distance education, thereby allowing any one side of the triangle to be stretched without negatively impacting the other two (Daniel, 1996; Daniel & Macintosh, 2003; Daniel, 1996). In their 2003 assessment, Daniel and Macintosh determined that even though the iron triangle presents ongoing challenges, open learning systems, i.e., open universities and especially mega universities, have achieved success in all three aspects. First, access should be considered a success because mega universities have contributed to severing the historic link between elitism and higher education even though not all mega universities have open admission policies due to national educational policy constraints. Second, quality has been achieved via course teams, institutional outcomes, and research that is at least on par with traditional universities. Third, cost advantages may be achieved if an institution can scale up using an industrial approach, as described by Peters (1967), while also maintaining the social value of expanding access to those financially disadvantaged by not passing on costs to students (Daniel & Macintosh, 2003). Open universities and mega universities are addressed later in this chapter.

First and Second Generation Distance Education Turning Points in the United States

The history of distance education in the United States shows a focus on pragmatism and lack of historical knowledge about professional practices. Writing during the third generation of distance education, Moore (2003) articulated the professional need to understand the history of

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the first and second generation of distance education when he argued: “it is not possible to understand what is happening at the present time unless one knows something of that history” (p. 8). Saba (2003) argued that American distance education shows a pragmatic “quest for practical solutions and a neglect of theory” (p. 3) with the notable exception of Wedemeyer’s contributions to theory. The pragmatic approach in the early years of distance education is understandable considering that the scholarship of distance education only began to proliferate in the 1960s (Black, 2004).

Correspondence study developments in the United States are important because for generations they were the only form of distance education. They impacted higher education teaching and administrative practices and stimulated future innovations in distance education (Pittman, 2003). Although Caruth & Caruth (2013) point to correspondence origins with either Anna Ticknor’s correspondence program for women that started in 1873 or the first higher education correspondence program at the University of Chicago in 1892 established under the direction of William Rainey Harper, antecedents existed. For example, in 1728 Caleb Phillips advertised in *The Boston Gazette* the opportunity to learn shorthand by mail (Diehl, 2019).

The early correspondence initiatives relied on postal delivery and printed materials (Daniel, 2020). Inherited from the British colonial regime, the American postal system was well-developed and benefitted from improved transportation routes by the 1830s (Diehl, 2013). Printing improved with two inventions in the mid-19th century. The cylinder press, invented in 1846, sped up the printing process and invention of offset printing in 1865 allowed printing on both sides of a paper (Diehl, 2019). Keegan (1983) argued that “it was no historical accident that distance education began at this time. It is intrinsically linked to the new forms of postal and

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transport services that commenced in the mid-19th century” (p. 20). Correspondence programs benefitted from these innovations.

Several initiatives in Great Britain were established in the 19th century to extend opportunities to learn via correspondence or examination. For example, Sir Isaac Pitman offered correspondence courses by mail in 1840 (Bates, 2016; Diehl, 2019; Mathews, 1999). Whereas Pittman’s courses signaled an important turning point in the history of distance education, the printing techniques mentioned above sparked the proliferation of correspondence courses. Cambridge University, London University, and Oxford University offered extension programs in the 1870s (Bell & Tight, 1993; Diehl, 2013). The expansion of higher education programs as well as those sponsored by working organizations such as the Mechanics’ Institute, happened in lockstep with the sustained increase in male suffrage opportunities in Great Britain from the mid-19th to the late-19th century (Diehl, 2013). Thus, the educational offerings were often politically motivated to increase working class political participation and social agency (Diehl, 2013).

Even though some American higher education institutions already had outreach programs in utilitarian subjects such as agriculture, mining, military, and mechanics because of the first Morrill Act of 1862, the British Extension Movement also influenced American institutions (Storr, 1966; Van Hise, 1990). After a presentation about the British Extension Movement in 1887 by a professor at Johns Hopkins University, more than 200 extension programs were established within four years (Diehl, 2013). Correspondence programs subsequently grew and benefitted from quality standards created by the NUEA founded in 1915 (Diehl, 2013; Moore, 2003).

The establishment of the Chautauqua Correspondence College in 1881 in New York represents another early influential initiative (Diehl, 2011; Moore, 2003). It used correspondence

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programs to further learners' interactions with professors beyond the summer face-to-face lectures to sustain year-round bible study. Chautauqua's mission promoted "education – the mental, social, moral, and religious culture of all who have mental, social, moral, and religious faculties; of all, everywhere, without exception" (Vincent & Miller, 1886, p. 4 as cited in Diehl, 2013). Hence, Chautauqua's mission was democratizing by including all adults and working around geographically imposed barriers to higher education. The mission also addressed both humanist and liberal purposes of adult education, which were introduced in Chapter 1.

Most relevant to this research project is the formation of the first higher education correspondence program at the University of Chicago led by William Rainey Harper. He had previously worked at Chautauqua and served as the first University of Chicago president from 1891 to 1906 (Diehl; 2011; Diehl, 2013; Storr, 1966). Harper's efforts were "bolstered by the egalitarian vision of the British educator Richard Moulton" (Moore, 2003, p. 11). The collaboration between Harper and Moulton illustrates another cross-proliferation of ideas between British and American higher education leaders. Although Moore (2003) classified Harper as a "doer" and Moulton as an "idealist," both were committed to the utopian vision of democratizing higher education using distance education. Moulton's idealism went so far as to suggest that the university extension movement was the third major revolution in world history, after the Reformation and the Atlantic Revolutions, that characterized the shift from the medieval era to the modern era (Moore, 2003). Although that argument is a bridge too far historically, Moulton's idealism shaped the University of Chicago's Extension division via his collaboration with Harper.

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Harper guided the creation of the University of Chicago's correspondence offerings housed within the university's extension programs. The Extension division included the following five components:

(1) regular courses of lectures delivered in and about Chicago 'in accordance with the best developed plans of University-Extension' (on the British model?); (2) evening courses in college and university subjects also offered in and about the city for men and women kept away from regular courses by their jobs; (3) correspondence courses for students, in all parts of the country, who were unable to go to college the year round; (4) special courses in scientific study of the Bible in its original languages and in translation; and (5) library extension (or the provision of books) in connection with the Extension courses. (Storr, 1966, p. 61)

The five components demonstrate the influence of the British Extension Movement, the unique needs of nontraditional learners, and the influence of Chautauqua's religious study that shaped Harper's endeavors. Harper subsequently specified the characteristics of the British Extension Movement included the British model of conducting community lectures. Bible study was not included as a major category of courses at the University of Chicago (Storr, 1996).

The University of Chicago's correspondence program was historically significant as the first in the American higher education system; it was unique for being financially self-sustaining by the early 1900s (Storr, 1966). During the 1915 NUEA conference opening address Van Hise (1990) observed that the University of Chicago "maintained primacy in successful correspondence work on a large scale" (p. 27). In pioneering university correspondence courses, it inspired other universities to follow suit. Although the University of Chicago was important

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for its Extension division efforts, the University of Wisconsin also made important contributions to the history of distance education.

In Van Hise's opening remarks at the 1915 NUEA Conference, he acknowledged that the University of Wisconsin had one of the first extension programs in the United States (1990). Their correspondence courses were more vocationally-oriented than those at the University of Chicago. The University of Wisconsin admirably lowered drop-out rates in correspondence courses when compared to the commercial correspondence schools. The institution continued to pioneer quality distance education throughout the 20th century (Van Hise, 1990).

Educational broadcasts were another turning point in the history of distance education. Under the direction of William H. Lighty in 1922, the University of Wisconsin in Madison initiated radio broadcasts for practical education purposes such as with market reports and for personal enjoyment such as with concerts (Diehl, 2013). In 1934, the University of Iowa began educational television broadcasts (Diehl, 2013). Several of the institutions in this study also utilized radio and television broadcasts.

The AIM project, established in 1964 by Wedemeyer at the University of Wisconsin, was another important turning point because it pioneered the team approach to developing correspondence courses with a focus on "the dignity, comfort and convenience of both the teacher and the learner" (Wedemeyer, 1966, p. 14). AIM diverged from previous distance education initiatives that only relied on one technology, i.e., just print, radio, or broadcast, and instead articulated a combination of technologies to help learners accomplish their goals. AIM also utilized manufacturing principles to separate the teaching process into components resulting in lower costs and higher quality courses than had previously been achieved (Moore, 2003). The combination of an articulated media strategy, the course team approach, and the application of

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manufacturing principles is known as the learning system concept (Wedemeyer, 1966). Although funding was discontinued, AIM set a precedent for employing the learning system concept that was further enhanced by the industrial model of distance education described by Peters (1967). The learning system concept was adopted by numerous open and distance universities that were founded during the 1970s and thereafter.

By the mid-1960s, higher education systems worldwide initiated correspondence programs to respond to global problems regarding the mass expansion of higher education such as increasing populations, need for continuing education, and availability of more leisure time (Wedemeyer, 1966). Wedemeyer (1966) also noted the following five global trends with correspondence programs: increased acceptance, growth of new programs serving new clients, improved quality of education and reputation, implementation of creative methods, and increased scholarship about correspondence education although the research was typically fugitive, i.e., inaccessible and out of print. When compared to traditional university programs in the mid-1960s, correspondence programs were more student-centered and better prepared to adapt to society's changing needs because correspondence programs were already experienced with utilizing technology for distance education and were focused on meeting nontraditional students' needs. Among the many achievements, Wedemeyer emphasized how correspondence programs served "broad social purposes [signaling] a revival, in a sense, of the early social ideals that motivated the development of correspondence" (1966, p. 8) programs established during the late-19th and early-20th centuries amidst the economic and social context of the Industrial Revolution. By the 1980s, upwards of 300,000 students in the United States participated in some form of university distance education learning and in the 1990s the majority of higher education institutions offered some form of distance education (Matthews, 1999).

First and Second Generation Distance Education Turning Points in Canada

Canada developed distance education programs during the late-19th century and throughout the 20th century to meet regional and local needs. Events within the history of distance education in Canada show the impact of a lack of a national distance education policy that gave rise to a variety of distance education initiatives (Ellis, 1982). The literature coalesces around several key turning points that impacted the development of distance education in Canada both within and outside of higher education.

Key turning points in the history of distance higher education in Canada include the establishment of correspondence courses and extension programs that originated within existing universities and colleges. Queen's University in Ontario began distance education programs in 1889 (Harry & Rumble, 1982). The University of Waterloo's correspondence program, which combined print and audiotapes, originated in the 1970s and served approximately 10,000 students in 1992 (Burge, 1992; Haughey, 2013). Athabasca University was established in 1970. It then embarked on a pilot project with distance in 1972 that turned into an institution-changing mission solely as a distance education institution (Rothe, 1986). Télé-université was established in 1968 and in 1972 began distance education to fill a void for Quebec's cooperative organizations' needs for legal, social, and economic educational programs. The Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Programme was created in 1974 to serve isolated First Nations communities in northern Manitoba via traveling professors (Rothe, 1986). In 1975 North Island College in British Columbia was the only non-campus-based community college in Canada. It was "designed to be open with respect to place, time and student entry and to provide self-paced mastery learning independent of instructor, campus, and schedules" (Rothe, 1986, p. 18). Daniel and Smith (1979) described the North Island College as "one of the most fascinating

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educational projects in the whole of Canada” (p. 73) with direct correlations to the establishment of open universities. In the 1980s, the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia revolutionized the printing process for course materials using photo composition systems and integrated text-processing (Bottomley, 1982). Also during the 1980s, 19 traditional universities offered some form of distance learning (Matthews, 1999). Eleven postsecondary Canadian institutions created the Canadian Virtual University, which existed from 2000 to 2019, to promote distance learning (Alcock, 2019). Athabasca University and Thompson Rivers University, the institutional successor of the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia, were two institutions in this study that participated in the Canadian Virtual University consortium.

The Antigonish Movement was among the most notable extension programs that existed within a university. In terms of the purposes of education, it falls into the category of education for social change (Spencer & Lange, 2014). It began with the 1928 establishment of an extension department at St. Francis Xavier University in eastern Nova Scotia, although it remained unfunded until 1930. With initial investments from St. Francis Xavier University and the Carnegie Commission, the extension department, headed by Reverend Dr. Moses Coady, set about to improve the local economic, social, religious, and educational conditions using a variety of techniques such as circulating libraries, correspondence courses, study clubs, radio courses, and folk schools (St. Francis University, 2021). Although only mentioned in passing by the St. Francis Xavier University Archives digital exhibit with extensive historical background about Coady and the evolution of the extension initiatives, the Danish folk school influence is unmistakable because it emphasized adults identifying their community problems and learning how to solve them with uniquely local solutions and community organizing. At nearly the same time as the Antigonish Movement, and also influenced by the Danish folk schools, Myles Horton

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established the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee in the United States. The Highlander Folk School went on to become a hotbed of first labor, and later civil rights, organizing that utilized the Danish folk school model of adult identify and solve their own community's social and economic problems (Highland & McDougall, 2015).

Turning points in the history of Canadian distance education also occurred outside of higher education in ways that involved telecommunications. TVOntario was created in 1970 to provide educational broadcasts (Rothe, 1986). The province of Alberta established a similar program called ACCESS in 1973 that provided educational broadcasting for all ages. The province of British Columbia created the Knowledge Network of the West Communications Authority in 1980 to coordinate across organizations that created and distributed cable television and satellite educational broadcasts. The developments outside of higher education either complemented and supported higher education practices or provided services that were not already offered by higher education (Rothe, 1986).

Three distance education scholars, Coldeway, Daniel, and Rothe, each proposed unique arguments about the overarching historical development of distance education in Canada. In an interview for *Speaking Personally*, Coldeway argued:

the distance education tradition in Canada, probably as a function of need and geography, is stronger and more developed in both distance and conventional institutions than it is in the United States. Therefore, any new developments are readily embraced, but with more of a sense of reality (as cited in Bunker, 1996, p. 77).

This is a curious argument considering Canada's shorter history of higher education when compared to the United States. Perhaps Coldeway was referring to significant developments in open and distance higher education since the 1970s, although one is left to guess because the

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argument was never qualified. Daniel (1982) suggested that two conclusions may be drawn about Canadian distance education. First, Canadian values of civility and opportunity manifested in assumptions about the purpose and implementation of distance education. Second, unlike most countries where expanding access was the primary motive and technology implementation was secondary, Canada exhibits the reverse, i.e. that creating innovative learning systems was the primary motive and expanding access was secondary (Daniel, 1982). He even went so far as to label any interpretation that privileged expanding access as revisionist. Daniel's argument is problematic because it neglects the contributions to distance education from the extension programs that were explicitly designed to expand access. Finally, Rothe (1986) suggested that Canada's distance education history produced a "national potpourri" characterized by "an outgrowth of departments, organisations and agencies, all of which had little institutional authority" (p. 22). This argument is credible considering that although a few institutions such as Athabasca University and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia had complete institutional autonomy, most other institutions with distance education programs lacked full autonomy.

First and Second Generation Distance Education Summary

Key turning points in the history of distance education can be understood using the three-generation framework. Pioneering scholar-practitioners transformed distance education throughout the second generation as they formulated theories about distance education, applied new technologies to distance education, and promoted the scholarship of the field. American and Canadian turning points illustrate the hodge-podge of distance education initiatives that were designed to respond to regional, not national, needs. Underlying the developments of this history of distance was a keen commitment to expanding access for democratizing purposes and

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improving the quality of education (Bunker, 2003). In doing so, distance education has pursued an idealistic goal with pragmatic methods.

The scholarship of the history of distance education is fraught with methodological problems because sources are fugitive (Pittman, 2003; Wedemeyer, 1966) and many scholars looking into the past of distance education neglect to employ, or are uninformed about, historical methodology (Moore, 2008). This study about the historical origins of eight open online nonprofit universities fills a gap in the existing literature by employing historical methodology in a comparative analysis of the contexts of the United States and Canada. This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Open and Distance Teaching Universities

Daniel (2019) argued that open universities were the most revolutionary innovation in higher education in the second half of the 20th century because they harnessed technology and successfully achieved economies of scale in a way that had never been done before in higher education. Open universities emanated in the context of the economic demands of a knowledge society while catering to adult learners for both economic and social purposes. Open universities utilized adult education approaches including flexibility and distance education practices to expand mass higher education. Worldwide, some employed open admission policies “based on the assumption that it is the exit standards, not the entry standards, that matter” (Daniel, 2019, p. 2). Some were prohibited by their national education policies from incorporating open admission standards (Daniel and Macintosh, 2003). As noted in Chapter 3, most of the institutions selected for this study had open admission policies. Some countries completely subsidized their open universities to provide free education, while others offered it affordably. Open universities expanded mass higher education worldwide.

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Definitions of open universities are similar in the literature and prominently feature elements of openness. The first open university, the UKOU was defined by the following four principles of openness: open as to people, places, ideas, and methods (The Open University, 1969). The term distance teaching university (DTU) was used by Otto Peters to describe institutions in the Soviet Union and South Africa that utilized distance teaching methodologies and predated the UKOU; the term DTU was subsequently adopted to describe “autonomous multi-media distance teaching universities” (Keegan & Rumble, 1982, p. 24). Another definition of an open university is a single-mode institution that employs an open learning system. An open learning system is characterized by ten factors (Wedemeyer, 1973), which are too lengthy to include here. Despite various definitions, open universities share commonalities such as being “part-time, distance, supported and open access” (Weller, 2020, p. 2). Essentially, the terms open university and distance teaching university are used interchangeably as demonstrated in Rumble and Harry’s (1982) book titled *The Distance Teaching Universities* with chapters on specific universities, all of which were or are open universities. For purposes of this study, I define an open university as a university with flexible approaches to study that caters mostly to nontraditional students using distance education techniques and may have an open admission policy. In other words, an open university is open to people, places, methods, and ideas.

Founding the Open and Distance Universities

Open universities were established with a democratizing social mission to expand higher education to individuals, mostly adult learners, who could not attend a traditional university for a variety of reasons (Rumble & Harry, 1982; Tait, 2018). Some, but not all, implemented open admission policies based on the assumption that individuals have the right to try to accomplish their academic goals (Daniel and Macintosh, 2003; Mugridge, 1997). Like traditional

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universities, open universities preserved cherished academic values such as inspiring critical inquiry and communities of scholars. In doing so, Daniel and Macintosh (2003) argued that open universities “have guaranteed the core survival of the core ethos of the university” (p. 833) amidst changing historical contexts. Open universities transformed distance higher education by using technology to achieve economies of scale (Daniel, 1996; Daniel, 2019; Daniel, 2019; Daniel & Macintosh, 2003; Rumble & Harry, 1982; Tait, 2018).

The UKOU was the first such institution branded as open when it was founded in 1969. Distance education scholars describe the importance of the UKOU founding as “a climactic event in the history of distance education” (Mugridge, 1997b, p. 169) and “the most significant innovation in higher education” (Daniel, 2019, p. 196). The UKOU model was subsequently tailored to other contexts, resulting in the proliferation of open universities worldwide. Open universities shared common political and professional challenges establishing this new type of institution. The founding of the UKOU is discussed in the next section to illustrate the essential component of political support that was a common factor in the global emergence of open universities.

The Open University of the United Kingdom.

The UKOU was the beneficiary of historical distance education developments in Great Britain and the United States. Influences included, but are not limited to, the University of London’s external degree program, the British Extension Movement, the establishment in 1903 of the Workers Educational Association for English working-class education, and correspondence programs such as those discussed in the previous section on the history of distance education (Bell & Tight, 1993; Rumble & Keegan, 1982; Weller, 2020). The founding of the UKOU was also informed by Wedemeyer’s AIM project at the University of Wisconsin,

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which experimented with a team approach to course development and applying manufacturing principles to producing curriculum and providing student services to adult learners (Moore, 1999, 2003; Diehl, 2011). By drawing on earlier traditions in distance education and embracing innovation, the UKOU sparked a wave of new open universities.

The UKOU was created by Royal Charter in 1969. The political context was crucial to this new educational venture because founding the new institution required public funding (Perry, 1977, 1997b; Weinbren, 2015). The Robins Report of 1963 kickstarted the political support for this institution as it outlined the need for additional higher education opportunities in the United Kingdom because existing opportunities catered to the elites and largely excluded the working-class (Perry, 1977, 1997b). Drawing on the Robins Report as well as distance education models in the United States and the Soviet Union, in 1963 Labour Party Leader of the Opposition Harold Wilson proposed a University of the Air that would offer broadcast multimedia-based distance higher education to the working-class for egalitarian purposes. Harold Wilson brought his vision one step closer to fruition when he became Prime Minister in 1964 (Perry, 1977, 1997b; Weinbren, 2015). He hired Jennie Lee as Minister of the Arts in 1965. She became a tireless advocate for the University of the Air as she oversaw the planning for this higher education innovation. The team faced obstacles such as unknown costs and securing broadcast time for educational content (Perry, 1977, 1997b; Weinbren, 2015).

Once they garnered sufficient political support and cemented a relationship with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Jennie Lee and her team proceeded to establish the UKOU with a Planning Committee created in 1967 (Perry, 1997b; Weinbren, 2015). In a 1969 report, the Planning Committee, which included academic representation and signaled a shift from political to academic control, outlined three mission goals. The university was to serve

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adult students, not require admission standards, and result in a quality degree that would be recognized on par with other institutions of higher education (Perry, 1997b).

The Planning Committee goals were then translated into being defined as open in the four aspects that were included in the 1969 Royal Charter: open to people, places, ideas, and methods. Being open to people meant an open admissions policy for anyone age 21 or older (Moreno, 2020; Perry, 1977; Weinbren, 2015). The UKOU intentionally avoided competition with traditional universities by serving only nontraditional learners who did not attend a traditional university for whatever reason (Perry, 1977). Being open as to place meant providing learners the opportunities to learn from their home regardless of geography, establishing numerous regional centers, and using existing facilities of other universities for residential requirements and labs (Moreno, 2020; Perry, 1977; Weinbren, 2015). Being open as to methods meant combining correspondence courses with multimedia including BBC television programs, radio, and using the course-teams approach to creating quality learning packages (Moreno, 2020; Perry, 1977; Weinbren, 2015). Being open as to ideas recognized that knowledge must be actively created via listening, creating projects, utilizing community resources, fieldwork, and ongoing dialogue; knowledge construction does not happen by just passively transmitting content from teacher to learner (Moreno, 2020; Perry, 1977; Weinbren, 2015). The Planning Committee also changed the name of this proposed institution to the Open University reflect their commitment to this open mission (Perry, 1997b; Weinbren, 2015).

These elements of openness manifested in the UKOU's course materials and learning methods geared toward nontraditional students. Course teams consisting of expert academics, learning designers, and multimedia designers created the materials, often in collaboration with the BBC. Students were expected to spend ten hours per week in a course for 36 weeks (Perry,

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1977). The degree structure was built around multidisciplinary foundations courses that focused on core content and helping nontraditional students learn how to learn in this new institution. The foundations courses were especially difficult to develop because although not intended for remedial learners, it was likely some remedial learners would enroll. The UKOU opted not to develop remedial courses because the new institution strove for parity with other universities and wanted to prove that open admissions could work despite skepticism. The founders contemplated an education degree for teachers and a science and technology degree for individuals working in those fields, but instead decided to only offer the Bachelor of Arts degree which maximized students' course choices and flexibility. The founders also debated the liberal and humanistic purposes of learning and decided that the single degree embodied the intertwining of the two purposes (Perry, 1977).

Reflecting on the establishment of the UKOU, Perry (1997b) identified political, institutional, logistical, administrative, financial, educational, and social challenges. Political support was especially problematic because the institution required public funding in a context with minimal political backing and widespread skepticism. The Labour Party offered perfunctory support while the Conservative Party reacted with hostility. Margaret Thatcher, a neoliberal appointed as Minister of Education in 1970, became an unlikely ally because she saw the UKOU as a cheaper way to fill an economic demand than creating more traditional universities. Once established, the UKOU faced further political problems early on due to the public blowback from a Marxist education course that created fears of the university being biased toward socialism given the United Kingdom's stance in the ideological contest of the Cold War (Perry, 1997b).

The institutional, logistical, administrative, and financial challenges were related to each other because they shaped what kind of university the UKOU would be, how it would operate,

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and how they would recruit students (Perry, 1997b). One institutional challenge centered around whether it would hire part-time faculty operating out of a small office within the BBC or whether the university would hire full-time faculty with research obligations. They opted for the latter, complete with research facilities. This approach resulted in a positive reputation for quality. The main logistical problem revolved around opening the doors to students without knowing how many students would take advantage of this unproven initiative. Catering to nontraditional students, the UKOU decided on a January 1971 start date with summer residential offerings using borrowed campuses at other universities, e.g., following the Australian model. Also following the Australian model, the UKOU required a small fee up front with the remainder of the fees due three months later. Perry (1997b) explained that this allowed students to test the waters and allowed the UKOU to not count drop-outs until the three-month mark. These approaches resulted in 43,000 initial applicants. Although the application rate dropped for the next two years, the numbers increased thereafter (Perry, 1997b).

Within a few years, the UKOU achieved institutional legitimacy and has retained such status ever since. In 2014, Martin Bean, Vice-Chancellor of the UKOU, reflected on the transformation of the university when he noted that “the Open University made the transition from an ‘electoral gimmick’ (to quote one politician at the time) to its current status of ‘national treasure’ (in the words of Vice-Chancellor at another university)” (Weinbren, 2015, p. xiii). Given the obstacles faced at the founding, it is a remarkable contribution to the expansion of affordable higher education. Other countries, and sometimes regions within countries, have adapted the UKOU model to their unique contexts.

Global Proliferation of Open Universities.

At least 60 open universities have been founded worldwide since the formation of the UKOU (Tait, 2018). During the initial proliferation phase from 1970 to the 1990s, they enjoyed several first-mover advantages such as innovating learning for nontraditional students who needed flexibility, dedicated missions to expand mass education, valuing of openness, incorporating technology for learning, and employing the industrial model of distance education thus achieving access numbers never experienced before (Daniel, 1996; Tait, 2018). The institutions with 100,000 or more students are referred to as mega universities (Daniel, 1996; Daniel & Mackintosh, 2003). The institutions branded as open might or might not have fully-open admission policies, but they all exhibit openness in other ways such as being flexible with the pace of study, time, place, and using distance learning strategies (Guri-Rosenblit, 2019; Mugridge, 1997).

Establishing open universities was an important policy development for industrializing nations that lacked well-developed systems of distance higher education (Mugridge, 1997). Open universities flourished and sometimes grew into mega universities because they filled essential national development needs and were supported by national political and economic policies (Daniel, 1996). According to Daniel, “the fortunes of individual open universities inevitably reflect the unique character of the economies and politics of their home jurisdictions, as well as the massive changes that have taken place in higher education worldwide in the last half-century” (2019, p. 196). The political, social, and economic contexts nurtured the establishment of certain industrializing nations’ open universities. Examples from Pakistan and India illustrate specific industrializing nations’ contextual factors that influenced the establishment of open universities in those countries.

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The Allama Iqbal Open University, originally named the People's Open University, was established in Pakistan in 1973. The socialist Pakistan People's Party (PPP) took power and stipulated education as a national priority for three-quarters of the rural subsistence farming population, as well as women who achieved only approximately 10% literacy rates in the early 1970s (Zaki, 1997). The PPP established the People's Open University to cultivate economic development skills and knowledge required for the socio-economic success of an industrializing nation (Zaki, 1997).

The Andhra Pradesh Open University (APOU) was the first open university in India when it was created in 1982 in the state of Andhra Pradesh (Ram Reddy, 1997). The name later changed to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. The establishment of the APOU was the product of political discussions that began at least as early as 1973, were influenced by the UKOU, and came to fruition because of a chance encounter that developed into a fruitful relationship between G. Ram Reddy and a politician who was the Minister of Education and then the Chief Minister of the state of Andhra Pradesh. The traditional universities, that already offered correspondence courses, and an especially vocal journalist criticized the newly proposed open university on the following three grounds: that education should not be open to all, that a new open university would lead to an increase in unemployed graduates, and that the quality would not suffice. The APOU secured public support after numerous seminars and won the state's political and financial support by promising to educate the largest number of students on a budget comparable to the smallest higher education institution in the state (Ram Reddy, 1997).

Only three years after the establishment of the APOU, the Indian Parliament passed the IGNOU Act in 1985 which created the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Even though other states began following the APOU precedent of creating new open universities to

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serve regional needs, capacity did not meet the Indian society's growing demand for higher education (Perry, 1997a). The demand can be seen in the startling volume of growth over time when "students rose from 17,000 to 3,538,000 between 1952 and 1987" (Perry, 1997a, p. 121). IGNOU benefitted from the leadership of G. Ram Reddy who had already founded APOU, strong national political support, less opposition compared to prior new institutions such as APOU, and the guidance and support from foreign entities such as the UKOU, the British Overseas Development Administration, the Commonwealth of Learning, and the Japanese International Co-operation Agency. IGNOU's mission was to serve students across the nation and maintain national authority over the quality standards of state open universities. This model is unique when compared to other nations with either one national open university, such as Pakistan, Israel, and the Netherlands, or regional open universities, such as those in Canada and Germany (Perry, 1997a).

The Indian examples illustrate the unique role of open universities in industrializing countries while also providing valid conclusions about open universities worldwide. Prasad (2018) used a framework of dharma (goals) and karma (practice) to illustrate the contradictions of principles and practices of open universities in India. Seven elements of dharma characterize open and distance higher education in the Indian context as follows: the democratization of education, social justice, sustainable development, employing technology for education, emphasizing quality, the shift from the teacher as the sage to a learning facilitator, and an institutional approach to teaching (Prasad, 2018). Although sustainable development is less relevant to Canada and the United States because they are already industrialized and the institutional approach to teaching was adopted to varying degrees in Canada and the United

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States, the other elements applied to the founding of the open universities in those North American countries.

Returning to the contradictions, Prasad (2018) identified six practical issues (karma) that make achieving the goals particularly difficult. The practices include the involvement of the private sector, diversity of programs, large student numbers, using technology for administrative functions, and later trying to adapt technology for teaching, quality, and attempts to maximize profits. The tensions between the goals and practices create disconnects (Prasad, 2018). For example, profits might go back into the institution in ways that do not improve the student experience or quality of course materials, there are ongoing concerns about the role of the teacher, external regulations, and traditional university norms that constrain open university curriculum choices (Prasad, 2018). These tensions are not just unique to open universities in India (Daniel, 2020). Rather, they illustrate the complexities faced by open universities worldwide as they seek to fulfill their democratizing missions of expanding higher education. In addition to facing these complexities, the origins of open universities in industrialized countries present unique insights as can be seen in the examples of Germany, Israel, and the Netherlands.

The Fernuniversität was established in the North Rhine-Westphalia state of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1974. Otto Peters (1997), who served as Rector from 1974-1984, identified ten factors that made the context ripe for the creation of a new type of university in a country where distance education had no roots. The following factors were significant in creating a positive climate: there were prevailing beliefs in the educational community about the potential of educational technology with accompanying benefits from the rationalization of teaching, increased awareness of distance education from other countries, support from student organizations, social equality was a matter of national reform, and funding from state

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government as well from the Volkswagen Foundation. The Fernuniversität Planning Commission conducted visits to the USSR, France, the UKOU in England, and to three institutions in the USA: Pennsylvania State University, University of Wisconsin, and SUNY Empire State College, which is analyzed in Chapter 5. Peters (1997) noted Empire State's pioneering spirit, success expanding access to adults working full-time, student-centered teaching methods, and guided independent degree programs.

The establishment of the Fernuniversität occurred at the same time as the expansion of traditional universities to serve the growing needs of increased high school graduates and to make the nation economically competitive in global markets. Although the expansion occurred across the entire higher education system, traditional universities still resisted the creation of this new distance teaching university due to prevailing elitist notions that universities should not radically alter their practices of nurturing young adults using campus-based programs. Their resistance was also likely attributable to the fact that traditional universities were not consulted in planning the Fernuniversität and because they feared the diversion of financial resources (Peters, 1997). Germany's open university was an important influence on how other open universities operated (Nichols, 2021).

Like the situation in Germany, Israel had a well-developed system of higher education, but did not have prior correspondence study experience when the Everyman's University was established in 1974. Even so, the country needed increased capacity for nontraditional learners and for improved teacher training (Ginzburg, 1997). The traditional universities were skeptical yet did not resist the formation of the Everyman's University because of a concerted effort by the founders to convince others that the new institution would supplement rather than replace

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traditional universities, especially catering to military students and transfer students (Ginzburg, 1997).

The Open Universiteit of the Netherlands was authorized by the Parliament in 1981 and first enrolled students in 1984. The idea had grown slowly since it was first proposed in 1967 and then flourished toward the late 1970s when there was growing national concern for women's equality, lifelong learning, and improving socio-economic status for individuals on the margins of society (Leibbrandt, 1997). This university emphasized flexibility, akin to the kind suggested by Wedemeyer's (1981) Theory of Independent Learning. For example, it offered self-paced courses, year-round starts, noncredit and short program options for lifelong learning, and open admission policies in a modular format that combined into one system continuing education and academic degrees (Leibbrandt, 1997).

The Open Universiteit of the Netherlands learned important lessons from not only the UKOU, as so many did, but also from Fernuniversität in Germany and Everyman's University in Israel (Leibbrandt, 1997). From the German example, they learned not to succumb to political pressure to open before they were ready with sophisticated course materials and to avoid renting space in multiple locations. From the Israeli example, they employed a small academic staff by cooperating with traditional universities. Leibbrandt (1999) noted that staff with traditional university experience went through an adjustment to the industrial nature of course production characteristic of open learning system. It is interesting that Peters (1997) did not make a similar observation about the staff at the Fernuniversität given his advocacy of the industrial model of distance education. However, Keegan (1983) explained that Peters addressed this resistance of staff coming from traditional universities. Like Germany and Israel, politicians supported the creation of the new institution in the Netherlands. However, political support was not just for the

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establishment of an open university because the country needed to expand capacity across the system. Politicians hoped it would create ripples of innovation for the traditional universities as well (Leibbrandt, 1997).

The global proliferation of open universities has not been regionally balanced. The Contact North searchable directory of open universities shows that Asia, Africa, and Europe have the most and Latin America only has a few distance teaching universities (<https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/universities>). According to Tait (2018), the United States, France, Russia, and Australia did not follow the national open university model at all during the first phase of this proliferation from 1970 to the 1990s because they already had extensive distance education systems via dual-mode universities and private programs, where most offerings were outside of higher education. For example, by the mid-1980s in the United States, approximately 600 courses of study were offered by an estimated 400 private home-study schools catering to vocational and professional needs (Zigerell, 1984). Although Tait (2018) did not add Canada to the list of countries that did not follow the establishment of a national open university, the same conclusion may be drawn considering the three Canadian open universities, i.e., Athabasca University, The Open Learning Institute of British Columbia, and the Université TÉLUQ were created to serve regional, not national, needs.

The establishment of open universities in industrializing and industrialized countries illustrates common themes. First, politicians, not educators, often instigated the establishment of open universities. Political support helped institutional leaders navigate the “suspicion or hostility” (Mugridge, 1997b, p. 167) they encountered, especially from established traditional universities (Moore, 2003). Second, the new open universities encountered resistance from their traditional university counterparts and were often left to wait for the student results to prove

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themselves. Third, there is “an emphasis on the shared experience among distance teaching universities” (Mugridge, 1997b, p. 168). In essence, they all drew on the UKOU practices and shared their knowledge with each other. This extension of distance teaching knowledge has since permeated traditional universities seeking to expand their distance education programs (Meyer, 2009b).

Canada and the United States lacked and perhaps did not need because of their existing distance education offerings, the kind of national political support required to establish the new open universities in countries with sparse or nonexistent distance education programs. Even so, new and smaller innovative and nontraditional universities that shared similarities with open universities were established in the United States and Canada during the 1970s (Moore, 2003; Mugridge, 1986). American examples in this study include SUNY Empire State College, Thomas Edison College, and Regents College (Moore, 2003). Athabasca University and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia, also in this study, are two Canadian examples of smaller universities with open characteristics that were designed for regional needs (Daniel, 1986; Daniel & Smith, 1979; Kaufman & Mugridge, 1986; Rothe, 1986).

Third Generation of Distance Education - Virtual Universities

The Internet “stimulated new ways of organizing distance teaching” (Moore, 2003, p. 21). A new type of institution, the virtual university, arose in the 1990s due to the Internet. A virtual university normally grants degrees and usually lacks a campus where students would go for teaching and learning (Meyer, 2009b). Virtual universities shared with the open universities established during the 1970s the goal of expanding mass higher education (Cox, 2009). The phenomenon of the virtual university began with a political discussion in 1995 that led to the

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1997 establishment of Western Governors University, which is analyzed in Chapter 6 of this study.

A variety of virtual university institution types exist. The term “virtual university” is ambiguous (Meyer, 2009b). It may mean different things and can create confusion. For example, the term is sometimes used to refer to institutions that are similar to traditional universities and some virtual universities may not even be autonomous institutions (Meyer, 2009b). Three virtual university institution types are relevant to this study. A distance education/technology-based university serves adult students using various technologies for teaching and learning and usually offers alternative programs in addition to degrees (Meyer, 2009b). Universities selected for this study that fit into this category include Athabasca University, the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia, SUNY Empire State University, and the United States Open University. A degree/competency-based organization is an institution that grants degrees using competency assessment of student learning (Meyer, 2009b). Institutions selected for this study that fit into this category include the Regents External Degree, Thomas Edison State College, and Western Governors University. An extended traditional university offers programs to nonresident adults via a correspondence or extension division within the university (Meyer, 2009b). The University of Maryland University College originated as this kind of institution and subsequently gained institutional autonomy.

Virtual universities are significant because they “have grown to be an accepted part of the higher education landscape, and they have also subtly changed that landscape, making online learning and online ways of doing business more acceptable among traditional higher education institutions” (Meyer, 2009a, p. 1). Virtual universities demonstrate rapid higher education innovation, which contradicts “the old saw that change in higher education happens at a glacial

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pace" (Meyer, 2009c, p. 110). Institutions established in the 1990s such as Western Governors University and the United States Open University are examples of rapid change in higher education innovation using the Internet. Daniel (1996) cautioned against rapid higher education innovation intended to create:

a new type of network mega-university with many quasi-autonomous nodes...[because this]...currently fashionable concept of a virtual university, that simply networks existing universities in new ways, will fail unless it can evoke the personal commitment from students and staff that is the basis of the academic community. (p. 36)

Daniel (1996) was specifically concerned about proposals for new virtual universities such as the African Virtual University, established in 1996 with World Bank funding to support the expansion of higher education in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe (Juma, 2006) and Western Governors University that were consortia arrangements. Although tangential to this study about the origins of open universities, it is worth noting that Western Governors University, one of the institutions selected for this research project, has grown into an award-winning 21st century institution.

Although publicly-funded virtual universities were established with the cherished distance education democratizing social purpose of expanding access to underserved individuals, they increasingly emphasized efficiency and workforce needs (Cox, 2009). This shift, left unaddressed by Cox, was due at least in part to the rise of neoliberal economic policies. The impact of neoliberalism is discussed in the last section of this chapter.

History of Distance Education Summary

Four conclusions may be drawn about the history of distance higher education. First, historical developments demonstrate that numerous forms of institutions and programs existed,

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and each was informed by their unique historical context. Rumble and Keegan (1982) boldly stated that the antecedents of open universities “that is, universities wholly or almost exclusively dedicated to distance teaching [were] a matter of time” (p. 10). This argument is an example of teleology, whereby an individual draws conclusions about the past based on overarching ideas of progress or decline. As explained in Chapter 3, historians avoid teleological arguments. While the forces of the expansion of mass higher education were aligning with technology and political support, the development of single-mode distance universities, i.e., open universities, was by no means historically inevitable. Second, there was a great deal of cross-proliferation of ideas from various contexts about distance education. Most notable for this project are the developments in the United States, Canada, and England regarding extension programs, correspondence education, and using technology for distance education that resulted in open learning systems. Distance education practitioner-scholars shared their findings with each other and published research to support open and distance education. Third, distance education became increasingly innovative over time, especially due to the need to expand mass higher education and employing technologies to support that goal. In doing so, they were accomplishing, at least in part, the call for all nations to “move faster and faster into the age of mass education” (Bereday as cited in Wedemeyer, 1973, p. 1). Fourth, distance education consistently worked toward the idealistic goal of democratizing higher education via sustained pragmatism.

Theme 3: Openness in Education

The concept of openness is another important theme. The history of education illustrates the persistent opening up of education via democratizing expansion and innovation (Iiyoshi & Kumar, 2008). The concept of openness is difficult to define because the term incorporates many

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forms, dimensions, and meanings. Wedemeyer (1973) identified the difficulty defining the term “open” and this problem has persisted and grown increasingly complex over time.

The concept of openness “draws upon multiple subject areas, making a well-defined set of literature to include a challenge” (Weller et al., 2018, p. 112). This lack of a consistent definition is supported by several scholars (Baker, 2017; Iiyoshi & Kumar, 2008; Smith & Seward, 2017; Weller et al., 2018; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2020). For example, scholars have referred to the fifty shades or many shades of openness (Pomerantz & Peek, 2016; Bozkurt & Koseoglu, 2018). Zawacki-Richter et al. (2020) described openness as an octopus with many tentacles. With broader intentions, Baker (2017) suggested openness should be considered an umbrella term that allows for a flexible and fluid nature including general characteristics of “freedom, justice, respect, openness as attitude or culture, the absence of barriers, promotion of sharing, accessibility, transparency, collaboration, agency, self-direction, personalization and ubiquitous ownership” (p. 131-132). This umbrella term allows for the various iterations of educational openness such as open content, open software, open research, open classrooms, open educational resources (OER), open courseware, MOOCs, etc.

Despite these multifaceted definitional challenges, scholars have detected patterns in the literature about openness in education. Baker (2017) categorized the definitions into three approaches: “historical accounts of related movements and events; philosophically or conceptually seating openness as the underpinning ideal of a given context, and operationally negotiating openness in practical contexts” (p. 130). Similarly, Zawacki-Richter et al. (2020) delineated strands in the literature according to origins, history, theory, applications, stakeholders, and current place in the field of distance, open, and flexible education. All of these categories contribute to the conceptualization of the interconnectedness of the various tentacles

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of openness. Expanding access to education lies at the heart of this interconnectedness and is especially important for open universities.

OER and open practices are teaching and learning manifestations of the values of openness (Cronin, 2017; Koseoglu & Bozkurt, 2018; Naidu, 2016). OER are characterized by the 5Rs (retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute) that have come to regulate Creative Commons open licensing (Wiley, 2014). Open educational practices may include flexible learning assessment such as competency-based and portfolio demonstration of learning outcomes. By providing students with flexibility regarding how to illustrate their competencies, portfolios align with open educational practices (Hoven, et al., 2022). Since the growth of prior learning assessment during the 1960s in the United States, higher educational institutions have found ways to grant credit for learner's knowledge and skills with the resulting impact of opening up curriculum (Ruinard & McNamara, 2016)

Although scholars tend to agree that openness lacks one specific origin and is instead informed by multiple trends in education policy and practice, they disagree on the origins of openness in education. "Openness in education has multiple roots, and many developments in history affected its evolution" (Bozkurt et al., 2019, p. 79). For example, 17th-century Czech educator and philosopher John Amos Comenius advocated for access to education. This was in line with the "early humanist idea of universal education or as a challenge to make different forms of education available to everybody" (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2020, p. 321). Baker's (2017) timeline of openness in education proposed origins with Dewey and Montessori in the decades from the 1900s-1930s. The timeline acknowledged the contributions of Karl Popper in the 1930s. Popper advocated ideals for an open society where individualism flourished. Neoliberals drew on this variant of openness while ignoring others that advocated social equality

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(Raimondi, 2012). From the 1950s-1970s, Baker (2017) identified open educational influences such as school integration, Illich, Freire, open-plan schools, the founding of the UKOU, and the free school movement. During the late-1960s' nontraditional learning initiatives enhanced by technology facilitated the establishment of open universities, which expanded the deep roots of open education (Zawacki-Richter, Müskens, & Marín, 2022). The 1980s-2010s included new initiatives with open software, open content, and open research (Baker, 2017).

Another view suggested the historical roots of openness in education are connected to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulated education as a basic human right (Bozkurt et al., 2019). The UN Declaration of Human Rights spurred the creation of UNESCO and that organization's commitment to expanding education access worldwide. Another viewpoint identified the 1960s as the origins of open education, although they did not justify that assertion (Jordan & Weller, 2017). A preponderance of evidence coalesces around the advances of open educational initiatives in the post-WWII decades. Although the precise origins of openness are not significant for this study on open online universities, it is helpful to acknowledge the multiplicity of influences that underpin open higher education.

Theme 4: Adult Education

The theme of adult education is relevant to this study because open universities expanded affordable educational opportunities to individuals, particularly adults, who were unable to attend on-campus programs for a variety of personal reasons. Open universities intentionally designed flexible programs catering to busy nontraditional students juggling employment and family obligations. The issue of the purpose and role of higher adult education as part of lifelong learning in the context of a knowledge society is prominent in the literature of adult education. The historical development of adult education shows changes over time as the field

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professionalized, higher education institutions expanded formal learning opportunities to nontraditional learners, international organizations offered policy support, and the purposes shifted from emphasizing humanistic goals during the 1960s to liberal purposes after the 1980s.

Adults learn throughout their lives via formal and informal learning experiences. Formal learning requires engagement with an institution, whereas informal learning can happen incidentally or intentionally, but does not require the learner to engage with an institution (Spencer & Lange, 2014). According to UNESCO, lifelong learning is defined as

an overall scheme aimed at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential outside the education system; in such a scheme men and women are the agents of their own education through continual interaction between their thoughts and actions. Education and learning ... should extend throughout life, include all skills and branches of knowledge, use all possible means, and give the opportunity to all people for full development of the personality. However, only some of that learning occurs in adult education is an institutional response for formal adult learning. Adults undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or skills. (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 9)

This definition of lifelong learning places adult education in both the social and economic purposes of education. Thus, while “education floats in a sea of learning” (Thomas, 1991, p. 182), open universities focus on the formal institutionally-provided lifelong learning experiences. Lifelong learning is especially important for knowledge-based economies, such as Canada and the United States, because this type of economy requires a highly trained, intelligent, flexible, and adaptable workforce (Ashwin, 2022; Kember, 2009).

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The purposes of adult education vary in the literature. Selman (1998) found four main categories of adult education: vocational, social, recreational, and self-development. The vocational category includes job-related learning and economic purposes. The social category includes learning for societal purposes such as nation-building and societal cohesiveness. Recreational and self-development learning focuses on individual pursuits. However, Selman (1998) also noted that clusters of the purposes of adult education could be narrowed into three broad categories: academic, credential, and vocational; personal interest and development; and citizen action and social change. The social and economic purposes of education are the most relevant to this study.

Within the social category, Selman drew on the work of Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) and Jarvis (1995). Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) emphasized the personal aspects of learning as they relate to the social purposes of education. They identified five subcategories of themes within the social purposes of adult education: individual self-actualization, personal and social improvement, cultivation of the intellect, social transformation, and organizational effectiveness. Jarvis (1995) emphasized the benefits to society and identified five subcategories within the social purposes of adult education: knowledge transmission and culture reproduction, social system reproduction and the reproduction of existing social relations, individual advancement and selection, leisure time and institutional expansion, and development and liberation. It is important to note the cultural context of these two views of the social purposes of education. Darkenwald and Merriam wrote in the American context whereas Jarvis was in the European context. Their contexts emphasized individualism and collectivism respectively.

As noted earlier, Canadian and American extension programs which catered to lifelong learners, were often small, underfunded, and housed within higher education institutions. After

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WWII, adult education policy gained global attention due to the advocacy of multinational organizations such as UNESCO, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the European Union (Larson & Cort, 2022). UNESCO identified lifelong education as an important component for peacemaking in the post-WWII context (Boeren & Rubenson, 2022). The purposes of adult education expanded and changed over time since the immediate post-WWII context.

The literature shows decade-based adult education purposes and policy characteristics since WWII. The 1960s focused on general education and vocational training; the 1970s focused on social equality, cultural democracy, and a humanistic approach; the 1980s focused on workforce competency and market deregulation; and the 1990s focused on globalization and technology (Boeren & Rubenson, 2022; Engesbak et al., 2010; Rubenson, 2006). Despite the growth and professionalization of the field of adult education since then, there are continued global concerns about insufficient funding, the ongoing invisibility of adult education programs, and national policies that undervalue the role of adult education in lifelong learning policies (Boeren & Rubenson, 2022). Neoliberalism has contributed to this undervaluation. Over time, neoliberalism has constrained the purposes of adult education to the narrow role of workforce development for economic growth (Larson & Cort, 2022).

Theme 5: Neoliberalism and Human Capital Theory

Neoliberalism is an economic theory. It translates classical political liberalism ideals into political and economic policies that privilege market-based decisions over government-based decisions, with the intention of removing government decision-making while protecting capital and individual rights (Giroux, 2002; MacLean, 2017; Marginson, 2019; Raimondi, 2012). In addition to the reduction of government, it advocates increased accountability, a hierarchical

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government structure, and free trade (Raimondi, 2012). Neoliberalism opponents argue that this dominant economic discourse threatens democracy because it subsumes democratic impulses to market trends (Giroux, 2002). This is relevant to higher education because the rise of neoliberalism, especially since the 1980s, has altered higher education policies and practices by viewing students as current consumers and future working consumers, which is a shift away from the university's purpose of providing a humanist and liberal education to produce a democratic citizenry (Raimondi, 2012).

Post-secondary educational institutions addressing workforce and market needs did not begin with neoliberalism. As noted earlier, the ancient universities included professional training for the clergy. Policymakers and universities responded to the changing economic context of the Industrial Revolution with the Morrill Acts and extension programs. Whereas modern universities were designed to fill social and economic needs, neoliberalism has increasingly shifted public perceptions away from higher education as a public good toward a more consumer driven model (Cannella & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017; Marginson, 2019). Neoliberalism is historically significant and relevant for this study because higher education served as the fertile ground for neoliberalism to emerge and then spread as the dominant economic policy context toward the end of the 20th century.

Origins of Neoliberalism

Neoliberal thinking originated with a group of economic scholars at the University of Chicago during the 1930s who drew on philosophical roots from the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. These scholars and like-minded business representatives solidified their ideas when they formed the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947 (MacLean, 2017). The group used institutions of higher education to spread their ideology, which they saw as the best way to resist

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the dangers of totalitarianism and promote individual liberty. The roots and proliferation of their ideas originated within a specific historical context.

Neoliberalism emerged in the United States, specifically at the University of Chicago, as a rejection of the Keynesian economic policy response to the Great Depression, which encouraged government interventions to remedy unfettered capitalism. Amidst the angst of the post-World War I climate, Keynes argued that laissez-faire economic policies “no longer worked in a world where the population was rising, nations were relying on outside sources for food, and the economy was moving from agriculture to manufacturing” (Raimondi, 2012, p. 41). Social and economic upheaval resulted from the unequal distribution of wealth created by the Industrial Revolution. Even after Progressive Era reforms to curb the worst abuses of capitalism such as child labor, many people advocated increased government intervention to stymie the exploitation and social inequalities resulting from unregulated enterprise (Zinn, 2003). The result of Keynesian policies can be readily seen with the New Deal responses to the Great Depression in the United States as well as similar social welfare policies implemented by western social democracies since the end of World War II (Edwards, et al., 2021).

Whereas Keynesian economic policies advocated government-run social welfare programs designed for the common good, neoliberal policies are guided by two operating principles that conflict with the Keynesian model. First, the government should not be involved with most economic decisions (Hursh, 2017; Madsen, 2022). Instead, the market should determine economic decisions on the premise that the market is more efficient and rational than the government. Second, public services should be privatized as much as possible (Hursh, 2017; Madsen, 2022). These guiding principles have steered educational policy toward the economic purposes and diminished the social purposes of education. Although neoliberalism sprang into

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the policy discourse after World War II and has dominated international economic policy discourse since the 1980s, neoliberalism was shaped by earlier ideological influences and was a product of the late-19th century and early-20th century historical political, economic, and social context.

Four economic scholars who studied or worked at the University of Chicago at various points between the 1930s and the 1950s, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, Frank Knight, and James Buchanan, shaped and spread the neoliberal agenda (Devine, 2017; MacLean, 2017). These scholars, who were contemporaries of Keynes, narrowly embraced Adam Smith's ideas of laissez-faire economics from the Enlightenment. All four scholars were influential, but Hayek and Buchanan were especially important for their impact on the history of higher education.

Friedrich Hayek's ideas of public choice theory focused on converting Enlightenment political ideals of individual liberty to economic practices in a way that did not challenge the existing autocratic political authority of the Austro-Hungarian Empire prior to collapsing as a result of World War I (Devine, 2017). Hayek argued that three institutions, the church, the family, and the market, formed the basis of western society as they were the evolutionary result of infinite individual decisions over time and beyond any individual human design. In Hayek's view that human rationality is limited, no human was capable of guiding these institutions. Applying this justification to the market, he argued that the market could compensate for limited human rationality while still affording individual choice and freedom. In this sense, the market was smarter than humans because the market "creates, conveys, and reveals information in a way no other human institution can emulate" (Devine, 2017, p. 7). Drawing on Adam Smith's principles of market supply and demand, Hayek argued that the market "provided the only means yet discovered of coordinating the desires and actions of millions of freely acting individuals,

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without government compulsion, in what Hayek called a ‘spontaneous order’” (MacLean, 2017, p. 39). Hayek thought the government could not accomplish such a task because public servants make choices about policies and practices. Given human rationality limitations, any government actions were prone to the failure of individual errors that could result in extreme threats to individual and market freedom, as seen with the totalitarian regimes of the 1930s and 1940s (MacLean, 2017). Hayek equated government intervention in the economy, and especially socialism, with slavery because of the lack of individual freedom in such an economic system (MacLean, 2017). In this view, the market is the best decider of social policy because it removes political influence and avoids conditions that cultivate fascism, communism, and socialism,

Hayek’s pessimistic view of democracy deemed that interest groups would only act in their self-interest, infringe on the freedoms of others if allowed to implement their self-interested policies, e.g., social justice calls for economic redistribution of resources, and thus initiate the conditions for totalitarianism (Devine, 2017). Therefore, he called for the idea of a universal super law, which in economic terms meant market policies and practices beyond government control. Herein lies the heart of the neoliberal agenda: establishing laws to protect the market from any future government influence so the market can operate to the best of its ability, promote individual liberties, and avoid totalitarian societies (Devine, 2017; MacLean, 2017).

In 1947 Hayek invited 38 like-minded thinkers to Mont Pelerin in the Swiss Alps to strategize the proliferation of their ideological goals (MacLean, 2017). Only two years after the conclusion of the devastation of World War II, the group was sincerely concerned about the “survival of Western civilization as they saw it: for the endurance of self-governing nations of freely associating individuals and of the market capitalism that by the turn of the twentieth century had made Europe and America into powerhouses of production and culture” (MacLean,

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2017, p. 37). Corporate interests such as the William Volker Fund subsidized the travel for the American delegation in hopes of rolling back the Keynesian social welfare state that impeded laissez-faire capitalism and maximizing profits (MacLean, 2017).

The founding members included, among others, the American economist James Buchanan (elaborated below), the American economist Milton Friedman (known for his ideas about technical efficiency, a positivist view of truth, and support for school vouchers), Karl Popper (known for his ideas about an open society), Ludwig Von Mises (Hayek's teacher in Austria), and the English millionaire Ralph Fisher (Devine, 2017). The Mont Pelerin meeting resulted in a strategy to create think tanks to propagate their preference for market-based decisions (Devine, 2017; MacLean, 2017). The first such think tank, funded by Fisher, was the Institute of Economic Affairs. It published easily digestible pamphlets outlining their neoliberal point of view and emphasizing the impartiality of market-based rationality (Devine, 2017). With their propaganda printed, the Mont Pelerin members were ready to spread their message with missionary zeal.

James Buchanan was instrumental in bringing these ideas back to the United States and firmly implanting them within institutions of higher education (MacLean, 2017). In addition to his participation at Mont Pelerin, Buchanan was informed by his background as well as the historical context within which he operated. He grew up in Tennessee during the early-1900s, served in the military during WWII, enrolled at the University of Chicago in 1946, and subsequently established the Center for Study of Public Choice, a neoliberal think tank at the University of Virginia that went on to disseminate neoliberal ideas nationally (MacLean, 2017).

Buchanan grew up in Tennessee during the Jim Crow era when segregation and racialized thinking were the norm (MacLean, 2017). The Nashville Agrarians, a chapter of the

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Southern Agrarians, were an early influence on Buchanan's social, political, and economic views. Writing in the 1930s, the Southern Agrarians were a group of literary men who promoted a return to an idealized version of a highly racialized society with "rural values free from corruption by creeping industrialism and materialism" (MacLean, 2017, p. 33). The Agrarians hoped for a return to the Jeffersonian yeoman farmer ideal and detested the interfering influence of northern industrialist reformers and government interference that dealt a blow to the established culture and reputation of the South during and after the Civil War. The Agrarians thought government expansion since the Progressive Era of the early-1900s was creating a totalitarian state that destroyed regional folkways (MacLean, 2017). One of the notable Nashville Agrarians was Donald Davidson who applied the term Leviathan, i.e., from biblical origins and subsequently used by Thomas Hobbes during the Enlightenment, to describe an evil form of government that was tyranny masked as benevolence as seen with government policies such as the abolition of slavery in 1865 and the Progressive Era reforms that protected workers' rights and increased federal regulations in many aspects of business (MacLean, 2017). These ideas shaped Buchanan's views about the dangers of government incursion that destroyed cherished ways of life.

While studying at the University of Chicago after WWII, Buchanan's research flipped the Keynesian notion that markets failed society i.e., resulting in the need for government intervention against unbridled capitalism, and instead investigated government failure due to lack of public trust in the government (MacLean, 2017). Ironically, Buchanan drew on the work of 19th-century leftist thinker Knut Wicksell who proposed that economists should "scrutinize the actual operational rules, practices, and incentives that created the framework of government and bureaucratic decision making" (MacLean, 2017, p. 42) and stop proposing government policy

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advice because government leaders were simply always acting in their self-interest, just like all other individuals in the market. Buchanan took these ideas and applied them to taxation, arguing that no one should be taxed without their consent. In this way, he expressed his abhorrence for the kind of Keynesian social welfare state that dominated President Truman's Fair Deal society, as exemplified by increasingly higher marginal tax rates for the wealthy. His ideas came to further fruition while he was working at the University of Virginia (MacLean, 2017).

Buchanan created the Center for the Study of Public Choice at the University of Virginia in 1956 (MacLean, 2017). The historical context cannot be overstated because this institute was created to resist the federally mandated desegregation of public schools required by the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954. Virginia's response is historically significant for the lost year of education when many public schools closed their doors to avoid desegregation compliance (Highland & McDougall, 2015). In Buchanan's mind, the federal mandate was not only an overreach of government authority because the people had no say in the decision, but an example of gangsterism or the tyranny and coercion of minority self-interests (MacLean, 2017).

Buchanan thought such overreach was the result of a social movement whereby individuals, acting collectively with their shared self-interests, desired to take from wealthy individuals what the wealthy had earned by their own volition to benefit others who had failed to create their good fortune (MacLean, 2017). In this view, Buchanan viewed all social movements that required the redistribution of taxes to support welfare programs for the common good as gangsterism (MacLean, 2017). This included any form of redistribution without explicit individual consent including issues of civil rights, labor rights, and elderly rights. As a "principal leader of public choice theory, James Buchanan set out to detonate the 'normative delusion' that 'the state was, somehow, a benevolent entity and those who made decisions on behalf of the state

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guided by the general or public interest” (Buchanan, 1997, as cited in Marginson, 2016, p. 128).

As an individualist libertarian, it appears that Buchanan did not believe in the idea of public common good because he only acknowledged multiple and competing self-interests. Although Buchanan would likely have preferred immediate results, he successfully played the long game to implant neoliberalism in institutions of higher education across the nation.

Recognizing the political nature of his goals and the fact that the University of Virginia was a publicly funded institution, Buchanan carefully constructed the language of the Center for the Study of Public Choice to avoid scrutiny (MacLean, 2017). For example,

how government officials make decisions became ‘public choice economics’; his analysis of how the rules of government might be altered so officials could not act on the will of the majority became ‘constitutional economics.’ The enemy became ‘the collective order,’ a code phrase for organized social and political groups that looked to government. (MacLean, 2017, p. xxv)

With these ideas firmly planted within an institution of higher education, and with similar think tanks following thereafter nationwide, entire generations of students were educated in this neoliberal philosophy with long-term implications for the law and higher education policy (MacLean, 2017). However, the popularity of these ideas did not coincide with the political, social, and economic context of the 1950s-1970s because of the impact of the civil rights movement and the continued government expansion that happened even through Republican Richard Nixon’s administration (Edwards et al., 2021).

Although initially not popular, the long-term impact can be seen in several ways. The Center for the Study of Public Choice, which moved from the University of Virginia to George Mason University, became the control center for a national plan to train activists who would

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transform some aspects of the law in favor of the market-based principles that guided neoliberalism (MacLean, 2017). Think tanks and endowed scholars funded by wealthy neoliberal individuals proliferated at universities across the United States. Furthermore, the American Legislative Exchange Council was formed in 1972 and has since created hundreds of draft laws that legislators enacted in their districts at the local and state level. In doing so, they have effectively tied the hands of public officials, making it difficult for the government to interfere in all aspects of society (MacLean, 2017).

The rise of neoliberalism resulted in a constitutional revolution, while claiming to be conservative in the classical liberal sense, because neoliberals changed the rules, rather than the rulers, to prevent individual government actors from responding to social movements (MacLean, 2017). These limitations on government were designed to be permanent and binding to the point that they have now become so accepted they may be considered part of the social imaginary (Marginson, 2019). Even though these restrictions are fundamentally undemocratic and geared towards an oligarchy, they were designed to prevent totalitarianism. Although drawing on classical liberal themes of freedom and rights, the goals of neoliberalism are to:

reinstatement of the kind of political economy that prevailed in America at the opening of the twentieth century, when the mass disenfranchisement of voters and the legal treatment of labor unions as illegitimate enabled large corporations and wealthy individuals to dominate Congress and most state governments alike, and to feel secure that the nation's courts would not interfere with their reign. (MacLean, 2017, p. xxxiv)

At the broadest levels for society, this shift has “morphed away from a jurisdictional emphasis (with a potential focus on fairness) to forms of veridiction (neoliberal truth regimes) that

legitimate intervention into all aspects of society” (Cannella & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017, p. 155) resulting in seismic shifts for higher education. The idea that neoliberalism has changed from an economic theory to veridiction is troubling because it imposes a straitjacket on the multi-faceted purposes of the university, especially as it relates to the expansion of mass higher education for democratizing social purposes.

Neoliberalism and Higher Education

The implications of neoliberalism for higher education generally and distance education specifically are compounding. At the general level, corporate grant-funded faculty research projects are increasingly tied to corporate needs. Resultingly, universities value grant funds over the pursuit of new knowledge that is not accompanied by hefty monetary compensation (Cannella & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017). Humanities programs are declining in favor of capital gains-driven academic program innovation and market-driven skills such as computer science (Cannella & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017; Morris & Targ; 2022). Faculty scholarship is constrained by neoliberal impacts on publication journals that seek profit above the pursuit of knowledge (Cannella & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017). Although, open publishing, as mentioned earlier, counters the profit-driven trends of some corporate publishers (Weller, 2020). Neoliberal governance policies that centralized administrative decision making and increased reliance on cheap precariously-employed faculty diminish faculty voice and power (Morris & Targ; 2022). Universities are selling branding rights to the highest bidder, outsourcing services, and preparing students to view freedom and consumption as the greatest goods while valuing their competitive self-reliance (Olssen & Peters, 2005).

In doing so, neoliberalism has changed the definition of what it means to be a citizen, which is important to higher education because many institutions include citizenship

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development as integral components of the social purposes of their mission. As Raimondi (2017) convincingly stated, “universities need to educate new cosmopolitan citizens who have the workplace skills needed to retain global competitiveness, yet who are culturally aware, justice-focused, and tolerant” (p. 47). Additionally, neoliberalism and markets are not positioned to solve major global problems such as war, poverty, terrorism, and injustice (Barber, 2002). Higher education will struggle to achieve the social purpose mission of preparing global citizens when neoliberalist ideas about the primacy of the self-interested consumer dominate at the exclusion of the humanist liberal arts and critical programs that foster learning for the joy of learning and simultaneously contribute to essential workplace skills.

Most relevant to distance education is the way that neoliberalism fails to acknowledge individual abilities and structural social differences such as the inequalities reproduced by systemic social and economic inequalities (Raimondo, 2017). Neoliberalism assumes everyone has equal access opportunity and everyone has an equal say in the market as a consumer (Raimondo, 2017). Essentially, it is an individual’s fault or perhaps bad luck, if they fail to exercise their market-driven functions. Raimondo (2017) argued that this view neglects the reality that the market does not distribute power evenly.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, higher education expanded during the dominance of Keynesian economic policies (Kerr, 2001). Furthermore, historical chronology shows that new types of universities, including several identified for this study, emerged during the 1970s when Keynesian economic policies were declining, but had not yet been supplanted by neoliberalism. Another implication of neoliberalism for distance education is that it sparked a reaction against the market and profit-driven journals (Cannella & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017). Open access scholarship, as noted earlier, is a significant trend in the tentacle of openness that has a

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democratizing mission at its core. While initially unpopular given the historic context of the 1950s-1970s, neoliberalism successfully manifested with human capital theory in the 1960s that has shaped higher education policy worldwide ever since.

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory has dominated education policy since the early 1960s, which was the same time as the expansion of mass higher education in the United States (Gillies, 2015; Madsen, 2022; Walters, 2004). Two seminal scholars, Schultz (1960, 1961) and Becker (1964), laid the groundwork for this economic theory that connects education and work. Both scholars were part of the University of Chicago known for advocating neoliberalism. Despite widespread criticism from other disciplines and epistemological viewpoints, human capital theory persists globally as the guiding principle that justifies national investment in higher education directly linked to economic growth. Like other theories and philosophies, human capital theory raises questions about the social and economic purposes of higher education.

Human capital theory of education derives from the sociological functionalist approach and the corresponding technical functional theory (Walters, 2004). The technical functional theory postulated that worker skill levels must change due to technological innovations. Along with new technological skills, displaced manual labor workers require new knowledge (Walters, 2004). Educational institutions play a vital role in this new knowledge-based economy for two reasons. First, institutions of higher education train the workforce with the required skills to serve the economic demands. Second, higher education institutions contribute to technological innovation via research. The marriage of the expansion of mass higher education and economic growth was solidified with human capital theory.

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Human capital theory postulates that education generally, and higher education specifically, creates individual and national benefits (Gillies, 2015). For the individual, the benefits are seen in increased lifetime earnings. The nation benefits from those increased earnings because of economic growth. Seen as a linear economic equation in a closed system, higher education increases the marginal productivity of labor where the added-value can be measured in economic outputs (Gillies, 2015). Human capital theory marked a shift in economic thinking, which previously saw national economic growth as being explicitly tied to rates of technological progress and savings (Gillies, 2015). According to human capital theory, investment in human capital produces knowledge and innovation, which in turn results in economic growth (Schultz, 1960, 1961).

The seeds of human capital theory sprouted and flourished because of favorable economic conditions in the United States during the 1950s-1970s. Piketty (2014) identified those economic conditions and explained how they created a context of optimism for the expansion of higher education. The conditions included increased employment for higher education graduates, increased social mobility, wealth created mostly from employment income rather than inheritance, and a decline in relative inherited income. These conditions suggested that merit and hard work, not family socioeconomic status, created the optimistic sense that education can produce an equitable and efficient society (Piketty, 2014). Furthermore, the 1950s-1970s era was marked by the civil rights movement, which created a policy discourse about the need for social equality. Marginson (2019) argued that the two policy streams, i.e., human capital theory and social equality, were intertwined. By expanding access to higher education to those historically disadvantaged, national investment in higher education could harness the most growth potential

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whereby “all productive talent would become educated” (Marginson, 2019, p. 288) and contribute to the national economy while also promoting social equality.

Amidst this context, policymakers latched onto the idea that affordable mass education could be expanded rationally and efficiently. By expanding equality of opportunities, higher education could create both economic and social benefits. Stemming from the United States, human capital theory spread globally with the help of UNESCO and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Marginson, 2019). Although human capital theory proliferated globally, it is not without criticism.

Criticisms of human capital theory abound in the literature because of methodological, economic, political, and moral reasons. As an economic theory, it has inherent methodological limitations (Marginson, 2019). It assumes that education and work are unified in a closed linear system. Although certainly overlapping, work and education exist in their own separate partly-open systems influenced by external factors about why individuals pursue higher education (Marginson, 2019; Weick, 1976). By neglecting other factors and opting for a single mathematical lens, the result is only one possible truth (Marginson, 2019). To combat this omission, Marginson (2019) suggested employing a critical realist lens using historicization because critical realism acknowledges the role of historical contingencies and other agents in social structures, which are inherently partly open and therefore influenced by numerous factors that cannot be reduced to mathematical equations.

Economic criticism stems from several perspectives. Human capital theory does not acknowledge the importance of a strong economy to begin with because young talent tends to flee in a weak economy (Gillies, 2015). Another economic criticism revolves around the idea of signaling or credentialism, which means that higher education only signals to employers the

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potential for useful human capital. However, the higher education degree itself does not increase economic growth because many other factors contribute to an individual's economic productivity. Seminal credentialist theorists, Berg (1970) and Collins (1979) disagreed with the technical functionalist argument that education must continuously expand to provide constant worker skill upgrading (Walters, 2004). Credentialists see education as an artificial good that can be used as currency to essentially buy into specific kinds of employment and elites control those entry credentials to protect their privilege (Walters, 2004). Furthermore, Marxist and other critical interpretations castigate human capital theory for the lack of recognition of power, labor relations, and the systemic inequalities based on social class structures (Gillies, 2015; Walters, 2004).

The moral criticisms of human capital theory result in political implications because of policy decisions. The moral criticisms center around the purpose of higher education. Policymakers that rely on human capital theory as their guiding motivation tend to privilege higher education programs aligned with professional opportunities that produce economic growth (Gillies, 2015). This can be seen in policies that require performance-based funding such as tying public funding to institutional graduate employability rates. Therefore, the liberal arts receive less funding, skirting them to the periphery of the purposes of higher education. Furthermore, programs that serve individuals with special needs, who may never contribute to the national economy, likewise are subsumed to the primacy of professional programs (Gillies, 2015). Similarly, lifelong learning programs that target retired individuals are relegated to the higher educational backburner. When policymakers demand economic growth justifications of higher education programs, the social purposes of higher education may still be achieved, but with less funding and political support (Gillies, 2015; Marginson, 2019).

Neoliberalism and Human Capital Theory Summary

Neoliberalism has been shaped by classical liberal ideas, the explosion of unfettered capitalism during the Industrial Revolution, Progressive Era reforms, Keynesian policies that created the modern welfare state, and the totalitarian governments of World War II. In terms of higher education, these influences are important because government determines educational policy, which in turn determines who has access to publicly-funded educational institutions. The history of neoliberalism is relevant to the history of open universities because of the context. Open universities were mostly established during the decline of Keynesian policies that advocated public funded for the common good and the rise of neoliberalism that has come to ignore the social and democratizing purposes of higher education that were elemental to the creation of open universities.

Human capital theory complements and supports the broader rise of neoliberalism. The theory suggests that governments should invest in education to produce economic growth. It also suggests that individuals benefit from this investment via increased lifetime earnings. Human capital theory is historically significant because it represented a shift away from the dominant economic assumption that technology and savings produced national growth. Instead, human capital theory recognizes the importance of human capital to produce innovation and knowledge.

Human capital theory and neoliberalism emphasize market-driven outcomes, mathematical measurements, and economic growth while ignoring the social purposes of higher education. Epistemologically, these ways of knowing are limited by a lack of historical contextualization. Whereas Marginson (2019) utilized critical realism to analyze the impact of neoliberalism in historical context, this study employs an interpretive paradigm and historical inquiry of primary and secondary sources to assess how the selected eight open universities

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founded in the 1970s and 1990s identified their intended social and economic purposes of higher education at their institutional origins.

Conclusion

Historians are not alone in claiming the scholarship of the history of higher education as it relates to the theoretical and historical events that shaped the founding of open universities. Sociologists, economists, political scientists, philosophers, and higher education administrators have contributed to the body of knowledge about what happened, how it happened, and why it matters within the strands of literature that intertwine to inform the origins of the open universities that emerged in Canada and the United States. Several themes emerged from this review of the literature.

The political and economic context is an important theme because political will, accompanied by sufficient public funding, was the linchpin for the successful transformation from elite to mass higher education. Public policy discourse changed from the late-19th and mid-20th-century acceptance of the Keynesian economic model justifying government support of programs designed to achieve some level of social equality to the latter half of the 20th century perceiving such government intervention as evil incarnate. The six higher education institutions in this study that were founded in the 1970s straddled the transition between these two competing paradigms. Neoliberalism was popular and spreading by the 1990s when the other two institutions in this study were created.

Another important theme is the ongoing debate about the social and economic purposes of higher education. The modern comprehensive university emerged in the United States. It combined the English elite emphasis of liberal arts for character development of future leaders with the German model of graduate research and specialization. The multiversity, as Kerr (2001)

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called it, served numerous social and economic purposes. This type of institution played an important role in the expansion of mass higher education, but it still mostly catered to traditional students with some offerings to nontraditional students via extension programs.

Single-mode distance teaching universities e.g., open universities, expanded mass higher education to nontraditional students. Some institutions emerged during the 1970s global proliferation phase and harnessed print, broadcast, and telecommunications technologies to achieve economies of scale, whereas others were established in the 1990s and relied extensively on Internet technologies. They inspired higher education initiatives that contribute to the goal of achieving universal access to higher education. Increased attention to openness and new types of openness served important social purposes of education via the democratization of knowledge.

The five themes in this literature review informed my study about the origins of open non-profit English-speaking universities in Canada and the United States. The literature reveals a notable absence of the application of historical methodology to the history of distance education, with a few exceptions because so many of the voices were from other fields. There is also a gap regarding the acknowledgement of the open classification of American nonprofit universities that utilized distance education techniques. Nor have these American open universities been compared systematically to their Canadian counterparts. This research project fills these gaps by employing historical methodology, i.e., analysis of institutional primary sources and relevant secondary sources, in a comparative study about the national and regional political, social, and economic circumstances that shaped the origins of eight open universities in Canada and the United States.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This study investigated, described, and compared the origins of eight distance-teaching universities in the United States and Canada. The institutions originated during either the 1970s or the 1990s, and all evolved into open online nonprofit English-speaking universities in the 21st century. This chapter provides the rationale for using an interpretive paradigm and historical methodology to investigate the research questions selected for this study. I explain the tenets of historical methodology, followed by a four-phased research process. I also identify ethical considerations and my positionality.

Research Questions

One main question with three sub-questions guided this study.

- How did the national and regional (state and provincial) economic, political, and social circumstances influence or align with the origins of the open online nonprofit English-speaking universities in Canada and the United States?
 - What were the institutional antecedents to these universities?
 - How did each university articulate their purposes of education for their prospective students? Were their purposes geared toward humanist individual fulfillment for the love of learning, liberal social and economic needs, or both?
 - How did the context of the institutional origins shape the articulated purposes of education? How did the contexts and the articulated purposes of education compare to each other?

Ontological & Epistemological Positioning

The paradigm guiding this study helps “clarify and organize the thinking about the research” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 9). A paradigm may be described as a world view, a set of

beliefs, and a way to pursue knowledge. This historical study interlocks with the interpretivist paradigm whereby meaning does not exist outside of human interpretation because people construct their own realities (Cohen et al., 2018).

Historians construct meaning by interpreting primary and secondary sources of information (Benjamin, 2019). The characteristics of each type of source are discussed later in this chapter. Determining the historically factual truth, such as a date when an event happened, requires a preponderance of evidence. Although the question of how much and what type of evidence is required to interpret something as historical truth is subjective, historians should exhaust their review of available sources (Benjamin, 2019).

History as a Way of Knowing

Lepore (2018) explained that “the work of the historian is not the work of the critic or of the moralist; it is the work of the sleuth and the story-teller, the philosopher and the scientist, the keeper of tales, the sayer of sooth, the teller of truth” (p. xix). Investigating and interpreting the past is a subjective process. History may be “defined as a continual, open-ended process of argument, which is constantly changing” (Wilson, 1999, p. 3). History varies because of new trends, new sources, and new societal movements that all inform how historians interpret the past. Historians seek to explain change and continuity over time, as well as the causation, comparison, and contextualization of historic events (Benjamin, 2019). Historians interpret and explain patterns and trends over time by analyzing the historical roots of events and their contexts.

The act of analyzing and writing a historical narrative aligns with the interpretivist paradigm because historians construct their own meaning based on an extensive review of available sources. For the purposes of this study, history is defined more specifically as the

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purposeful interpretation and retelling of events in the past based on source analysis and source-supported argumentation. The sections about historical methodology and types of sources later in this chapter summarize the historian's craft. The historian's efforts produce a cohesive narrative about what happened in the past, why it happened the way it did, and why it matters.

Society's perceived value of history as a way of knowing has changed over time due to multiple factors that influenced historical methodology. For example, Aristotle's hierarchy of knowledge subsumed history as less valuable than philosophy and poetry because history deals with uniqueness and specificity, whereas the other two ways of knowing transcended into universals (Wilson, 1999). Views of history were subsequently informed by teleology, which assumes that history shows trends in society's progress or decline. French philosopher Auguste Comte created a three-stage teleological model in the mid-19th century (Wilson, 1999). The first stage was dominated by Christian theology, the second by abstract metaphysics, and the third by positivist scientific reasoning. Initially, the scientific revolution severed the bond between historical interpretation and teleology as historians sought to apply scientific methods to interpreting the past such as looking at past human behavior in ways similar to understanding the natural environment (Wilson, 1999). The impact of the scientific method de-emphasized the role of the historian's interpretation in the quest for absolute truth (American Historical Association, 2019). However, Renaissance notions of human progress blended with a scientific approach which subsequently defined history produced during the Enlightenment as teleological (Wilson, 1999). In each teleological stage, historians were generally guided by trends they thought showed progress or decline. The way historians interpreted the past changed in the late-19th century with the advent of historicism (Wilson, 1999).

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The modern field of history is informed by the concept of historicism developed by German historian Leopold von Ranke during the late-19th century (Wilson, 1999). Historicism means studying the past on its own terms without imposing present values, which requires rigorous interrogation of sources within their historical context (Tosh & Lang, 2006). Historicism also means recognizing that one goal of history as a way of knowing is to uncover the uniqueness of the past because each age cannot be reproduced or duplicated exactly. Furthermore, the historicist approach argues that history is the only discipline that explicitly recognizes and seeks “to understand how all knowledge has been constructed over time” (Wilson, 1999, p. 25). This view of history as a way of knowing contradicts Aristotle's view of history as an inferior way of knowing.

In addition to incorporating historicism as essential to the pursuit of historical knowledge, Ranke laid three other cornerstones of modern historical methodology and history as a way of knowing (Wilson, 1999). First, history should follow the hermeneutic tradition of interpreting texts. The historical record is intimately intertwined with the history of written sources (Lepore, 2018). Second, history should be broad in scope while addressing the uniqueness of the past (Wilson, 1999). Third, history should avoid teleology because imposing a championing agenda on the past for purposes of advocating a specific future direction contradicts the purpose of understanding the past on its own terms (Wilson, 1999).

Although not the focus on this study, the teleology of educational technology is relevant to this research endeavor. The teleology of educational technology is the assumption that education technological advancements and corresponding improvements in instruction were inevitable (Watters, 2021). For example, there has been a tendency to view the computer as the inevitable pinnacle of advancement and all other educational technological advancements were

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merely lesser-valued precursors to the computer revolution. Viewing the computer as inevitable suggests that technological progress was the only driver of events often at the expense of recognizing the political, economic, and social factors that also influenced the history of educational technology (Watters, 2021). Whereas this study addressed how the eight institutions in Canada and the United States utilized technology for learning, it avoided the teleology of educational technology by investigating and interpreting the social, political, and economic factors that influenced the origins of the eight open universities.

Although Ranke advocated for total historicism, modern historians recognize that completely escaping presentism is impossible because to some extent we know what happened in the past and can see the trajectory of how the past shaped the present (Wilson, 1999). Ranke's contributions to historical methodology emanated in the same broad historical context of the creation of the land-grant universities in the United States, discussed in Chapter 2, that professionalized disciplinary practices in numerous fields. Highlights of these disciplinary practices are articulated throughout this chapter.

Modern historical methodology rejects the notion that scientific and positivist knowledge is better than historical knowledge (Wilson, 1999). Instead, the two ways of knowing are at least on par with each other if not privileging history as the superior form of knowledge precisely because historical methodology interprets the specific and unreplicable truth of the past. Balancing rigorous historicism while acknowledging the inevitabilities of presentism is now a defining characteristic of the modern field of history (Wilson, 1999). In doing so, historians discover the beauty and excitement of the past while illuminating aspects of human society (Stearns, 1998).

Historical Methodology

Historical methodology requires adhering to disciplinary ethical practices. Historians establish trust and integrity by accurately citing sources so other historians may follow the researcher's trail, acknowledging the work of prior historians, not fabricating evidence, understanding the differences between primary and secondary sources, and contributing to the scholarly discourse "in a fair-minded way" about the interpretation of the sources (AHA, 2019, para. 8).

The interpretation of any historical event is subject to change over time. Societal values change, historians uncover new evidence, and historians examine old evidence employing new perspectives. Collectively, these changing trends in the telling of history are known as historiography. These trends are significant because "the changing perspectives of historical understanding are the very best introduction we can have to the practical problems of real life" (McNeill, 1985, para. 7). Furthermore, it is important to determine historiographical trends because it forces the researcher to "confront the relativity of 'facts,' the importance of interpretation, and the insidious nature of 'bias-free' accounts of the national past" (Rhineland, 1996, para. 2). Employing the historicist approach of understanding the past within its own context allows historians to recognize that past actions were fixed as "a once existent reality" (Wilson, 1999, p. 4) while simultaneously acknowledging that interpretations of the past change over time and are informed by some inescapable presentism.

Thus, these tenets of historical methodology align with the interpretivist paradigm employed in this study. I analyzed and interpreted the available sources from the position of a trained historian in the second decade of the 21st century looking back on the 1970s and 1990s. I also analyzed the comparative origins of the eight institutions in light of historiographical trends

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within the fields of higher education and distance education while balancing historicism with presentism by interpreting primary sources within their historical contexts and comparing my findings with the secondary sources.

Types of Sources

There is no single historical methodology because some historians are extreme historicists or presentists while others utilize epistemologies and methodologies from other disciplines such as economics, sociology, anthropology, or cliometrics (Stearns, 1998; Wilson, 1999). Even so, historians share the professional practice of interrogating and interpreting historical sources. Only after interrogating numerous sources can the historian craft a narrative argument that interprets past events. It is imperative to differentiate between the types of sources because each type of source requires a different kind of interrogation from the researcher (American Historical Association, 2019). The kinds of questions the historian asks of any source result in dialectical feedback where questions and sources inform each other (Wilson, 1999).

Primary sources were created at the time or close to the time of an event (Teachinghistory.org National History Education Clearinghouse, 2018). The types of primary sources collected for this study include institutional documents, government documents, speeches, and press accounts (see Appendix A). Primary sources were analyzed for context, perspective and bias of the author, purpose of the source, intended audience, and what is left out of the source (Benjamin, 2019). Bias of the authors who created the primary sources for this study turned out not to be a relevant factor given the nature of this study because the primary sources did not indicate competing interpretations about the purposes of creating the institutions.

Secondary history sources are peer-reviewed publications such as monographs, journal articles, textbooks, and reference entries resulting from extensive primary source research and a

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survey of the existing other secondary sources which are essential to determine historiographic trends (Teachinghistory.org National History Education Clearinghouse, 2018). These secondary sources tell the story of what happened in the past only after careful analysis leading to well-reasoned conclusions based on a preponderance of the evidence that held up to the rigorous peer-review process required for publication. Authors' bias within secondary sources is typically apparent in their argumentation and use of sources.

This project also utilized numerous secondary sources that were not history, but rather educational research studies which tended to summarize technology, pedagogical practices, and outcomes. Other secondary sources about educational topics were reflective pieces about an author's experiences and observations. These sources did not employ historical methodology and therefore were not relevant to historiographical trends.

Selecting evidence is a subjective process based on what the historian finds or chooses (Wilson, 1999). My process for selecting these sources is explained in the Research Design section later in this chapter. When sufficient evidence is not obtainable, historians may interpret the existing evidence with the acknowledgement that their interpretation is plausible (Benjamin, 2019).

Historians are always confronted with the problem of finding all the available sources. Renowned American historian Jill Lepore (2018) explained this problem as follows:

Some of these things are saved by chance or accident, like the one house that, as if by a miracle, still stands after a hurricane razes a town. But most of what historians study survives because it was purposely kept — placed in a box and carried up to an attic, shelved in a library, stored in a museum, photographed or

recorded, downloaded to a server — carefully preserved and even cataloged. (p.

4)

Inevitably in any historical study, some sources were not preserved or some perspectives about a given event were overlooked, resulting in a degree of ambiguity and the impossibility of ever obtaining absolute and omniscient historical knowledge (American Historical Association, 2019; Barzun & Graff, 2004; Moran, 1991; Wilson, 1999). This was true for this study as explained in the limitations section of Chapter 1 and in the next section about research design.

Research Design

This research study occurred in four phases. Each phase built on the previous one as described below. The first phase set the inclusion criteria. The second phase focused on collecting and summarizing primary sources. The third phase involved collecting and summarizing secondary sources. The fourth phase focused on analyzing the sources and writing the argumentative narrative. The phases were iterative rather than linear because some secondary sources led me to primary sources that I had not yet identified and writing the narrative regularly spurred me to conduct additional research in both primary and secondary sources.

Phase 1 - Selection of Universities: Inclusion Criteria

The first phase identified the universities to investigate. The eight universities selected for this study are acknowledged in the literature as nontraditional, innovative, open, or virtual. They were founded during either the 1970s or the 1990s. I selected these two decades for the following reasons. The 1970s saw the proliferation of open and distance teaching institutions following the establishment of the UKOU. Mass higher education expansion was still at its height in Canada and the United States during the 1970s whereas the 1990s was at the tail-end of the expansion. Technological advancements, especially due to the Internet, impacted higher

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education during the 1990s in different ways than technology available during the 1970s.

Furthermore, two decades after the 1970s is a sufficient duration to show the national context change over time, particularly due to neoliberalism and technological advancements.

Beyond the preliminary criteria of being founded in either the 1970s or 1990s and being described as nontraditional, innovative, open, or virtual, additional criteria narrowed the scope of this study. I selected the following criteria based on 21st century characteristics of open online universities:

- Nonprofit status
- Open admission policies or branded as open
- Provides entirely online programs
- Mission or vision statements that explicitly or implicitly serves nontraditional students
- English-speaking

I identified nontraditional universities described in the literature and then conducted website or secondary source analysis to determine if they met the criteria. Table 2 shows the results of institutions selected for this study.

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Table 2

List of Institutions

Canada	United States
Athabasca University founded 1970	SUNY Empire State College founded 1971
Open Learning Institute of British Columbia founded 1978 ^a	Regents External Degree Program founded 1971*
	Thomas Edison State University founded 1971
	University of Maryland University College founded as a separate institution in 1970*
	Western Governors University founded 1997
	The United States Open University founded 1998 ^b

Note. Institutions marked with an asterisk changed names; the original names are shown in the table. ^a The Open Learning Institute of British Columbia lost institutional autonomy when it became part of the Open Learning Agency of British Columbia established in 1988. The Open Learning Agency of British Columbia administered the BC Open University (BCOU). The BCOU courses became part of the Open Learning Division of Thompson Rivers University in 2005. ^b The United States Open University closed in 2002.

Phase 2 – Collecting and Summarizing Primary Sources

I identified institutional primary sources from each institution in Phase 2. I contacted each university's archivist or other representative and obtained digital copies of relevant documents from the founding of each institution such as bulletins, mission statements,

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admissions policies, meeting minutes, charters, reports, speeches, oral history interview transcripts, and university student-run newspapers. The documents I obtained from each institution varied considerably by type based on what was available. Not all primary sources were from the origins of each institution because they were created later. I treated such sources as primary when the authors had first-hand knowledge of an institution's origins or identified important discourses for adult distance education as it transformed. This practice is in keeping with historicism.

Appendix A identifies the types of primary sources analyzed for each university. When institutional or other similar documents were unavailable or insufficient, I obtained newspaper accounts about the origins and context of the institution using the ProQuest database. This was the case with the USOU.

Challenges Obtaining Primary Sources. Obtaining sources presented numerous obstacles which illustrate Lepore's (2018) point that the historical record "is maddeningly uneven, asymmetrical, and unfair" (p. 4). The following paragraphs describe the most significant challenges I encountered trying to access primary sources. Only Western Governors University published digital copies of the relevant institutional documents on their website. Therefore, I contacted institutional representatives to determine if I could obtain primary sources from the other institutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic initially prevented some archivists from accessing their records. The archivists for Athabasca University, SUNY Empire State, and the University of Maryland University College were not able to immediately access their holdings, but eventually provided the requested sources. I was unable to obtain institutional documents for the Regents External Degree, now Excelsior College, because Excelsior does not maintain an archive and I

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was unable to identify someone at the New York Board of Regents who could facilitate my request. Fortunately, the New York Public Library provided relevant speeches about the Regents External Degree. Similarly, Thomas Edison State University does not maintain an archive, but the New Jersey Public Library provided useful sources.

The initial lack of available primary sources from The Open Learning Institute of British Columbia (OLI of BC) and the United States Open University (USOU) was especially problematic. Despite the valiant efforts of Dr. Louise Moran who catalogued and created the archives for the OLI of BC while writing her dissertation about the institution's legitimacy, a librarian later disposed of many of these records. Furthermore, Thompson Rivers University, the institutional inheritor of the OLI of BC, moved locations prior to my inquiry for sources and was unable to determine how or where the surviving sources were misplaced. Months later, they located some, but not all, of what they thought they had. Thompson Rivers University sent me some institutional reports from the later years of the OLI of BC, but still left me without the desired primary sources from the origins. Upon the USOU's closure in 2002, their institutional documents were supposedly packed up and shipped back to the UKOU's archives. However, the UKOU archivist was unable to determine if they existed. The UKOU's archives were officially designated as a unit in late 2003, the year after the closure of the USOU, so the USOU documents might have been discarded in the interim year. Furthermore, I was unable to obtain the USOU's accreditation self-study reports because one accrediting agency did not save the report and the other never responded. Fortunately, Dr. Lynette Krenelka, who wrote a dissertation (2005) and subsequent article (2009) on the closure of the USOU, located hard copies in her home attic of some of the interviewees she conducted. She graciously sent me

copies. I also asked former USOU leaders to check their personal collections. Dr. Richard Jarvis, former USOU Chancellor, provided important USOU catalogs.

Management of Primary Sources. I logged all the documents into a spreadsheet with headings for the institution, reference, and main ideas. After interrogating each primary source for document type, main ideas related to the articulated purposes of education and context, potential bias, and intended audience, I summarized these details using the spreadsheet.

Phase 3 - Collecting and Summarizing Secondary Sources

This phase required extensive review of secondary sources, which I split into three categories. The first category included institutional histories. I was mindful that institutional histories tend to be hagiographical (Moran, 1992). The institutional history references led to additional primary sources not already identified in Phase 2, so in many cases I engaged in an iterative process of obtaining those sources and summarizing them. Appendix Table B identifies examples of the institutional histories employed in this study.

The second category consisted of secondary source literature about the political, social, and economic context that shaped the founding of each institution. With few exceptions, these sources were supplementary to those utilized in Chapter 2. I logged my summary notes into another spreadsheet using the same headings employed for the primary sources.

The third category consisted of the studies about the educational practices of each institution. As mentioned earlier, these sources did not employ historical methodology, so I interrogated them with attention to the main ideas, validity of the arguments, and reliability of the evidence. I logged these notes into the same spreadsheet as the primary source documents for each institution because some served as valuable primary sources that were created shortly after the origin of an institution.

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Selecting secondary sources involved a varied process depending on the topic. I collected secondary sources specific to the institutions until I reached saturation. However, this was not necessary for collecting sources about the national and regional contexts because I relied on a combination of reputable textbooks, historical monographs, and academic journal articles which provided corroborating contextual narratives. Therefore, my review of the contextual histories was not exhaustive.

Authors' bias was notable within most secondary history sources and taken into consideration when weighing their arguments. For example, institutional histories tended to glorify the institutions to varying degrees, which is understandable given their purpose. The secondary history sources used for the national and regional context sections also contained detectable biases, for example emphasizing social history over economic history, but this bias did not sway my thinking as I weighed the relative importance of political, social, and economic contextual influences. I created my own judgements about those factors for each institutional context.

Phase 4 – Analyzing the Sources and Writing the Narrative

This phase answered the research questions by first describing the national and regional context, then explaining each institution's origins, and finally drawing comparative conclusions about how each institution articulated their intended purposes of education given the regional and national factors that shaped their institutional founding. To do this, I pieced together my interpretation of the significant events for each institution's origins by carefully examining the sources for reliable, and when possible corroborated, evidence. I began by outlining these events for each institution's origins into timelines and themes which framed the first draft of my narrative interpretation. I then drew connections between the national and regional contexts and

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the institutional origins. In some cases, the institutional primary sources identified relevant contextual influences whereas in other less-apparent cases I created arguments about how the historical contexts aligned with, rather than explicitly influenced, the institutional origins. The narrative product is my interpretation of the relative importance of the contextual factors that shaped the origins of the eight open universities analyzed in this study.

In addition to answering the research questions, each chapter analyzes the elements of openness as defined by the UKOU, e.g., the ways each institution was open as to people, places, methods, and ideas. Each chapter concludes with a comparative analysis of the national and regional contextual influences, purposes of higher education, elements of openness, and educational characteristics.

Chapters 4-6 focused on the institutions established in one country during one decade. Chapter 4 analyzed the two Canadian institutions created during the 1970s. Whereas I contemplated going in chronological order of each institution's creation date, Athabasca University in Canada and the University of Maryland University College were both established in 1970. Given the shared origin year and the fact that there were two Canadian institutions and four American institutions established during the 1970s, I opted to begin with Canada since there were fewer institutions. Chapter 5 analyzed the four institutions created during the 1970s in the United States and Chapter 6 does the same for the 1990s. Chapter 7 comparatively analyzed all eight institutions, their contexts, purposes of education, educational characteristics, and elements of openness. It also summarized the entire study and suggested future research.

Ethical Considerations

Dr. Lynette Krenelka provided me with copies of some of the USOU interviews that she conducted with the assurance of anonymity for her dissertation. I attempted to obtain consent

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from some of the participants who had previously worked at the USOU. I cited by name only when I obtained written consent via email. I employed an anonymizing protocol of 'USOU Official 1,' 'USOU Official 2,' and 'USOU Official 3' for individuals I was not able to contact.

Positionality

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, some historians utilize methodologies and epistemologies from other disciplines, but I did not. I only employed historical methodology because it was the most suitable way to investigate the institutional origins and their contexts. Nor am I an extreme presentist. Instead, I took a historicist approach which aligns with the disciplinary ethics where the historian should try to be true to the sources within their contexts.

According to the American Historical Association (2019), "practicing history with integrity does not mean having no point of view. Every work of history articulates a particular, limited perspective on the past" (para. 12), which contributes to the enrichment of the collective understanding of the past. I acknowledge the potential for my personal views about the purposes of higher education to shape my interpretation of sources. I think governments should expand higher education for individual, social, and economic purposes, which requires public investment of funds for the common good. I believe the balance between societal and individual goals is especially difficult for open universities given their potentially large enrollments and need to achieve economies of scale as they fulfill the democratic goal of expanding access to higher education for those previously underserved.

Furthermore, I do not share the neoliberal ideology that markets, not governments, should make decisions defining and shaping the public good. To achieve balance, I incorporated analysis of multiple viewpoints about neoliberal policies as they related to the origins of

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neoliberalism, discussed in Chapter 2, and the implementation of neoliberal policies under President Reagan in the United States.

I am academically involved in distance education in both Canada and the United States. I have been immersed in predominantly Canadian scholarship regarding distance education through my studies at Athabasca University. Contrastingly, I have taught numerous adult students online at three higher education institutions in the United States for the past seventeen years with little exposure to the scholarship of distance higher education in this country. I only gained expertise about the American scholarship via this study. As a citizen of the United States, I did not privilege my country's history of distance higher education over Canada's; nor do I deem it somehow better than Canada's on the grounds of patriotism. Similarly, my appreciation for Canadian national multicultural policies did not sway my interpretation of the Canadian context.

Conclusion

This chapter identified key methodological considerations for historical investigation of the origins of open online nonprofit English-speaking universities in Canada and the United States. Guided by the interpretive paradigm, historical methodology requires analytic interrogation of sources and subsequent argumentation about what happened in the past, why it happened the way it did, and why it matters. The end-product is a cohesive comparative argumentative narrative explaining the institutions' purposes of education within their national and regional contexts.

Chapters 4-7 explain the significance of the political, social, and economic factors that shaped the founding of open online non-profit English-speaking universities in Canada and the

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United States. These chapters also include information about the elements of openness of each institution.

**Chapter 4: One Win One Draw – Canadian Open Universities Established During the
1970s**

Introduction

Canada's post-World War II economic boom resulted in major social and political changes that fueled the mass expansion of higher education from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. Athabasca University was created in 1970 in Alberta and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia was established in 1978. Athabasca University was not created as an open university but evolved into one via a pilot project. The Open Learning Institute of British Columbia was an open university from its origins. Regional contexts, particularly economic factors, were more influential than Canada's national context in shaping the origins of these two institutions. The diverse geography of the world's second-largest country prominently factored in regional development but was more important for British Columbia than Alberta. The UKOU significantly shaped the origins of both institutions.

This chapter analyzes the origins of Athabasca University in Alberta and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia, their intended purposes of education within their national and provincial historic contexts, and open educational characteristics. It begins with an overview of the federal context. It then moves to Alberta and Athabasca University and subsequently to British Columbia and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia. A comparison ensues, followed by the conclusion.

Canada's National Context

Canada's Post-war Political Context

Canada developed into a modern nation-state after World War II (Conrad, 2012). Having survived the Great Depression with capitalism intact, the country embraced Keynesian policies

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to mitigate the worst abuses of the capitalist system. Keynesian policies manifested in state capitalism, defined as “a managed capitalism in which the state would play a major role” (Finkel, 2012, p. 7). During the post-war era, the federal government created new economic interventions and social welfare programs that paralleled the mass expansion of higher education. The federal civil service doubled in size to administer new departments such as Veterans Affairs, Reconstruction, and National Health and Welfare (Conrad, 2012). The federal government also expanded veterans’ benefits as discussed in Chapter 2, offered tax incentives to retool war industries for a consumer economy, and supported exports sent to Europe as part of the Marshall Plan (Conrad, 2012). The federal government grew further to administer new social welfare programs intended to provide a degree of economic and social security to the citizens (Finkel, 2012). During this transition, the most prominent foreign influence on Canada shifted from Great Britain to the United States (Conrad, 2012; Finkel, 2012).

Politically, a post-war national consensus existed with the Liberal Party dominant at the federal level from 1945-1984 (Conrad, 2012). The Liberals and their rival Conservatives adhered to traditional bourgeois values that protected the interests of capital (Finkel, 2012). The consensus resulted from the lack of substantial differences among political parties since they all generally supported the democratic, human-rights, and capitalist policies advocated by NATO (Conrad, 2012; Finkel, 2012).

Canada’s National Identity

Canada’s post-war climate was imbued with optimism that stimulated a widespread distinct sense of national identity (Conrad, 2012). Canada experienced a wave of post-war self-confidence boosted by the constitution, celebration of the centennial, a new flag, the national media dominance of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and a commitment to human rights

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(Barman, 2007). The “kaleidoscope of centennial frenzy...in 1967 made a strong statement about a country differentiated by powerful regional identities, and too frequently, a sense of alienation” (Foran, 2006, p. 616). This new national pride was fueled by economic growth that funded social welfare programs which raised the standard of living and provided a minimum degree of social security for many residents. This was a significant development given the prevalent regionalism inherent in the federal system characterized by the compact theory of Canadian federation which viewed each province as an equal political member in the nation (Marsh, 2006). Although the new sense of a national identity was growing, regional identities were vibrant and more influential than a national identity on the origins of Athabasca University and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia as explained later in this chapter.

Culturally, the country embarked on a Canadianization movement that contributed to the growing sense of a uniquely Canadian identity. It “gained momentum in the late 1960s as Canadians began to imagine themselves as a better version of the North American dream” (Conrad, 2012, p. 238). An emphasis on social security, economic opportunity, equality, and human rights formed the foundation of this new national consciousness. The federal government supported arts and culture grants, while universities implemented Canadian-first hiring policies and established Canadian studies programs (Conrad, 2012; Cormier, 2005). These policies and programs were infused with the quest for the idea that “knowledge itself could be thoroughly 'Canadian' [meaning] a uniquely Canadian way of understanding the world and that could be expressed using any type of medium” (Cormier, 2005, p. 357). One example of this Canadianization movement in higher education manifested with the establishment of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education in 1972 (Fisher, 2017). This organization created *The Canadian Journal of Education* to supplant the nation’s academic reliance on American

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educational journals (Fisher, 2017). By the late 1980s, Canadian studies programs were taught in at least 25 countries, showing the success of the movement (Department of the Secretary of State, Canada, 1989). Amidst the nascent yet cogent national identity, regionalism remained strong, as evidenced in the later sections on Alberta and British Columbia. The open universities created in these two provinces were established to serve regional, not national, educational needs so it is not surprising that regional factors were so influential for the two institutions in this study.

Canada's Post-war Economic Context

Economically, the nation moved toward a service economy with growth stimulated by investments in “welfare, warfare, and infrastructure” (Conrad, 2012, p. 231). The nation experienced its period of greatest prosperity between 1945 and 1957 (Finkel, 2012). The long-standing industries of natural resource extraction continued to flourish, particularly with timber, fish, minerals, and oil generating the profits to fund expanded social services (Conrad, 2012). However, mechanization changed natural resource extraction methods in ways that reduced the need for labor, resulting in the relocation of large swaths of the population to cities and a burgeoning service economy (Conrad, 2012). These trends were important for Alberta and British Columbia because provincial governments adjusted educational policies to deal with these economic and population changes.

Based on the 1955 recommendations of the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects that addressed growing concerns about American economic interference, Canada opened trade with Cold War enemies and offered tax incentives to promote Canadian industries. In 1956, the federal government initiated a tax equalization formula that redistributed some profits from wealthier provinces to those that lacked a healthy economic base, such as

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Newfoundland, much to the dismay of wealthy Alberta and British Columbia (Conrad, 2012). These measures did not completely address the country's problem of unequal wealth distribution because "marketplace forces were redistributing wealth upwards. Social service spending countered the market's tendencies, leaving everyone in relatively the same place" (Finkel, 2012, p. 132). As the gross national product quadrupled between 1945 and 1960 and middle class consumerism became the norm, approximately 27% of the non-farm population still fell below the designated poverty line (Finkel, 2012). Athabasca University and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia catered to the learning needs of some of these rural populations using distance education methods.

The federal government's increased role in the economy manifested through investments in infrastructure and increased spending on military and social services programs. "Public spending at all levels increased from 30 percent of GDP in 1960 to 48% in 1985" (Conrad, 2012, p. 228). Military spending reached its height with 45% of GDP in 1953 and then dropped to 23% in 1961 (Conrad, 2012). The expanded federal role in the booming economy was not a heated concern even among ardent free market capitalists as long as profits and optimism persisted. However, this optimism crashed in 1972 when the OPEC oil embargo caused serious stagflation in the United States, which in turn rippled throughout Canada (Conrad, 2012; Marsh, 2006). The impact of the oil crisis reduced Alberta's profits that fueled the mass expansion of higher education and social services (Marsh, 2006).

The Canadian federal government once again responded with interventionist state capitalism. Although, by the 1970s state capitalism took on a post-Keynesian emphasis that focused on "active labour-market policy to provide the skilled workers necessary for a growing economy, industrial strategy to assist growth sectors and encourage adjustment of uncompetitive

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sectors, and wage and price controls to control inflation” (Finkel, 2012, p. 147). For example, federal authorities in Ottawa implemented an oil price freeze and an export tax to prevent Canadians from paying high prices for fuel (Marsh, 2006). The price freeze capped oil prices at 25 percent lower than international market rates (Finkel, 2012; Marsh, 2006). The federal government authorized a new Crown corporation in 1973, Petro-Canada, and created the Foreign Investment Review Agency in 1974 to reduce foreign ownership of the oil industry (Conrad, 2012). The National Energy Program created in 1980 aimed for energy independence by 1990 while keeping consumers happy at the pump with fair prices (Noakes, 2020).

These economic problems engendered a lack of trust in the federal government and blame for federal officials in Ottawa, especially Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, who faced criticism for a national energy policy that caused resentment in oil-rich Alberta (Conrad, 2012; Marsh, 2006). Albertans were upset because the energy policy limited the royalties and profits in favor of consumer pump prices (Noakes, 2020). In addition to economic intervention, these initiatives furthered the Canadianization of the energy industry. This is an important example of the competing tensions between provincial and national economic interests that are inherent in a federal system as well as the ongoing contest between the common good and free market enterprise that played out in social welfare programs and higher education. It was also a significant contextual influence on the origins of Athabasca University because the province used profits from the oil industry to fund services for the public good (Barmby, 2013; Byrne, 1989; Foran, 2006).

The government further intervened in the economy by building a welfare state extensive enough to stymie support for socialist policies and provide a modicum of social security but limited enough to be acceptable to business elites. These policies made the liberal state and

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corporate capitalists happy bedfellows because better economic opportunities were supposed to create improved social opportunities (Finkel, 2012). Serious calls for a welfare state from a wider population, beyond the labor activists of the earlier Progressive Era and Great Depression, began during WWII. The federal government amended the constitution to create unemployment insurance in 1940 and offered provincial cost-sharing programs for infrastructure and health insurance during the 1940s and 1950s (Finkel, 2006b, 2012). In 1945, a group of proposals known as the Green Book promised extensive social welfare programs if the provinces agreed to a federal tax hike to administer them at the national level, but the plan failed when the provinces refused to relinquish some of their provincial taxing authority (Finkel, 2006b, 2012; Taylor, 1987). This pattern of provincial insistence on controlling and limiting taxes for social welfare programs paralleled other federal-provincial cooperation issues such as oil revenue redistribution and spending on higher education. The oil revenue redistribution issue was especially consequential for Alberta. That topic is elaborated in a later section.

The 1940s' calls for increased expenditures on social welfare programs for the common good manifested in federal transfer payments to the provinces during the late 1950s and 1960s. Hospital insurance transfers began in 1958, postsecondary education transfers began in 1967, and medicare transfers began in 1968 (Carter, 1977). These federal transfer grants, which were based on provincial expenditures, covered 50% of provincial postsecondary costs (Carter, 1977; Wu, 1985). The total federal contributions to postsecondary education commenced with an allocation of \$421 million during the fiscal year of March 1967-1968 and rose to \$1,619 million by 1977 (Carter, 1977). The federal government sought alternatives to these staggering expenditures. For example, during the 1973-1974 fiscal year, the federal government imposed a 15% growth rate cap on postsecondary contributions (Carter, 1977). Then in 1977 the national government passed

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the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Established Programs Financing Act, which changed the funding to a block grant tied to the gross national product growth rates and did not consider provincial operating costs (Wu, 1985). After a compromise with Alberta officials who only wanted tax points and Atlantic Province officials who only wanted cash payments, the new funding mechanism provided a combination of tax points and cash payments to all provinces (Carter, 1977; Wu, 1985). These unconditional grants allowed the federal government more fiscal planning control and provided the provinces with greater flexibility on how to allocate their grants across the healthcare and postsecondary sectors (Wu, 1985). The provinces could decide how to spend their federal allocations on programs for the common good according to their needs and preferences. Given that the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Established Programs Financing Act passed in 1977 and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia was created in 1978, it is possible that this flexible funding arrangement influenced the creation of the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia, but not the creation of Athabasca University because it was established using the prior funding formula based on provincial expenditures. Regardless of funding mechanism, both universities were created in the context of increased national attention to social welfare programs for the common good. Prime Minister Trudeau's Just Society campaign directed further national attention to these kinds of programs.

Although weaker than proposed during the 1940s, the welfare state with regional development programs and universal healthcare garnered additional political support when Prime Minister Trudeau embarked on his Just Society campaign in 1968 (Conrad, 2012; Trudeau; 1968). His speech argued that the Just Society "will be one in which all of our people will have the means and the motivation to participate" (Trudeau, 1968/1998, p. 19). Trudeau outlined the need for attention to the common good when he stipulated that "no one in the society should be

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entitled to superfluous or luxury goods until the essentials of life are made available to everyone” (Trudeau, 1968/1998, p. 17). He was not advocating full blown socialism, rather the kind of Keynesian state capitalism that could ensure a minimum level of security and equality of opportunities, including within higher education. Athabasca University and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia were created in this context with public funding for the common good.

Canada's Post-war Social Context

The socio-cultural landscape of the country changed in numerous ways during the post-war years. The population swelled from 11.5 million in 1941 to 15 million by 1981 thanks to the baby boomer generation, increased life expectancy, and immigration (Conrad, 2012). Canada's post-war economic and cultural developments heavily influenced the boomers' values. They “grew up with television, embraced the Enlightenment idea of progress, and experienced state policies that conveniently supported their need for public schooling, university education, employment, and social security” (Conrad, 2012, p. 244). Canadians embraced the prevailing belief that education combined with economic prosperity were the keys to upward mobility (Finkel, 2012).

Returning WWII veterans and baby boomers took advantage of increased off-campus courses to fulfill their educational goals while also balancing the demands of adult life (Department of the Secretary of State, Canada, 1989). The boomers were a significant factor in the mass expansion of higher education that promoted equal opportunity throughout Canada. Athabasca University and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia catered to the segment of the baby boom generation that sought part-time learning opportunities using distance education methods.

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Minorities were another target group of equal opportunity initiatives. Legal reforms reduced de jure discrimination against minorities. For example, ethnic minorities experienced improved educational opportunities when Canadian provinces followed the American example of systematically dismantling segregation laws, including for education, throughout the 1960s (Conrad, 2012; Henry, 2021). Events in the United States continued to influence Canada's social context with the influx of Vietnam draft dodgers and social equality movements such as Black Power, Red Power, the LGBTQ movement, women's struggles to end discrimination, and environmentalism (Conrad, 2012). Canada and the United States experienced similar social equality movements, which in turn were important for the mass expansion of higher education in both countries. Distance education served some of those individuals who were previously excluded from higher education.

Immigration policy also shaped the ethnic makeup of the country. The 1962 Immigration Act aligned with the 1960 Bill of Rights by removing explicit racial discrimination for prospective immigrants (Immigration Act, Immigration Regulations, Part I, Amended RG2-A-1-a, volume 2269, PC 1962-86, 1962; Marsh, 2006) However, that did not mean all were welcome. Employability became a deciding factor and the policy still stipulated controls on family sponsorships of new immigrants from preferred countries in Europe, the Americas, and Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt in the Middle East (Immigration Act, Immigration Regulations, Part I, Amended RG2-A-1-a, volume 2269, PC 1962-86, 1962). In 1967, a modification to the law created a point system that judged certain categories of potential immigrants by their language skills, employability, education level, age, and personal character (Immigration Act, Immigration Regulations, Part 1, Amended RG2-A-1-a, volume 2380, PC1967-1616, 1967). The personal assessment category, e.g. moral character, was defined by the applicant's "adaptability,

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motivation, initiative, resourcefulness and other similar qualities...to become successfully established in Canada” (Immigration Act, Immigration Regulations, Part 1, Amended RG2-A-1-a, volume 2380, PC1967-1616, 1967, Schedule A p. 2). The immigration officer conducting the interview scored the applicant according to subjective criteria. These immigration policies prioritized employability for potential new immigrants. Similarly, universities were increasingly interested in providing their graduates with programs that addressed workforce needs.

These immigration policy changes paved the way for the influx of new ethnic minorities to Canada, particularly from Asian countries. The new wave of Asian immigrants combined with the ongoing issue of Quebec succession and bilingualism, created a need for multiculturalism (Conrad, 2012). Prime Minister Trudeau articulated this need in a speech before Parliament on October 8, 1971 as follows: “There cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples and yet a third for all others. For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other” (Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Debates, 28th Parliament, 3rd Session, Volume 8, p. 8545). The multiculturalism policy was supposed to help immigrants learn English or French, promote equality, stimulate cultural exchange, and support cultural groups with their development and growth. The multiculturalism policy and immigration legal changes at the national level were important for provincially-funded higher education institutions who had to respond to these changes as part of the mass expansion of higher education. Women’s equal rights were also of concern in the post-war context.

Women increased their participation in higher education and the workforce. The share of women in the workforce doubled between 1951 and 1981 with increased access to birth control even though it was technically still illegal (Conrad, 2012). Despite these improvements, women

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continued to experience pressure from prevailing attitudes about gender-based roles that dictated a woman's role in the household (Conrad, 2012). To counter some of these pressures, the federal government established the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1967. In 1970, it put forward 167 recommendations for policies and practices to end gender discrimination in areas of concern such as political participation, education, employment, and childcare (The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970). Over time, the recommendations were enacted, but contemporary radicals decried the pace of reform as too sluggish (Conrad, 2012).

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women identified access to lifelong education as a vehicle for social mobility, an essential element for women's equality, and a requirement for navigating the complexities of Canadian society. The report's section on education explicitly addressed values and the need for flexible options aligned with distance education as follows:

The educational system itself must be more flexible, offering them a variety of opportunities for study and training. Moreover, flexibility and adaptation to new situations must be taught as indispensable equipment for living successfully in the world of today and tomorrow. All too often education teaches only yesterday's wisdom. (The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970, p. 161)

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada recognized that the traditional university system was unable to meet the formal learning needs of so many women who were important constituents of the mass expansion of higher education. The traditional university system left women, particularly those with children, in a marginalized position, even while women enjoyed seemingly ample informal learning opportunities. For example, "hundreds of thousands [participated in programs for] the satisfaction of being able to do something well, to

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understand something not understood before, to feel or experience something that was neither felt nor experienced before” (The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970, p. 188). The Royal Commission seemed to suggest that informal humanist learning was working well. Workforce training for women was underway but required modifications to align social welfare services that better supported women’s labor force development goals (The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970). Women still faced barriers with higher education and distance education was not a priority in the report.

The Royal Commission (1970) glossed over anything related to distance education. It summarized that more women than men partook of correspondence and extra-mural television courses. Women’s numbers of part-time study increased faster than full-time study. Some universities offered a potpourri of maturity-based, e.g. age 21 or older, admission policies along with part-time and correspondence study programs, but the Royal Commission again recognized the childcare barrier faced by mothers. The report only mentioned ‘distance’ once when it identified that “classes for women, held in their own neighborhoods within easy walking distance of their homes, have been enthusiastically received” (The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970, p. 210). The walking-distance classes were tied to nursery school programs designed for working mothers.

The Royal Commission summarized how technology might be used to benefit nontraditional female learners. For example, it briefly mentioned the potential of educational television programs, citing success in the United States and at the UKOU, as well as radio, and mobile libraries (The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970). The report suggested that women should have an advisory role in the development of new satellite communication programs. Rather than an explicit call for systematic distance teaching and

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learning options that would benefit women as part of the mass expansion of higher education, the report recommended that the provinces establish educational television programs at times convenient for women viewers with accompanying correspondence courses. It did not stipulate how this should be accomplished.

The report also recommended that each province study their regional educational problems, especially regarding rural access to higher education (The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970). Alberta and British Columbia examples of such regional higher education investigations are explained in the relevant sections later in this chapter. Leaving it up to the provinces and only minimally addressing distance education potential should not be surprising given that education was under provincial authority and distance education was still in the early stages of development in Canada, as described in Chapter 2.

Canada's National Context Summary

Canada's national context demonstrated a growing sense of a uniquely Canadian sense of identity. The nation harnessed a political consensus, acceptance of Keynesian-style state capitalism, and the post-WWII economic boom into new and expanded social services, including the mass expansion of higher education. These new services were aligned with a commitment to human rights while promoting equal opportunities and improved economic and social conditions designed for the public good. The next section identifies significant factors for Alberta's regional context that influenced the origins of Athabasca University.

Alberta's Regional Context

Alberta became the nation's fourth largest province in 1905; it covered 255,285 square miles that hosted a rather sparse population until WWII (Andrews et al, 1997). After the post-war economic boom, the province switched from the smallest to the largest of the three Prairie

provinces by population (Finkel, 2012). The provincial political, economic, and social contexts directly impacted the origins of Athabasca University. Relevant contextual factors are identified in the subsequent sections.

Alberta's Political Context

The provincial political context was largely conservative by the mid-20th century (Finkel, 2006a; Robin, 1972). The province maintained a strong tradition of participatory democracy as it shifted from agrarian populism to conservatism (Long & Quo, 1972). Like the consensus at the federal level, Albertans exhibited a steady political consensus even amidst changing social and economic circumstances. Although unlike the liberal consensus at the federal level, Albertans preferred conservative political policies.

The Social Credit and Conservative parties had the most influence in Alberta during the post-war era. Both were inherently conservative, anti-federalist, and anti-partyist in the sense that political dogma was not a driving factor in their platforms (Long & Quo, 1972). The Social Credit Party held power in Alberta from 1935 to 1971, during which time they advocated anti-socialism and focused on the individual (Finkel, 2006a; Willoughby Small, 1980). The Social Credit Party embarked on their campaign for political dominance when they won power in the province in 1935 with a promise to bring the region out of the Great Depression with their A+B theorem (Finkel, 2012; Long & Quo, 1972). They proposed that the price of goods should equal wages and dividends (A) plus the cost of production resources (B), but they needed to print more money to distribute as social credit to increase purchasing power and reduce prices. This social credit, which did not exclude women, amounted to a \$25 monthly payment (Finkel, 2006a; Finkel, 2012).

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Naysayers referred to the new political organization as the “funny money party” (Finkel, 2012, p. 5) due to this monthly payment stemming from questionable economic practices. The theory’s lack of economic validity did not matter to those who found it an appealing way to ameliorate their economic woes. In addition to drawing those who sought financial relief, the Socreds attracted Christian fundamentalists and promoted the idea that Albertans had the duty to support their government (Long & Quo, 1972).

Social Credit support declined through WWII as their economic doctrines were invalidated and supplanted by Keynesian policies. Even though Social Creditors adamantly opposed socialism, they initiated the Albertan welfare state supported by the province’s oil riches (Long & Quo, 1972). In doing so, they appealed to the populist tendencies of the province and sustained their reputation as a party that served the people and not merely political doctrine. By 1967 when Premier Manning retired, the Social Credit Party was losing support (Long & Quo, 1972).

The Socred stronghold was challenged by younger voters who were more inclined to side with the New Democratic Party and the Liberals, both of which were more nationally-oriented (Long & Quo, 1972; Marsh, 2006). All three of these political parties faced growing opposition at the provincial level from the new Progressive Conservative Party which advocated free enterprise and welfare with dignity; they gained power by appealing to rural voters (Long & Quo, 1972). Under the leadership of Premier Lougheed, the Progressive Conservative Party took power in 1971 and embarked on province-building projects designed to diversify Alberta’s economy beyond agriculture and oil extraction by investing profits from those industries into infrastructure and social services that met provincial economic and social needs (Marsh, 2006). These political party changes were significant for the creation of Athabasca University because

the nascent institution hung in a precarious balance during the political shift from the Socreds to the Progressive Conservatives.

Alberta's Social Context

Alberta did not experience significant sociodemographic impacts rippling immediately from WWII, but that changed in the decades shortly thereafter (Byrne, 1989). The baby boom generation sought educational opportunities and economic security (Barmby, 2013; Finkel, 2012). Domestic and foreign immigration brought an influx of new residents to Alberta (Willoughby Small, 1980). However, immigration did not alter the existing ethnic makeup of the province due to the immigrants' mostly European and Canadian-born backgrounds which served to perpetuate the province's Anglican-centric and nativist culture (Foran, 2006).

Significantly, the population in Alberta shifted from predominantly rural to urban. During WWII the population was approximately 2/3 rural and 1/3 urban and by the 1966 census those ratios flipped (Byrne, 1989). These changes created an urban housing shortage. For example, in 1966 Edmonton was considered the most overcrowded city in the nation (Foran, 2006). Recognizing that some Albertans were unable to achieve economic security even amidst an oil boom, Social Credit Party Premier Manning, who was not a university graduate and suspicious of the left wing, called for a minimum standard of living that reflected the growing national concerns about social security (Barmby, 2013; Finkel, 2006b; Willoughby Small, 1980). The province also grappled with growing social concerns of anticipated increases in poverty-related inequalities in education particularly among the Native and Metis children, mental illness, suicide, crime rates including juvenile delinquency, social unrest, as well as drug and alcohol abuse (Alberta Commission on Educational Planning, 1972). Education was desired as a solution to these social problems.

Alberta's Economic Context

Economically, the province experienced an oil boom from 1947-1957 that funded the mass expansion of higher education in the region (Byrne, 1989). The discovery of the Leduc oil deposit in 1947 prompted growth of the oil industry by multinational corporations that developed oil refineries in Calgary and Edmonton (Finkel, 2012; Foran, 2006; Marsh, 2006). The government of Alberta identified higher education as an economic priority by the late 1950s with increasing policy importance throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.

As part of a broad pattern across Canada, provincial governments established postsecondary education commissions to coordinate activities and provide budget recommendations that included the voice of higher education institutions (Barmby, 2013). Budgeting was not a problem during the dynamic decade of 1947-1957 when higher education requests did not threaten other provincially-administered programs (Barmby, 2013). By 1967, education accounted for 25% of Alberta's provincial and municipal budgets (Foran, 2006). However, universities and government officials sought to control spending amidst increased student demand and ongoing concerns about the tradeoffs between costs and value for programs reliant on formula funding (Barmby, 2013). As explained later in this chapter, Athabasca University was created to address the burgeoning demand for higher education in Alberta.

Alberta's Higher Education Commissions

Alberta's higher education commissions took several forms. In 1957, Alberta formed a Royal Commission to study complex educational problems (Willoughby Small, 1980). Their 1959 findings recommended increasing adult education and establishing a planning commission to guide policy makers for future social and economic needs (Willoughby Small, 1980). The Royal Commissioners viewed education "as the magic key to unlock the Pandora's box of

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universal plenty” (Byrne, 1989, p. 99). This vision aligned with the baby boomers’ expectations and Trudeau’s Just Society. The Survey Committee on Higher Education in Alberta was established in 1961 and resulted in more technical and community colleges; by 1965 the Survey Committee recommended further expansion of community colleges and university satellite campuses (Willoughby Small, 1980). The provincial budget allocation for education increased from \$68.7 million and 27.9% of the budget in 1962 to \$405 million and 35% of the budget by 1972 (Willoughby Small, 1980). These educational investments were motivated by the needs of a changing society and the prevalence of human resource development initiatives that focused on improving human efficiency and workplace competency (Byrne, 1989; Willoughby Small, 1980).

Human resource development, which was a manifestation of human capital theory as explained in Chapter 2, steered Alberta’s higher education landscape during the late-1960s and early-1970s. Spurred by the wave of centennial celebrations and projects across the nation that were generously funded by the federal government, Alberta responded with investments that enhanced the provincial cultural, economic, and social profile (Foran, 2006). Premier Manning and his fellow Socreds released a White Paper on human resource development in 1967 that recommended a policy based on free enterprise with a social conscience that emphasized research and investment into physical and human resources (Byrne, 1989). Their philosophy proposed that human resources were more important than physical resources and the government should serve the individuals rather than the collective (Willoughby Small, 1980). The White Paper nodded to socialist humanitarian concerns but affirmed a limited governmental role in society and promoted individual responsibility for social services via volunteer and private sector

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organizations (Foran, 2006). Their vision of the public good rested squarely on the shoulders of individuals.

Two years after the White Paper, the Socred government took another step toward outlining a vision for Alberta's higher education needs for mass expansion. In 1969 Premier Strom, Manning's successor, established the Commission on Educational Planning that led to the Worth Report in 1972 (Barmby, 2013). The Worth Report was instrumental in shaping the purposes and methods of Athabasca University as outlined in the next section.

Athabasca University

Athabasca University (AU) emerged in the context of the mass expansion of higher education guided by human resource development (Pulker & Papi, 2021). AU was first authorized as a place-based campus in June of 1970, subsequently switched to a pilot catering to nontraditional learners using distance methods in 1972, approved in principle in 1975, and finally achieved permanent status in 1978 (Athabasca University Governing Authority, 1977; Byrne, 1979; Department of the Secretary of State, Canada, 1989; Hendy, 1995; Pulker & Papi, 2021). It originated in a system of higher education that was already well-developed by 1945 with existing institutions such as the University of Alberta, the Banff School of Fine Arts, the Institute of Technology and Art in Calgary, the Calgary Normal School, two agricultural schools (Vermillion and Olds), and numerous private colleges (Andrews et al, 1997; Daniel & Smith, 1979). Industrialization, abundant employment opportunities, post-WWII government support for veterans' education, and a mushrooming population demanded the mass expansion of higher education, so the government responded with the Universities Act of 1966 that converted the University of Calgary from a campus of the University of Alberta into an autonomous institution

in 1966 and created the University of Lethbridge in 1967 (Andrews et al, 1997). However, the Worth Commission argued that further action was needed.

The Worth Report

The Worth Report of 1972 was an influential policy planning document that guided the establishment of Athabasca University (Barmy, 2013; Byrne, 1989; Clark, 1972; Willoughby Small, 1980). The Worth Commission set out to achieve two goals: identify the educational consequences of socio-economic trends and study the system of higher education in Alberta to prepare for future challenges (Clark, 1972). The Worth Report aligned with the future-oriented nature of the 1970 national study conducted by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

The Worth Report included guiding components such as providing educational opportunities to all who sought them, prioritizing undergraduate education, keeping student fees unchanged while increasing student access to financial aid, expanding the higher education system in a decentralized manner, increasing institutional accountability, adding technical and community colleges, and innovating for efficiencies (Clark, 1972). In addition to making education available to all who desired it, the Worth Report recommended creating part-time formal learning opportunities and transferable credits in socially-relevant programs that used technology and flexible approaches with personalized learning systems to reach students where they were while responding to changing societal needs (Alberta Commission on Educational Planning, 1972). These recommendations indicate that even the well-developed system of higher education in Alberta was still insufficient to meet the provincial needs.

Addressing societal changing values was of the utmost importance in shaping the Worth Report. The Worth Commission framed their research around one central question: “Will the traditional values and beliefs that have brought us the present point of technological and

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economic development continue to work in the decades ahead?” (Alberta Commission on Educational Planning, 1972, p.2). Their answer was a resounding ‘no’ and they called for a substantial change in values.

Values may be viewed in many ways. As noted by the 1972 document, Athabasca University, *An Experiment in Practical Planning*, “in periods of stability, values are taken for granted. Norms of behavior are clearly established and people cling to them tenaciously. In periods of rapid, almost revolutionary, change, this is not so. All forms of authority are challenged” (Appendix, p. 2). The Worth Commission identified shifting societal values such as the new national commitment to human rights discussed earlier in this chapter and urged policy makers to redesign educational systems to prepare students for this upheaval. The Worth Commission illustrated the dichotomy between the traditional values of a second-phase industrial society and the values for a person-centered society as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Worth Report Values by Type of Society

	Second-Phase Industrial Society	Person-Centered Society
Goals	Separate	Linked
Values underlying organizational structure	Bureaucratic forms	Flexible forms
Values governing organizational relations	Competitive relations	Collaborative relations
Organizational strategies	Responsive to crises Specific measures Requiring consent Standardized administration Separate services	Anticipative of crises Comprehensive measures Requiring participation Long planning horizon Innovative administration Coordinated services
Values regarding Resources	Resources are regarded as owned exclusively	Resources regarded also as belonging to society

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Note: Adapted from “Summary and Implications: Worth Commission on Educational Planning” by *Alberta Commission on Educational Planning*, 1972, pp. 16-17.

Traditional values aligned with a second-phase industrial society dominated by consumerist economic values that privileged technology and industry over individual needs whereas humanist values were core to a person-centered society that privileged individual fulfillment over industrial system needs (Alberta Commission on Educational Planning, 1972). The Worth Report argued that liberal education, defined as “those [programs] that liberate the individual by providing understanding, emotional identification and direct experience” (Athabasca University, 1974, p. 3) was desired for the next three decades and should serve “as a vehicle for the realization of the self in society” (Athabasca University, 1974, p. 1). A liberal education was intended to cultivate the individual’s moral and intellectual development, be problem-oriented, interdisciplinary and future-oriented. This kind of humanist education focused on learning rather than teaching.

Another dichotomy of values applies to traditional and distance teaching universities. They shared a commitment to teaching, research, and public service, but execute those responsibilities in different manners because distance teaching universities created new teaching and learning systems with resulting implications for management, governance, operations, and leadership based on the open university model (Daniel & Smith, 1979). Whereas a traditional university’s main goal “is to guard the cognitive or intellectual culture generated through empirical research procedures and to foster and protect all the interest that support that culture” (Byrne, 1979, p. 23), “a distance teaching university, on the other hand, assumes the values of an information society” (Byrne, 1979, p. x). Humanist and information society values as well as the

values of a distance teaching university shaped the creation of Athabasca University as an open university.

Recognizing that the province already had two comprehensive research institutions with the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary expected to reach capacity by the early 1970s, combined with the growth of the regionally-oriented University of Lethbridge established in 1967, the Worth Commission proposed a new institution that would serve different regional needs (Clark, 1972). Thus, the seeds for Athabasca University were planted and supported by the Social Credit government, but then put into a state of uncertainty with a political party change in 1971 when the Progressive Conservative Party assumed power (Andrews et al, 1997; Hendy, 1995; Pulker & Papi; 2021).

Athabasca University Mission and Purpose

As envisioned by the Social Creditors, the new university originally planned to be in St. Albert with a capacity of 5,000 students, was to offer undergraduate arts, sciences, and education programs along with graduate social sciences and humanities programs designed to enhance provincial social and economic circumstances (Clark, 1972; Daniel & Smith, 1979). The mission and location were subsequently modified when the Progressive Conservative Party displaced the long-standing Social Credit Party in 1971 (Daniel & Smith, 1979).

Whereas "new governments are apt not only to put the knife into old schemes but also to apply a twist in an ostensibly sadistic pleasure in witnessing the discomfort of political opponents" (Hornblow, 2005, p. 6), Athabasca University survived a political party change, albeit in a modified form after a distance education pilot project, which is discussed in the next section. Premier Lougheed of the Progressive Conservative Party later moved the headquarters to Athabasca to promote rural economic development stirring the displeasure of those who viewed

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this action as entirely political, e.g., to gain rural votes, and contrary to the treasured values of institutional autonomy; some hired to conduct the initial planning who preferred not to relocate resigned (Barmby, 2013; Paul, 1986). Lougheed desired education that served the economy rather than Dewey's progressive humanist education, which was preferred by many of the Social Credit ministers with educator backgrounds who at times numbered as many as 1/3 of the cabinet (Barmby, 2013). Contrastingly, Lougheed filled his cabinet with business leaders who insisted that educating for economic needs would result in filling social needs because they believed that only a solid economy could provide the means to improve social circumstances (Barmby, 2013).

Athabasca University was established by Order In Council 1206/70 on June 25, 1970. The mission retained the undergraduate focus described above with the added stipulation that programs must include "the application of the humanities and social sciences in related professional fields" (Hendy, 1995, p. 1), which shows the importance of meeting regional economic needs. Graduate programs were shelved due to their higher costs (Athabasca University Governing Authority, 1971; Athabasca University, 1972).

The university was tasked with using "new procedures in curriculum organization and instruction" (Athabasca University Governing Authority, 1971, p. 3). The undergraduate degree plan was designed to be like other programs across Canada, but unique in utilizing technology thereby preparing graduates for the emerging technology age (Byrne, 1989). The degree plan included three years of general study and one year of specialized study. The fourth year of specialized study was to include applied experiences such as internships that would benefit the individual as well as the community organizations via cooperation with industry, labor, and government officials (Athabasca University, 1972). The fourth year in the curriculum was likely

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for individuals who sought an honors degree or to meet the requirements for graduate school admission (<https://grad.ucalgary.ca/future-students/understanding-graduate-studies>).

Regional studies and a problem-based orientation were also included with intended ripple effects beyond Alberta (Athabasca University Governing Authority, 1971). For example, the consumption of non-renewable energy resources was a pressing concern across the province; by studying this regional problem, reverberations were expected in other provinces regarding such a matter of national importance (Athabasca University, 1972). This regional study example also illustrates the emphasis Athabasca University placed on the practical applications of knowledge, which aligns with the liberal purposes of higher education identified in the conceptual framework employed in this study.

The 1971 Academic Concept expressed concern that “the quest for knowledge may no longer be justifiable as an end in itself” (p. 4). Rather, knowledge should be harnessed to “mark routes in the improvements of the quality of living” (Athabasca University Governing Authority, 1971, p. 4). This shows that the university planners were concerned about the social applications of knowledge, which justified their emphasis on undergraduate problem-based, interdisciplinary studies that would help students succeed amidst the existing and future complexities of society. In doing so, the planners blended humanist and liberal purposes of higher education.

Furthermore, students were expected to develop independent study learning skills to be successful in a learning and information-based society (Athabasca University, 1974). Heeding the calls from the Worth Commission, Athabasca University programs were intended to provide “education for the decades ahead” (Athabasca University Governing Authority, 1971, p. 4). To prepare students for the future, the undergraduate studies program was explicitly designed to serve “as a vehicle for the realization of the self in society” (Athabasca University Governing

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Authority, 1971, p. 4). The planners gave the utmost consideration to the issue of an individual's relationship to social institutions because "new forms of human groupings and different organizational tactics will need to be created for the technetronic society. The problems of social organization require both research and development and the insight deriving from interdisciplinary study" (Athabasca University, 1972, Appendix, p. 7). Thus, the mission of Athabasca University included some humanist elements, but fell more heavily on the side of liberal economic and social purposes of higher education.

Athabasca University as a Pilot Project

The fledgling university-in-planning hung in the balances of continued uncertainty when enrollments across Alberta declined during the early 1970s and the government refused any new buildings (Hendy, 1995). However, the government approved a pilot project between 1972 and 1975 for home-study students to assess whether a distance teaching university in Alberta could be sustainable (Athabasca University, 1972; Department of the Secretary of State, Canada, 1989). The first students enrolled in 1973. In 1974, enrollees amounted to only about 400, most were in their mid-thirties, and there were more women than men (Pulker & Papi, 2021). AU's precarious existence benefitted from a lack of resistance from the traditional universities and colleges in Alberta who were generally agreeable to stick to their strengths and let AU assume leadership in their unique distance and nontraditional niche (L.W. Downey Research Associates, 1975). By 1975, AU expanded its mission beyond exclusively undergraduate degree granting to research and development activities as well as producing high quality course packages (L.W. Downey Research Associates, 1975). Once the pilot project concluded in November 1975, AU proved that it could serve the needs of the busy adult learner who studied part-time (Athabasca University Governing Authority, 1977). After proven success and amidst an ongoing and

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projected increased need to serve nontraditional learners, AU became a permanent university in 1978 (Byrne, 1989; Hendy, 1995).

Athabasca University's Educational Methods

AU retained the pilot project's method of using distance delivery to facilitate learning and opened regional offices across Alberta. It offered open admissions to learners aged 18 or older and focused on the higher educational learning needs of nontraditional learners (Coldeway, 1986). Professors, who were employed full-time, were expected to conduct research and help develop high-quality course materials. Course materials development began with an extensive seven-phased review and revisions process, which was later reduced for efficiency (Pulker & Papi, 2021).

AU innovated correspondence with telephone tutoring and audiovisual supplements. Tutors were trained during in-person workshops that lasted one or two days; they practiced using tape recorded tutoring sessions (Feasley, 1983). They also utilized workbooks that focused on effective communication (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). By the mid-1980s, approximately 160 part-time tutors, who usually held advanced degrees, were available by telephone toll-free during designated times each week (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). AU's telephone tutoring tended to be infrequent and usually student-initiated (Feasley, 1983).

Nonstarters, meaning those individuals who enrolled but did not perform any learning activities, were a significant problem for AU resulting in high incompleteness rates due to a lack of initial support (Coldeway, 1986). AU created regional offices in Fort McMurray in 1977, Calgary in 1980, and Edmonton in 1984 for advising and testing support (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). Unlike Calgary and Edmonton that were already well-established cities, Fort McMurray's population grew from just 2,000 in 1964 to 35,000 by 1975 because of the oil

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extraction industry; the government responded to the growth with increased social services including education (Marsh, 2006). Students could flexibly schedule their exams with the assistance of these regional offices. AU's counsellors also advised on personal skills, social skills, career planning, study strategies, and academic preparedness testing (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). Additionally, they provided learners with audio tapes for counseling self-help and institutional orientation.

UKOU Influence on Athabasca University

The UKOU's influence on the founding of Athabasca University is unmistakable despite Byrne's argument that whereas "many assume that Athabasca University adopted its model from that of the British Open University...The two universities developed independently of each other" (1989, p. ix). Evidence exists to the contrary for several reasons. Members of the Athabasca University planning team visited the UKOU as well as other innovative universities in North America during the early 1970s (Athabasca University, 1972; Hendy, 1995, Pulker & Papi, 2021). The AU planning documents revealed the following five themes: "a strong interest in the non-traditional learner, in home study, in learning theories and their application to instructional design, interdisciplinary curricula, and in educational technology" (Paul, 1986, p. 131). These themes were prevalent in the founding of the UKOU as described in Chapter 2. For example, L.W. Downey Research Associates (1975) noted that AU aspired to serve Canada's nontraditional students just as the UKOU served Britain's adult learners via distance methods. AU and the UKOU shared features including a focus on the unique needs of nontraditional students, using communications technologies and distance delivery to reach students, the course-teams approach to developing curriculum, offering tutor-led assistance, and open admission policies.

Athabasca University's Subsequent Developments

In 1980, AU announced it would open a new headquarters campus in the town of Athabasca which prompted numerous resignations from staff who were unwilling to move to the rural location; that campus opened in 1984 and remains the headquarters in the 21st century (Pulker & Papi, 2021). The Progressive Conservative Party's policy of economic decentralization and rural investment stimulated the move (Photo gallery: Athabasca University's history in pictures, 2022). During the 1980s, AU expanded their academic offerings and use of broadcasting. In December of 1981, AU advertised their first interactive broadcast courses in cooperation with ACCESS Alberta, the provincial educational television entity (Athabasca University, 1981). The first offerings included the non-credit Managing Stress course and French 103: Ensemble for six credits (Athabasca University, 1981). In 1983, AU initiated a Canadian Studies major (Athabasca Advocate, 1983). This new program aligned with the Canadianization initiatives discussed in the national context section earlier in this chapter. In 1994, it began offering two graduate degrees, the Master of Business Administration and the Master of Distance Education, using a cost-recovery model (Pulker & Papi, 2021). The MBA was the first online degree of this kind in the world (Athabasca Advocate, 1990; Athabasca University Faculty of Business, n. d.). AU opened the Centre for Learning Accreditation and at least as early as February 1997 began granting credit for a student's prior credit from a nonaccredited labor training program, the workplace, or other nonformal learning endeavors via portfolio, testing, simulation, essay, or interview assessment (Athabasca University, 2001; Collier, 1997).

AU achieved several notable accomplishments in the early 2000s. The university launched the academic journal the *International Review of Research in Distance Education*

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(IRRODL) in 2000 (Pulker & Papi, 2021). AU announced plans to move classes fully online in 2003 (Pulker & Papi, 2021). It achieved accreditation in the United States via the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in 2005. In 2008, AU was the first university in North America to offer a Doctorate of Distance Education program (Koole, 2007; Pulker & Papi, 2021).

Athabasca University Summary

The Social Credit Party instigated the creation of AU to meet Alberta's mass expansion of higher education needs. Alberta's oil-rich economy funneled profits into this mass expansion that paralleled other increased social services for the public common good. The Worth Report of 1972, which was imbued with the values of a person-centered rather than an industrial society, combined with a keen policy interest in human resource development for what was initially intended to be a place-based university. After surviving a political regime change with the Progressive Conservative Party, AU began a multi-year pilot project that embraced the values and methods of a distance teaching university. The UKOU influenced these methods including a team approach to creating printed course materials supplemented with multimedia, tutorials, and student services that catered to nontraditional distance learners. Today, AU is the only surviving Canadian autonomous English-speaking university that only uses distance methods and is branded as "Canada's open university." From 1978 to 1988, AU was accompanied as an English-speaking distance teaching university by the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia. The regional context of British Columbia is explored in the next section.

British Columbia's Regional Context

British Columbia developed a unique sense of regional identity as a province during WWII (Barman, 2007). This identity was shaped by a frontier culture and isolating geography on

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the western coast. The identity was closely tied to abundant natural resources and subsequently influenced by the environmentalism movement of the 1970s (Barman, 2007). Their regional identity assumed prominence over their national identity. “British Columbians are westerners but share little in common with the Prairie provinces. They are Canadians, but only half-heartedly attached to their loose and variegated federation” (Robin, 1972, p. 27). There is a prevailing view that British Columbian interests were never aligned with national interests and the investment in the railroad was the last and only time the province benefitted from federal initiatives when they joined the Confederation in 1871 (Barman, 2007). This regional identity shaped by geographic, economic, and political circumstances influenced the creation of the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia because of the province’s unique circumstances.

Geography is a defining feature of British Columbia due to the United States to the south, the ocean to the west, mountains on the east side, and difficult terrain in the north (Barman, 2007). The province stretches 370,000 square miles, of which 55% of the land is classified as forest (Dennison, 1997; Mugridge, 1981, 1986). The inhospitable terrain prohibited infrastructure development except for postal and telephone communications and dictated that the vast majority of the population resided in the south (Mugridge, 1981, 1986). Geographic considerations were foundational to the establishment of the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia because distance teaching methods could overcome the barriers of place.

British Columbia’s Economic Context

As is so often the case, geography shaped the provincial economy. Class conflict and differences in regional growth rates created disparities between the urbanized south and the rural hinterlands of the north (Robin, 1972). Rich with timber, fish, and minerals, British Columbia exported these natural resources and imported consumer products which increased the

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importance of shipping ports during the middle of the 20th century (Barman, 2007; Dennison, 1997; Finkel, 2012). Large-scale corporations dominated these industries and supported company towns (Robin, 1972). Industrial unionism was embraced by a vibrant labor movement especially in coastal employment, which was precariously cyclical and exacerbated by Asian immigrant strikebreakers (Robin, 1972). Dotted with small farms, the terrain prohibited large-scale agriculture (Barman, 2007). Agrarian values such as those embraced in the Prairies did not prevail in British Columbia's frontier because many independent small farmers owned the means of production and generally enjoyed a comfortable standard of living (Robin, 1972). The regional economic disparities were foundational to the creation of the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia because the institution sought to reach the hinterland residents and improve their economy using distance learning methods.

Like Canada's national economy, British Columbia experienced a post-war boom sparked by spending accumulated savings, providing resources to rebuilding western Europe and to hungry American industries, and military spending on the Korean War (Barman, 2007). Plagued with inter-provincial disparities due to the inhospitable terrain and a small population in the north, the province invested their profits into massive infrastructure projects to improve communication networks, electrify the hinterlands, and provide transportation via railroads and highways. In doing so, the province was industrializing, including southern urban locations like Vancouver which was only partially industrialized during WWII (Barman, 2007). The provincial government under the Social Credit Party initiated and steered infrastructure investments (Robin, 1972). These industrializing initiatives were important for the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia because it needed infrastructure investments for course delivery.

British Columbia's Political Context

The Social Credit Party steered the infrastructure investments and initiated the mass expansion of higher education in British Columbia. As described in an earlier section, the Social Credit Party emerged in Alberta during the 1930s drawing supporters “from a composite of various cranks, monetary reformers, religious fanatics, and professional anti-Semites” (Robin, 1972, p. 52). By the 1950s when they took power in British Columbia, supporters had changed to middle class individuals in both rural and urban locations, with the balance tipped toward the rural voters. Their 1953 campaign in British Columbia advocated political stability and free enterprise while opposing monopolies and socialism (Robin, 1972). The Socreds dominated the British Columbia political scene for several decades due to factors including the wave of prairie migrants who shared this political vision and the popularity of W.A.C Bennet, who was the provincial Socred leader from 1952-1972 (Robin, 1972).

Somewhat ironically given their anti-socialist stance, the Social Credit Party was keen to use the government to intervene in the British Columbian economy. In doing so, they “advanced a peculiar Okanagan variant of Marxism. They agree with Marx that workers are exploited, but violently disagree as to who are the exploiters” (Robin, 1972, p. 65). Social Creditors believed that labor leaders, not corporations, were the exploiters. To curb labor’s power and appeal, Social Credit legislation limited collective bargaining and used injunctions. These actions were supported by a frontier culture and socio-economic elites who defined freedom as “not the freedom to deliberate and communicate, but the freedom of political and economic elite to act and get results [in ways that are] respected by people concerned with achievement to the exclusion of rights” (Robin, 1972, p. 42). This definition of freedom aligned with the shifting vision of the public good from collective to individual rights described in Chapter 2. It also

aligned with post-Keynesian economic policies that focused on labor market cultivation. These trends manifested in the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia's mission as described later in this chapter.

British Columbia's Higher Education Landscape

British Columbia lacked a well-developed system of higher education during the mid-1970s with only three universities all located in the south (Dennison, 1997; Moran, 1991, 1993). The University of British Columbia (UBC) and the University of Victoria (UVic) were created prior to the mass expansion of higher education whereas Simon Fraser University (SFU), which Dennison (1997) described as “a monument to government support” (p. 40), came into being in 1965 as part of the mass expansion. Recognizing the dearth of opportunities for British Columbians outside of the southern urban locations, the Social Credit government began exploring options for additional institutions (Moran, 1991, 1993).

The B.C. School Trustees Association conducted a study in 1962 articulating the goals of provincial education. “It is the aim of education in a democratic society to enable the development of the individual to the maximum in the following five fields: physical, economic, social, cultural, and philosophical or spiritual” (as cited in Beinder, 1986, p. 2). The School Trustees envisaged that these goals must be pursued at all levels of education. In 1970, legislation amended the Public Schools Act to expand college access for vocational training and promote transferability to university for those who desired degrees (Beinder, 1986). The efforts to expand college access did not address the problem of degree attainment for residents in the hinterlands who lacked educational options.

British Columbia's Existing Distance Education

There is a contradiction in the literature about the existence of distance education in the province prior to the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia (OLI). Mugridge (1981, 1986) argued that the province lacked any distance education opportunities and noted the widespread assumption that vocational education was too difficult to accomplish via distance. Although marginalized, some distance education did exist within UBC, SFU, and North Island College. UBC created a Department of Extension in 1936, offered noncredit “Living Room Learning” during the 1950s, suffered severe budget cuts during the 1960s, but still maintained 15 correspondence courses although their reputation was considered inferior (Moran, 1991). The courses were dispersed across various faculties, contributing to their overall institutional invisibility which “reduced distance education’s potential to acquire a recognized, legitimate place within the University as a whole” (Moran, 1991, p. 79). Therefore, UBC’s correspondence courses remained marginalized. Another example of existing distance education was that SFU, only ten years into its existence, offered some courses via distance starting in 1975 (Hornblow, 2005).

North Island College was notable for its distance education programs. As mentioned in Chapter 2, it was established in 1975 to serve the Island of Vancouver. It was the first distance education institution in the province and the Principal referred to the institutional mission as open learning (Daniel & Smith, 1979; Department of the Secretary of State, Canada, 1989; Moran, 1991; Rothe, 1986). North Island College targeted small villages spanning some 48,000 kilometers of rugged terrain. Tutors acted as facilitators sometimes using mobile homes to bring technology and learning resources to students in remote locations.

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North Island College had transfer agreements with AU which began to enhance British Columbia's distance education offerings (Daniel & Smith, 1979; Department of the Secretary of State, Canada, 1989; Moran, 1991). AU supported some 100 students who were enrolled at North Island College but took AU courses. Doug Shale, in a letter to the AU Governing Council on October 30, 1979, argued this collaboration created a situation where "politically they [North Island College] seem to be an albatross" (Athabasca University Governing Authority, 1977, p. 47) because AU was asking the Alberta government for more money when British Columbia had plenty of money; AU could just serve the 100 students directly rather than at NIC. Considering these nascent and marginalized opportunities, more distance education was desired in British Columbia

Early Proposals for a British Columbian Open University

By the early 1970s, British Columbians were considering the idea of an open university, although it remains unclear who exactly was the first to advocate it. Ellis (1997) and Moran (1991,1993) argued that Ellis' (1973) publication titled "Why we should create a B.C. style Open University" was the first to propose an open university for the province. However, a closer examination of a 1971 speech by an Education Ministry official, as well as Ellis' (1973) publication, contain earlier evidence of discussions about an open university for British Columbia.

Andrew Soles, Assistant Deputy Minister and then Deputy Minister responsible for Post-Secondary Education in British Columbia from 1970 to 1985, delivered a speech at the Vancouver Public Library in May 1971 advocating an open university after he had spent several months in England and became intrigued with the UKOU the previous year. His speech predated Ellis' publication by two years. Ellis' (1973) call for an open university in the province also

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noted that British Columbia's Minister of Education Eileen Dailly was interested in the idea of creating a provincial open university so clearly discussions were already underway. The idea could not have been new with Ellis' publication in 1973. It is likely that Andrew Soles' promotion of the idea from at least two years earlier stimulated interest within the Education Ministry and thus shifts the origins of the new open university for the province from the academic community, as previously identified in the literature, to the provincial government. It is also likely that British Columbia's higher education community was aware of the UKOU's launch in 1969. Whatever the precise origins of the idea of an open university for the province, Soles' (1971) speech articulated an important vision for a new provincial institution.

Soles (1971) argued that if British Columbia decided to add a fourth university, constituents should seriously consider the UKOU model after further investigation of UKOU outcomes and potential modifications to the provincial context. He outlined specifics of what this new institution could look like in British Columbia with a central administrative building, comprehensive library, laboratory space, and audiovisual studio. Soles (1971) proposed full time faculty, preferably of national and international acclaim, who could create course packages, lecture at regional centers, assess academic outcomes, oversee tutors, and create and grade exams. He envisioned that the nine existing community colleges and some high schools would work well as regional centers for advising, tutoring, replaying media, and summer residencies. The new open university could negotiate with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and local radio and television stations for programs integrated into the course packages (Soles, 1971).

Soles (1971) also articulated a vision for the curriculum and likely benefits of a new open university for the province. The institution would need to closely coordinate with community colleges regarding curriculum, transferability, and degree-completion options. The new open

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university would develop third and fourth year courses designed for the individuals who completed their first two years at the community college. The new institution could also develop first and second year courses for those who did not attend a college due to employment or geographic barriers (Soles, 1971).

This new addition to the higher education landscape promised benefits such as extending distance higher education learning opportunities throughout the province, increasing flexibility for retraining, exposing the residents to some of Canada's leading scholars via the course packages, likely reducing per-student costs, increasing public support for higher education, and promoting innovative and experimental instructional techniques (Soles, 1971). In doing so, Soles saw the creation of a new open university as a significant way to help British Columbians realize the dream of lifelong education and provide hope to those previously excluded from higher education. However, he realistically cautioned that "whether or not a fourth public university will be required for British Columbia will depend upon a continuing demand for higher education which will be determined, in the final analysis, by social and economic conditions (Soles, 1971, p. 17). Provincial higher education commissions continued to debate these issues throughout the mid-1970s amidst mounting pressure for higher education expansion.

British Columbia's Higher Education Commissions

Four reports were instrumental in guiding the decisions of the provincial Ministry of Education to expand mass higher education in British Columbia. The Winegard report of 1976, Faris report of 1976, and Goard report of 1977 all expressed the same need to use distance education to serve students in their homes, which was particularly important for the hinterlands because it was nearly impossible to complete a degree without moving to an urban location (Moran, 1993). The Faris report promoted adult learning opportunities and the Goard report

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focused on improving vocational training (Dennison, 1997). The Distance Education Planning Group report of 1977 proposed a public utility style coordinating agency that used telecommunications technology but lacked acknowledgement of unique distance education obstacles like cultivating relationships with traditional universities and the costs of program development (Ellis, 1997).

The Winegard report was especially influential because it detailed the unique British Columbian problems existing in the higher education system beyond the inability to complete degrees without residents having to relocate. The problems included the dispersed population spread across difficult terrain, minimal vocational and professional opportunities outside of the cities, and the lack of articulation agreements (Moran, 1993). The Winegard report recommended that the creation of new programs using distance education methods specifically designed to promote economic development needs in the hinterlands be housed within SFU and in collaboration for transfer purposes with the other two universities (Dennison, 1997; Moran, 1993).

The existing universities did not welcome this proposal. UBC vocally resisted with concerns about the quality of distance education whereas UVic decried their anticipated loss of control over professional programs (Abrioux, 2006; Moran, 1993). Brian Wilson, SFU's Vice President Academic, argued that any suggestion of using UKOU courses, a topic which had also been discussed widely at that point and supported by Minister of Education Patrick McGreer, would be too costly and not suitable for the context of British Columbia (Moran, 1991). During the summer and fall of 1977, the universities' principals committee began planning for an 'open college' (Ellis, 1997). Realizing that the three universities were unable to agree, and that distance education was the only means by which to reach people in rural areas, the Education Ministry

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embarked on an ambitious plan to establish a new institution that would be independent yet expected to extensively collaborate amidst such hostility.

Open Learning Institute of British Columbia

OLI of BC's Mission and Purposes of Learning

The OLI of BC was formally established on June 1, 1978 via Order-in-Council 1429 under the 1977 Colleges and Provincial Institutes Act and then received degree-granting authority on July 27, 1978 via an amendment to the 1974 Universities Act (Moran, 1991, 1993). In creating this new open university for British Columbia, the Social Credit Party responded to “driving forces [that] were largely economic, based on the assumed public and private benefits of investing in human capital and on the advantages of decentralizing B.C.’s population” (Moran, 1993, p. 51). Ellis (1997) noted the provincial “government’s long-standing policy of decentralizing educational opportunity” (p. 92). After all, the Social Credit Party valued individualism and free enterprise, not collective centralization, so their emphasis on human capital and economic goals aligned with their political philosophy.

Contrastingly, “public rhetoric was largely couched in terms of social justice: that is, the social desirability of improving educational access” (Moran, 1993, p. 51). In defining the OLI of BC’s intended student population, the planners targeted individuals who were excluded from traditional higher education. Although the planners did not explicitly address the social group trifecta of race, gender, and class, the OLI of BC “implicitly recognised the educational consequences of social inequality” (Moran, 1991, p.136). This social objective referred to a growing movement toward social equality, such as with the baby boomers’ values, equal rights movements, and the Just Society. As noted in Chapter 2, the social and economic benefits of expanding mass higher education were compatible and widely embraced with human capital

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theory that promoted the idea that investing in higher education would result in individual and national benefits (Gillies, 2017; Marginson, 2019).

Contradictory interpretations exist about the OLI of BC's mission clarity and the formal mission statement was not located for this study. Mugridge (1986) argued that it was established with the following clear mission: "to provide by distance means throughout the province of British Columbia, programmes in adults basic education, in career-technical-vocational areas, and leading to undergraduate degrees in arts and sciences" (p. 121). These educational options indicate a range of humanist and liberal purposes of learning but appear to promote the workplace roles the most. Abrioux (2006) and Hornblow (2005) agreed with the mission's clarity regarding the three programmatic areas.

However, Moran (1991) argued that the founders' "lack of clarity appeared in OLI's mission statement which did not define education, nor specify the nature and priorities of OLI's service role" (p. 158). Ellis (1997) suggested the mission announcement lacked details but articulated that the new institution would serve unmet formal learning needs, offer program variety as stipulated above, and use distance methods. Ellis further explained that the "public and political response to this rather cryptic announcement was minimal because its implications were not widely understood" (1997, p. 91). So perhaps the mission was clear to the planners at least in general terms. Given the lack of available primary sources from the institutional origins such as the mission statement in a course catalog, it is difficult to assess which argument has more validity. It is likely that some combination accurately depicts the mission's clarity, i.e., that the three program areas were clear, but the organization's service role was vague, and the public did not receive sufficient details about the OLI of BC's service role.

UKOU Influence on the OLI of BC

It is clear that the UKOU was an unmistakable influence on the OLI of BC. Bottomley (1979) argued that the Education Ministry and public viewed the origins of the institution as linked directly to the acquisition of UKOU course materials. Three individuals that were instrumental in the founding of the OLI of BC in 1978, John Ellis, Patrick McGeer, and Walter Hardwick, insisted on the UKOU model. Each of these individuals shaped the new open institution in different ways,

It is beyond the scope of this study to determine if, or to what extent, those three individuals were aware of the early advocates of an open university for British Columbia such as Soles (1971), who had spent time in England the year before his speech at the Vancouver Public Library. However, Ellis, who was a dean at SFU and later the first principal of the OLI of BC, was obviously familiar with the UKOU by the time of his published call for an open university in 1973. Both Soles (1971) and Ellis (1973) had been careful to mitigate the fact that the UKOU was still nascent and suffering from lack of widespread credibility in Britain during the early 1970s. By carefully tailoring a new distance teaching institution to the regional socio-economic needs and embedding the institution within the existing system of provincial higher education, it would presumably avoid similar reputational problems as those experienced in the early years of the UKOU as described in Chapter 2 (Ellis, 1997).

Like the democratizing mission of the UKOU, Ellis believed that "access to education in all its forms is now a basic ingredient of occupational success and personal enrichment. There is a moral responsibility to do everything possible to make the whole range of educational experience available to all citizens" (Athabasca University Governing Authority, 1977, p. 35), meaning that he supported a variety of post-secondary missions. Ellis also recognized the need

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for strong government support to create a new distance teaching institution (Moran, 1991), such as occurred with the establishment of the UKOU and other open universities worldwide (Mugridge, 1997; Perry, 1997b).

During the second half of the 1970s, the Socred government was preparing to adopt an open university model (Abrioux, 2006). During 1976 and 1977, a visit from the UKOU's Vice-Chancellor Walter Perry to British Columbia was followed by investigative trips of key British Columbia Education Ministry personnel to the UKOU as well as innovative institutions in Massachusetts and Texas (Ellis, 1997). In 1977 Social Credit Minister of Education Patrick McGeer and Deputy Minister Walter Hardwick pushed for the open university vision and confidentially began negotiating with the UKOU; these negotiations remained secret until February of 1978 (Moran, 1993).

Hardwick, who had visited the UKOU, even went so far as to sign a letter of intention to purchase UKOU course materials and consultation services that raised suspicions from critics about these premature actions (Moran, 1991). After all, the OLI of BC had not yet been authorized at that point in 1977. Even so, Hardwick jumped the gun by spending a hefty \$306,000 on UKOU course materials in December 1977 (Moran, 1993). The critics were concerned about the costs, but more importantly that "A BOU [British Open University]-clone awarding its own credentials threatened the educational hierarchy, institutional territory, funding priorities, and established educational mores" of the province (Moran, 1991, p. 119). This speaks to the hostile higher education environment in which the institution was created.

Furthermore, there were serious issues adapting the purchased UKOU course materials. Hornblow (2005) suggested that Hardwick ignored advice to customize UKOU course materials to the British Columbian context. However, that did not mean the OLI of BC was using the

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courses as-is because nine months after the creation of the OLI of BC in a written discussion presumably to institutional leadership, Bottomley (1979) identified the following required modifications to use the purchased UKOU course packages in an institutional report:

- split up courses into smaller units for fewer credits that were transferable to British Columbia's institutions
- adapt courses to the Canadian context not because of national pride, but pedagogical recognition of helping students understand principles in a context they knew first so they can apply them to other contexts
- adapt the copyrighted materials to North American edition publications
- develop appropriate and customized assessments
- adapt summer school and tutorials
- adapt media.

Required television programs that accompanied UKOU courses presented a major adaptation obstacle, but also varied by course type. For example, 33% of the three purchased mathematics classes required television, but the percentages increased to 58% of the 12 arts classes, 75% of 12 science classes, 80% of five social science classes, and 83% of the 12 technology classes (Bottomley, 1979). This was all problematic because only 75% of the provincial population had access to cable television or the ability to play video cassettes at that time. Bottomley (1979) suggested that the OLI of BC create non-video replacements that would be accessible to British Columbia learners.

Additionally, the OLI of BC faced other problems related to the purchased UKOU courses. The science laboratory kits were incredibly expensive to purchase and maintain (Bottomley, 1979, Moran, 1991). The UKOU spent \$15 million in 1978 on their customized kits,

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but the OLI did not budget for them (Bottomley, 1979). Furthermore, many of the purchased courses were thematic rather than discipline based, which made them incompatible with the other provincial universities' curriculum. This raised further questions about course transferability, coordination of higher education, and potential reputational damage for the new institution within the higher education community. Most courses were unusable without modifications, but if adapted could produce quality course packages at about 50% of the cost of starting from scratch (Bottomley, 1979).

Even with UKOU support in the forms of purchased materials and visit consultations, a hostile environment surrounded the emergence of the OLI of BC. Ellis described the traditional universities' response as "vocal and ...vituperative" (1997, p. 91) as they expressed outrage over potential quality concerns and not being consulted. McGeer later reflected in 1991 that "if we could have snapped our fingers and created an open university exactly modelled on the Great Britain style with a companion institution to cover the things that were non-university, we would have done it" (as cited in Moran, 1993, p. 50). The resistant higher education players and unique geographic context demanded something adaptable to British Columbia (Ellis, 1997). Despite the potential threat posed to the existing system, the OLI of BC was established in 1978 with significant influence from the UKOU.

OLI of BC's Educational Characteristics

The OLI of BC offered open admissions to learners aged 18 or older with six intakes, or every other month, per year (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). Learners could complete their final exams every two months, usually offered during weekends using various local facilities. Students could transfer up to 75% of their credits from other institutions into the OLI degree (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986).

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It offered three-credit courses using high quality print materials supplemented with audio during four-month semesters and later added an option for students to take up to six months to complete a course (Bottomley, 1986; McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986; Seaborne & Zuckernick, 1986). The printed course packages developed by OLI of BC course teams were designed to facilitate students' meaning-making and skill development in ways that were reminiscent of Holmberg's guided didactic conversations discussed in Chapter 2 (Diehl & Cano, 2019; Keegan, 1983; Moran, 1991). The audio supplements, which were mostly developed in-house, were more cost-effective than broadcast, but the OLI increasingly included broadcast materials they obtained from other institutions such as the UKOU, International University Consortium, and Coast College Consortium (Bottomley, 1986; Seaborne & Zuckernick, 1986).

In addition to the OLI-created course packages, the OLI adopted materials from other institutions. They used commercially-published textbooks and journal articles (Bottomley, 1986). It initially purchased two AU-created courses, contracted with an AU course designer, and subsequently developed plans for the two institutions to create 60 courses that could be utilized at both institutions (Moran, 1991).

Whether the OLI of BC offered prior learning assessment was not verified for this study. However, sources indicate that it was not likely. First, Koenig & Wolfson (1994) attributed Loyalist College, Mohawk College, and the First Nations Technical Institute, all in Ontario, with the first prior learning assessment policies in Canada during the 1980s. Second, Glen Farrell, who at the time was President of the Knowledge Network, called for prior learning assessment as part of his vision for open learning at a meeting held during December of 1986 (Moran, 1992). Third, the OLI of BC's successor, the Open Learning Agency participated in two provincial conferences about the topic and helped create provincial standards for prior learning assessment

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that were adapted from the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning in the United States (Koenig & Wolfson, 1994). Presumably the conferences and initiative to develop standards, without acknowledged dates, occurred sometime between Farrell's 1992 call for prior learning assessment and Koenig and Wolfson's (1994) report.

Faculty worked part-time. Despite UKOU Vice Chancellor Walter Perry's public support of full-time faculty, he privately advised Hardwick and Ellis not to employ full-time faculty because their narrow academic expertise would likely translate into limited course offerings (Moran, 1991). Athabasca University's President W.A.S. Smith, who had worked at SFU with Ellis, shared similar advice. Furthermore, the OLI of BC lacked the budget to fund a research library as well as research and study leave for full-time faculty (Moran, 1991).

Tutors, who were usually contracted for six months at a time, facilitated students' distance learning, typically with three contacts via telephone at the beginning, middle, and end of a course (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). Although, tutors also found teleconferencing with multiple students simultaneously beneficial to avoid repeating the same information. Tutor training occurred via annual workshops as well as an OLI-created self-directed learning print package supplemented by audio (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986; Moran, 1991). This method familiarized tutors with the course packages utilized by students.

The OLI of BC established six regional advising centers (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). Advisors answered enrolled and prospective student inquiries. Their advising model did not include customized learning strategies or life counseling because the institution assumed that successful distance education learners did not need additional support once they were familiar with the institution's learning methods (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986; Moran, 1991). Three

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regional advising centers were eliminated during the 1984-1985 academic year due to budget constraints (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986).

The institution's role in British Columbia expanded in September of 1984 when Patrick McGreer, Minister of Universities, Science and Communications, initiated the Open University Consortium (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). This new provincial consortium brought together the OLI of BC, the Knowledge Network, and traditional universities to facilitate distance learning (Bottomley, 1986; McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). The mission was as follows:

ensure that students can obtain credits from the offerings of member institutions and other accredited institutions towards the completion of an 'open' degree; coordinate needs-assessment procedures and programme planning; ensure evaluation of programmes and methods of delivery; acquire rights to materials produced outside British Columbia; and advertise and promote jointly the programmes offered by the member institutions. (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986, p. 66)

Under this arrangement, the OLI of BC granted the degree, maintained student records, and provided student advising (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). The consortium paved the way for increased provincial higher education cooperation that also resulted in the loss of institutional autonomy for the OLI.

OLI of BC's Institutional Autonomy

The OLI of BC had a short life as an autonomous institution. The Open Learning Act of 1987 prompted a change to the institution the following year (Abrioux, 2006). In 1988, the OLI of BC merged with the Knowledge Network, the provincial educational media producer, and

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became the Open Learning Agency with a mandate to manage multiple programs including the British Columbia Open University, the British Columbia Open College, and the Knowledge Network (Department of the Secretary of State, Canada, 1989; Hornblow, 2005). For a time unspecified by Abrioux (2006), the institution branded itself as The Open University of Canada, although provincial authorities within British Columbia insisted on rescinding that brand because they had not been consulted. This might have been a manifestation of the provincial identity discussed earlier in this chapter. On April 1, 2005, the University College of the Cariboo merged with the British Columbia Open University creating Thompson Rivers University with an Open Learning Division (Thompson Rivers University, n.d.). The OLI ceased to exist as an autonomous institution but lived on in another form.

OLI of BC Summary

British Columbia's geographic and infrastructure considerations were of the utmost regional concern compared to national contextual factors as they impacted the creation of a new open university for the province. From the beginning, distance learning methods adapted from the UKOU model combined with the Social Credit Party's focus on individualism to create a new institution that served provincial economic purposes. The provincial government initiated the Open Learning Institute (OLI) as part of the mass expansion of higher education using distance education means to reach residents in the hinterlands, but numerous twists and turns occurred regarding institutional autonomy due to perceived threats within the higher education landscape. The traditional universities initially resisted the idea of a fourth university with a multifaceted mission to offer adult basic education, vocational training, and undergraduate programs using distance learning methods. Unable to sway thinking that would prevent the creation of a new open university for British Columbia, the OLI of BC existed for about a decade

as an autonomous institution until it is merged and eventually became part of Thompson Rivers University.

Comparisons – Contexts and Educational Characteristics

Similarities prevailed between the two provinces and their open and distance teaching institutions. Human capital theory was the economic guide embraced by provincial governments, particularly Social Creditors, that created these universities. These provincial governments created coordinating bodies to recommend policies regarding postsecondary expansion opportunities. British Columbia and Alberta enjoyed wealthy economies based on resource extraction industries that funded the mass expansion of higher education. AU and the OLI were established only after provincial authorities created new traditional universities. Both institutions focused on nontraditional students' opportunities for undergraduate education, although AU eventually expanded beyond that arena to research and graduate programs. The OLI and AU were required to operate within the existing provincial systems of higher education. Both emphasized transferability of credits, were influenced by UKOU, and were established with provincial government support. Although using distance methods was not part of AU's original mandate, it operated as a distance university from the beginning because of the pilot project. The two institutions were regarded as open universities. Both universities were compatible with social equality movements, but neither institution explicitly identified social equality as a goal.

Differences are also notable between the two institutions designed to serve regional needs. British Columbia's geography circumscribed postsecondary education opportunities, leaving distance-methods as the best way to offer programs to the hinterlands, whereas AU was more interested in using technology for innovative teaching methods. Both provinces dealt with socialist sentiments, but class conflict was more prominent as a social divider in British

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Columbia. Similarly, populist politics were prevalent in both provinces. However, Alberta's populism was of the agrarian variety influenced by early 20th century farmers' movements and the Great Depression. British Columbia's populism took the form of a commitment to individualism and free enterprise during the 1950s. British Columbia was politically more polarized than Alberta. AU survived a political party change whereas the OLI benefitted from a provincial political consistency.

These institutions shared some educational characteristics and diverged on others as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Educational Characteristics: AU and OLI of BC

Educational Characteristics	AU	OLI of BC
Learning Centers	Yes, but focused on broad student services	Yes, but focused on narrow student services
Open Admission	Yes	Yes
Prior Learning Assessment	Added later	Unlikely
Correspondence Courses	Yes	Yes
Use of UKOU Courses	Unclear	Purchased, but unclear when started using them
Faculty	Full-time	Part-time
Individualized Learning Contracts	No	No
Educational television	Yes	Yes, but initially relied on audio rather than television media
Tutoring	Telephone-based	Telephone-based
In-person courses	No	No

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Both institutions offered open admission, telephone-based tutoring, printed course packages via correspondence, and regional advising centers. The OLI used teleconferencing less than AU (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). AU's advising mandate was broader than the OLI. AU offered personal life counseling and career planning at regional centers whereas the OLI's advising model focused on procedures and logistics (McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986). The OLI experienced higher completion rates than AU in a study of one course suggesting that finite start and end dates and overall pacing influenced those outcomes (Coldeway, 1986). Although, it is not clear if the OLI sustained higher completion rates than AU beyond the study with one course. Faculty were employed full-time at AU whereas the OLI faculty were part-time. Both institutions offered educational television components, but to varying degrees. There was insufficient evidence to determine if, when, and how either institution used UKOU courses. Neither institution offered individualized learning contracts, but AU offered prior learning assessment options. Neither institution offered entirely in-person courses due to their distance-learning focus.

The institutions also differed with their purposes of learning and institutional autonomy. AU was more concerned about values and helping students develop independent learning skills required for a learning society. The OLI of BC avoided interdisciplinary programs whereas AU insisted on them. AU's purposes of learning mixed humanist and liberal elements whereas the OLI of BC focused on liberal purposes of learning. The OLI of BC was under attack by threatened existing traditional universities whereas AU was not confronted by a hostile higher education environment. AU influenced the OLI of BC with courses and the two subsequently cooperated with transfer agreements and shared some administrators. The OLI of BC did not

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survive as an autonomous institution as it merged to eventually become part of Thompson Rivers University, leaving Athabasca as the sole autonomous distance teaching university in Canada.

Conclusion

This chapter identified the national and regional contexts that supported the mass expansion of higher education in Alberta and British Columbia. It articulated the political, economic, and social factors that influenced the establishment of AU and the OLI of BC. In both cases, affluent economic regional contexts were more influential on the institutional origins than regional political and social contexts or the national context, but the elements of the national context such as identity, increased attention to social and educational services, human rights, and the widespread belief in human capital theory seeped into AU and the OLI of BC.

Comparisons and contrasts of the two universities were analyzed. AU and the OLI of BC shared similar distance-oriented learning methods but diverged in how those methods manifested for each institution. The UKOU influenced both AU and the OLI of BC. The next chapter explores four American distance teaching universities in their national and regional contexts during the 1970s.

Chapter 5: Four Wins – American Open Universities Established During the 1970s

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the political, economic, and social origins of four open higher education institutions that were established in the United States during the mass expansion of higher education. SUNY Empire State College (ESC), the New York Regents External Degree Program (REX), and Thomas Edison College (TEC) were created in 1971. The University of Maryland University College (UMUC) gained institutional autonomy in 1970 after having been formally created in 1947 as the College of Special and Continuation Studies within the University of Maryland. These institutions shared a national context of sweeping changes during the 1960s that influenced their origins as they expanded higher educational opportunities to nontraditional learners. The regional contexts, institutional missions, and educational methods offer insight into their comparative differences. The regional contexts were more important than the national context for the creation of SUNY ESC, REX, and TEC. Contrastingly, the regional context did not significantly influence the origins of UMUC. British distance education programs, whether the University of London's External Degree, the United Kingdom's Open University (UKOU), or both, influenced all four institutions at various points either during their origins or early years. These four nontraditional institutions embodied characteristics of openness inherent in open universities.

This chapter begins with an analysis of the national context. It then moves into the regional context of New York, followed by the origins of SUNY ESC and REX. It subsequently explains the contexts of Maryland that influenced the creation of UMUC's institutional antecedent as well as New Jersey that influenced TEC. It concludes with a comparison of the contexts and educational characteristics of the four institutions.

The National Context

In the United States on the national level, social changes combined with economic prosperity and political will to funnel profits from post-WWII economic growth into social services including the mass expansion of higher education, which was discussed in Chapter 2. The civil rights movement, Great Society social welfare programs, war in Vietnam, Attica prison riots, and women's movement were important turning points with national ramifications that influenced the origins of the four universities analyzed in this chapter. They responded to the context by tailoring instruction methods that allowed nontraditional learners to flexibly acquire skills and knowledge and demonstrate their learning outcomes. In doing so, the institutions offered nontraditional learners, many of whom were from marginalized social groups, a vehicle for relevant and flexible learning. These events also contributed to increased political and economic conservatism that constrained the mass expansion of higher education during the 1970s without threatening the viability of the four nascent institutions. These events with national ramifications are analyzed in the subsequent separate sections even though they were often interrelated.

Civil Rights

The civil rights movement advocated for equal opportunities, including in higher education and credentialed employment, which led the four universities to respond to that context with open admission policies. The long struggle for civil rights may be divided into two distinct yet connected eras: pre and post 1968 (Highland & McDougall, 2015; Maclean, 2010). Prior to 1968, the civil rights movement for African American equality focused on removing de jure barriers to equality by changing laws. For example, Executive Order 9981 (1948) desegregated the armed forces and the *Brown vs. Board Education* (1954) court case

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desegregated public education. Sit-ins, Freedom Rides, and Freedom Summer projects with nontraditional education, voter registration projects, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party resulted in other federal legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibited discrimination in public places and employment as well as the Voting Rights Act (1965) that prohibited discriminatory practices such as literacy tests (Dittmer, et al., 2017; Highland & McDougall, 2015). These de jure changes provided African Americans with a modicum of legal equality of opportunity as well as a standard of living for some (Edwards, et al., 2020). After 1968, the movement focused on achieving de facto equality and valuing black culture (Highland & McDougall, 2015; MacLean, 2010).

Even with the de jure improvements, many African Americans were frustrated with persistent de facto inequalities when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968 while supporting striking sanitation workers in Memphis (Edwards, et al., 2020; Highland & McDougall, 2015). Frustrated by events especially during the previous year, the nation was in a pressure cooker. One month before the assassination, the federal Kerner Commission (1968) report investigating civil unrest argued that immediate national, regional, and local structural changes were needed to remedy a growing apartheid-like society that perpetuated racial injustices in two unequal societies, one white one black, growing farther apart. In 1967 when 167 race riots occurred nationwide (Carroll, 2000), Dr. King publicly condemned the war in Vietnam on the basis that approximately 15 million Americans opposed the war for multiple reasons including that the government spent \$500,000 to kill each enemy soldier and only \$53 for each person classified as poor which created even more resentment amongst the African American population, and the time for silence had ended (King, Jr., 1967). In response to King's

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assassination, 130 cities rioted again, and social divisions worsened. American society was in turmoil and braced for further social disruption.

The changes implemented by the Great Society social welfare programs initiated in 1965, which are described in the next section, were insufficient to placate growing unrest and resentment tore at the nation's fabric. The 1968 protests prompted higher education leaders in New York to delay a proposal for a State University of New York "without walls" institution, meaning a distance teaching university, although the idea came to fruition a few years later with SUNY ESC (Bonnabeau, 1990). By the mid-1970s, urban protests declined. The black underclass continued to be separate and unequal (Carroll, 2000). The higher education system, including the institutions in this study, expanded access to help ameliorate racial inequalities. As explained in a later section, SUNY ESC and REX sought to meet the needs of socially marginalized individuals using flexible open educational methods.

Great Society

Concurrently with the civil rights movement, the federal government rolled out the Great Society programs designed to increase social welfare and equality for the common good. This vision encouraged investment in education and new approaches to the delivery of learning experiences. On May 22, 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson delivered a speech announcing his proposed Great Society massive federal government initiative to end racial discrimination and poverty, as well as invest in education, infrastructure, commerce, and the environment (Johnson, 1964). He partially emulated Franklin D. Roosevelt's Keynesian New Deal and created programs that extended benefits to groups on the lowest rungs of the social ladder (Schulman, 2007). The Great Society outlined a national vision to create a higher standard of living and a richer quality of life for all Americans. The vision came to only partial fruition.

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A flurry of legislation implemented 84 laws with several notable new programs that expanded the American welfare state during the 1960s (Schulman, 2007). The Social Security Amendments of 1965 created Medicaid to provide healthcare for people with a limited income and Medicare offered health insurance for all Americans over age 65 (Medicare and Medicaid Act, 1965). The National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act (1965) created the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts to ensure that the humanities continued to flourish amidst the prevailing higher education emphasis on science and technology. The Public Broadcasting Act (1967) established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to promote cultural, instructional, and educational programming, which was important for nontraditional learners. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) established the Head Start program to provide comprehensive early education for low-income children and provide federal aid to public schools. The Higher Education Act (1965) provided low-interest loans and scholarships to students as well as increased federal investment in universities for the mass expansion of higher education. These programs indicated the federal government's willingness to invest in the public common good.

Criticism abounded about the Great Society's enormous cost (Hacker, 2002). Ardent capitalists decried the expenditures while President Johnson attempted to placate them with corporate tax breaks (Schulman, 2007). The white working class especially resented the idea that they were bankrolling the expansion of social welfare poverty programs they believed were only utilized by African Americans (Hacker, 2002). Just a few years into the Great Society, California's new Governor Ronald Reagan stated that "welfare, is another of our major problems...we are not going to perpetuate poverty by substituting a permanent dole for a paycheck" (Reagan, 1967, para. 15). Later as president, Reagan continued to embrace the notion

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of individual self-reliance that neglected to acknowledge the public common good resulting from the federal investment in social programs, including the mass expansion of higher education that paralleled social safety net initiatives.

This resentment about taxpayers permanently funding relievers combined with the social upheavals of civil rights, anti-war, and free speech protests, a new drug culture, high taxes, and inflation that exacerbated the alienation of the white working class who subsequently supported Richard Nixon's 1968 election promise to expand law and order as he appealed to the white working class as the Silent Majority (Carroll, 2000; Hacker, 2002). As part of his Southern Strategy, as his campaign was dubbed, Nixon ignored the black vote and only 13% of African Americans voted for him in 1968 (Carroll, 2000). The white working class who secured his election did not seem to care that most of the spending went to inclusive social insurance programs designed for the common good such as Medicare and Social Security or that corporate tax breaks were approximately equivalent to government spending on programs designed to provide a social safety net (Trattner, 1999). Their backlash contributed to the rise of neoliberal economic policies, which are discussed further in Chapter 6.

The Great Society programs were important to the institutions in this study because they demonstrated a policy context of the government's willingness to massively invest in social safety net, educational, and cultural initiatives intended for the public common good. This was the same policy context that influenced the creation of the four universities analyzed in this chapter that were also established for the public common good. However, government expenditures for social welfare programs and protests over American military involvement in Vietnam exacerbated divisions in American society that subsequently contributed to the growing

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power of neoliberalism, which redefined the public good and constrained spending on higher education during the 1980s and 1990s.

The War in Vietnam

The United States became involved in Vietnam when President Truman sent military equipment to the French who were trying to maintain control of their Indochina colony and prevent the expansion of communism threatened by Mao's victory in China in 1949 and the Korean War which began in 1950 (Edwards, et al., 2020; Schulman, 2007). By 1954, the United States had sent 300,000 machine guns and small arms as well as financed 80% of the French initiative (Zinn, 2003). American involvement escalated in 1954 when the French relinquished their imperialist territory of Indochina (Shepard, 2014). President Eisenhower sent military advisors to prevent the southern portion of Vietnam from joining their northern communist counterparts (Edwards, et al., 2020). The United States then propped up the unpopular Ngo Dinh Diem, who had recently lived in New Jersey, as the new South Vietnamese leader (Shepard, 2014; Zinn, 2003).

The conflict escalated further after the North Vietnamese attack on an American ship conducting secret electronic surveillance in the Gulf of Tonkin (Zinn, 2003). President Johnson rallied the nation by describing the incident as entirely unprovoked and not mentioning the CIA's secret attacks on North Vietnamese coastal facilities (Schulman, 2007; Zinn, 2003). Congress responded by expanding presidential power in a nearly unanimous vote (Edwards, et al., 2020; Schulman, 2007; Zinn, 2003). The Gulf of Tonkin resolution permitted the president to engage in foreign hostilities thus bypassing the constitutional requirement that Congress authorize a war (Edwards, et al., 2020; Schulman, 2007). By early 1968, 500,000 American troops were stationed in Vietnam, 40,000 Americans were dead, and another 250,000 were wounded (Zinn,

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2003). Public frustrations, especially among American higher education students, increased in 1970.

During the Spring of 1970, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Nixon initiated a secret war in Cambodia to attempt to destroy North Vietnamese supply routes (Edwards, et al., 2020; Zinn, 2003). On April 30, 1970, Nixon announced on national television that the United States was engaging in ‘incursions’ into Cambodia and that the United States had to do so as a matter of national identity and power as well as to fight communism (Carroll, 2000). Members of the press, government, and students at campuses nationwide questioned the constitutionality of violating Cambodia’s sovereignty and extending the war’s massive devastation (Carroll, 2000). In 1972 and after several years of bombing neighboring Laos, the United States helped the South Vietnamese invade Laos (Zinn, 2003). This context impacted UMUC’s open educational characteristics because they operated in these war zones.

American protests increased in response to the invasions into Cambodia and Laos (Edwards, et al., 2020; Zinn, 2003). The FBI documented at least 1,785 student demonstrations during the 1969-1970 academic year (Zinn, 2003). The events at Kent State University were emblematic of growing frustration with the war and resulted in reforms that influenced the origins, early years, or open educational characteristics of the four universities analyzed in this chapter. Protests began at Kent State on May 1, 1970, with approximately 300 students and proceeded for the next few days. (Carroll, 2000). On May 4, 1970, the National Guard teargassed and opened fire without warning on student protestors, some of whom had firebombed the campus ROTC building; the National Guard wounded nine people and killed four students (Grace, 1987/2005).

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Just a few days after the shooting at Kent State, public opinion was divided. Newsweek reported a public opinion poll showing that 11% found the National Guard at fault, while 58% found the protestors at fault and that 50% supported and 39% were against Cambodia invasions (Carroll, 2000). Furthermore, 46% supported Vice President Agnew's public condemnation of the protestors while only 30% disagreed with his criticism. Contrastingly, a Harris poll of college students at the same time showed that 44% supported radical and systemic changes to improve social progress and 76% supported some changes to the social system to improve quality of life (Carroll, 2000). The students' responses aligned with the 1968 Kerner Commission's recommendations that higher education specifically, and society generally, needed to address systemic inequalities while the older generations in the Newsweek poll were more willing to accept the status quo. These diverging public opinion polls and responses to Kent State illustrate the splintering of national unity and how higher education played a role in it.

Following Kent State and other Cambodia protests, President Nixon convened the President's Commission on Campus Unrest on June 13, 1970, with 139 members that met over three months to determine the causes of campus unrest and recommend solutions (Johnson & Marcus, 1986). Also known as the Scranton report named after the chairman, William W. Scranton, the report identified the following causes of campus unrest that also reflected broader societal concerns: war in southeast Asia, racial injustice and bitter frustration with the civil rights movement's failures to achieve de facto equality, and university policies (Carroll, 2000; Johnson & Marcus, 1986; President's Commission on Campus Unrest, 1970). The report recommended that the United States end the war, create social justice, and reform universities. Regarding university reforms, the report urged "that the university make its teaching programs, degree structure, and transfer and leave policies more flexible and more varied in order to enhance the

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quality and voluntariness of university study” (President’s Commission on Campus Unrest, 1970, p.13). The Scranton report recognized the need to reduce the stigma of dropping out to encourage higher education reentry while simultaneously offering new programs that would provide learners with socially-relevant knowledge. It also advocated increased credit transferability and reduced residency requirements, along with more nondegree programs and a variety of educational methods to promote learner choices (President’s Commission on Campus Unrest, 1970).

In 1971, Robert Finch, Secretary for Health, Education, and Welfare under Nixon, convened another task force that issued the Report on Higher Education, also called the Newman report (Johnson & Marcus, 1986). It recommended extending educational opportunities to women, minorities, and adult learners, giving money directly to students to use at an institution of their choice rather than to the institution that then selectively decided on students, creating regional examining universities to assess learning beyond classroom, and promoting the notion that dropping out was not failure nor eternal (Johnson & Marcus, 1986). These university reforms recommended in the Scranton and Newman reports manifested in the institutions analyzed later in this chapter.

The military draft, formally called selective service, was another central domestic issue of the war in Vietnam that directly impacted higher education and the four new open universities that catered, at least in part, to military nontraditional learners. Selective service was not new; the nation sporadically drafted men during all major American foreign wars, but circumstances during the Cold War spurred the creation of a permanent draft mechanism. In direct response to the military needs fighting the Korean War, the 1951 Universal Military Training and Service Act required all males between 18 and 26 to register (McNeil/Lehrer Productions, 2001).

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Whereas major draft protests occurred during the Civil War and minor protests occurred during WWI and WWII, widespread Vietnam draft protests erupted at draft centers and on university campuses nationwide during 1965 (McNeil/Lehrer Productions, 2001; Zinn, 2003). On October 16, 1967, a group called The Resistance organized a mass draft card turn-in at the Pentagon where the University of Maryland University College offered off-campus courses to nontraditional learners (InSight Films, 2021; The Resistance 1967/2005)

Some university students protested the Vietnam draft because they thought the war was unjust (Foley, 2003; Zinn, 2003). Others detested that their universities conducted research that benefitted the military-industrial complex. Furthermore, their age group was the prime target of the draft and college-enrolled men could defer draft eligibility (Foley, 2003; Zinn, 2003). Card and Lemieux (2000) estimated “that draft avoidance raised college attendance rates by 4-6 percentage points in the late 1960s” (p. 1). Although, it had a short-term and limited impact on university enrollment because only a small percentage of returning Vietnam veterans enrolled in higher education, unlike the swell of post-WWII enrollments (Card & Lemieux, 2000). The draft was a serious concern for those who could not defer, at least until 1971 when the draft laws changed and no longer allowed a university deferral (Hudgins, 2000).

In December 1969, the induction procedures changed when the lottery system used randomly drawn birthdates; it was supposed to be less repulsive than going in order of delinquents, volunteers, and non-volunteers (Card & Lemieux, 2000; InSight Films, 2021). Draftees could still defer with college, so those already enrolled in higher education during 1970 were able to avoid service. Frustrated with the war and unfair draft policies, Selective Service registrants turned in 25,000 cards at the end of May 1970 in response to the war in Cambodia and subsequent shooting on the campuses of Kent State and Jackson State (InSight Films, 2021).

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After June 1971, the volume of new draftees needed had drastically declined due to President Nixon's Vietnamization plan that expanded the South Vietnamese military while reducing the American military service personnel in the war zones (Card & Lemieux, 2000). These draft procedure changes were important for the four universities in this chapter because the institutions were established in this context. They all enrolled military learners and used distance teaching methods to help those learners accomplish their higher education goals. As explained later, this context was most significant for the University of Maryland's operations in the war zone. By the time the United States evacuated Vietnam in defeat in April 1975, American society splintered from years of widespread protests and questions about the American leadership's commitment to truth. As identified in Chapter 2, public distrust in the government contributed to the ascendancy of neoliberalism and a redefinition of the public good during the 1980s that favored market-based decisions.

Attica Prison Riots

The 1960s' and early 1970s' rebellions "took on an unprecedented political character and the ferocity of class war, coming to a climax at Attica, New York, in September 1971" (Zinn, 2003, p. 269). Prisoners collectively organized for improved safety and rights as they became conscious of how the social system oppressed minorities and political radicals (Zinn, 2003). The death of inmate George Jackson at California's San Quentin prison sparked the notorious Attica riots in New York, where SUNY ESC and REX were established. Jackson had authored a nationally-read book articulating the experiences of being an oppressed lower class black man in an imperialist society. Rumors swirled that his 1971 death during an alleged escape attempt was a premeditated murder because Jackson's revolutionary writings threatened the prison's and society's stability (Zinn, 2003).

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The conditions at Attica mirrored American social inequalities (Carroll, 2000). The guards were 100% white and 54% of the prisoners were black (Zinn, 2003). Similar to urban ghettos, racism was rampant and exacerbated by abhorrent living conditions and inadequate medical care (Carroll, 2000; Zinn, 2003). One month before Jackson's death, an inmate-instructed sociology class sparked organized protests calling for reforms at Attica (Zinn, 2003). The prisoners responded to Jackson's death with nonviolent civil disobedience actions of going on a hunger strike and wearing black armbands in solidarity. However, the nonviolent tide turned on Sept 9, 1971, when prisoners yanked control of one of the prison yards away from the guards and took hostage 40 guards. For five days prisoners established a racist-free community in the yard, but then Governor Rockefeller, who was instrumental in the creation of two universities discussed later in this chapter, ordered the National Guard, local police, and the prison guards to invade. In total, 31 prisoners and nine guards were killed (Carroll, 2000; Zinn, 2003).

Carroll (2000) argued that "the massacre at Attica epitomized official attitudes toward lower-class rebels, most of them black. Government might flirt with minority entrepreneurs, provide summer jobs for unemployed students, dole out welfare checks to 'dependent children.' But the yawning poverty of urban America remained untouched" (p. 53). National prison reforms about social equality did not result in widespread criminal justice changes, but prisoners continued to organize, educate themselves, create their own literature, and find support (Zinn, 2003). Prisoners benefitted from distance education programs. TEC implemented a successful prison distance education program whereas SUNY ESC proposed, but failed to implement one, in the wake of the Attica riots. These attempts are discussed later in this chapter.

The Women's Movement

Women drew on their experiences with increased employment during WWII as well as the civil rights movement to seek more equality and access to higher education. During the 1950s, some middle class white educated women were frustrated with the lonely boredom of household duties, the falsities of consumerism, and lack of equal opportunities for greater participation in American society (Friedan, 1963/2005). Women's participation in higher education compared with men dropped from 47 per cent in 1920 to 35 percent in 1958 (Friedan, 1963/2005). In 1940 approximately 25% of women were employed, but that percentage nearly doubled by 1970, yet women suffered from limited opportunities and lower pay than men (Carroll, 2000). By the mid-1950s approximately 60% of enrolled women were dropping out to get married and then the divorce rate subsequently increased by two-thirds between the mid-1950s and 1970 (Carroll, 2000). Women sought independence, higher education, and economic self-sufficiency that led to the establishment of the National Organization for Women (NOW) on October 26, 1966.

NOW advocated for the removal of discriminatory policies and practices in higher education and employment. They argued that the time was ripe for change because longer life spans meant women were not just confined to child-rearing, technology reduced their time spent on household chores, and women had more to offer society than just being confined to the domestic sphere (National Organization for Women, 1966/2005). NOW's Statement of Purpose articulated that 46.4% of women ages 18-65 were employed, but 75% were in low-paid and routine positions with two-thirds of African American women in the lowest paid positions. Moreover, women employed full-time earned on average 60% less than men. Women achieved just one-third of the bachelor's and master's degrees and only one-tenth of the awarded doctoral

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degrees when compared to men. Whereas women comprised 51% of the population, only 7% of doctors, 4% of lawyers, and 1% of judges were women, and men were displacing them in primary and secondary teaching, library, and social work positions (National Organization for Women, 1966/2005).

NOW (1966/2005) criticized the lack of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's enforcement of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that barred employment discrimination. The organization also identified the double discrimination as particularly problematic for black women and called for a civil rights movement for women, like that of African Americans during the previous decade. The efforts resulted in the Equal Employment Act of 1972 which amended Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, and ethnicity (Carroll, 2000). NOW took a moderate approach to achieving legal equality, but other organizations such as the Redstockings (1969) were more radical in their quest for de facto women's equality. Together, these organizations influenced the national context for women who were important constituents of the mass expansion of higher education and benefitted from flexible and nontraditional learning options.

The moderate and radical women's organizations agreed that women's birth control was a central issue. Total fertility rates for American women rose from 2.49 in 1949 to 3.65 in 1960 (Teitelbaum, 1973). The population growth rate, which had exploded during the post-WWII baby boom, was a matter of national concern. During July of 1969, President Nixon "warned that 'one of the most serious challenges to human destiny in the last third of this century will be the growth of population'" (Westoff, 1973, p. 1). Its impact on issues such as environmental

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sustainability were matters of serious national debate even after the national legalization of birth control.

Whereas Margaret Sanger had established the nation's first birth control clinic in 1916, many states outlawed birth control even for married couples because patriarchal Victorian ideologies persisted into the 20th century (Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 2015; Zinn, 2003). Finally in 1965, the Supreme Court decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut* dismantled the states' prohibitions on birth control (Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 2015). The landmark Supreme Court decision in the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* case legalized abortion nationwide (Zinn, 2003). With contraception, surgical sterilization, and abortion all available, the population growth rate was no longer a major national problem by 1973 (Westoff, 1973). These options afforded women increased decision making regarding their higher education and employment participation. Women were important constituents of the mass expansion of higher education generally and specifically the four universities analyzed in this chapter.

National Context Summary

The national context of the civil rights movement, the Great Society, the war in Vietnam, and the women's movement influenced the four universities in mostly similar ways. The civil rights movement and the women's movement advocated for equal opportunities, including in higher education and credentialed employment, and the four universities responded to that context with open admission policies. The Great Society justified hefty federal expenditures via new social welfare and education programs designed for the common good. At the state level, the four new open universities were also created for the common good. The war in Vietnam impacted the four institutions because they all enrolled military learners, but it especially influenced UMUC because it operated in the war zone. Discussed later in this chapter, the 1968

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protests in response to Vietnam and civil rights frustrations delayed the creation of SUNY ESC for three years. The Attica prison riots heightened attention for ‘behind and without walls’ distance education programs; SUNY ESC and TESC responded with prison initiatives during their early years although only TESC was successful. Additionally, British distance education programs influenced the four American universities analyzed in this chapter. The next section outlines how the United Kingdom’s Open University attempted to establish a North American presence.

The United Kingdom’s Open University Early Efforts in the United States

The UKOU, analyzed in Chapter 2 as an influential turning point in the history of distance education, tried to expand into the American higher education market, which was the largest in the world, during the early 1970s (Perry, 1977). The UKOU needed alternative revenue streams while avoiding increasing student fees after the Conservative government cut funding in 1970 (Perry, 1977). From 1969 to 1973, UKOU Vice-chancellor Walter Perry and Pro-chancellor Sir Peter Venables visited the United States several times to determine interest in potential collaborations while they presented at various conferences (M. Taylor, personal communication, June 17, 2022). For example, Venables spoke on the topic of “The Open University: Its emergence, implications and potential” at the American Association of Higher Education conference in Chicago between March 4-8, 1972 (M. Taylor, personal communication, June 17, 2022). Also in 1972, UKOU officials contemplated creating a limited liability corporation that would focus on international commercial operations, but it did not garner sufficient interest until four years later when it was established (Perry, 1977). The UKOU instead sought partners to trial course packages in the United States. Those course packages, which were discussed in Chapter 2, consisted of high-quality printed workbooks accompanied by

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audio-visual supplements. Tutor-led sessions and occasional mandatory residencies helped students further their independent learning in a social constructivist way.

In 1972, the American College Board and Educational Testing Service helped coordinate a pilot to assess the viability of UKOU courses in the USA (Koch, 1981; Mayeske, 1973). A contradiction exists about which American organizations funded this pilot project. According to Perry (1977), the Carnegie Foundation was willing to fund the project but was restricted by regulations that required it to only fund programs based in the United States, which is why the UKOU subsequently sought assistance from the College Board (Perry, 1977). However, an internal UKOU staff newsletter stated the Carnegie Foundation funded the pilot (Expansion Plans for States after Success of OU Project, 1973). While the American funder remains unclear, the College Board and its assessment spinoff entity, Educational Testing Service, were involved with the pilot.

The president of the College Board, Arland F. Christ-Janer, described the UKOU as “the best effort yet known to harness the potential of radio and television and wed them to a system of independent study on a national level” (Mayeske, 1973, p. 24) and wanted to bring this system to the United States. Officials selected the University of Houston, Rutgers University, University of Maryland University College (UMUC), and California State College in San Diego and secured grants to trial UKOU courses (Harnett, et al., 1974; Koch, 1981). Meanwhile, the UKOU's Marketing Division established a relationship with an American publisher that acted as the sole agent in the United States to initiate course package sales (Perry, 1977). Presumably, the Director of the UKOU's Department of Harper and Row, whose name was redacted on archival documents, but was noted as the UKOU's North American agent, was the same UKOU official involved with the pilot (Expansion Plans for States after Success of OU Project, 1973).

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The four American institutions embarked on the pilot assessment of UKOU course materials during the fall of 1972, although California State University later withdrew and did not complete the experiment (Harnett, et al., 1974; Koch, 1981). The pilot was successful and the remaining three institutions planned to continue using UKOU courses the following year (Expansion Plans for States after Success of OU Project, 1973; Harnett, et al., 1974; Mayeske, 1973; Perry, 1977). The UMUC pilot results are analyzed in the UMUC section later in this chapter. Whereas grants funded the first pilot, the institutions would fund their next pilot themselves (Expansion Plans for States after Success of OU Project, 1973).

The unnamed UKOU North American agent reported to UKOU colleagues via an internal staff newsletter that “there were also other state Open Universities planned in Massachusetts, Georgia, Florida, Hawaii, Wisconsin, California, and Illinois, and in the Canadian provinces of Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia” (Expansion Plans for States after Success of OU Project, 1973). Chapter 4 discussed the impact of the UKOU on Athabasca University in Alberta and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia, but the results from the UKOU’s initiatives in most of the American states mentioned above remains unclear. At some point in between June and November of 1973, Vice-chancellor Perry and Professor Michael Neil of the UKOU’s Institute of Educational Technology Department visited Rutgers and UMUC (OU Plaque goes up in U.S., 1973). Perry honored a group of UMUC course completers with certificates (OU Plaque goes up in U.S., 1973). These endeavors all seemed promising for the future of the UKOU’s efforts to collaborate with North American higher education institutions.

Encouraged by the conference trips, pilot, and the volume of requests for more information received by the UKOU’s sole agent in the United States, the UKOU set up their

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North American Office in New York with Michael Neil as the first Director (M. Taylor, personal communication, June 17, 2022; Perry, 1977). The Harper and Row sole agent, along with a secretary from Harper and Row, whose name was also redacted on the newsletter but was clearly hired away by the UKOU, set up an office provided by the College Entrance Examination Board in Manhattan (OU Plaque goes up in U.S., 1973). The office officially opened on January 21, 1974, after Neil's delay trying to get there during a transportation strike in England (Neil, 1974). Neil's goals included learning about American higher education institutions, establishing an academic presence for the UKOU, gathering feedback on use of UKOU courses, determining the feasibility of establishing a consultancy service as well as permanent office, and spreading awareness of UKOU offerings (OU Plaque goes up in U.S., 1973). Neil later clarified what he meant about establishing an academic presence as follows:

The issue is not one based on a simple criterion of sales – or the lack of them – of courses abroad. It is about the evolution of strong and viable concepts in the theory and practice of designing and implementing programmes of continuing higher education. It is about similarities and differences in social systems and their philosophies and the educational, political, and economic implications of international cooperation of a kind never explored in depth before. (Neil, 1974, p.

4)

Neil was interested in determining first if, and then how, the UKOU could collaborate with American universities with an eye on the macro-level ramifications of cross-Atlantic collaboration.

Neil experienced numerous logistical obstacles attempting to open the office including office supply problems, a secretary unexpectedly going on leave, a most-crucial missing cheque

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with necessary start-up funds, a bank in New York refusing to accept Queen Elizabeth II as a reference to open an account, and problems obtaining a corporate credit card for a corporation that did not yet exist (Neil, 1974). After resolving those logistical issues, Neil traveled throughout the United States to initiate collaborations.

He visited with the following individuals, whose names were redacted on the internal staff newsletter: the Dean of New Program Development and Evaluation at California State University, a former Chancellor of California State University who became a leader at the University of Texas at Dallas, someone from Texas Instruments, the OU Program Director at the University of Houston, someone from the University of Galveston, and the OU Program Director at the University of Maryland accompanied by someone else from the State Department (Neil, 1974). These visits were all likely during late January and throughout February of 1973 because Neil recounted attending the American Association of Higher Education conference in Chicago during March of 1973. During April of 1973, Neil revisited Washington, D.C. and Bethesda, Maryland. He also met with officials at a university in Queens, NY, SUNY ESC in Saratoga Springs, NY, Minnesota Metropolitan State College, and attended a conference about open learning systems in Ottawa. Neil (1974) described his experiences as follows: “it is difficult to convey adequately the goodwill and opportunities for the OU which exist at the present time in America” (p. 5) and he planned to return from mid-May to mid-July that same year.

It is not clear why, but the North American Office moved to Washington D.C. later in 1974 and used the house of an official of the Inter-American Development Bank only a few blocks away from the Brookings Institute (M. Taylor, personal communication, June 17, 2022). The office relocated during July of 1977 back to New York City, specifically at 110 East 59th Street, New York City, NY, 10022 (M. Taylor, personal communication, June 17, 2022). The

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reason for this relocation also remains unclear. Financing was possibly a problem because Neil had cautioned “that current brakes on educational expenditure in the U.S. may well stop any rapid development of the ‘package course’ idea” and proposed that any collaboration with American institutions needed to financially break-even (OU Plaque goes up in U.S., 1973, para. 31).

Financing and perceived arrogance were problematic from both American and British perspectives. American higher education administrators were initially attracted to UKOU courses because it was a cheaper alternative than hiring more faculty, but that prompted a backlash from faculty (Perry, 1977). American faculty suffered from arrogance thinking their courses were superior to anything created in another country. The UKOU officials thought British academic expectations were higher than American academic standards and the UKOU course materials were “too sophisticated” for American students (Perry, 1977, p. 276). Furthermore, the course packages were expensive and the American sales fell short of projections. The high level of support to implement the courses was another financing obstacle. The UKOU assumed that a consultancy service sustained by additional fees could facilitate both commercial and academic needs in the USA, but it turned out that the American institutions were unwilling and unable to pay for such services. Furthermore, the British government, who could provide the start-up funding for a consultancy service, was unwilling to fund such an operation in another country. To provide the academic expertise, the UKOU therefore drew on its existing staff with hopes that early American institutional clients would provide the necessary funds to create new consultant positions in the United States. Although the separate consultancy entity never came to fruition in the United States, 19 unnamed American institutions were using UKOU courses when Perry (1977) was writing his book.

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By 1977, Michael Neil was back in the United Kingdom running a new unit called the OU Consultancy Service, which explored the potential of collaboration with higher education institutions in multiple countries (M. Taylor, personal communication, June 17, 2022). The OU Consultancy Service officially lasted until March 1980, but the UKOU has continued these pilot and collaboration services ever since. Exactly when and why the North American Office closed also remains unclear, but it was likely sometime after July 1977 and before March of 1980 (M. Taylor, personal communication, June 17, 2022). Even though the UKOU's North American office closed, it directly influenced SUNY ESC and UMUC via pilot projects.

Regional Contexts

The national context was not the only influence on the political, economic, and social origins of the four institutions analyzed in this chapter because each state has oversight of education per the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution. Cooperative federalism, meaning balanced power between the states and Washington D.C., prevailed from approximately 1913 to 1964, but then Johnson's Great Society tipped the balance in favor of Washington D.C. (Salmore, et al., 2008). The post-WWII economic boom created opportunities for the federal and state governments to coordinate new investments as state funding alone was insufficient to carry out massive infrastructure and higher education expansion projects (Bloom, 2019). The federal government dominated the relationship with the states from the mid-1960s until 1980 (Salmore, et al., 2008). This federal-state partnership was a subtle continuation of the New Deal assumption that Keynesian policies promoted the public common good (Bloom, 2019). Compared to the cities' potential to implement change, states were better-positioned to implement change because of a stable civil service and financing, combined with the fact that states do not focus on uniquely local and city-specific problems (Bloom, 2019). By the early

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1970s, President Nixon's approach maintained the capitol's power but simultaneously increased the states' role (Salmore, et al., 2008). Within this broad context of federalism, the state government was an essential player in the establishment of the four institutions analyzed in this chapter. The specific state government roles are explained in later sections.

Regionalism was another important influence on the origins of the four institutions because each state created their respective higher education institutions to meet their regional needs. Gottman (1961) argued that:

a region needs much more than a mountain or a valley, a given language or certain skills; it needs essentially a strong belief based on some religious creed, some social viewpoint, or some pattern of political memories, and often a combination of all three. Thus regionalism has what might be called iconography as its foundation: each community has found for itself or was given an icon, a symbol slightly different from those cherished by its neighbors. (p. 163)

In support of Gottman, DiLisio (1983) noted that “the personality of a region is composed of both tangible and intangible elements” (p. 1). The tangibles include the geographic, political, social, and economic context whereas the intangibles refer to the feelings of identity to a region. Although the intangible and iconographic elements are important for a sense of belonging, only the tangible elements of American regionalism are relevant to this study.

The unique tangible elements of the three states where the four institutions were created are explained in succession throughout this chapter, but they all shared a broad regional megalopolis context. Gottman (1961) named the northeast urban corridor region a megalopolis because it had five of the nation's metropolitan areas with a population over one million, the highest concentration of wealth in the nation with notable pockets of poverty concentration

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particularly among minorities, and a variety of social groups. It was also the busiest ocean route to Europe from the North Atlantic and the eastern half of country produced 90% of total national manufacturing, much of which stemmed from the northeast megalopolis.

New York's Regional Context

New York's economic, social, and political context steered the establishment of SUNY Empire State College and the Regents External Degree program. The geography of the state also influenced the creation of these institutions. Geographic factors were important in how they connected to the political, economic, and social factors. New York was unique during the 1970s because of the state's enormous wealth, massive urban population, and Governor Nelson Rockefeller's activism (Connery & Benjamin, 1979; Douglas, 2010). New York was also unique because it invested in state programs more than any other state in the post-war context (Bloom, 2019).

New York's geographic delineation between the upstate and downstate regions were important for their social, economic, and political implications, which are explained in a subsequent section. New York covers 49,576 square miles (Worth, 1982). Three mountain ranges consisting of the Adirondacks in the northeast, the Allegheny range in the southwest, and the Catskills in the south-central region delineate upstate from downstate New York (Marlin, 2002; Worth, 1982). Downstate refers primarily to New York City's sprawl and upstate is everything beyond the mountains.

New York's Economic Context

The state had a diversified economy by the 1970s when the two New York institutions analyzed in this study were established. New York City was the financial capital of the nation thanks to the leading global financial center at Wall Street. New York City had a vibrant arts and

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culture scene (Marlin, 2002). The Port of New York City sustained major shipping operations. Beyond the city, the state's major industries included garment manufacturing, printing, publishing, leather, instruments, photographic and electrical equipment, transportation equipment, metals, vineyards, fishing, mineral extraction, and agriculture (Marlin, 2002; Worth, 1982). Upstate New York's economy thrived on high tech research and development, manufacturing, heavy industry, dairy, agriculture and a variety of other smaller industries (Marlin, 2002). New York shared a national trend of rural economic growth outpacing urban growth during the 1970s, for the first time since 1820 (Worth, 1982).

Travel and communication networks were already well-developed during the post-WWII era. The state's extensive railroad network was being displaced by passenger travel on buses, but automobiles were the most widely-used method of transportation (Worth, 1982). The state contained 100,000 miles of roads, of which 14,000 were state highways (Worth, 1982). The federal government lavished money on highway construction that spurred suburban and economic growth in New York, while also contributing to white flight and industrial operations vacating the New York City inner-city hub (Bloom, 2019). From 1946 to 1960, suburban New York City counties experienced 133% growth stimulated by the GI Bill, Federal Housing Authority cheap mortgages, and second and third generation European immigrants seeking a better life beyond the inner city (Marlin, 2002). The extensive availability of roads and automobile usage influenced thinking about how to expand the state's higher education capacity into the suburbs (Bloom, 2019). Most households had a telephone and could access the state's extensive radio, cable and television networks, including eleven Public Broadcasting Stations (Worth, 1982). These communication networks factored into the creation of SUNY ESC.

New York's Social Context

Socially, the state was predominantly white. In 1980, the census reported fourteen million white residents, 2.5 million black residents, 1.5 million Hispanic residents, 310,000 Asian or Pacific Islanders, and 39,000 indigenous residents (Worth, 1982). The state's traditional cultural elites, such as those of the Rockefeller family, maintained wealthy estates upstate (Marlin, 2002). They were known politically for opposing working-class populism, defined as the people creating programs for themselves and governing themselves according to their class interests (Marlin, 2002). The bulk of the non-white residents, excluding the indigenous people, clustered in the downstate region while the white population dominated the upstate region. Puerto Rican immigrants and African Americans lived in paltry ghetto conditions in New York City (Bloom, 2019). The movement to the suburbs exacerbated social stratification with abandoned inner city housing, underfunded schools, and limited employment opportunities in New York City (Bloom, 2019). The founders of SUNY ESC and the REX were particularly attentive to addressing the higher education needs of marginalized social groups who were targets of the mass expansion of higher education in New York. A religious dichotomy between Catholic and Jewish adherents, elaborated in a later section, also impacted the state's higher education system.

New York's Political Context

The Republican Party, known for being moderate in New York, dominated the state's governorship from 1943 to 1973, with a brief exception from 1955 to 1958 (Marchi, 2004). Governor Thomas Dewey, in power from 1943 to 1955, relished a postwar economic surplus of \$623 million, which Dewey used to create the Postwar Reconstruction Fund to expand social welfare programs and construction projects (Marlin, 2002). He led the construction of the 641-mile New York State Thruway, which was one of the first major superhighways in the nation

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(Marchi, 2004). Dewey also presided over the initial mass expansion of higher education with the creation of the State University of New York in 1948, maintained a mass transit system, implemented civil rights laws, and invested in public housing – all for the public good (Bloom, 2019).

Dewey was known for his pragmatism, belief in honest government, controlling the New York Republican Party from his office, and his disdain for ethnic urban political machines (Marlin, 2002). Conservative Republicans viewed him as the "father of the tradition of progressive Republicanism... a pragmatic liberal or positive liberal" (Marlin, 2002, p. 12), which conservatives in the Republican Party did not appreciate because of his willingness to spend on social programs in a Keynesian manner. Dewey regularly coopted the Democratic agenda and made it his own. Dewey and his successor Nelson Rockefeller embraced the following three beliefs: an activist government can solve any problem, the executive branch should provide leadership on policy issues, and executive priorities outweigh legislative priorities because the legislature may get caught up with local concerns (Marlin, 2002). Dewey's progressive Republicanism set a precedent for the future Governor Nelson Rockefeller, who supported the creation of SUNY ESC and REX.

New York was unique politically because Nelson Rockefeller served as governor from 1958 to 1973, which makes his influence comparatively greater than governors of other states given his tenure in office (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). Rockefeller was known as an activist governor, meaning that he successfully swayed the state's legislature and the public into supporting new state programs and policies intended to improve the overall standard of living (Bloom, 2019). Example new initiatives for the public common good included investments in

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hospitals, mental health, subsidized housing, environmental measures, regional economic development, new higher education campuses, and revitalizing downtowns (Bloom, 2019).

These measures did not win Rockefeller support from his more conservative Republican counterparts who slandered him as “the perpetual governor, ebullient, erratic, WASP thoroughbred” (Marlin, 2002, p. 1). Despite this conservative criticism, Rockefeller believed in the federal-state partnership and created an innovative revenue sharing plan between the two government levels that the Nixon administration approved in 1972. In total from 1972 to 1986, states and the federal government shared \$85 billion in revenue (Bloom, 2019). The benefits of revenue sharing included “immediate help for stressed states, flexible dollars for local priorities, and streamlined federalism for conservatives” (Bloom, 2019, p. 11). The streamlined federalism was politically important to Rockefeller as he faced mounting conservative opposition from the New York Conservative Party, which was established in 1964 explicitly to challenge what conservatives perceived to be Rockefeller’s extreme liberalism (Marlin, 2002). Governor Rockefeller survived the conservative onslaught and spent some of his political capital reserve on higher education. He strongly supported New York’s mass expansion of higher education, including the nontraditional options offered via SUNY ESC and REX.

New York’s Higher Education Landscape

Before WWII, most states lacked a coordinated system of higher education because institutions were independent (Douglas, 2010). In 1939, only 17 states had a coordinating system and then 48 states had such a system by 1969 (Douglas, 2010). New York was among the latter group. New York's higher education development was unlike most other states because of a complicated higher education policy context and repeated missed opportunities to create a state university (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). New York’s private higher education institutions

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dominated enrollments by the mid-19th century and enjoyed protection from policy makers, particularly the Board of Regents who were bureaucratically incapable of exerting control on the higher education system because the Regents only served in an advisory capacity (Connery & Benjamin, 1979; Douglas, 2010).

New Yorkers failed to take advantage of early opportunities to create a public state system of higher education during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For example, the New York legislature gave all its Morill Act allocation, which was a hefty 1/10 of the total for the country, to the private Cornell University (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). In 1913, the Board of Regents initiated scholarships that could be used at any institution; this is an example of indirect aid to private institutions, which was viewed by policymakers “at the time as an inexpensive alternative to a state university” (Connery & Benjamin, 1979, p. 296). It was cheaper to provide aid directly to students to use at the private universities rather than create an entirely new system. In 1938, the Regents’ official policy protected privates from financial competition. The Regents’ 1944 Postwar Plan for Education in the State of New York deemed private institutions were sufficiently meeting capacity and proposed expanding student scholarships, which they did the same year. Meanwhile, the state managed to sponsor free municipal colleges and public teacher training institutes even as the state’s financial contributions to higher education ranked nearly last at 47th in the nation (Connery & Benjamin, 1979).

The system dominated by private institutions and with minimal public options was incapable of responding to the doubling enrollment in 1945 caused by veterans utilizing their GI educational benefits (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). Governor Dewey and the private university coalition resisted using veterans as an excuse to fundamentally change the nature and structure of higher education in the state because they saw the influx as merely a temporary problem. As an

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immediate concern, veterans were swelling higher education capacity in other states, making relocation elsewhere less of a viable option for New Yorkers (Connery & Benjamin, 1979).

Religious divisions further exacerbated the complexity of social circumstances that impacted higher education in New York. Commonly known as the Blaine amendment, New York's constitution included a provision that prohibited state funds to religious institutions (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). Republican James Gillespie Blaine of Maine proposed this amendment to the United States constitution during the 1870s' Catholic challenge to growing Protestant privately-funded educational influence (Rainey, 2009). It failed to pass at the federal level, but 37 states adopted some form of the Blaine amendment (Rainey, 2009). This was important for New York because of the extensive power of private universities, many of which had a religious affiliation and openly discriminated against Jewish and African American students. Some Catholic institutions were "dubbed 'Hitlerite' and contrary to the dominant postwar ideology of ethnic assimilation and social mobility" (Bloom, 2019, p. 151). Veterans and civil rights leaders criticized the ethnic quota system employed by some private institutions that limited the number of minority enrollees. Dewey accommodated Jewish constituents in exchange for their political support and forced the Catholic institutions to remove their discriminatory policies (Bloom, 2019). These actions were in keeping with Dewey's support for civil rights, especially when he gained political benefits, but more needed to be done to remove access barriers to higher education based on ethnicity and religion.

In January 1946, the mayor's Committee on Unity of New York City raised concerns about privates discriminating against Jews, Catholics, and African Americans (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). In response, a coalition of the New York Teachers Guild, the American Jewish Committee, the United Parents Association, and a mayoral committee called for a state

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university, which was proposed in the legislature the next day (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). In February 1946, Governor Dewey asked for a commission to study the need for a state university and the legislature approved the study in April 1946.

The Temporary Commission to Study the Need for a State University started in July of 1946; it was referred to as the Young Commission. Its appointees were a "classic pluralist balance among regions, religions, and economic groups" (Connery & Benjamin, 1979, p. 297). Their desire to be geographically, socially, and economically representative led to inertia with too many unresolvable viewpoints among 25 members resulting in a political minefield. Despite their limitations, the Young Commission successfully debated the following four issues: cost, governance, centralization vs. decentralization, and liberal arts versus technical education. The upstate-downstate dichotomy played out in the political ramifications. Downstate Democrats supported a state university, but the Regents, privates, and northern Republicans did not (Connery & Benjamin, 1979).

Dewey was reluctant to establish a state university but was forced to do so in response to weighty political circumstances. President Truman's report calling for increased capacity nationwide and attention to ethnic minorities' needs for higher education, explained in Chapter 2, was released just a few weeks before New York's Young report (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). This created a political tension because Dewey was running for president against Truman in the 1948 election. Dewey endorsed the Young report to compete with Truman (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). This political maneuvering shaped the creation of a state higher education system in New York.

The SUNY system, which grew into the largest network of comprehensive higher education in the nation, was created in 1948 as part of the mass expansion of higher education.

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SUNY was founded on the democratic principles of equity, access, inclusion, and social mobility (Medina, 2010). Rosenthal (2010) suggested that “the creation of SUNY in 1948 was a major triumph of populist government” (p. 310), meaning that the state’s political leaders responded to the citizens’ demands for expanded opportunities for higher education. This signaled a shift away from the socially unresponsive upstate political elite dominance. Although the government responded, Governor Dewey was cautious about expanding too fast (Connery & Benjamin, 1979).

The higher education system in New York faced numerous problems during the 1950s including insufficient capacity which forced undergraduate and graduate students to seek learning opportunities in other states compounded by questionable quality of the nascent SUNY institutions (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). During the late-1950s, there were 126 private degree-granting institutions and the SUNY system comprised of eighteen two-year colleges, six technical and agricultural institutes, two medical schools, eleven colleges of education, eight professional schools, and only one liberal arts college (Committee on Higher Education, 1960). In 1958, 60% of students enrolled in private institutions. Federal grants helped privates expand with new programs, but federal regulations usually required matching funds creating pressure for increased state aid (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). Regents’ scholarships helped meet some individual students’ financial needs, but these scholarships were not enough (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). The state again convened a commission to study New York’s higher education capacity problems.

Rockefeller created the new Committee to Review Higher Education Needs and Facilities on December 21, 1959. It consisted of the following three well-known private sector members: Henry Heald of the Ford Foundation, Marion Folsom of Eastman Kodak and prior Secretary of

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the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and John Gardner of the Carnegie Corporation (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). Rockefeller had good reasons to select this group. It was politically advantageous to separate himself from the committee because he could deflect if needed based on public response. The commission members could use their clout and the group was small and manageable enough to avoid the inertia of the previous Young commission (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). Rockefeller and the Regents charged the Heald commission, as it was called, with recommending how the state could:

(1) assure educational opportunities to those qualified for college [higher education] study; (2) provide undergraduate, graduate, and professional training necessary for the continued development of the State as a leading business, industrial, scientific, and cultural center; and (3) contribute its proper share of trained personnel to meet the nation's needs for education, health, and welfare services. (Committee on Higher Education, 1960, p. iii)

The 1960 Heald report to the Board of Regents projected enrollment doubling in ten years and tripling in 25 years (Committee on Higher Education, 1960; Medina, 2010). It called for a mix of 60% public institutions and 40% private, a reversal of the status quo, to meet demand (Bloom, 2019; Committee on Higher Education, 1960). New York at that point ranked eighth nationally in higher education investment, but the improved investments were still insufficient to meet demand (Bloom, 2019). The committee was attentive to changing social and political circumstances when they acknowledged “an accelerated pace of human events, an explosion of knowledge, a surge of population, an almost unbelievable breakthrough in science and technology, and possibly more important than any other force, a menacing international contest between democracy and communism” (Committee on Higher Education, 1960, p. 8).

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They sought to position New Yorkers to confront these major social challenges with improved access to higher education.

The Heald commission recommended expanding and strengthening SUNY to handle projected increased enrollments, engaging in a comprehensive planning process that included private institutions, and doubling Regents' scholarships (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). The Regents and the SUNY trustees issued separate plans within one day of each other. The Regents proposed supporting private universities with \$100 per semester direct aid to students that privates could retain by raising tuition; this suggestion was in addition to doubling the number of Regents scholarships. The SUNY trustees called for more community colleges, four new graduate centers, and two new liberal arts colleges. Rockefeller combined the proposals and created the Scholar Incentive Program to appease the privates. The legislature passed the Scholar Incentive Program on March 15, 1961, but problems ensued because on June 7, 1961 the Regents announced they would give the Scholar Incentive directly to schools, not individuals, which was in direct violation of the Blaine amendment. They implemented a compromise on June 24, 1961, whereby the funds would go to the school first for student tuition, but students could claim their \$100 Scholar Incentive if they already paid their tuition (Connery & Benjamin, 1979).

Although the Heald report focused almost entirely on expanding campus operations, it also identified nontraditional options that set the stage for the two New York open universities in this study. It suggested the Regents establish a system for students to complete their degrees by examination rather than in classrooms (Committee on Higher Education, 1960). Those details are elaborated in the REX section of this chapter. The report also urged the establishment of a statewide network of educational broadcasting programs accompanied by quality course

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materials prepared by expert faculty (Committee on Higher Education, 1960). This materialized with the creation of SUNY of the Air, which is discussed in a later section about ESC.

In support of the Heald report recommendations, Rockefeller's 1961 legislative address linked expanding New York's higher education capacity with freedom and deemed it the state's number one policy priority (Connery & Benjamin, 1979). Within a few years, the 1964 Master Plan revision called for two-year colleges to train technicians and increased opportunities for students to transfer to four-year institutions (Medina, 2010). By the early 1970s, SUNY campuses offered similar programs with little variation (Bonnabeau, 1996). Although the SUNY system developed later compared to other states, it evolved into the largest system in the nation (Worth, 1982). Even with such an extensive higher education system, there was a noticeable gap for New York's nontraditional distance learners that was filled with the creation of SUNY ESC and REX.

SUNY Empire State College

SUNY ESC was established in Saratoga Springs, New York in 1971 as an innovative addition to New York's public higher education system. It originated in a politically supportive environment to address the needs of traditional and nontraditional learners throughout the state. Openness, flexibility, and student-driven learning were integral to the mission. The founders debated the merits of British pioneering distance education initiatives. Originally, SUNY ESC combined face to face mentoring and independent learning using distance education methods. Subsequently, SUNY ESC offered modified UKOU courses nationally and internationally using entirely distance methods. Two individuals, Samuel Gould and Ernest Boyer, were especially influential in bringing this new institution to fruition. Two institutional antecedents, the SUNY

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of the AIR program and the SUNY Independent Study Program, also influenced the origins of SUNY ESC.

Recognizing a need to rein in a large system and cater to the needs of nontraditional students, educational policy makers were faced with a decision: either attempt to reform the entire system or create a new innovative institution (Boyer, 1996). The New York higher education system, like in other states, faced access pressures compounded by baby boomers and Vietnam draft evaders (Hall & Bonnabeau, 1993). New York's higher education landscape needed something different that could offer an alternative for those unable or unwilling to access traditional higher education during the late-1960s and early-1970s and the creation of SUNY ESC helped fill that gap (Coughlan et al., 1993).

Samuel B. Gould, SUNY Chancellor from 1964-1970, and his successor, Ernest L. Boyer set about quickly creating a new independent institution that skirted academic traditions to be intentionally innovative (Bonnabeau, 1996; Hall & Bonnabeau, 1993). Gould's and Boyer's previous experiences shaped their ideas about innovation in higher education. Both had worked in the University of California system under Clark Kerr and saw first-hand the benefits of a coordinated system to efficiently expand mass higher education (Bonnabeau, 1996; Clark, et al, 2010).

From 1954 to 1959, Gould was president of Antioch College in Ohio, which was widely acclaimed for its innovative student-centered participatory learning design process, and then served as president of the University of California at Santa Cruz from 1959 to 1962 (Bonnabeau, 1990; Rosenzweig, 1997; Samuel B. Gould Papers, 1933-1997, Biographical information, 2022). He was president of the public Educational Broadcasting System in New York from 1962 to 1964 when Channel 13 rolled out as the flagship station in New York City (Bonnabeau, 1990;

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Samuel B. Gould Papers, 1933-1997, Biographical information, 2022). Subsequently, he was the SUNY Chancellor from 1964 to 1970 (Samuel B. Gould Papers, 1933-1997, Biographical information, 2022). Gould believed deeply in the power of educational television, so he established the SUNY University of the Air (Bonnabeau, 1990).

SUNY University of the Air

Three years before the creation of the UKOU in 1969, the SUNY University of the Air initiative began in 1966 and operated until 1969 (University of the Air, 2022). Although it was created before the UKOU, the idea was not new because J.C. Stobart of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) proposed a wireless university in 1926 and then four decades later in 1961 Professor George Wedell created a pamphlet on the idea and shared it with British Prime Minister Harold Wilson (Koch, 1981). Wilson had a relationship with Senator William Benton, Chairman of Encyclopedia Britannica, who was familiar with Russian distance education programs (Koch, 1981). Benton and Encyclopedia Britannica combined some elements of what he saw in Russia with the idea of a wireless university that manifested in the Chicago College of the Air with educational films (Koch, 1981). Gould was aware of these developments (Bonnabeau, 1991). Gould might also have been knowledgeable about the 1960 Heald report's recommendations for educational broadcast courses supplemented by quality course materials because it was issued two years before he took the position as president of New York's Educational Broadcasting System. Whereas other universities' existing educational television programs relied on the professor-led approach, Gould wanted higher quality programs that cost approximately \$100,000 to produce. Faculty used a new recording studio at the SUNY Albany campus to produce the programs (Bonnabeau, 1991).

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The SUNY University of the Air utilized seven Public Broadcasting Stations in New York (Bonnabeau, 1990). In 1966, the Schenectady Gazette advertised what were likely the first three courses, History of Latin America I and II as well as Eye on the Universe, which could be viewed by anyone on WMHT-TV Channel 17 (SUNY Presents Three Television Courses for College Credit, 1966). Individuals interested in obtaining the accompanying course materials for credit or self-study non-credit were encouraged to contact their local SUNY campus (SUNY Presents Three Television Courses for College Credit, 1966). By 1969, it offered the following seven courses: Eye on the Universe, Guten Tag – Beginning German, The Rise of the American Nation II, Calculus and Analytic Geometry II, Humanities II: The Discourse of Western Man, the History of Latin America II, and Major American Books (University of the Air Catalog, 1969). These courses helped SUNY students meet degree requirements and contributed to informal lifelong learning among the general population that could view the educational programs on television. Students who pursued the formal learning requirements had to register and engage in pre-enrollment counseling at one of fourteen SUNY campuses to receive their materials (University of the Air Catalog, 1969).

SUNY faculty developed the courses which included recorded lectures and workbooks with learning activities (University of the Air Catalog, 1969). A typical workbook included the course objectives, a detailed breakdown of each lesson with practice activities, directions for formal assignments, explanations of how to use accompanying additional media or physical materials, and procedures for on-campus required meetings and examinations (Gerlitzki, 1969). Students were expected to spend a comparable amount of time on a three-credit televised course as they would spend on a three-credit campus-based course and some courses required on-campus meetings (University of the Air Catalog, 1969).

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The SUNY University of the Air program success was limited because the program was expensive and unable to secure sufficient airtime (Bonnabeau, 1990; 1996). Funding was not a problem during the late-1960s, but by the early-1970s fiscal allocations dwindled so the program was discontinued (Bonnabeau, 1991). Airtime was problematic because the programs were offered early in the mornings or at the same time as popular sports broadcasts (Bonnabeau, 1991). The initiative also failed because it was administered by the SUNY System administration office rather than as an independent program, did not grant degrees, relied on Gould's leadership and ceased when he became Chancellor, was costly, and lacked support from campuses (Hall & Bonnabeau, 1993). The leaders who went on to create SUNY ESC learned important lessons from the SUNY University of the Air.

Although ineffective in terms of long-term sustainability as a stand-alone program, elements of the SUNY University of the AIR manifested within SUNY ESC because of Gould's experiences and influence. Gould's promotion of American nontraditional higher education should not be underestimated; even Time Magazine showcased Gould on the magazine's January 12, 1968 cover (Clark et al., 2010). Gould identified as one of his best achievements in a keynote speech on April 3, 2009, that he proudly supported distance learning throughout his time as SUNY Chancellor (Wharton, 2010).

SUNY Independent Study Program

The SUNY Independent Study Program was another institutional antecedent of SUNY ESC. Contradictory evidence exists about when it began because the Independent Study Program Catalog (SUNY Empire State College, ca. 1978) and an institutional memo (Jacobson, 1977b) noted the establishment in 1967, but Harter (1969) noted their first students began on June 30, 1969 (Harter, 1969). It is likely that SUNY created the program in 1967 and spent two years

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obtaining and developing courses before enrolling students in 1969. SUNY purchased correspondence courses from the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Wisconsin (Bonnabeau, 1991).

It did not offer an entire degree (Bonnabeau, 1991; SUNY Empire State College, ca. 1978). The Dean of Continuing Education, William R. Dodge, oversaw the program, but each campus administered the correspondence courses for their respective students (Bonnabeau, 1996). It offered entirely open admissions and students had 12 months to complete a course (SUNY Empire State College, 1978).

A study of the first semester showed positive results with 134 students completing at least one correspondence course at 12 SUNY campuses (Harter, 1969). The students responded favorably to the overall design and materials. The study of the first semester did not mention the specific course(s). The students noted implementation problems such as delays receiving course materials and lack of communication from their assigned correspondence faculty (Harter, 1969). The program enrolled 6,000 students by the time that Dodge moved over to help create SUNY ESC and brought the Independent Study Program with him (Bonnabeau, 1991; Bonnabeau, 1996; Jacobson, 1977b).

Ernest L. Boyer

Ernest L. Boyer was another significant influence on the creation of SUNY ESC because he was willing to experiment. He had been dean at Upland College in Texas from 1956 until it closed in 1965 where he emphasized blending content specialization, general education, and civic engagement (Moser, 2014). At Upland College, he also oversaw the nation's first 4-1-4 flexible calendar, meaning two semesters of four classes with a mid-year short term with only one class (Bonnabeau, 1990; Moser, 2014). As director of the Center for Coordinated Education

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at the University of California, Santa Barbara from 1962 to 1965, he developed educational improvement projects in the primary, secondary, and higher education systems (Bonnabeau, 1990; Bucher & Williams, 2003). His experience in California put him at the center of that state's mass expansion of higher education when he worked alongside Clark Kerr. Boyer subsequently worked as the first executive dean of SUNY from 1965, then as vice president for two years, and replaced Gould as chancellor in 1970 (Bonnabeau, 1990). Boyer strived to coordinate the SUNY system. He believed that students of all ages benefitted from community-based learning and flexibility (Bucher & Williams, 2003). This belief permeated his vision for SUNY's new innovative distance institution.

Boyer hatched a plan for a new SUNY addition without a campus and pitched it to retiring Chancellor Gould, who readily supported it (Boyer, 1996). In 1968, Gould and Boyer debated the merits of a SUNY "without walls" as either a consortium with experimental units in existing SUNY institutions or as an entirely independent institution (Bonnabeau, 1990). A new nontraditional option could expand higher education to a more diverse and wider student population using innovative teaching and learning methods and answer some of the late 1960s' and early 1970s' national questions about curriculum relevance and rigidity, growth, and nontraditional learners' needs (Worth, 1982). Several of those questions were identified in the 1968 Kerner Commission report, the 1970 Scranton report, and the 1971 Newman report outlined in the earlier section of this chapter about the national context. However, Gould and Boyer tabled any immediate action in 1968 due to nationwide and statewide campus riots that consumed politicians' discussions about higher education (Bonnabeau, 1990). If the national student protests had not interrupted the SUNY "without walls" talks, then such an institution

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could have come to fruition in New York the year before or perhaps the same year as the UKOU, which was founded in 1969.

Clark et al (2010) suggested that Boyer, who was the New York Education Chancellor from 1970-77, "grasped what proved to be a poisoned chalice" (p. xx) because of deteriorating finances and reduced support from the legislature, public, and governor that led to financial retrenchment throughout Boyer's time in office. However, that was not the case early in Boyer's term. Boyer reignited the idea of a "without walls" SUNY institution in 1970 and approached Governor Nelson Rockefeller during one of their regularly scheduled meetings held every few weeks (Bonnabeau, 1990). Rockefeller recognized the potential of using distance teaching methods to reach those still underserved by the existing SUNY system and supported the creation of this new institution (Bonnabeau, 1990; Worth, 1982). Unlike the establishment of so many public universities that relied exclusively on state funding for start-up, Boyer secured \$300,000 in grants from the Ford Foundation and Carnegie Commission for the new institution (Bonnabeau, 1990; 1996).

Creation of SUNY ESC

On January 27, 1971, the SUNY Board approved the idea of a new institution that would provide off campus students with flexible and independent learning options (Bonnabeau, 1996). The Board did not hesitate even though the New York legislature had repeatedly threatened campus closures for three years due to problems related to riots and drugs. This new innovative educational institution provided a glimmer of hope amidst national social unrest (Bonnabeau, 1996). Boyer (1996) described the SUNY Board as "the most educated and most enlightened board I have ever encountered in higher education. These public servants understood precisely their role as guardian of the public trust" (p. 7), meaning they were willing to take a risk on this

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new institution that would serve the public common good. With a supportive board, planning commenced for the new institution.

Boyer assembled the SUNY Planning Task Force, which issued *A prospectus for the new university college: Objectives, process, structure and establishment* on February 8, 1971. The following three principles guided the creation of the new institution: individual learners should determine what learning is important to them; learning can happen in various contexts and by various means; and teaching and learning styles vary by individual (Granger, 1990; Worth, 1982). The prospectus document envisioned an experimental institution that would supplement the existing SUNY system using new technologies and learning methods . Boyer insisted that the academic programs be relevant to students' needs in a post-industrial society (SUNY Planning Task Force, 1971; Worth, 1982). The mission envisioned a commitment to openness by transcending

constraints of space, place and time. It will represent an expression of faith in a more hopeful future, not yet shaped or perceived, in which higher education can open new paths of learning and fulfillment to every individual within the State of New York ...[it] shall serve the variety of individuals of all ages, throughout society, according to their own lifestyles and educational needs. It will transcend conventional academic structure which imposes required courses, set periods of time, and residential components of place upon the individual student. (SUNY Planning Task Force, 1971, p. 4)

These elements of openness, e.g., open as to people, places, and methods, were typical characteristics of open universities as described in Chapter 2, but SUNY ESC did not stop there. The planning team considered two British examples of openness in distance education. They saw

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the benefits of the University of London's external degree but thought the lack of student study resources led to high failure rates (SUNY Planning Task Force, 1971). SUNY ESC would mitigate this problem by providing students with ample study resources in varied formats.

UKOU Influence on SUNY ESC

Whereas SUNY ESC institutional historian Dr. Richard Bonnabeau insisted that the UKOU “did not inspire the creation of SUNY ESC [because] Chancellor Boyer had been engaged in nontraditional approaches for most of his career” (R. Bonnabeau, personal communication, March 9, 2022), the SUNY ESC planning documents and other publications show that the The Task Force actively contemplated the UKOU's model (Hall & Bonnabeau, 1993). Four members of the Planning Task Force visited the UKOU a few months before the UKOU launched and reported back to the SUNY Board of Trustees on December 16, 1970, that a similar non elitist demand for higher education likely existed in New York (Bonnabeau, 1996). Like the UKOU, New York's nontraditional learners suffered from time, place, and access barriers to higher education (Granger, 1990). “Task force member Harry K. Spindler noted, the United Kingdom was an example of a society willing to gamble on a ‘huge departure’ from traditional education” (Bonnabeau, 1996, p. 18). The Task Force figured that New York was stable enough after the social unrest of the late-1960s and ripe for this kind of gamble.

The Task Force applauded the UKOU's quality educational broadcasting programs and course materials but counterargued that the UKOU did not go far enough in their commitment to openness because of the “structured and a relatively closed system of delivery where all media applicable to instruction are balanced within a space/time frame” (SUNY Planning Task Force, 1971, p. 6). The Task Force insisted on more flexibility and more openness whereby SUNY ESC would “provide the resources both for structure, if necessary, and for individual creative

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learning, if desirable” (1971, p. 6). The student would decide how to learn according to their preferences.

Drawing on the UKOU’s model, SUNY ESC created regional learning centers where students and faculty could meet for degree planning and tutoring (Bonnabeau, 1996; Granger, 1990; Worth, 1982). However, the UKOU’s Chancellor Lord Perry later observed that when comparing the UKOU and SUNY ESC, “the two programs were ‘as different as chalk and cheese’” (Bonnabeau, 1996, p. 18). The difference came down to a matter of degrees of openness and student-centeredness. Unlike the UKOU, the SUNY ESC student would decide if, when, and how they utilized available course resources. Furthermore, SUNY ESC would not require any residencies or mandated tutoring and rarely used classrooms (Granger, 1990). Bonnabeau (1996) suggested that this student-centeredness was more in line with American educational reforms and innovations of the late 1960s and 1970s. Even so, Boyer used the UKOU launch to amplify his call for nonresidential higher education in New York (Bonnabeau, 1996).

SUNY ESC Educational Methods

Openness was operationalized via student-driven choices articulated in an individualized learning contract. The Planning Task Force defined open learning as “a process [that places] the responsibility for learning on the student in return for his freedom to pursue his education according to his individual needs and interests” (1971, p. 5). Students and faculty worked together to formulate an individualized learning contract degree plan that included any combination of existing SUNY Independent Study Program correspondence courses, SUNY campus courses, workplace and community-based learning opportunities such as internships or volunteering projects, independent study with or without a tutor, educational communications such as cassettes, television, and computer-assisted programs, international study, exams, and

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SUNY ESC-created learning modules (SUNY Planning Task Force, 1971; Worth, 1982). Prior learning assessment was intended from the institutional origins, but operationalizing it happened later (Hall & Bonnabeau, 1993). Students could thus draw from a range of openness by selecting and combining learning experiences according to their comfort level with structure and experiences.

Faculty ensured the quality of the customized learning contract. Although this could raise suspicion from traditional universities and accrediting authorities about a lack of quality and coherence, Boyer saw it differently because he thought “the so-called distribution requirements [offered by traditional universities were] pretty much a grab bag of electives without purpose or coherence” (Bonnabeau, 1990, p. 5). Traditional universities and accrediting agencies likely disagreed with Boyer’s interpretation because of the time and effort thoughtfully spent designing quality degree requirements. Setting aside that disagreement, faculty and SUNY ESC leadership committed to academic quality because they supported the institution’s innovative mission of helping students to design high-quality, coherent, and complex learning contracts that were not merely arbitrary reflections of students’ interests (Granger, 1990). Boyer thought this commitment helped the SUNY ESC degree be more coherent than one from a traditional university (Bonnabeau, 1990).

Once a learning contract for a degree plan was approved, the student could go about learning at their own pace and then submit a final portfolio for assessment. Faculty and one dean comprised the bulk of each review committee, but the student also had a vote on their final assessment (Bonnabeau, 1996). This exemplified SUNY ESC’s commitment to active student responsibility for their learning. Breaking the norm for higher education, transcripts only recorded student successes and not failures (Bonnabeau, 1996).

SUNY ESC Degrees and Purposes of Learning

The Planning Task Force (1971) outlined academic options for traditional disciplines, interdisciplinary study, and special programs that aligned into either an Associate of Arts in Liberal Studies, a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, a Bachelor of Arts in an interdisciplinary area, or a Bachelor of Arts in an academic major. The emphasis on interdisciplinary and liberal studies demonstrates a decidedly humanist bent to their purposes of education. Upon completion of any degree, students were expected to demonstrate competency in the following ambitious ways:

Living in a post-industrial culture will require certain basic skills. These will include: the ability to think, read, write, speak and listen in an increasing variety of symbol systems; an ability to learn which includes understanding of the new modes and media of learning; problem solving ability on personal, social and technical levels; the capability to differentiate between cognitive and affective learning and to apply each where appropriate; the capacity to engage in a wide variety of experiences with the excitement of learning rather than the fear of the ambiguous or the unknown; the recognition of the fallibility of personal knowledge with understanding of ways to accommodate to that recognition; the ability to apply qualitative as well as quantitative understanding; ability to articulate his personal values, coupled with the strength to be secure when change is necessary. (SUNY Planning Task Force, 1971, p. 10)

Whereas these competencies would be useful for professional endeavors, the Task Force did not address New York's economic need for trained professionals. Instead, SUNY ESC took a humanist approach focused on cultivating the individual. However, the

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institution later realized that their “adult learners tended to be largely driven by the practical needs of having a degree to survive in the hurly-burly world of work; they were generally less interested in intellectual fulfillment” (Bonnabeau, 1996, p. 80). This realization led to the creation of more structured learning resources for students that tended to be passive and less creative in their individualized learning plans (Bonnabeau, 1996). Some students preferred a set curriculum geared toward liberal, e.g., workforce, purposes of higher education.

A commitment to multiculturalism was also integral to the institutional mission. Boyer (1981) noted that multicultural tensions plagued the nation and argued that universities were obligated to work with the K-12 education system to improve teacher training and high school advising to serve the needs of minorities. The Task Force was careful to avoid epistemological privilege of the industrialized white dominant culture when they argued:

an intelligent person from the ghetto or urban area or isolated community who is currently at a disadvantage in learning the predominant cultural symbol system in our society will not be excluded because he cannot communicate within that symbol system or reflect its cultural expectations. He will learn for his own purposes and at his own pace within a community of his own choosing. (1971, pp. 6-7).

This shows that openness extended to the socio-cultural needs of the learners who confronted de facto discrimination and were underserved by the existing higher education system. Students were encouraged to customize their learning according to their context so long as they could demonstrate the required competencies (SUNY Planning Task

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Force, 1971). Personalized learning contracts offered marginalized social groups a vehicle for relevant and flexible learning.

SUNY ESC Admissions

The Planning Task Force (1971) targeted five groups of learners: those desiring flexibility, those who could not or would not leave home, mature students seeking a degree for any reason, employed individuals needing part-time study for career advancement, and high school drop-outs. The admissions were entirely open. The Planning Task Force (1971) anticipated that most of the incoming students would be youth who sought programs relevant to society's increasing complexity, i.e., not just the classics, and who preferred an alternative to a traditional campus. However, the first cohort proved the predictions wrong because the enrollees were mostly adults and 70% had some college credit (Bonnabeau, 1996). This pattern persisted (Coughlan, et al., 1993). Boyer (1981) later reflected that ESC was

“a college where adults can go back to school without the indignities of bureaucratic hoops - where corporate executives can run their corporations and still finish their degrees - where young men and women can travel and still stay academically in touch - where mothers can care for young children and still read Shakespeare and move toward academic fulfillment.” (p. 3)

Nontraditional students were drawn to ESC because of its commitment to innovation, flexibility, and openness.

SUNY ESC - Support and Potential Threats Within New York

ESC benefitted from a supportive higher educational and political context. Boyer convened state-wide higher education leaders on February 9, 1971, and gained their approval of the Prospectus (Bonnabeau, 1996). The leaders were all aware of the 1970 SUNY Progress

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Report that projected enrollments by 1980 would comprise 400,900 full-time students and 251,000 part-time students for a total of 652,000, with existing capacity unable to serve approximately 20,000, so the new institution could meet that need (SUNY Planning Task Force, 1971). The leaders of SUNY campuses were not concerned about balkanization and saw the new institution as a welcome addition to the SUNY system (Bonnabeau, 1996). On March 16, 1971, Governor Rockefeller committed \$200,000 to the start-up, which the legislature initially denied and then approved after a 45-minute lobbying meeting (Bonnabeau, 1996). Amidst this support, ESC still faced one potential threat from REX, which was created the same year.

The year 1971 was exciting for New York's higher education landscape because the state created two new institutions: SUNY ESC and REX. The Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York, which is a different governing authority from SUNY, authorized the creation of REX in 1971. The details of its establishment are discussed in a later section of this chapter. ESC and REX competed for Carnegie and Ford Foundation grants, and SUNY ESC received a reduced amount than originally requested so the foundations could support both programs (Bonnabeau, 1996). The SUNY ESC Planning Task Force recognized the potential threat these two nontraditional and distance-oriented universities posed to each other but also articulated their essential differences as follows:

The New York Regents' program will offer a degree to those who are *ready for degree credentialing without further study*. This program should be accompanied by a *companion effort to serve those who seek preparation for certification* but who cannot or should not be asked to return to a campus and be restricted by the curricular and time constraints typically imposed. We need a flexible *process* as well as a more flexible measurement of the *product*. Since the State University of

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New York is the *educating arm* of public higher education in New York (outside New York City) and the Regents are the *certifying arm*, a collaborative effort of the sort proposed here would result in a project that would be both comprehensive and dramatic. (1971, pp. 41-42).

The differences emphasized learning and assessment methods. SUNY ESC provided individualized learning contracts assessed via portfolio and potentially resource-supported learning whereas REX only catered to those students ready to sit for exams to earn their credit. The two institutions thus broadened the possibilities for expanding mass higher education in New York by serving nontraditional students in different ways. With this potential threat averted, planning continued to bring SUNY ESC to fruition.

Boyer proposed Saratoga Springs as the home base because Skidmore College had recently vacated some buildings in that location, the city offered a vibrant arts culture, and there was no existing SUNY campus (Bonnabeau, 1990, 1996). Boyer named the new institution Empire State College with a connotation of serving the entire state rather than adhering to the SUNY tradition of place-based names (Bonnabeau, 1990, 1996). Once established, SUNY ESC quickly secured permanent status as a distance education leader in New York's higher education landscape.

SUNY ESC's Legitimation

SUNY ESC achieved legitimation during the mid-1970s and subsequently re-organized some essential distance programs. It secured Middle States accreditation in 1974 and New York State Department of Education registration with unanimous approval in 1975 (Bonnabeau, 1996; Boyer, 1981; Worth, 1982). In 1974, SUNY ESC piloted an initiative called Extended Programs that operated entirely at a distance using mail and telephone communications between faculty

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and students, but the initiative was initially underfunded and institutionally isolated (Bonnabeau, 1996). It is unclear if the Extended Programs initiative was a perpetuation or modification of the SUNY Independent Study Program identified earlier in this chapter. Seeking improved correspondence courses and methods of communication between faculty and students, SUNY ESC and the UKOU created a partnership.

UKOU and SUNY ESC Partnership

Five years after the UKOU piloted their courses in the United States with proven success at UMUC, which is elaborated in a later section, SUNY ESC and the UKOU's North American office began discussions in 1976 about another pilot (Worth, 1982). A representative from the UKOU's North American Office met with SUNY officials at a conference sponsored by ESC during March of 1976 to discuss the feasibility of SUNY ESC using UKOU course materials (Jacobson, 1977b). On February 9, 1977, SUNY ESC's Vice President John Jacobson (1977a) communicated to some SUNY ESC staff that the UKOU's faculty member, Vincent Worth, would be seconded for three months to adapt UKOU course materials to SUNY ESC; Worth was set to arrive on March 6, 1977 (Jacobson, 1977a). Jacobson (1977a) noted that the UKOU "accepts the financial arrangement prepared by us, though Sir Walter Perry wishes us to know that their doing so is a sign of the special affection they have for us" (p.1), meaning that the two institutions shared similar commitments to openness. The financial arrangement remains unclear.

Initial field tests that concluded in May of 1977 showed positive results of the following courses: Humanities (A100), Making Sense of Society (D101), The Man-Made World (T100), Reading Development, and Renaissance and Reformation (Office of Academic Development and Office of Research, 1977). Although some units of those courses needed modification and others were not suitable, those courses had units that could be used as-is and would appeal to

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approximately 20% of SUNY ESC students. SUNY ESC faculty suggested that some units could be combined with existing SUNY Independent Study Program courses. Students identified that they liked the materials, the British context did not interfere with learning, and whole courses were too long but could be adapted into shorter units. The initial pilot results suggested that SUNY ESC needed specialized tutors to work with the course materials and planned to conduct further testing within SUNY ESC's Independent Study Program the following fall (Office of Academic Development and Office of Research, 1977). The evaluation also indicated the need to "adapt courses to better fit patterns of American higher education" (Worth, 1982, p. 8), so an ESC course team with the help of Vincent Worth, who was seconded from the UKOU Social Sciences faculty, chunked the Foundations in Social Sciences and the Foundations in Technology courses into three-credit and four-credit courses that were more appropriate for individualized learning contracts (Bonnabeau, 1996; Hassenger, 1977b; Worth, 1982).

SUNY ESC administrators saw the potential of adapting UKOU courses "in order to revitalize the Independent Study Program, to upgrade the courses both academically and pedagogically" (Hassenger & Granger, 1977, p. 1). By August 1977, 13 SUNY institutions offered courses administered by SUNY ESC's Independent Study Program, but students still could not complete an entire degree via the Independent Study Program, so more courses were desired (Hassenger & Granger, 1977; Jacobson, 1977b). In an effort to offer enough Independent Study Program courses for students to complete an entire degree, the next field test of UKOU courses occurred during the fall of 1977.

On September 12, 1977, the Independent Study Program Director encouraged the North Country, Syracuse, Urban Studies, and Utica regional Learning Center mentors and tutors to promote ISP101: Making Sense of Society – Social Relationships (Hassenger, 1977a). The

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Urban Studies students were encouraged to take the class via the WNET-Urban Studies collaboration and their orientation was scheduled for September 4, 1977 (Hassenger, 1977a). Presumably, this collaboration included educational television since WNET Channel 11 was a Public Broadcasting Station, although the documents analyzed did not include the specific methods of instruction. The WNET collaboration attracted new students because it was piloted with municipal employees in New York City's District 37 and SUNY ESC anticipated additional new enrollments for early 1978 (Hassenger, 1977b; Worth, 1982)

The SUNY ESC Office of Research and Evaluation conducted another study of modified UKOU courses tested by faculty mentors (Bonnabeau, 1996; Worth, 1982). The courses included ISP101: Making Sense of Society - Social Relationships, ISP111: People, Work, and the Economy, and ISP121: The Man-Made World (Hassenger, 1977b). The modifications implemented by the SUNY ESC course team and Vincent Worth from the UKOU produced positive results (Worth, 1982). These courses were then housed within the Independent Study Program and were utilized by Extended Programs students nationally and internationally (Bonnabeau, 1996).

SUNY ESC Subsequent Developments

In February of 1979, Extended Programs and the Independent Study Program merged into the Center for Distance Learning which continued to offer adapted UKOU courses and educational television programs (Bonnabeau, 1996; Worth, 1982). The television programs had rolled out in January of 1975 with a systematic attempt to recruit students to use broadcast, but the initiative met with limited enrollments (Bonnabeau, 1996). The Center for Distance Learning later moved the educational programs onto video cassettes that were more convenient for nontraditional students (Bonnabeau, 1996). The Center for Distance Learning employed a small

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course-teams approach to create structured courses, some of which included those recorded educational programs, for the students who preferred structure over individualized-flexibility (Granger, 1990). The Center for Distance Learning also adapted International University Consortium courses, which employed audio, video, and later computer technologies to facilitate distance learning (Granger, 1990). At some unclear point, SUNY ESC attempted to establish a “behind/without walls” distance learning program in the New York prison system in response to the Attica prison riots, but the New York legislature rejected the initiative (Bonnabeau, 1996). Boyer (1981) later described this rejection as the greatest missed opportunity for SUNY ESC. Although the prison distance education program failed, SUNY ESC extended important learning opportunities to nontraditional learners throughout the state and went on to create entirely online programs with open admissions in the 21st century.

SUNY ESC Summary

SUNY ESC was created in 1971 to address distance learning needs for New York nontraditional learners. Samuel Gould and Ernest Boyer steered the vision of the new institution while Governor Rockefeller and private foundation grants provided the start-up funding. It was created in a system dominated by the interests of private higher education institutions that slowed the mass expansion of public institutions. The institutional antecedents, SUNY of the AIR and SUNY Independent Study Program, shaped the educational methods of the new institution. SUNY ESC had open admissions, initially focused on learner choices via customized learning contracts, and later developed more structured distance-based courses. A collaboration with the UKOU was especially influential in extending the structured distance-based courses. The SUNY ESC degrees emphasized the humanist purposes of learning.

Regents External Degree

REX was created in 1971 in New York without any institutional antecedents. The 1960 Heald report was the most significant influence on the origins of this new institution that sought to flexibly extend higher education especially to New York's nontraditional learners from socially marginalized groups using a competency testing approach to help them obtain academic credentials. Ewald B. Nyquist steered the creation of this new addition to New York's higher education landscape.

The 1960 Heald report was the impetus for the creation of the Regents External Degree (REX) program. It identified an opportunity for students to receive credit for their knowledge and skills while recognizing the difficulty of higher education institutions inconsistently awarding credit for learning that happened via television, independent study, adult education, or courses at industrial plants (Committee on Higher Education, 1960). The Heald report proposed an alternative that would avoid those obstacles and facilitate awarding credit for "achievement without regular attendance at formal college classes" (Committee on Higher Education, 1960, p. 43). It recommended a system of credit by examination based on the following assumptions:

- (a) the demand for trained manpower during the next decade or two will be so great that the State should encourage students to engage in post-high school study of every form;
- (b) high-quality post-high school education can be offered through television courses, adult education courses, and by other means outside the conventional curriculum of colleges and universities; and
- (c) the offering of these courses outside the conventional curriculum can extend the effectiveness of well-qualified faculty and alleviate the seriousness of their

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potential shortage as enrollments increase. (Committee on Higher Education, 1960, pp. 43-44)

These assumptions expressed a belief that nontraditional flexible higher education could ease pressure on the growing SUNY system and fill employability needs. The Heald report tasked the Regents to draw on their expertise with operating 18 professional licensing exams and collaborate with Educational Testing Services, a national organization, to develop new tests that would grant credit for skills and knowledge (Committee on Higher Education, 1960). The Regents created the College Proficiency Examination Program later that year (Nolan, 1977). It took another decade for New York to create the examination-based degree.

Ewald B. Nyquist

In 1970 at his inaugural address, New York Education Commissioner Ewald B. Nyquist proposed a degree designed entirely around examinations (Nolan, 1977). Nyquist wanted to harness the statewide formal and informal educational resources and promote equal access to post-secondary education of all forms (Nyquist, 1970). He dreamed of a unified system "yet one with a diversified educational power base which would permit and encourage the establishment of a mixed economy of private and public institutions" (Nyquist, 1970, p. 2) that would affordably serve people of all social backgrounds. He was attentive to the extensive influence of private higher education institutions in New York and the need to address pressing national social problems such as those identified earlier in this chapter

Nyquist was concerned about the social realities of the underprivileged in New York. His sympathies likely stemmed from the discrimination he experienced as a child of Swedish immigrants in Rockford, Illinois (Mafroff, 1975). As Commissioner, Nyquist supported bussing integration of the elementary and secondary schools in New York (Mafroff, 1975). He insisted

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that "education of free men in a free society is the most important function of government" (Nyquist, 1970, p. 4). He believed the state government had a moral obligation to do more to extend educational opportunities especially to women, African Americans, and Puerto Ricans (Nyquist, 1970).

Nyquist's goal was to create the conditions that would promote "the liberation of the human spirit, the release of human potential, and the enhancement and celebration of individual human dignity" (Nyquist, 1970, p. 6). His goals embodied the marriage of social equality and higher education for both humanist and liberal purposes. Nyquist also confessed that his goals equated to "high-risk idealism – for we have promises to keep, pledges to redeem, and miles to go in a society tending to become unglued and one characterized by dissent and rising expectations which, unhappily, are out-distancing sluggish social institutions" (Nyquist, 1970, p. 6). He sought to remedy national socio-economic disparities. Conservatives in New York labeled Nyquist as an "unashamed liberal" (Mafroff, 1975, para. 2) for his desire to use education to promote social equality.

Nyquist was also cognizant of the economic realities of a credential-focused society that did not value individuals without a degree who contributed to the vitality of society. Society left them behind and denied them "the recognition and advancement to which they are entitled" (Nyquist, 1970, p. 12). He found value in various forms of labor, including menial labor, because it contributed to society. He argued that "degrees, now a common currency, are only a sign that a person is not intellectually inadequate" (Nyquist, 1970, p. 7) and held steadfast to his position that people without a degree were not intellectually inferior. They simply lacked options to obtain their credentials to be economically successful. According to Nolan (1977), "since the degree has become a job requirement, social justice demands equitable treatment for all learning,

wherever it takes place. Going to college, it seems, isn't the only way to get a college education" (p. 248). Nyquist set about offering a new option for students to complete a degree without pursuing formal coursework.

Nyquist proposed an external degree like those in Europe, such as the University of London's external degree mentioned in Chapter 2, that would not compete with existing New York institutions by catering to nontraditional learners via different methods than those already available or even in the planning stages like SUNY ESC (Nolan, 1977; Nyquist, 1970). A degree by examination aligned with "more honorable forms of educational entry, exit, and re-entry, to create more socially approved channels for interrupting and resuming education" (Nyquist, 1970, p. 8). The nontraditional learner needed the flexibility to sometimes halt and then resume their educational pursuits. An examination degree could meet those needs.

REX Degrees and Purposes of Learning

Nyquist (1970) envisioned a humanistic approach that would "redress the value imbalances of a technological and materialistic society, with its emphasis on good rather than the good things in life" (p. 14). He characterized humanistic education as developing an appreciation for the arts, a belief that every person can learn, a commitment to diversity as a value to be appreciated while recognizing that people still have more in common, promotion of ethics, a willingness for an individual to account for their weaknesses and work on them, listening, education infused with love, inspiring the joy of learning, and promoting freedom with responsibility (Nyquist, 1970). His vision was for the entire statewide education system at all levels. His vision only partially panned out with REX.

REX offered associate degrees options in the arts, sciences, and nursing as well as baccalaureate degrees in business administration and nursing (Nolan, 1977). The emphasis on

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professional programs with nursing and business administration suggests more of a liberal than a humanistic approach to education. Thus, Nyquist's humanistic vision only came to partial fruition. Whereas there was no time limit for completing the arts and sciences degrees, the two professional programs set a ten-year limit to ensure students were mostly-current with their knowledge and skills. The degree had open admissions and was open regarding age, place of study, and method of study. There were no attendance requirements and students could transfer in credits from accredited programs (Nolan, 1977).

REX Educational Methods

The program was designed around the underlying principle that "what a person knows is more important than how or where he acquired the knowledge" (Nolan, 1977, p. 234). Students could obtain their knowledge however they saw fit so long as they could pass the required tests. A statewide faculty committee collaborated with the New York Department of Education to develop 60 subject tests and the overall degree requirements. Like the University of London's external degree, the Regents published the requirements and provided students with study guides, reading lists, and exam descriptions. In 1973, a pilot study evaluated approximately 100 courses from industry organizations across the state resulting in an approved list of courses that students could complete outside of traditional higher education (Nolan, 1977). In 1975, REX began using the American Council on Education (ACE)'s list of 629 approved military courses. REX also approved tests administered by the Department of Defense such as those offered by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES) and United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI). The ACE, DANTES, and USAFI tests were important to members of the armed forces who comprised about half of the REX enrollments in 1977 (Nolan, 1977).

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Educational Testing Service helped administer the tests domestically and the American College Board did so for students overseas (Nolan, 1977).

When no appropriate test existed, students could pursue the special assessment option, which was "a flexible approach to measurement that includes oral, performance, or written examinations, and the valuation of a candidate's portfolio - artistic, literary, or musical" (Nolan, 1977, p. 239). A two-person expert panel evaluated the submission and awarded variable credits ranging from three to sixty; students typically received 15-25 credits via the special assessment. Advisers recommended that students pursue the standard tests to save money and time (Nolan, 1977).

REX Outcomes, Acceptance, and Name Change

Nolan (1977) found that most students were pursuing career objectives or were obtaining an associate degree to transfer to a campus. 94% were part-time learners and 75% were employed full-time. Students reported in an April 1975 survey that 56% used job experience and 83% pursued independent study to prepare for their exams (Nolan, 1977).

The REX program did not encounter resistance statewide because it drew support from the faculty, guidance personnel, classes, and libraries already available (Nolan, 1977). The external degree set itself apart from other innovative and nontraditional programs at the time because it embodied flexibility, freedom from rigidity, and independent learning that could be demonstrated solely by examination (Mafroff, 1975). Like other nontraditional universities, REX committed to "responsible academic judgements" (Nolan, 1977, p. 247) for quality assessment of learning and inspired similar programs in New Jersey and Connecticut. As elaborated later, REX partnered briefly with TEC in New Jersey. In 1996, REX changed their name to Regents College

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and then became a private non-profit institution known as Excelsior College in 2001 that offered entirely online degrees with open admissions in the 21st century.

REX Summary

REX was created as a publicly-funded institution in New York in 1971 to offer a nontraditional and flexible approach to higher education via competency-based testing. The 1960 Heald report called for this kind of addition to the higher education landscape in the state. Ewald Nyquist steered the creation of the new institution designed to cater to socially-marginalized groups by recognizing the learning they acquired outside of formal education and promoted the idea that stopping out was not a deterrent to achieving academic credentials. REX offered open admissions with both humanist and liberal purposes of learning. REX later became a private nonprofit institution.

Maryland's Regional Context

Maryland is one of the smallest states, ranking 42nd with 12,303 square miles (DiLisio, 1983). It serves as a bridge between the north and south given its geographic location. During the post-WWII era, Maryland enjoyed economic prosperity thanks to a diversified economy. Baltimore, the largest city in the state and the 14th largest metropolitan area in the nation, was home to a major port and served as an economic engine of the state. Baltimore is within commuting distance of Washington D.C., which was the nation's seventh largest metropolitan area. Although Maryland enjoyed economic prosperity during the post-WWII era, wealth was concentrated in the suburbs and country estates, at the exclusion of the rural descendants of sharecroppers, those in the state's poverty-stricken isolated Appalachia region with limited mobility, as well as marginalized social groups within inner-city Baltimore (DiLisio, 1983).

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Socially, the state's population grew by 7% from 1970 when it was 3,923,897 to 4,216,446 in 1980 (DiLisio, 1983). By 1978, Maryland had the fifth highest population density, was home to 2% of the nation's population, and had the 16th highest average income. The population was 75% white with 42% of the nonwhite residents concentrated in Baltimore City; the white population there decreased by 28% from 1970 to 1980. The highways increased white flight to the suburbs as illustrated in the Washington D.C. metro region. Howard County, adjacent to Baltimore County and Washington D.C., experienced an astonishing 89.8% population growth because of D.C. planning while Baltimore lost 13.5% (DiLisio, 1983). The population growth during the 1970s around Washington D.C. was important for UMUC because so many of the institution's learners worked and lived in that area.

Maryland's Higher Education Landscape

The University of Maryland system began in 1807 when the state created the College of Medicine (Hudgins, 2000). In 1856 the state added the Maryland Agricultural College in College Park, which became the land grant after the 1862 Morrill Act; it offered statewide agricultural extension courses. The name changed in 1916 to Maryland State College. It then became the University of Maryland in 1920 via a merger with professional schools in Baltimore. It maintained the two locations of Baltimore and College Park for most of the 20th century and expanded further into the University System of Maryland consisting of six state colleges and universities, making it the 12th largest in the nation at the dawn of the 21st century (Hudgins, 2000).

Maryland's higher education landscape was well-developed. By 1978, there were 20 two-year colleges and 28 universities (DiLisio, 1983). Baltimore was the higher education center with numerous traditional options including the University of Maryland at Baltimore, Johns Hopkins,

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St. Mary's Seminary and University, Loyola, College of Notre Dame of Maryland, Mt. St. Agnes College, Morgan State University, Maryland Institute of Art, Coppin State College, University of Baltimore, and the Peabody Institute. The U.S. Naval Academy offered a military education option in Annapolis (DiLisio, 1983). The University of Maryland created a new alternative in 1947 for those still left underserved by the state's well-developed landscape of higher education.

University of Maryland University College

The University of Maryland established the College of Special and Continuation Studies (CSCS) in 1947 to extend higher education to part-time adult learners via off-campus courses offered during the evenings and weekends (Hudgins, 2000). The immediate post-WWII circumstances spurred the creation of CSCS because of the GI Bill. The University of Maryland expanded after WWII to meet the needs of veterans who sought to utilize their new educational benefits. Whereas the entire University of Maryland system enrolled 6,000 students in June of 1946, it enrolled more than 11,000 students in September of 1946 (Hudgins, 2000). From its origins, CSCS rapidly responded to the military's shifting conditions.

Harold R. Benjamin, the dean of the College of Education, proposed the idea of a university college to serve nontraditional students (Hudgins, 2000). Benjamin thought the University of Maryland was well-positioned to draw on their expertise with off campus teacher certification courses, agricultural extension courses, and a variety of other noncredit programs off campus such as hosting conferences, institutes, and continuing education for a variety of groups including the military, housewives, industrial workers, educators, and farmers (Hudgins, 2000). Benjamin seized an opportunity not only to meet the various learning needs of nontraditional students but to combine these initiatives into one institutional entity that served multiple purposes.

CSCS Early Years

During August of 1947, University of Maryland President H.C. Byrd supported the idea, mustered the required institutional financial resources without additional state-funding, and housed the newly-created CSCS under the College of Education (Hudgins, 2000). CSCS was financially supported only by tuition and fees. The new institution's name, although a bit cumbersome, expressed the mission to solve multiple problems and serve various purposes. Headquartered at the College Park location, it assumed leadership over the noncredit extension courses and professional workshops. CSCS created a Division of General Studies in August of 1947 to help learners who did not meet regular admissions requirements via remedial courses. President Byrd, who had created the College of Military Science and Tactics in 1944, put the military program under CSCS (Hudgins, 2000). This shows the close connection between CSCS and the military from the beginning. That relationship, which is explained later in this chapter, was instrumental to the institution's development and manifestations of openness.

In 1949, CSCS became a separate college with its own dean (Hudgins, 2000). Two divisions comprised CSCS at that point: Part-Time Studies, which included the military science programs, and General Studies. The Part-Time Studies division offered a limited number of evening and weekend courses for nontraditional students in a variety of locations, some of which were off-campus. The General Studies division offered lower level arts & sciences, as well as remedial, courses in College Park. By the end of its second year, CSCS enrolled more than 4,000 students in approximately 250 courses and operated at 27 locations (Hudgins, 2000).

In 1953, nearly two decades before the Attica prison riots, CSCS initiated a distance learning program for the Maryland State Penitentiary in Baltimore (Hudgins, 2000). Professors in those prison classes noted improved learning outcomes compared to on-campus students.

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Those improvements were attributed to the prisoners having more devoted time to engage with the materials and the candid discussions about socially-relevant course topics (Hudgins, 2000).

From the late-1940s and through the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, CSCS offered off-campus courses to African Americans to avoid desegregating campuses because the public education system was still formally segregated, even though the first black student was admitted into the system's law school in 1935 (Hudgins, 2000). Courses held on military bases were also integrated in accordance with President Truman's Executive Order 9981 (1948) that desegregated the military. CSCS took important steps to further the democratization of higher education in Maryland by extending higher education to African Americans.

In 1959, the Maryland Board of Regents authorized CSCS to grant its own degrees and changed the name to University College. The mission was "to extend the facilities of the University by offering adult educational programs in the on-campus evening division and conveniently established off-campus centers overseas and throughout the state of Maryland and environs of the District of Columbia" (University of Maryland University College, 1959, p. 1). This shows the persistence of the original CSCS mission to facilitate adults obtaining off-campus degrees. The CSCS mission also continued in University College especially via "conferences, institutes, and special programs for interested groups of adults" (University of Maryland University College, 1959, p. 1). Those noncredit programs provided relevant formal learning opportunities to nontraditional learners. In 1959, University College also offered a Spanish course via television, which was their first attempt offering a course entirely via distance (Hudgins, 2000).

University College continued to offer an Associate of Arts or Science and added two new degrees by offering "the Bachelor of Arts degree in General Studies and the Bachelor of Science

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degree in Military Studies to mature adult students” (University of Maryland University College, 1959, p. 1). Maturity was of the utmost importance because off-campus courses were typically located in places of employment such as military bases. Students were expected to conduct themselves according to appropriate professional decorum and maturity was required to successfully balance working and learning. University College defined adult education as “all forms of training and instruction pursued during leisure hours by persons otherwise regularly and fully employed” (University of Maryland University College, 1959, p. 1). The narrow definition of the target students for adult education indicates a gendered bias that excluded women because of prevailing gender norms that regularly confined vast segments of the married female population to part-time employment and housewife duties.

Institutional Autonomy, Mission, and Purposes of Learning

University College transitioned to institutional independence in 1970 and changed the name again to University of Maryland University College (UMUC) in 1971. The new mission was different from that of 1959 because the institution acknowledged the changing context. The 1971-1973 bulletin explained that “the complexity of modern-day life, produced in part by the staggering increase in man’s knowledge and standards of educational expectation, has proved the hypothesis that education is a lifelong process” (University of Maryland University College, 1971, p. 8). UMUC committed to this lifelong educational process by “providing opportunities for continuing education that stimulate the adult’s intellectual life, promote his career, and develop his sense of individual and community responsibility” (University of Maryland University College, 1971, p. 8). This mission indicates both humanist and liberal purposes of higher education.

UMUC's Openness Operationalized in the Overseas Programs

After World War II, the United States military required officers to obtain at least two years of higher education regardless of where in the world they were stationed (Hudgins, 2000). This requirement initially became a significant barrier for those deployed to the Berlin airlift operation from June 1948 to Sept 1949. It became even more of a problem when NATO was created in 1949 and Americans troops were stationed for longer periods in Europe because the military learners could only access USAFI correspondence courses at that point (Hudgins, 2000). CSCS was the only higher education institution that responded to the Department of Defense's request for proposals to expand learning options to the military's nontraditional students (Hudgins, 2000). In doing so, CSCS helped the deployed students overcome the access barrier of existing requirements in nearly all states. Those requirements mandated certain amounts of on-campus residency, limited transfer credits from institutions such as USAFI or considered them extension credits that did not meet residential requirements and stipulated that students must complete their degrees within a finite period that was especially problematic for deployed military personnel (Collins, 1997; Hudgins, 2000). CSCS counted all their courses for Maryland residency regardless of where the learning occurred and helped students meet timely degree completion requirements by sending faculty worldwide. From 1949 when CSCS began offering courses in Germany, it offered military personnel night and weekend classes with the same total hours as on-campus in Maryland (Hudgins, 2000). Faculty, who were usually full-time, moved to a new base after each eight-week term (Hudgins, 2000). CSCS was open as to place by serving the military's learners across the globe.

Given the realities of the international context within which they operated overseas, CSCS confronted significant geographic and political barriers. CSCS embraced flexibility and

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innovation to surmount those obstacles. Geography was especially problematic for CSCS' operations in Greenland. They experienced significant supply problems getting learning materials to students stationed in Thule because it was so remote. CSCS experimented by airdropping learning materials on a palette but to no avail because the package busted open, and the learning materials scattered across the tundra (Hudgins, 2000). The military learners in Greenland also experienced course-work interruptions when they had to engage in unpredictable nuclear bomb flights over the Soviet Union with mission orders sealed to be opened in-flight, so they did not know ahead of time if they would return to the base at Thule or keep going and initiate a mutually assured destruction war with the Soviet Union. CSCS professors never penalized the students for that excuse (Hudgins, 2000). Political hotspots also interrupted learners overseas. For example, Austria's independence in 1955 interrupted students' learning, Charles De Gaulle demanded the removal of foreign troops from France in 1966, and the coup in Libya in 1969 forced the American military base closure there (Hudgins, 2000). Faculty and students embraced flexibility to work around these kinds of politically-initiated and place-based impediments.

Activities in Asia illustrate CSCS's commitment to openness regarding place and methods. CSCS offered courses in Korea to Air Force personnel beginning in September of 1956 (Hudgins, 2000). The Air Force solicited CSCS to take over from the University of California's Extension Division who withdrew from their contract during the spring of 1956. This was a beneficial change for the Air Force learners because the University of California degree required 24 residency credits, but the CSCS degree did not require learners to return to Maryland. By the second year, CSCS had 90 faculty teaching in Korea and enrollments at the Seoul location

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quickly rose to the highest of any CSCS overseas location. By 1957, CSCS also offered 136 courses at 52 facilities in Japan (Hudgins, 2000).

Faculty and students in the Asian Division experienced numerous obstacles getting to their classes. Faculty in Korea often hopped onto a C-47 transport plane and then drove on eroded dusty roads that required a face mask (Hudgins, 2000). Faculty in Korea were required to wear uncomfortable military fatigues. Students in Okinawa avoided four-hour automobile commutes to class by jumping onto a helicopter when available (Hudgins, 2000). In addition to in-person learning, the institution offered other options to the military learners in Asia.

University College, which had changed its name from CSCS by this point, started a radio show in 1959 called "Opinion = The University of Maryland, Far East Division, Forum of the Air" about relevant topics with guest speakers & faculty for informal learning (Hudgins, 2000). In 1960, University College offered Japanese language courses via television to remote areas in cooperation with the U.S. Armed Forces Radio and Television Service and subsequently added other language courses via television (Hudgins, 2000).

University College's commitment to openness as to place and methods notably manifested again during the war in Vietnam. University College initiated courses in Saigon in January of 1963, expanded to Thailand in 1967, operated at 15 locations across southeast Asia in 1967, and reached their height of 36 locations when they closed in 1975 (Hudgins, 2000). The institution offered courses to American personnel beyond those with the Department of Defense, including the Red Cross, State Department, and USAID. The composition of the students who served in the military during the war in Vietnam changed after the American federal government modified the military draft regulations in 1971 to be more equitable whereby eligible men could no longer use a higher education deferment (Hudgins, 2000). Presumably, this benefitted

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individuals from socially marginalized groups who were drafted in large numbers earlier in the war.

All full-time faculty assigned to the Asian Division were required to teach at least one eight-week term in Vietnam each year and the experience was unsettling for those who had never been in a warzone (Hudgins, 2000; Ten years, 40,000 students and Vietnam program is over, 1973). Faculty had to overcome numerous barriers related to place and methods. Travel difficulties required reliance on intelligence air services to determine transportation safety. Secrecy was of the utmost importance when UMUC, which had changed its name again and gained institutional autonomy by this point, moved with the military into Laos in March of 1972 given the American government's secret war there (Hudgins, 2000). UMUC veiled their operations in Laos by making it look like they were in Udorn, Thailand.

Faculty and learners had to deal with countless war-related obstacles. For example, they encountered issues such as lack of supplies, bombardment, finding a quiet place with electricity even if that meant moving class to the latrine or using a flashlight, incredibly long hours, unexpected service personnel duties, class delays such as when the Tet Offensive started one day before a new term, and checking the killed and missing in action lists before submitting final grades (Hudgins, 2000; Ten years, 40,000 students and Vietnam program is over, 1973).

Flexibility and openness regarding methods and places were paramount under these conditions.

UMUC & the UKOU

UMUC began using UKOU courses domestically in 1972. The partnership moved quickly from idea to operation. UMUC established their Open University of Maryland (OUM) program in a frenzy when they appointed Betty Jo Mayeske as the program director and she embarked on a "crash publicity campaign" (Mayeske, 1973, p. 4) during the summer of 1972

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designed to enroll students for the fall semester. UMUC selected the UKOU's Humanities Foundation course for the initial experiment (Koch, 1981; Hudgins, 2000). The Humanities Foundation course independent study materials combined with the cassettes, tape recorders, and films, cost the UKOU a hefty sum of \$25 million to prepare (Mayeske, 1973). It is not clear if or how much OUM paid the UKOU to use the course.

OUM ordered course materials for an anticipated enrollment of 100 students, but expectations were tripled (Hudgins, 200; Koch, 1981; Mayeske, 1973). The impromptu publicity campaign succeeded, and students were interested in an independent study option that did not require off-campus class like at UMUC. OUM staff determined that existing facilities, such as high school classrooms, meeting rooms in libraries, military bases, and University of Maryland campuses, and systems could handle a maximum capacity of 300 students, but they allowed four additional students to enroll because they were spouses who could share course materials (Hartnett, et al., 1974; Mayeske, 1973). Just a few days before courses were to begin in September of 1972, OUM received the remaining 200 sets of course materials, which were threatened by a Southampton, England dock strike (Mayeske, 1973). This shows how political and socio-economic events beyond a university's control in another country impacted implementation of a new trans-Atlantic partnership. OUM subsequently secured materials domestically from Harper and Row, mentioned earlier in this chapter as the UKOU's North American representative, to mitigate potential international shipping delays (Mayeske, 1973).

OUM split the 18 credits for the Humanities Foundation course into three 12-week sessions of six credits per term from September 18, 1972 until June 26, 1973 to accommodate student finances and facilitate transfer credits (Hartnett, et al., 1974; Mayeske, 1973). Course materials consisted of traditional books, student workbooks, and media used during tutorial

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sessions (Mayeske, 1973). Learning was primarily independent study, but the optional tutoring sessions at Learning Centers and other activities enhanced the students' exploration of the humanities. The media components helped students see and listen to what they read about in their printed course materials. OUM advisors encouraged students to take advantage of the lively discussions with tutors and their peers to avoid the isolation and low completion rates of entirely independent study (Mayeske, 1973).

Seven tutors worked across thirteen Learning Centers in Maryland during that first semester piloting the UKOU Humanities Foundation course (Hartnett, et al., 1974; Mayeske, 1973). Tutorial staff consisted of part-time faculty and qualified graduate students who staffed the centers, graded assignments, and handled counseling and tutoring functions (Hartnett, et al., 1974). Activities also included distributing and collecting assignments and support materials, socializing, discussing academic content, and presenting audiotapes and films (Hartnett, et al., 1974). OUM typically dedicated three hours once per week to the pilot at a Learning Center. Ten locations offered evening hours and the other three had daytime hours, thus providing flexibility regarding time and place to the pilot participants (Hartnett, et al., 1974). Students could float to another center if they missed their weekly session (Mayeske, 1973). Centers had to share the electronic equipment and tutors learned how to use the equipment (Mayeske, 1973). The tutors graded assignments and helped students translate British examples to the American context, often resulting in lively discussions (Hudgins, 2000). There were limited phone tutorials, mostly addressing students' personal extenuating circumstances (Mayeske, 1973). These Learning Center characteristics were similar to the UKOU.

The demographics of the first cohort illustrate the characteristics of the nontraditional students that found this independent study option appealing: 40% had no prior college

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experience or had not attended in the previous seven years while 60% had prior credits (Mayeske, 1973). Most students were looking to complete, not start, their degrees. Almost all, 96%, were nontraditional learners and only 4% identified as traditional learners (Hartnett, et al., 1974). Housewives comprised 38% of the first cohort and 18% identified as racial minorities. Just over half, 52.63%, were employed full-time, 58% were categorized as white collar workers, and only 4.5% identified themselves as blue-collar workers (Mayeske, 1973). This was like the UKOU, which although they targeted the working class, attracted more middle class students (Perry, 1977; Weinbren, 2015). It is unclear what percentage of the first OUM cohort were in the military but given UMUC's close collaboration with the armed forces and that three Learning Centers were on military bases, it is possible that military personnel and their spouses constituted a fair share of the initial cohort. However, the pilot did not restrict OUM enrollment to existing UMUC learners and the marketing intentionally catered to a variety of types of students including individuals with disabilities, people working from home, and senior citizens (Hartnett, et al., 1974).

Like the UKOU, the pilot course at OUM required one week of residency for labs, special lectures, and unique events like a theatre production (Mayeske, 1973). Students also were required to spend one weekend on-campus before the final exam to engage with more special lectures where professors shared their expertise. The faculty and students were treated to a banquet as well as a National Gallery of Art field trip (Mayeske, 1973).

The pilot was successful. Students identified the Learning Center interaction as important, found the courses time-consuming but also worth it, and indicated they were more interested and felt more prepared for higher education study after the UKOU pilot (Hartnett, et al., 1974). Students indicated that the printed materials were more useful than the films which is

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not surprising considering that the films were only available in the Learning Centers during the pilot. The British orientation of the materials was only a problem with some audio tapes. Faculty attitudes changed with more positive views toward working with nontraditional modes of instruction, off-campus courses, and working with mature learners. Faculty were positive about the Learning Centers, nontraditional students' abilities, and the course materials. They recommended spending more time preparing tutors and reassuring students during the first few weeks. They also suggested the course pace was too fast, so they recommended running it over 39 or 40 weeks and avoiding splitting courses into partial credits. Educational television was a problem at OUM because there were not enough students in the pilot to justify even trying to broadcast the programs on local networks, which was worthwhile in the United Kingdom, so instead OUM dealt with projector costs (Hartnett, et al., 1974).

After initial success, they continued the next year with some modifications and additions. During the 1974-1974 academic year, OUM switched to two nine-credit terms and added science, math, and social science foundation courses as well as the Renaissance and Reformation course (Hartnett, et al., 1974; Hudgins, 2000). Copyright permissions were secured for UKOU films to be offered at two local television channels for home viewing and at least one Learning Center continued offering projector films (Hudgins, 2000).

At some unclear point, educational television resurfaced with the Maryland University of the Air, although details of its existence and operations were not located for this study. However, Smith (1978) mentioned a partially-successful experiment between the UKOU and the Maryland University of the Air. In 1976, they tried a televised version of an introductory math class for 4,000 students on campus "only to have it literally hooted out of existence" (Smith, 1978, p. 63).

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The on-campus students apparently strongly disliked the televised method of learning. However, the same class was successful for off-campus independent study students.

At least during the 1970s, the OUM program did not offer an entire degree because of an insufficient number of courses (Hudgins, 2000). OUM expanded overseas to the European Division in 1977 and into the Asian Division during the early 1980s. By the 1990s, the OUM courses remained popular among domestic and internationally deployed learners and the program was renamed Open Learning (Hudgins, 2000).

UMUC's Subsequent Developments

In 1993, UMUC offered its first distance education course via computers to the Asian Division by investing in 20 local learning centers with the latest computer technology for asynchronous communication (Hudgins, 2000). UMUC became a virtual university in 1994 when it created online student systems and expanded virtual learning in 1995 to more locations around the world under the Open Learning program. Open Learning courses used proctored exams and were otherwise operated entirely at a distance (Hudgins, 2000). In 2019, UMUC changed its name to the University of Maryland Global Campus and remains one of the largest providers of nonprofit distance education worldwide.

UMUC Summary

The regional political and economic context was not influential on the creation of UMUC as an independent institution. CSCS already existed and merely gained institutional autonomy because of its growth. Furthermore, UMUC did not receive state funding for the first four decades. It was the only institution in the University of Maryland system that operated exclusively on student tuition and fees until it received partial funding from 1989 to 1992 and then more permanent and reliable funding after 1996 (Hudgins, 2000). The close relationship

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with the military influenced its educational method that demanded flexibility and openness regarding places and methods, especially in military zones. Whereas UMUC initially offered off-campus in-person courses, it later added educational broadcasting and correspondence courses that were influenced by a partnership with the UKOU. The admissions policy was open and the purposes of learning were both liberal and humanist.

New Jersey's Regional Context

New Jersey's geography, as well as social, economic, and political developments inhibited a state identity and hindered the state's mass expansion of higher education. Benjamin Franklin described New Jersey as "a barrel tapped at both ends" (as cited in Stansfield, 1983, p. 1) because its approximately 8,000 square miles form a peninsula between the Delaware River bordering Philadelphia on one side and the Hudson River on the other side bordering New York City. New Jersey's proximity between and economic dependency on those two powerful metropolises relegated New Jersey to the status of an important transportation corridor dominated by suburbs with nothing else within the state particularly "unexpected, unusual, or flamboyant" (Stansfield, 1983, p. 3). New Jersey is the fifth smallest by land size and as of 1980 had the highest population per square mile in the nation.

New Jersey's cities were smaller than their neighbors of New York City and Philadelphia and more akin to suburbs of those two major metropolitan centers (Salmore, et al., 2008). By the early 20th century, 75% of the New Jersey population clustered around New York City and Philadelphia's neighboring counties as commuters (Salmore, et al., 2008). From 1940 to 1960 the population boomed from 4 million to 6 million with the second fastest growth rate in the nation after California; the population increase halted during the 1970s because of the economic downturn (Salmore, et al., 2008; Stansfield, 1983). Hudson County, home to Jersey City and

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Hoboken, had the highest population concentration and was the first to lose population (Stansfield, 1983). The population concentration, combined with the state's voting structure, influenced the state's political identity and mass expansion of higher education. This is elaborated in a later section.

New Jersey's Economic Context

Economically, New Jersey was mostly an industrial state until midcentury and notably its industrial production outpaced the national average (Stansfield, 1983). Hudson County's geography with extensive marshlands confined expansion along the Hudson River banks, so major industrial development and wealth built up further inland in places such as Paterson, Newark, and Trenton (Salmore, et al., 2008). Like other predominantly industrial states, New Jersey shifted during the 1950s to high tech, service, and a post-industrial economy that boasted the nation's fifth highest per capita income in the nation (Stansfield, 1983). These economic conditions required workers with increased knowledge and skills.

New Jersey's Social Context

Socially, New Jersey maintained the second highest population of black residents in the northeast region after New York (Stansfield, 1983). Most African Americans lived in the northern part of New Jersey because that region retained slavery longer than the southern abolitionist region. By 1980, 12.5% of the state's population were black, 6.7% were Spanish-speaking, and 1.4% were Asian Pacific Islanders. Unlike Asian Pacific Islanders, African Americans and Spanish-speakers were mostly concentrated in cities and unable to secure the middle class lifestyle in the suburbs (Stansfield, 1983). Although these marginalized social groups were targets of the mass expansion of higher education, they did not significantly influence the state's political developments compared to European immigrants.

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New Jersey had the second highest non-native population by 1920 after Delaware due mostly to immigration (Salmore, et al., 2008). The major European enclaves consisted of Italian, Irish, Slavic, and German immigrants that settled in the industrial silk-producing cities such as Paterson. Religious sectarianism and Catholic interests, which stemmed from the European immigration, were especially influential on the state's politics during the first half of the 20th century (Salmore, et al., 2008). The political context delayed the mass expansion of higher education in New Jersey.

New Jersey's Political Context

The Democratic Party controlled much of New Jersey's political agenda and structure throughout the 20th century. From 1916-1940, the Democrats won the governorship six out of nine terms, thanks largely to the ethnic immigrant population in Hudson County which borders New York City (Salmore, et al., 2008). New Jersey's political system for the first half of the 20th century was characterized by an outdated county-level weighted voting system that originated with the 1844 state charter and political party machinations. The county-level weighting system meant that local concerns prevailed. Progressive Era reforms brought minor changes during the first two decades of the 20th century such as the direct election of major officials, but county-level parties still controlled the nominations. Although the Democratic Party controlled most of the counties, small Republican and Protestant counties successfully held up Democratic and Catholic statewide initiatives (Salmore, et al., 2008).

Political leader Frank Hague controlled New Jersey's Democratic Party machine organization for three decades (Foster, 2002). Hague was the Jersey City Mayor from 1917 to 1947 and the Democratic National Convention vice chair from 1922-1949 (Foster, 2002). His influence shaped the state's political, economic, and social context. "When critics demanded

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'reform' of the Hague organization, Hudsonites recalled that 'reform' was often a code word for Protestant hegemony and Catholic disenfranchisement" (Salmore, et al., 2008, p. 44). Hague drew on his base of Hudson County Catholic immigrants to resist numerous reform initiatives as he maintained a system of ethnic welfare patronage.

Called a fascist dictator by his opponents and Boss Hague by his supporters, Hague's actions were often straight out of the 1920s Irish Catholic ethnic welfare playbook whereby he rewarded supporters with holiday meals and employment (Salmore, et al., 2008). Hague supported likeminded female candidates for state and federal office throughout his three decades in power. He also raised taxes on major corporations like Standard Oil and railroads, which provided an improved source of state funding given that New Jersey residents refused to support a state income tax (Salmore, et al., 2008). Hague's funding schemes combined with the unpopularity of a state income tax stymied New Jersey's political modernization and ability to expand mass higher education.

Several turning points after WWII led to New Jersey's political landscape modernization. First, returning veterans signaled the end of sectarianism's fulcrum because veterans came home from overseas with different viewpoints and reduced ethnic identities (Salmore, et al., 2008). Second, the state engaged in a major initiative during the early 1940s to finally replace the 1844 charter with a new constitution. Hague tried to kill the constitution with warnings of railroad tax breaks that would dilute state funding, threats to public employee pensions, scares of a dreaded state sales tax, and anti-Catholicism rumors that churches would be taxed, and priests forced to divulge confessional secrets (Salmore, et al., 2008). His efforts to protect entrenched sectarian and county-level interests were unsuccessful. The new constitution reorganized the court system under a Supreme Court and vastly increased gubernatorial powers (State of New Jersey

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Department of State, 1947). Third, the courts systematically dismantled the outdated county-based weighted voting system throughout the 1960s (Salmore, et al., 2008). Fourth, the state implemented a three percent sales tax in 1966 (Winters, 2014). Fifth, a 1973 local property tax formula changed public school funding which led to increased support for a state income tax. It passed in 1976 and was important for addressing New Jersey's statewide financing needs (Salmore, et al., 2008). Finally, and also during the 1970s, campaign finance reforms shifted emphasis away from party machinations and towards individual candidates, which combined with televised political debates to finally produce a modern political system during the 1977 election. The state's slow development toward a modern political system stymied the mass expansion of higher education.

New Jersey's Higher Education Landscape

The New Jersey higher education landscape suffered from a lack of mass expansion by the early 1970s. New Jersey attempted initial expansion of the system during the administration of Governor Richard J. Hughes, who held that office from 1962 to 1970. He convened the Citizens Committee for Higher Education during 1965-1966 to recommend opportunities for expanding higher education (Collins, 1997; Mann & Forsberg, 2006). Their report found that the existing public higher education system only served approximately 50,000 individuals so they recommended expansion that could be funded by creating a three percent state sales tax (Mann & Forsberg, 2006; Winters, 2014). The state used the new funds to implement changes based on the Citizens Committee report's recommendations including creating new county community colleges and a new Department of Higher Education with a state Board of Higher Education and a Chancellor of Higher Education (Collins, 1997; Mann & Forsberg, 2006; Winters, 2014). Between 1968 and 1970, New Jersey created two new public medical schools in Newark and

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Piscataway, approved two new state colleges, and granted fiscal autonomy to the state colleges (Winters, 2014).

Even with these expansions, capacity was still so limited that New Jersey “became known as the ‘cowbird state’ because cowbirds lay their eggs in the nests of other species and leave them to be raised by other parents” (Collins, 1997, p. 10). Higher education opportunities were so slim that many residents were forced to enroll in other states. The 1966 Citizens Commission also noted the consequences of the lack of higher education access including costly out of state resident tuition, loss of manpower for New Jersey’s businesses, and some students had to deal with lower quality of education (Mann & Forsberg, 2006). Additionally, the lack of access negatively impacted minority and low socioeconomic status individuals, such as the second highest largest black population in the northeast megalopolis region (Mann & Forsberg, 2006; Stansfield, 1983). To remedy the situation, New Jersey’s Chancellor proposed the following three new additions to the state’s system in July 1971: Ramapo State to serve the northern region’s traditional students, Stockton State to serve the southern region’s traditional students, and an open university that would meet the needs of nontraditional students statewide (Collins, 1997). New Jersey voters authorized a \$155 million bond issue in November of 1971 to fund the additional expansion even as new Governor William T. Cahill, who held that office from 1970 to 1974, inherited a fiscal crisis with a projected \$268 million deficit for the 1971 fiscal year (Connors, 2014). The open university concept manifested with Thomas Edison College amidst this context.

Thomas Edison State College

Thomas Edison College (TEC) was established on July 1, 1972. The New York REX program was the most significant influence on TEC. The UKOU and SUNY Empire State

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College also inspired TEC. The new institution provided an important open and flexible option to the existing limited higher education landscape in New Jersey.

New Jersey's Chancellor of Education Ralph Dungan advocated for an 'open university' in New Jersey via a July 1971 letter to New Jersey State Treasurer Walter Wechsler (Collins, 1997). The proposed new addition to the state's higher education system was intended to be the most cost-effective method to expand mass higher education with initial project start-up funding estimated between \$200,000-\$500,000 (Collins, 1997). The new institution was an important component of the state's Master Plan to "develop new structural approaches in higher educational opportunity for people unable to attend a college full-time" (EPE, 1971, p. 3). It was designed for nontraditional learners.

Planning TEC

Discussions about New Jersey creating an external degree college like New York's REX program began in September 1971 between Donald Nolan, New Jersey staff member of the Department of Higher Education, and T. Edward Hollander, New York's Deputy Commissioner for Higher and Professional Education (Collins, 1997). They envisioned that the two states would share competency tests for reasonable fees and operate via joint degree committees and advisory councils (Collins, 1997; Hollander, 1973). These talks paved the way for an interstate agreement, which was likely the first of its kind in the nation (Collins, 1997; State of New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, 1971).

Planning moved quickly and by early December the New Jersey Board of Education considered a proposal for the new institution that they approved on December 17, 1971. Initially, the proposed name was Garden State College, but some individuals were concerned it mimicked SUNY ESC so they opted to draw inspiration from famous New Jersey resident Thomas Edison

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(Collins, 1997). Thomas Edison was not only a famous inventor who established one of the first formal research operations in the nation but was known for his lack of formal education (Collins, 1997; EPE, 1971; Thomas A. Edison College, 1973). Edison “demonstrated the power and ability of adults to embrace learning and achievement as a life-long principle independent from the structure of traditional collegiate education” (Pruitt, 1990a, p. 7). The name suited the new institution’s approach to inspiring individuals to achieve their higher education goals outside the boundaries of formal campus-based education.

The proposal and accompanying supporting material identified numerous needs to justify the new institution. The EPE 15-Minute Report (1971) offered three arguments in support of the new nontraditional institution. First, “non-resident degree programs and other non-traditional forms of study are no longer mere experiments. Recent developments show they are gaining considerable stature” (p. 6). Nontraditional and nonresidential forms were becoming nationally accepted, as evidenced by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools which had just developed standards for nontraditional and nonresidential learning options. Second, the establishment of the UKOU and the global proliferation of other open universities garnered interest among American higher education leaders. Third, the University Without Walls consortium with 20 institutional participants stimulated interest in nontraditional offerings (EPE, 1971). Furthermore, the formal proposal argued that 82 million American adults nationwide were expected to engage in nontraditional forms of learning by 1975 but lacked the opportunity to receive formal credit due to barriers of geography, time, and responsibilities (State of New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, 1971). These barriers excluded individuals from professional opportunities that required credentials. The proposal also noted that housewives, military service

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personnel, healthcare professionals, and prison inmates were segments of the population that were underserved by the existing higher education system.

TEC's Mission

To fill these unmet demands, TEC's three-fold mission in the proposal was as follows:

1. To enable individuals to obtain college credit or other educational advantage by examinations without formal classroom instruction.
2. To offer information about the many opportunities available for self-study.
3. To make available undergraduate degrees to persons who possess knowledge equivalent to that of a degree recipient from a New Jersey institution of higher education. A person will be able to obtain a degree on the basis of: (a) previous college credits; (b) any credible learning experience that can be documented; (c) successfully completed proficiency examinations. The emphasis of the entire program would be on what a person knows, not on where or how he learned it. The end results would be to make New Jersey's educational system more flexible, open and humanistic. (State of New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, 1971, pp. 1-2)

This first component of the mission statement committed to serving nontraditional students by offering credit for learning obtained in a variety of nonaccredited ways so long as the learning could be demonstrated and assessed. The second component manifested in the Clearinghouse, which is described in a later section. The third component of the mission statement advanced transferability, prior learning assessment, and competency-based exams. It also included an

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explicitly humanist purpose, but that purpose was not elaborated except to imply that providing open and flexible opportunities was inherently humanistic.

UKOU Influence

The UKOU influenced the creation of TEC. The founders of TEC debated the following UKOU characteristics: “1. a non-residential campus; 2. Resident faculty but no resident students; 3. Regional learning centers housing various types of educational resources; and 4. The development of instructional materials for use with different types of media” (State of New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, 1971, p. 2). The planners recognized the benefits of the UKOU’s approach but selected different characteristics for the new open university in New Jersey. TEC did not have resident faculty, nor any required in-person learning components. It did not offer tutoring at regional learning centers. It did not develop nor offer any instructional materials, at least initially. These characteristics differentiated TEC from the UKOU.

Degrees and Purposes of Learning

With planning completed, TEC became the ninth state college in the system, governed by its own board, and authorized to grant degrees (Pruitt, 1983). The Thomas A. Edison College Catalog, 1973-1974 supported the implied interpretation of a humanistic purpose of education, mentioned earlier, when it stated that the institution’s goal was “to make New Jersey’s higher educational system more flexible and open to a wider socio-economic and age range of students” (p. 1). By opening up opportunities, individuals could pursue higher education for their own purposes, whether humanist or liberal in nature.

The initial degrees offered by TEC indicated both humanist and liberal purposes of learning. It initially offered only the Associate of Arts degree with plans to quickly roll out a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration by mid-1973 and an Associate in Applied

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Science in Nursing in early 1974 (Thomas A. Edison College, 1973). The proposal acknowledged that the new institution would bring significant benefits to New Jersey including showing “political sensitivity to massive expansion of higher education [and bringing] value to the economy of the State of New Jersey in contributing to an educated citizenry” (State of New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, 1971, p. 8). By offering an Associate of Arts degree and addressing the needs of underserved adults, TEC included humanist elements while the business and nursing degrees catered more to liberal social and economic purposes of higher education in New Jersey.

TEC granted credit for experience that aligned with an accredited degree (Purdom, 1978). TEC’s degree requirements mirrored a traditional distribution of credits and the knowledge demonstration had to be equivalent to existing traditional courses. Like REX, TEC was not revolutionary in how it adhered to traditional degree requirements, but it was revolutionary in challenging the prevailing assumption that most learning was the product of teaching (Purdom, 1978).

TEC’s Educational Characteristics

To fulfill the mission, TEC began by serving students with no campus, no full-time faculty, no TEC-created correspondence or educational television courses, fees rather than tuition because it did not offer courses, and minimal staff (Hawes, 1977; Purdom, 1978; State of New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, 1971). TEC employed part-time faculty consultants drawn from New Jersey’s other higher education institutions, advising consultants, and a small administrative staff (Collins, 1997). The first students enrolled in 1972. TEC initially offered transfer evaluations and REX tests and then expanded assessment options in 1973 when

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it began offering a portfolio assessment or performance demonstration option for either an individual or a group (Collins, 1997).

TEC derived their learning assessment methods from their mission with the underlying assumptions that learning occurs in many ways and receiving credit for that learning empowered the individual (Pruitt, 1990; Thomas A. Edison College, 1973). Students earned credit via subject matter competency tests, transferring credits from other institutions including from American Council on Education approved courses, or individual portfolio special assessment (Hawes, 1977; Pruitt, 1990a, 1990b; Thomas A. Edison College, 1973). To prepare for tests, students were encouraged to engage in independent study courses offered by other providers including educational television programs, short courses developed by unions, corporations, correspondence courses, and community/neighborhood educational programs (Pruitt, 1990a, 1990b; State of New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, 1971). TEC provided students with bibliographies, study guides, and exam descriptions to prepare for College Proficiency Exams and TEC's External Degree Examinations (Thomas A. Edison College, 1973). Following the example of New York's Clearinghouse which publicized correspondence courses, the TEC Independent Study Clearinghouse evaluated and published findings on recommended correspondence courses, study guides, and programmed texts, thus offering numerous ways to open up learning (State of New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, 1971).

Highly-qualified faculty were essential to establish a respected reputation of the new innovative institution (State of New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, 1971). The faculty consultants assessed learning, ensured the quality of awarded degrees, developed tests, promoted collaborations with other institutions, and articulated transferability of credits. Their efforts were successful as demonstrated in a 1978 survey where 75% of TEC's faculty consultants found that

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degree standards were as high as conventional institutions and another 11% said TEC's standards were even higher than their traditional counterparts (Purdom, 1978). Like, SUNY ESC's subsequently-added learning and assessment options, TEC faculty consultants also became mentors when TEC added the Guided Study option where students could receive feedback from their mentors on 16-24 week correspondence courses (Collins, 1997, Pruitt, 1983). TEC later shortened their Guided Study Program correspondence courses to 12 weeks (Pruitt, 1990a, 1990b).

TEC's Admissions Policy

TEC had an open admission policy geared to "award degrees to all who qualify by meeting the degree requirements established, without regard to such considerations as age, residence, previous level of schooling, or method of preparation....A high school diploma or college entrance examination is not required" (Thomas A. Edison College, 1973, p. 5). Although the college had an open admission policy, it was not actually open to all individuals. One college president jokingly noted that TEC was "the only R rated college in New Jersey. We won't let an 18 year old near the place" (Pruitt, 1990b, p. 2). There was no strict age requirement, but students fresh out of high school would not yet have had the chance to gain enough advanced learning, so they were generally not considered for admissions. TEC catered to nontraditional learners.

TEC's Partnerships

The initially cordial and mutually-beneficial relationship between TEC and REX, mentioned earlier, subsequently suffered from misunderstandings about each state's interpretation of their test-development and joint-oversight agreement. REX accused TEC of violating their joint-decision authority by making independent decisions, enrolling students

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beyond New Jersey, delaying the transcript evaluation process, and not developing enough new tests (Collins, 1997). TEC counter-argued that it suffered from minimal funding and never agreed to New Jersey residential exclusivity (Collins, 1997). Furthermore, there were philosophical differences between the two institutions regarding their service orientation because REX served the students via the Registrar whereas TEC took a more personalized approach with their counselors (Hollander, 1973; Pruitt, 1983; Purdom, 1978). REX and TEC mutually agreed to sever their collaboration on November 20, 1973 (Collins, 1997). Although, New York's Education Commission staff hoped they could resume their agreement within a year (Hollander, 1973). They did not. In March of 1974, TEC created their own examinations called the Thomas Edison College Examination Program (Collins, 1997).

Despite the rocky relationship with REX, TEC went on to cultivate other productive collaborations. TEC was one of the ten founding members of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, when that organization was created in 1974 (Collins, 1997). In 1975, TEC created cooperative learning agreements with nonprofits, industry, and the state's government (Pruitt, 1983). The institution created a long term partnership offering classes to New Jersey civil servants and offered guaranteed accredited transcripts to some nonaccredited police and secretarial training schools (Collins, 1997). During the mid-1970s, TEC started recruiting at New Jersey military bases as well as at the Pentagon in Washington, DC. The persistent military student problems of meeting residency requirements and time limits for degree completion were not an issue at TEC because students transferred in credits or earned credits directly with TEC. It later partnered with Wayne State University in Michigan and the nascent New Jersey Network public television, which was established in 1968 to offer Guided Study courses accompanied by educational television programming (Collins, 1997). TEC claimed to have pioneered legal

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copyright video tape duplication for educational purposes; this practice later became a standard contract item for all Public Broadcasting Corporation contracts with educational institutions (Collins, 1997).

A few years after the Attica prison riots, TEC succeeded in a “behind and without walls” distance education program for prisoners. In a project funded by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), TEC extended learning into the New Jersey prison system in 1975 using exams created by TEC as well those from the nationwide College Level Examination Program. Another CETA-funded project from 1975-1980 helped approximately 600 unemployed individuals obtain TEC credits and degrees (Collins, 1997). These initiatives at least partially addressed a socio-economic unmet demand for credentials and upskilling during an economic downturn.

TEC's Expansion

During the late 1970s and 1980s, the institution continued to expand. The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools granted it full accreditation in 1977 (Collins, 1997; Pruitt, 1983). TEC opened the Serving the Adult Collegian (STAC) program in December of 1980. STAC personnel conducted prior learning assessment for other colleges without students having to enroll at TEC (Collins, 1997). STAC only performed the evaluation, so it was up to the individual college to determine the appropriate amount of credit. It began with a mix of eight public and private institutions that promoted transfer policy standardization (Collins, 1997). Although STAC encountered some early resistance from traditional institutions that would not accept this form of learning assessment, it served 37 institutions by 1983 and by 1997 42 out of New Jersey's 54 higher education institutions joined thereby indicating growing acceptance of prior learning assessment (Collins, 1997; Pruitt, 1983; Pruitt, 1990b). To reflect their expansion,

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the institution changed the name to Thomas Edison State College (TESC) (Pruitt, 1983). In 1988, TESC created the National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning (NIAEL) to serve national professional development and training needs (Collins, 1997; Pruitt, 1983, Pruitt, 1990b). In the 21st century, Thomas Edison State University offers entirely online degrees via Guided Study, portfolio assessment, and testing.

TEC Summary

TEC emerged as an open university amidst New Jersey's sluggish expansion of higher education that was hindered by statewide unpopularity of a state sales tax and a political system that was slow to modernize. TEC drew inspiration from the UKOU as an open institution that catered to nontraditional learners with no admissions requirements but opted for different educational methods. The New York REX degree was the most significant influence on TEC's educational characteristics when the two collaboratively developed and shared competency tests. TEC offered individual portfolio assessment as well as individual or group skill demonstration assessment options. TEC's purposes of learning were both humanistic and liberal. The institution created numerous partnerships that furthered adult education nationwide.

Comparisons – Contexts and Educational Characteristics

The four institutions analyzed in this chapter shared a national context that shaped their origins. The civil rights movement, Great Society, women's movement, and war in Vietnam sparked national debates about equity, justice, and equal opportunity that influenced the broad higher education landscape of the nation. All four responded to changing social circumstances such as minorities' and women's demands and the military community's needs for flexible higher education. They all extended higher education opportunities to social groups that were underserved by traditional universities via open admission policies and a variety of distance

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learning methods. The Attica prison riots prompted SUNY ESC and TEC to create prison distance education programs, but only TEC succeeded in that endeavor.

All four institutions were established during the early-1970s' mass expansion of higher education and designed degree programs with content distribution requirements that aligned with traditional universities and accreditation standards. None of the institutions threatened balkanization of existing colleges and universities, so the new institutions benefitted from a lack of resistance from their traditional counterparts. They also benefitted from the economic prosperity generated within their regional context of the northeast megalopolis. They all drew on British flexible and open educational methods but in various ways that are noted in the next section. The four institutions shared a commitment to openness inherent in open universities.

The three states experienced different rates of expanding mass higher education. New York and New Jersey were slow compared to Maryland. Only New York had an activist governor. SUNY ESC, REX, and TESC were established with state funding whereas UMUC gained institutional autonomy without any state funding. Carnegie Foundation grants supported the creation of SUNY ESC, REX, and TESC. Ford Foundation grants also supported the creation of the two New York institutions.

Faculty working conditions and student learning conditions mostly-diverged. Those educational characteristics are identified in Table 5 below.

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Table 5

Educational Characteristics: SUNY ESC, REX, UMUC, and TESC

Characteristics	SUNY ESC	REX	UMUC	TESC
Learning Centers	Yes	No	Yes	No
Open Admissions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prior Learning Assessment	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Correspondence Courses	Yes, from origins	Yes, from origins but not created by REX	Added later	Yes, from origins but not created by TESC. Guided Study added later.
UKOU Courses	Yes	No	Yes	No
Faculty	Full-time mentors	Part-time	Full-time & Part-time	Part-time
Individualized Learning Contracts	Yes	No	No	No
Educational Television	Yes	Yes, from origins but not created by REX	Yes	Yes, from origins but not created by TESC
In-person courses	No	No	Yes	No

SUNY ESC and UMUC utilized regional learning centers for supplemental instruction. All the institutions offered open admissions. SUNY ESC, REX, and TESC challenged prevailing assumptions that learning was only the product of teaching by offering prior learning assessment. REX and TESC offered prior learning assessment from their origins. SUNY ESC planned to do so from the beginning but implemented it later. UMUC was the only institution that did not incorporate prior learning assessment, at least according to the sources consulted for this study. All four institutions offered correspondence courses at some point, but only SUNY ESC did so

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from the beginning. Due to their competency-testing approach, REX and TESC did not utilize UKOU courses whereas the other two engaged in extensive collaborations with the UKOU. SUNY ESC and UMUC employed full-time faculty whereas REX and TESC relied on part-time faculty drawn from their respective state traditional universities. SUNY ESC was the only institution that offered individualized learning contracts and incorporated educational television distance learning courses from the beginning. UMUC uniquely extended faculty-taught courses into extreme locations worldwide for military students. Only REX and TESC created a statewide clearinghouse of information to publicize and promote distance learning opportunities. REX and TESC did not offer any type of in-person courses whereas SUNY ESC offered in-person tutoring and UMUC faculty taught in-person courses.

The institutions diverged with their purposes of learning, prison distance education programs, and collaborations. SUNY ESC emphasized humanist learning more than the other three institutions that pursued both humanist and liberal purposes of learning. TESC extended distance learning into the New Jersey prison system for a “behind and without walls” program whereas SUNY ESC attempted, but failed, to do so for the New York prison system in response to the Attica riots. UMUC had a distance education program in the Maryland prisons prior to becoming an autonomous institution. REX and TESC attempted to collaborate with each other, but that endeavor failed early in its existence due to mutual misunderstandings. TESC stood out as a national leader that advocated prior learning assessment as it participated in numerous initiatives overtime.

British distance education initiatives influenced all four institutions in various ways. The founders of SUNY ESC and TESC contemplated the UKOU’s methods and decided on different education characteristics although they shared with the UKOU a commitment to serving

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nontraditional learners via open admission policies. SUNY ESC and UMUC collaborated directly with the UKOU on adapting UKOU course packages, but the other two institutions did not. The UKOU may have influenced REX, but the lack of that acknowledgement might be attributed to the lack of REX primary sources obtained for this study. The University of London's external degree influenced the methods of REX and TESC by offering credit by examination and emphasized that nontraditional learners could demonstrate their learning acquired by methods beyond a conventional classroom.

Conclusion

This chapter identified the national and regional contexts that supported the mass expansion of higher education in New York, Maryland, and New Jersey. This chapter also articulated the political, economic and social factors that influenced the establishment of SUNY ESC, REX, UMUC, and TESC. The national context of the civil rights movement, the Great Society, the war in Vietnam, and the women's movement influenced the four universities in similar ways. The civil rights movement and the women's movement advocated for equal opportunities, including in higher education and credentialed employment, and the four universities responded to that context with open admission policies. The Great Society justified hefty federal expenditures via new programs designed for the common good. At the state level, the four public universities were also created for the common good. The war in Vietnam impacted the four institutions because they all enrolled military learners, but it especially influenced two of the institutions. UMUC was particularly open regarding methods and places when it served military learners overseas. The 1968 protests in response to Vietnam and civil rights frustrations delayed the creation of SUNY ESC for three years. The Attica prison riots heightened attention for "behind and without walls" distance education programs.

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Regional political and social factors slowed the mass expansion of higher education in New York and New Jersey, but that was not the case in Maryland. SUNY ESC, REX, and TESC enjoyed regional political and economic support as new institutions. UMUC avoided Maryland's political and economic arena because it evolved within the University of Maryland rather than being created as a new institution and it did not receive state funding for several decades.

This chapter also compared the educational characteristics, institutional antecedents, and purposes of learning of the four universities. They were all open to people with open admissions policies and operationalized being open as to places, methods, and ideas in different ways. The next chapter explores two American open universities created during the 1990s.

**Chapter 6 – One Win, One Loss: American Virtual Open Universities Established During
the 1990s**

Introduction

This chapter identifies and compares the political, economic, and social contexts that informed the creation of two open virtual universities established in the United States during the 1990s. Western Governors University was created in 1997 and the United States Open University was established in 1998. This chapter also identifies and compares the institutional antecedents, articulated purposes of higher education, and open educational characteristics of these two virtual universities.

The national political and economic context, specifically Reaganomics and the subsequent dot-com bubble, were more influential on the origins of these two institutions than the social context. Although, the national social context illustrated the end of the mass expansion of higher education when these two universities were created. The regional political context was elemental to the origins of Western Governors University, but irrelevant to the United States Open University. Both institutions had important antecedents and embraced open educational characteristics, but to varying degrees.

National Context

Reaganomics

Neoliberalism influenced the political, economic, and social context of the 1990s due to the Reagan administration's policies of the 1980s that permeated into the next decade. The literature review for this study explained the historical origins, philosophical focus, and growth of neoliberalism in the United States. The neoliberal agenda took firm root within President Ronald Reagan's administration during the 1980s. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Reagan

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denounced welfare when he served as the Governor of California during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Reagan, 1967). He then drew on his experience in California when he brought his economic ideas, known as Reaganomics, to the national stage as president. The outcomes from Reaganomics shaped the national context of the 1990s, with serious implications for higher education and the national understanding of the public good.

Reaganomics was characterized by the trickle-down economic theory whereby reducing taxes for corporations and the wealthiest individuals was expected to stimulate job creation, economic opportunities, and wealth that would flow down throughout the rungs of the socio-economic ladder. Reagan reduced the highest marginal income tax rates in 1981 and again in 1986 to stimulate economic productivity (Brownlee, 2015). These measures reduced the rampant inflation occurring from the late-1970s (Brownlee, 2015). During his tenure, unemployment rates peaked in December 1982 at 10.8%, declined to 7.2% during the 1984 election, and fell to 6% by September 1987 (Pew Research Center, 2010). Reagan's neoliberal economic agenda focused on deregulation, privatization, and reducing the size of the federal government (Morris & Targ, 2022). His reelection in 1984 was a landslide (Busch, 2015). It cemented neoliberalism into the 1980s economic structures that shaped the origins of the two virtual universities analyzed later in this chapter.

Reagan's policies slashed spending on social services while bolstering Cold War military spending, resulting in a skyrocketing national deficit (Edwards, et al., 2021). President Reagan upheld his campaign promise to reduce social welfare programs spending, with negative consequences for some of the poorest women because he reduced by 12% the Women's Education Action Project that focused on removing gender discrimination in education (DuBois & Dumenil, 2016). Reagan's cuts to social programs like food stamps and low-income housing

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resulted in increased homelessness (Barnes & Bowles, 2014). The wealth gap widened as low-income Americans struggled while the wealthy enjoyed tax breaks and an overvalued stock market (Barnes & Bowles, 2014; Brownlee, 2015). A Pew Research survey in 1989 showed that white Americans possessed 17 times more wealth than black Americans and 14 times more than Hispanic Americans; the gap was the widest in that year (Kochhar & Fry, 2014). However, the wealth gap between white Americans and African American or Hispanic Americans reduced by about half from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s (Kochhar & Fry, 2014). The racial wealth gap, exacerbated by social spending cuts, persisted throughout the 1980s and demonstrated an ongoing de facto social inequality that stemmed from the country's historically racially-motivated structural policies. Economic prosperity throughout most of the 20th century resulted in the United States being the most economically stratified industrialized country at the dawn of the 21st century (DuBois & Dumenil, 2016).

As neoliberalism seeped into the 1980s' national economic framework, it narrowly redefined the public good as wealth creation, small government, increased privatization, quantification of measurable outcomes, deregulation, and individual rights (Giroux, 2002; Maclean, 2018; Madsen, 2022; Morris & Targ, 2022; Marginson, 2019; Raimondi, 2012). This laser-focus on how to define the public good that rebuked Keynesian economic policies had repercussions for higher education. Among other domestic spending cuts, Reagan slashed higher education spending by approximately 25% between 1980-1985 to extricate the federal government from people's lives (Fergus, 2014; Walsh, 1982). These cuts reduced the availability of federal Pell grants to low-income students and middle class families' abilities to secure low-income federally subsidized student loans by capping the family income threshold at \$32,000 per year (Fergus, 2014; Walsh, 1982).

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The cuts were accompanied by a neoliberal view that financially needy students were a detriment to the public good. For example, David Stockman, White House Director of the Office of Management and Budget at the time, called American higher education students “tax eaters ... [and] a drain and drag on the American economy” (as cited in Fergus, 2014, para. 10) in a speech to Congress. In another example, Terrel Bell, Reagan's Education Secretary, equated students requiring federal financial aid with other so-called drains on the economy such as welfare recipients, subsidized farmers, elderly Medicare recipients, and poor families on Medicaid (Bell, 1988; Fergus, 2014). Stockman and Bell expressed the Reagan administration's view that the public good should be defined by individual responsibility, private decision making, and economic freedom.

Reduced federal spending on higher education persisted throughout the 1990s when the two institutions analyzed in this chapter were created. From 1990 to 2001, federal higher education funding declined 14% while research funding to colleges and universities increased 38% (Hoffman, 2001). Reduced federal spending on higher education forced higher education institutions to respond with increased tuition (Wei, et al., 2004). The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 1992, which set the financial aid policy for the decade, expanded federal financial aid, but did so mostly via increased subsidized loans to low-income families rather than increasing Pell grants (Wei, et al., 2004). Those loans likely placed a financial burden on low-income individuals who were important constituents of the tail-end of the mass expansion of higher education. These federal funding allocations show the neoliberal market orientation that constrained funding on higher education for the public common good.

This was a departure from the Keynesian notion of publicly-supported services that guaranteed a minimal social safety net and the human capital theory that advocated investment in

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higher education for the mass expansion of higher education as discussed in Chapter 2. To combat the reduced investment in higher education while navigating increased technological complexity, higher education institutions had to do more to serve the market-orientation of industry and society using fewer resources (Barzun, 1991; Daniel, 1996; Kerr, 1994).

Collaborations and partnerships, such as those that led to the creation of Western Governors University in the western region of the nation, offered a viable means to navigate the neoliberal economic policies of the nation. The dot-com bubble, discussed in the next section, was a result of the neoliberal deregulation agenda that directly impacted the context of the two universities analyzed later in this chapter.

Economic Context – Telecommunications & Dot-com Bubble

Virtual universities such as WGU and the USOU emerged in the context of the dot-com economic bubble of the 1990s and Internet telecommunications technologies (Daniel, 2004; Krenelka, 2009; Meyer, 2003). Virtual universities utilize the Internet for student services and learning. The Internet began in the United States during the 1960s as a defense, research, and educational platform (Leiner, et al., 1997). During the mid-1980s, the Internet evolved into a national network of networks that included commercial operations and subsequently spread across the globe (Berners-Lee, 2021; Leiner, et al., 1997). Chapter 2 explained the institutional characteristics of virtual universities that operated via the Internet. The following summarizes the growth of telecommunications technology used for distance learning that existed within the economic context of the dot-com bubble in the United States.

In 1988, at least 81 institutions across 39 states used telecommunications technologies to serve their students administratively at a distance (Johnstone, 1991). The percentage of American households that owned computers increased from 15% in 1990 to 35% in 1997 (U.S. Department

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of Labor, 1999). The number of higher education institutions offering distance education courses increased by about one third between 1994-95 and 1997-1998 (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2000). The 1999 National Survey of Information Technology in Higher Education found that 70% of institutions processed admissions via the Internet, 77% posted their catalogs online, 54% were using email, 61% had a strategic plan for information technology, and 47% offered at least one course entirely over the Internet (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2000). During the 2000-2001 academic year, 56% of higher education institutions offered distance education courses and another 12% planned to do so within three years (Kuenzi, et al., 2005). According to a Sloan Consortium and College Board report, more than three million individuals in the United States enrolled in at least one online course in 2005, which was approximately double the number since 2002 (Johnstone, 2006). These statistics illustrate the widespread growth and adoption of the Internet for distance education learning and administrative support. Higher education institutions were not alone in harnessing this technology.

Corporations, including those that specialized in educational technology, also harnessed the growing prevalence of computer and Internet use. New corporations that relied exclusively on the Internet to sell their products and services were known as dot-coms. Several factors created the conditions for what became known as the dot-com bubble of the 1990s. This economic context directly shaped the two universities analyzed in this chapter.

The precise origins of the dot-com bubble are disputed, but generally coalesce around the initial public offering of the web browser Netscape in August 1995 (Gomes, 2006), the Telecommunications Act of 1996 which deregulated that industry to promote competition (Federal Communications Commission, 2013), and the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 which

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reduced capital gains taxes (Political Calculations, 2010). The two Acts were outgrowths of the neoliberal deregulation discussed in the previous section. These combined events of the two Acts and the creation of Netscape stimulated investment in new Internet-based corporations, some of which offered educational products. The stock market rose exponentially during the late 1990s and early 2000s as investors relished in low interest rates that were attractive to venture capitalists, investment banks that profited from initial public offerings, and chances to gain wealth from newly-formed corporations known as dot-coms that conducted most of their business over the Internet (Gomes, 2006). These favorable economic conditions encouraged new virtual educational products during the late 1990s.

The dot-com economic bubble reached its zenith in March 2000 when the NASDAQ peaked at above 5,100 (Gomes, 2006). From then until 2003 when it officially burst, numerous start-ups failed due to their lack of profitability (Gomes, 2006; Political Calculations, 2010). Nevertheless, about half of the dot-coms established since 1996 still existed four years after the NASDAQ's peak in March 2000 (Berlin, 2008; Goldfarb, 2014). This statistic illustrates the viability of some new ventures established in this risky economic context.

Numerous factors contributed to the dot-com bust that were directly related to education. Overestimates of the market's capacity for new digital start-ups, increased competition for market share from new corporations entering the educational product market, traditional universities embracing online learning, and misunderstandings about the cost of delivery were leading factors (Meyer, 2003; Krenelka, 2005). The federal government contributed to the overestimates of the higher educational market's capacity and misunderstandings because it had projected an additional cost of \$300 billion per year to meet the upskilling and reskilling needs of one in seven working adults, which amounted to approximately 128 million full-time equivalent

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students worldwide (Meyer, 2003). The federal government was not about to commit to that expenditure. Rather, the researched projections encouraged the growth of new Internet-based educational products, dot-coms, and virtual universities.

The millions of projected new nontraditional American students that would utilize new virtual educational programs and services fell short of the estimates for several reasons. The projections did not materialize due to factors such as the lack of credentials needed for the extensive service sector and marketing difficulties (Meyer, 2003). Many nontraditional learners, much to their dismay, conflated the convenience of online learning with easier learning than on a traditional campus. Furthermore, the competition between higher education institutions increased substantially when distance learning courses and programs doubled in numbers and enrollments rose between 1995-1998. Much, if not most, of this growth occurred in traditional campuses. Additionally, virtual educational products were expensive to create and deliver and it was difficult to recoup start-up costs without customers and learners willing to pay for these new services. Another obstacle was the mismatch between the technical capabilities of instructors, learners, and online programs that required technical skills (Meyer, 2003).

The context of the dot-com boom influenced the origins of Western Governors University and the United States Open University because these new virtual universities took advantage of the widespread adoption of the Internet throughout American society. Although neither utilized a for-profit model like the rest of the dot-coms, the institutions benefitted from some of the dot-com products that afforded virtual administrative and learning operations. The context was also important because higher education institutions, including the two in this chapter, were increasingly offering programs to serve the new Internet-based workforce needs and meet the millions of projected enrollments.

Social Context – Women & Racial Minorities

Higher education participation of marginalized social groups toward the end of the mass expansion of higher education was a significant factor in the national social context of the 1990s. Marginalized social groups experienced significant gains with removing de facto discriminatory barriers throughout the 1980s and 1990s, although there were also some setbacks along the way.

Between 1970 and 2000, women's higher education completion rates increased (DuBois & Dumenil, 2016). From 1970-2000, women's completion of bachelor's degrees increased by 15.5% from 41.5% to 57.0% and attainment of doctoral degrees rose by 30.7% from 13.3% to 44%. Women gained ground in professional employment due to improved higher education opportunities and national policies that reduced workplace discrimination based on gender, but also continued to experience lower pay than their male counterparts in certain sectors. Women in female-dominated service-oriented low-end labor market sectors received only about one-third to one-fifth of their counterparts in male-dominated labor sectors at the dawn of the 21st century (DuBois & Dumenil, 2016). These examples show the impact of civil rights equality initiatives discussed in Chapter 5, as well as persistent concerns about de facto gender-based inequalities.

Black and Hispanic Americans also benefitted from the expansion of mass higher education during these same decades. Racial minorities constituted approximately 20 percent of all higher education attendees in the United States by 1990 (Kerr, 1994). By 2000, black Americans constituted approximately 15% of degree-completers and Hispanic Americans achieved approximately 18% of all higher education degrees completed (DuBois & Dumenil, 2016). These statistics for marginalized social groups illustrate the increased access and efforts toward social equality. Marginalized social groups, along with baby boomers and veterans, were important targets of the mass expansion of higher education, which was one element of the

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conceptual framework for this study identified in Chapter 2. Whereas precise details were not available of women's or racial minorities' attendance at the two new virtual universities, it is likely that these socio-economic conditions, along with increased virtual learning opportunities, shaped the decisions of many to pursue higher education.

Higher Education Context – Distance Education Demonstration Program

During the mid-1990s, higher education enrollments increased because more women, racial minorities, and the baby boomers' children were going to college; these enrollments were expected to continue increasing for approximately the next 15 years (Johnstone, 2006). At the same time, personal computing and Internet use were on the rise. Higher education leaders were exploring how to embrace the potential of online learning to expand higher education access cost-effectively (Johnstone, 2006). The federal government helped them by creating the Distance Education Demonstration Program.

On October 7, 1998, the federal government amended the Higher Education Act of 1966 to include the new Distance Education Demonstration Program (DEDP) (Kuenzi, et al., 2005; Western Governors Association, 1998). At the time, the Department of Education defined distance education as "an educational process that is characterized by the separation in time or place, between instructor and student" (Western Governors Association, 1998, p. 4). Their definition included programs offered via correspondence, telecommunications, video cassette or audio disc, as well as computer or audio conferencing. This definition was broad because it did not separate correspondence from other forms of distance learning communication.

The DEPD had the following goals: expand access to higher education for individuals via distance education, test distance education programs, determine the quality and effectiveness of participating distance education programs, recommend distance education policy changes, and

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provide federal financial assistance to individuals in participating programs (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2000; Kuenzi, et al., 2005; Western Governors Association, 1998). The first year, the DEPD limited participation to 15 institutions or consortia and planned to increase to 35 participating institutions or consortia by the third year (Western Governors Association, 1998). Nine institutions participated in the first year and 23 did so by 2003 (Kuenzi, et al., 2005). The University of Maryland University College and Western Governors University (WGU), participated in the first year of the DEPD (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2000).

The federal Secretary of Education oversaw the DEPD and had authority to waive requirements regarding the minimum number of weeks of instruction for demonstration purposes (Kuenzi, et al., 2005; Western Governors Association, 1998). This waiver was important for competency-based learning which was not tied to seat-time. The Secretary of Education was required to annually evaluate each demonstration program, review policy barriers, and provide oversight responsibilities (Kuenzi, et al., 2005; Western Governors Association, 1998).

The DEPD was a significant development because the federal government expanded its role in distance education across the nation, even though per the Constitution's 10th Amendment education was a state responsibility. It was also important because the DEPD, bolstered by pressure from congressional leaders and lobbyists, resulted in a major financial aid policy change from the 1992 amendment to Title IV of the Higher Education Act that excluded financial aid eligibility based on what were collectively called the 50% rules (Krenelka, 2009; Wood, 2001).

The 1992 Title IV legislation set financial aid eligibility for institutions and individuals participating in distance education. Institutions were eligible if less than 50% of their courses were offered via correspondence or a combination of correspondence and telecommunications and if less than 50% of their students were enrolled in those distance-delivery courses (Kuenzi, et

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al., 2005). Individuals taking correspondence courses were only eligible if they were enrolled in a program leading to a degree, but not a certificate. However, the criteria set an exception for telecommunications delivery. An individual was eligible for federal financial aid when participating in telecommunications courses if they were enrolled in a program leading to a certificate or degree of at least one year in duration (Kuenzi, et al., 2005). The distinction between correspondence and telecommunications might seem arbitrary, but at the time legislators included the distinction because workplace training programs were increasingly using telecommunications and were doing so reputedly (Kuenzi, et al., 2005). Legislators wanted to support those workplace training programs. The 1992 Title IV legislation also required 30-week academic calendars for correspondence courses to prevent fraudulent course-stretching (Krenelka, 2009; Wood, 2001). The 30-week academic calendar was problematic for competency-based learning, so the DEPD created an exception.

The DEPD required all participating institutions except WGU, which employed competency-based learning, to already be eligible for financial aid (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2000). The DEPD waived the 50% rules and the 30-week academic calendar rule (Wood, 2001). These exceptions were crucial for WGU because they lacked a campus, and their students could acquire their learning by any method and then demonstrate their competency. Students enrolled in DEPD institutions could receive federal financial aid, thus expanding access to many nontraditional learners in new virtual learning programs.

The DEPD showed the federal government's willingness to support quality distance learning programs. The federal Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported in 2004 that 14 schools serving approximately 225,000 students were negatively impacted by the 50% rules (Kuenzi, et al., 2005). Yet, 13 of those institutions were DEPD participants and therefore

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received waivers. The GAO expected the number of students enrolled in distance education and the number of institutions offering classes via a distance to keep climbing (Kuenzi, et al., 2005). When the program was set to expire in 2006, Congress moved quickly with extensive political support to again amend Title IV of the Higher Education Act that regulated financial aid eligibility.

That amendment authorized for the first time “an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, utilizes direct assessment of student learning, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others” (as cited in Lederman, 2012, p. 4). The 2006 legislation only authorized for financial aid eligibility entire competency-based programs that did not utilize seat or credit hours as their basis for granting degrees (CTE Policy Watch, 2013). Excluded were programs that mixed and matched seat-time or credit hour equivalency with those that took a purely competency-based direct assessment of learning to award credit. Another stipulation of the legislation required the appropriate accrediting agency to submit a letter of approval for the institution’s plan to directly assess learning using competency-based education (CTE Policy Watch, 2013). The 2006 change to Title IV was a major federal policy departure from seat-time or credit hour requirements, although institutions still had to justify how their assessment of student learning was equivalent to either credit hours or seat-time (CTE Policy Watch, 2013; Lederman, 2012). The equivalency was supposed to be based only on the student learning outcomes, not the actual credits hours of seat-time.

Even though this legislation was tailor-made for WGU thanks to high-level political support in Congress, WGU opted to instead use the competency for credit hour equivalency method it previously used under the DEPD (Lederman, 2012). In other words, WGU did not take

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a purely direct assessment competency-based approach when it applied for financial aid authorization. In the seven years after that, no higher education institutions utilized the groundbreaking path that WGU cleared with the 2006 legislation (Lederman, 2012). The lack of utilization of this pathway was further illustrated on March 19, 2013, when the federal Department of Education issued a "Dear Colleague Letter" reminding competency-based institutions of the opportunity available to help their students obtain federal financial aid (CTE Policy Watch, 2013). The lack of utilization of this pathway shows a reluctance at the time among American higher education institutions to pursue the untreaded waters of guaranteeing financial aid when using pure competency-based education without seat-time and credit-hour equivalents for assessing student learning outcomes.

National Context Summary

The national context was characterized by Reaganomics, Internet adoption, the dot-com bust, improved social equalities since the 1970s, and the federal government's support of distance learning. Reaganomics reduced budget expenditures on higher education and social services that impacted some of the constituents of the end of the mass expansion of higher education. Reaganomics also promoted an economic context that increased measurable performance outcomes and deregulation, which were part of a broader pattern of neoliberalism that redefined the public good away from Keynesian policies and instead emphasized individualism. The growth of the Internet and the deregulation of telecommunications created the conditions for the dot-com bubble which instigated the creation of virtual universities. Many higher education institutions incorporated the Internet into their administrative and learning operations. The federal government increased support for some universities to assess quality distance learning via the DEPD. Western Governors University and the United States Open

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University were created within this national context. The origins of WGU are discussed in the next section.

Western Governors University

Political leaders created WGU in 1997 to address regional economic needs. It was historically significant as the first national competency-based virtual university and the first university to obtain full regional accreditation from four agencies simultaneously. The Western Governors Association and Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications drove the vision and set collaborative precedents for this new virtual university. With extensive high-level political support, these organizations and the new university shaped the federal policy for distance education.

Western Governors Association

The Western Governors Association (WGA) brought together governors from the western states to collaborate on issues of shared policy importance. The Western Governors Conference and the Western Governors' Policy Office merged to create the WGA in 1984 headquartered in Denver, Colorado (Ogsbury, 2020). Although they formed a new organization, their collaboration dates back at least as far as 1891 to the creation of the Trans-Mississippi Congress with 24 states and territories west of the Mississippi River (Ogsbury, 2020). The Trans-Mississippi Congress discussed shared commercial interests including waterways, agriculture, transportation, international trade, business conglomerations, and mineral extraction when it met with approximately 1,000 attendees at a conference in Denver in 1891 (Trans-Mississippi Congress, 1891). After that, the western states continued to collaborate. For example, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education was established in 1951 to help innovatively solve higher education problems, the Western States Water Council was created in

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1965, and the Western Governors' Policy Office was created in 1977 (Ogsbury, 2020). This tradition of interstate collaboration proved useful to the creation of the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (WCET), which was an antecedent of WGU.

Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications

WCET influenced the creation of WGU and continued the activist policymaking approach of the WGA. The impetus for the creation of WCET sprang from

"a group of state regulators and accreditors [that met during the early 1980s] to decide what to do about a rash of branch campuses that seemed to be popping up like mushrooms around the nation. They feared that, without tight interstate controls, institutions would expand their operations from state to state. One state regulator rose to admonish the group that they were engaged in perfecting the Pony Express while telegraph wires were being strung along the trail: the use of telecommunications to deliver higher education would soon make branch campuses a thing of the past. He warned that unless states assumed a role in managing the interstate delivery of telecommunicated learning - then an almost entirely unregulated phenomenon, probably the Federal government, would do so." (Goldstein, 1995, p. v)

These accreditors and state policymakers in the western region recognized the need to regulate distance education programs that were crossing state lines. They equated state university branch campuses to antiquated institutions when technology could provide students access to programs and overcome barriers of place and time. The policymakers and accreditors were not inclined to step back and wait for the federal government to impose regulations, so they initiated their own frameworks to promote consistent

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telecommunications policies and interstate distance delivery of higher education programs. Project Accreditation and Licensure of Learning via Telecommunications (ALLTEL) created the first western regional shared framework for interstate licensure and accreditation for telecommunicated learning via a state-level reciprocity model (Goldstein, 1995). Project ALLTEL set the stage for the creation of WCET.

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) created WCET in 1989 initially to handle distance education issues such as sharing information and resources regarding telecommunications systems and how educational institutions could utilize those systems (Dively, 1990; Johnstone, 2009). Sally M. Johnstone was the founding executive director of WCET, which advanced the integration of technology in higher education (Lassner, 2005). Johnstone drew on her experience at the University of Maryland University College, an institution analyzed in Chapter 5, with securing state funding to build a studio, promoting education cable television broadcasts, and integrating computer and video-based learning activities into higher education institutions in the western region (Lassner, 2005).

WCET helped coordinate diverse state-level telecommunications planning regarding which technologies to use, governance, and cooperation across different types of organizations because entities such as libraries, higher education institutions, local governments, and K-12 education institutions operated independently and did not coordinate their policies or technologies (Dively, 1990; Dively & McGill, 1991). During the 1989 legislative sessions, nine of the 15 western states were preparing a coordinated telecommunications system and four had coordinated educational telecommunications systems in place (Johnstone, 1991). By 1995, only California, Colorado, Idaho, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington in the western states had policies to regulate electronically-delivered higher education programs that originated in other

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states (Western Interstate Cooperative for Higher Education, 1995). As educational institutions adopted telecommunications and computing technologies amidst growing financial constraints, WCET facilitated cost-effective regional coordination and cooperation (Dively & McGill, 1991).

WCET subsequently expanded to wider campus, state, federal, and international issues regarding the use of technology in higher education (Dively, 1990; Johnstone, 2009; Lassner, 2005). Their annual conferences were known for bringing together e-learning vendors, managers of programs, accreditors, faculty, and state policy leaders. WCET also supported faculty professional development in technological skills.

During the mid-1990s, WCET brokered collaborative agreements between various western states that offered certificates and degrees via distance learning (Lassner, 2005). For example, the first agreement was with the University of Arizona's Master's in Library Science that expanded access using telephone and video links to students seeking that degree in other states that did not offer it (Johnstone, 2009). The U.S. Department of Commerce helped fund that library science program (Johnstone, 2009). WCET brokered six degree and certificate programs by 1995 in the fields of environmental engineering, health, information technology, and space studies (Johnstone, 1995).

Meanwhile, the western states were sharing technology for educational purposes. For example, Washington State University and University of Idaho connected on Idaho's microwave system to share engineering and agricultural courses (Dively & McGill, 1991). Similarly, the University of Wyoming linked to Colorado State University's microwave connection in 1990 (Dively & McGill, 1991). Although WCET's role in this technology-sharing remains unclear, it is likely that WCET approved of this cooperation and facilitated it by publishing annual reports, such as those by Dively (1990) and Dively and McGill (1991) about the status of educational

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telecommunications systems in the west. These kinds of agreements laid the cooperative foundation across the western region that was beneficial for WGU.

WCET also played an instrumental role in authoring the Principles of Good Practice for distance learning for regional accreditation (Johnstone, 2009; Lassner, 2005). It identified that there were "several problems with relying on accreditation in its present form" (Western Interstate Cooperative for Higher Education, 1995, p. 40) due to accrediting agencies' regional inconsistency for distance learning evaluation and reliance on face-to-face instructional criteria that were not appropriate for electronically delivered learning. The U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education supported WCET's three-year project to "foster an interstate environment that encourages the electronic provision of quality higher education across state lines" (Western Interstate Cooperative for Higher Education, 1995, p. 35). Whereas the western states were eager to avoid federal imposition of regulations for distance education as mentioned earlier, they were willing to accept federal financial support to create such regulations. The federal government was also apparently willing to have the western states lead this initiative, which was reasonable given WCET's experience and expertise.

Initially drafted by WCET and then modified with input from eight regional accrediting agencies, the best practices addressed "concerns that regional accreditation standards [were] not relevant to the new distributed learning environments" (Western Interstate Cooperative for Higher Education, 2002, p. 3) for off-campus technology-mediated learning. The best practices guide addressed the following five quality assurance areas: institutional context and commitment, curriculum and instruction, faculty support, student support, and evaluation and assessment. Institutions and accrediting agencies used the evaluative criteria and guiding

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questions for distance learning quality assurance (Western Interstate Cooperative for Higher Education, 2002). By 2000, all eight regional accrediting agencies across the nation adopted the WCET's best practices categories (Kuenzi, et al., 2005). As noted later in this chapter, these principles and guidelines for distance education helped WGU secure accreditation with four regional agencies simultaneously.

WGU Origins

WGU originated in a context of pressure to expand higher education amidst fiscal constraints and demands to serve the changing technological and economic needs of society (Western Governors Association, 1996a). The Memorandum of Understanding prepared by the WGA noted that “the strength and well-being of our states and the nation depend increasingly on a strong higher education system that helps individuals adapt to our rapidly changing economy and society” (Western Governors Association, 1996a, p. 1). The instigators of WGU saw a new virtual collaborative university as an efficient way to address regional and national economic needs.

One of the earliest documented conversations about the idea of a virtual university for the western region of the United States happened between North Arizona University president Dr. Clara Lovett and Utah’s Governor Leavitt in early 1995 (Kinser, 1999; Johnstone, 2006). They determined that distance education was especially suitable because of the diverse geography and population across the WGA region (Kinser, 1999; Johnstone, 2006). The seeds of this idea sprouted a few months later.

Governor Leavitt pitched the idea to the WGA meeting held in Park City, Utah during the summer of 1995 (Kinser, 1999; Johnstone, 2006). Leavitt, serving as WGA chair, suggested a collaboration on distance higher education. The attending governors unanimously agreed on the

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concept that would breakdown traditional higher educational barriers regarding time, place, and method of learning. Colorado Governor Roy Romer, who was the prior chair of the Education Commission of the States, saw technology as a solution to the access barrier and competency-based education as the solution to the quality barrier to prevailing negative assumptions about distance education that stemmed, in part, from some fraudulent correspondence programs. Furthermore, the governors supported the concept of this new virtual university which would promote the treasured values of the American West such as self-reliance, individual effort, and independence (Kinser, 1999; Johnstone, 2006).

At a meeting during the fall of 1995, the WGA established the following six goals for the new institution: expand access, reduce and share costs, employ a competency-based approach, use technology for learning, establish quality performance standards, and set a model for traditional universities to address society's changing needs (Western Governors Association, 1996a). These goals aligned with national economic needs for a highly trained workforce in the dot-com era. The founders also saw this new collaborative regional university as an opportunity for higher education to create a technology hub for the region (Western Governors Association, 1996a). The WGA envisioned the following three primary roles for the new institution:

- Expand the marketplace for demonstrated competence by assessing and certifying competencies and learning acquired in whole or in part via advanced technology, in ways that are recognized and valued by both employers and institutions of higher education. The intent is to provide individuals with a new currency that makes their learning portable in the marketplaces of employment and academe.

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- Expand the marketplace for instructional materials, courseware, and programs using advanced technology that have already been devised by public and private sector providers, and to foster interstate and public-private cooperation in the development of new instructional materials that respond to unmet needs in the region.
- Identify and work with the governors to remove barriers to the free functioning of these markets, particularly barriers imposed by statutes, policies, and administrative rules and regulations at both the state and federal levels. (Western Governors Association, 1996a, p. 3)

The first and second roles were explicitly aligned with market needs and workforce employability skills. The degrees chosen and how students would go about earning the degrees, which are discussed in a later section of this chapter, all addressed regional economic needs. The third role was simultaneously political and economic as governors used their influence and lobbying efforts to change policies, in a neoliberal deregulatory way, that inhibited the growth of online competency-based education.

Competency-based Educational Methods

Competency-based education began with the end-goal of specific knowledge and skills that students need for a particular profession and then provided students ways to acquire those competencies, if needed, and demonstrate their proficiency (Johnstone, 2006). WGU was designed for students to either progress quickly if already competent, or access faculty support and learning resources on a weekly schedule over a six month term if not yet competent (Johnstone, 2006). WGU students could also take courses and pay tuition at other institutions and then demonstrate their competency via an approved assessment process to obtain WGU

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certificate or degree (Western Governors Association, 2002). Secure testing facilities were required for objective assessments such as multiple choice exams, whereas WGU used originality software for essays and projects (Johnstone, 2006). The student's transcript showed the mastered skills, not grades (Western Governors Association, 2002). The transcript competencies were equivalent to a B grade at a traditional university (Johnstone, 2006). Upon receiving accreditation, WGU President Robert W. Mendenhall acknowledged that students might have difficulties transferring their WGU credits to another institution because WGU's transcripts used competency credits rather than course credits (Carnevale, 2003). However, WGU officials were confident that securing regional accreditation from the four regional accrediting agencies would limit potential transfer problems (Carnevale, 2003).

Accreditation

WCET, the organization described in an earlier section that served as an antecedent for WGU, facilitated the creation of the Inter-Regional Accrediting Committee (IRAC) (Lassner, 2005). IRAC brought together four western regional accrediting bodies to create shared standards (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2000; Johnstone, 2006). It was established in 1997 with members from the Northwest, North Central, Western Senior, and Western Junior College associations initially to help WGU secure multiple accreditations based on the best practices for distance education authored by WCET discussed earlier in this chapter (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2000; Johnstone, 2006). IRAC approved WGU for eligibility in 1998 (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2000). On November 21, 2000, IRAC recommended WGU for Candidacy for Accreditation, which meant that WGU was on track and under review for full accreditation (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2000; Johnstone, 2006). Meanwhile, WGU sought Distance Education and Training Council (DETC)

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accreditation with a site visit on April 4-5, 2001, and then received full DETC accreditation on June 2, 2001 (Johnstone, 2006). In 2003, WGU became the first university fully-accredited simultaneously by four regional accrediting bodies (Johnstone, 2006). Accreditation also influenced the faculty conditions at WGU.

Faculty Mentors

WGU faculty were never intended to teach in the sense of developing and facilitating courses, but rather to mentor students (Johnstone, 2006). Initially, mentors were hired part-time, but WGU switched to hiring at least ten full-time faculty by 2002 to meet accreditation requirements (Western Governors Association, 2002). Mentor duties included guiding a student through their entire degree planning process, called the Academic Action Plan, by connecting the student with resources to acquire their competencies, helping students navigate university policies and procedures, and helping students understand their individual learning strengths and weaknesses (Johnstone, 2006; Western Governors Association, 2002). Other duties included guiding students on the final portfolio project, assessment development and revision, engaging in professional development, serving on university committees, and identifying learning resources aligned with WGU programs and mapping those learning resources to existing competencies (Western Governors Association, 2002).

Each student-mentor pairing occurred during the third week of the mandatory introductory four-week course that covered topics such as competency-based education, time management, distance learning, and learning preferences (Western Governors Association, 2002). Full-time faculty mentors tutored students during the introductory course. Once assigned to their academic mentor, the student and mentor were expected to communicate via email or phone every two weeks (Western Governors Association, 2002). These faculty working

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conditions facilitated competency-based learning for students in an institution with an open admissions policy.

Open Admissions

WGU was created with an open admissions policy for students who completed high school or the equivalent, were at least 16 years old, and willing to travel to a regional assessment center (Western Governors Association, 2002). The admissions process also required students to complete a skills assessment survey, an intake interview with an admissions counselor, an online pre-assessment, and submit any prior transcripts. This information helped WGU determine if the student was an appropriate fit for competency-based education and, if admitted, helped the mentor formulate an Academic Action Plan collaboratively with the student (Western Governors Association, 2002).

Degrees and Purposes of Higher Education

WGU offered the following five degrees by early 2000: Associate of Arts, Associate of Applied Science in Electronic Manufacturing Technology, Associate of Applied Science in Network Administration, Associate of Applied Science in Software Applications Analysis and Integration, and Master of Arts in Learning and Technology (Johnstone, 2006). At the same time, it offered three certificates in Electronic Manufacturing Technology, Network Administration, and Software Applications Analysis and Integration. It added the Bachelor of Science in Business later in 2000, the Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems in 2001, and numerous certificates related to the existing Bachelor of Science degrees in 2001 and 2002.

WGU added three new graduate degrees in Instructional Design, Technology Leadership, and Technology Proficiency in 2001 (Johnstone, 2006). With the exception of the Associate of Arts, WGU's degrees explicitly addressed workforce economic needs and therefore fit into the liberal,

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especially economic, purposes of higher education. WGU did not offer any bachelor's degrees that aligned with the humanist purposes of higher education, such as literature or philosophy.

External Funding and Policy Assistance

WGU benefitted from multiple financial sources beyond tuition and fees. The WGU National Advisory Board and the federal government helped WGU achieve early financial sustainability. The National Advisory Board contributions and the federal grants demonstrated private-sector and political support for this new virtual open university.

WGU National Advisory Board members, who consulted on industry trends and employability competencies, were expected to contribute at least \$250,000 each and some gave more than \$2 million in cash or in-kind donations (Johnstone, 2006; Western Governors Association, 2002). The National Advisory Board began with 11 members and expanded to 23 in 2002 (Johnstone, 2006). The expansion provided WGU with even more financial support.

The federal government gave WGU \$2 million per year between 2000-2003 to scale up operations (Western Governors Association, 2002). Political maneuvering underpinned this federal expenditure because Congress bypassed the traditional peer review process and instead used a special appropriations allocation, commonly known as pork barrel spending for special interests, on a Health and Human Services bill (Johnstone, 2006). The congressional high-level support illustrates the political leaders' belief in the need for innovation and willingness to take a risk on the first online national competency-based virtual university. The Department of Education also awarded \$10 million over five years beginning in September 2001 to build WGU's first online competency-based Teachers College, although this expenditure was not public until after WGU obtained accreditation in 2003 from the four IRAC agencies. In the fall of 2002, the Department of Education awarded WGU a Transition to Teaching grant of up to

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\$3.7 million in scholarships and support services for educational paraprofessionals and individuals seeking a second career in the Dallas and Las Vegas metropolitan areas to become fully-licensed. By 2003 when IRAC approved WGU's full accreditation, the federal government, foundations, and supporting corporations had provided \$26 million in cash or in-kind donations and committed to another \$9 million in the near future (Johnstone, 2006).

With help from Utah's Senator Bennett, the Department of Defense Appropriations bills in 2004 and 2005 awarded WGU \$2 million to offer educational programs to active duty and retired military personnel (Johnstone, 2006). The Department of Defense authorized military service personnel to utilize GI Bill benefits at WGU when it secured accreditation and then later cooperated in military tuition assistance in 2005 (Johnstone, 2006). These grants and scholarships helped individuals achieve their professional goals and secured WGU's financial sustainability while also contributing to workforce needs.

WGU Summary

Politicians created WGU with the explicit goal of utilizing technology for learning while simultaneously addressing economic needs in the western states. High-level political support, federal and private financial support, and collaborative traditions were crucial to WGU's formation, accreditation, and financial sustainability. WGU offered the nation's first virtual competency-based degree, despite being created to serve regional needs. It was also the first American university to obtain full regional accreditation from four agencies simultaneously. This accreditation influenced the national distance education quality standards.

WGU's educational characteristics included open admissions, partnerships with other institutions where students could take courses, full-time faculty members who helped students customize how they acquired and demonstrated their competencies via portfolio assessment, and

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competency exams. The institution's purposes of learning fell squarely within the liberal economic purposes of education designed to meet workforce needs.

United States Open University

The USOU existed briefly from 1998 to 2002. Leaders of the UKOU created the USOU as a sister institution because they sought to break into the large American higher education market (Davies, 1999, USOU Official 3, 2004). The American higher educational system was recognized globally for being home to a majority of the world's best universities (Rosovsky, 1987). Internationally, there was widespread value placed on an American degree (Kerr, 1994), so a sister institution in the United States was desirable, especially since the market potential was enormous given the population size (Steinberg, 2004). Furthermore, the UKOU's high-quality courses were expensive to create, so the UKOU sought to spread the costs across multiple institutions via a sister institution arrangement (Steinberg, 2004).

The USOU was incorporated in the state of Delaware as a private nonprofit higher education institution in June 1998 (Krenelka, 2005, 2009). Delaware was selected because the state had a high-quality and bi-partisan reputation of constantly modernizing their corporate statutes and legal system, which proved helpful to organizations looking to incorporate expediently (Daniel, 2021; Ting, 2011). The USOU maintained administrative offices in Delaware and Colorado with split duties (Krenelka, 2005, 2009). Student support services were run out of the Wilmington, Delaware office under the direction of the vice chancellor of educational services. All other upper administrators operated from the Aurora, Colorado (referred to as the 'Denver') office (The Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education Training Council, 2001; Krenelka, 2005, 2009).

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Operations began and ended quickly. Sir John Daniel, who was the Vice-Chancellor of the UKOU and had previously served as Athabasca University's Vice President for Learning Services, started as the USOU chancellor in September 1999 (Krenelka, 2005, 2009). Daniel was the only liaison to the UKOU and president of USOU's Board of Governance. The USOU pilot semester commenced in February 2000 with 89 students in seven courses taught by nine associate faculty. Student services and the student help desk were created during the summer and fall of 2000 (Krenelka, 2005, 2009). Daniel resigned in June 2001 and the USOU closed in January 2002 due to financial unsustainability that stemmed from numerous factors that are elaborated later (Krenelka, 2005, 2009; Weinbren, 2015).

Mission

The USOU adopted the primary mission of its British sister institution in Milton Keynes, but the USOU extended the mission to be “open as to people, open as to time and place, open as to methods, open as to ideas, and open as to the world” (United States Open University Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000, p. 5). Being open to the world did not mean worldwide enrollment because the USOU required American residency (USOU Graduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000; USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000). Being open to the world likely referred to harnessing the Internet for learning since it could open the world to a learner sitting at their home computer.

The USOU shared the UKOU mission of providing high-quality distance education courses primarily to nontraditional students using the UKOU's Supported Open Learning™ system (Davies, 1999; Steinberg, 2004; USOU Official 1, 2004; USOU Official 2, 2004; USOU Official 3, 2004). The formal USOU concept statement articulated the mission as follows:

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“United States Open University provides a world-class educational choice to self-motivated students who want a personal, accessible and flexible learning experience. USOU’s proven Supported Open Learning method combines high-quality multi-media learning materials, personalized faculty support and peer interaction, with online technologies that enable students to study when and where their schedules permit.” (USOU Self-Study, 2002, as cited in Krenelka, 2009, p. 66)

The Supported Open Learning system was characterized by highly-structured logistics, learner support, and faculty-facilitated high-quality courses where learning was reinforced and assessed regularly over a semester (Krenelka, 2005, 2009; Steinberg, 2004). USOU Chancellor Richard Jarvis explained at the time that "the Supported Open Learning method and interaction between student and associate faculty truly sets the United States Open University apart from other U.S. institutions" (PR Newswire, 1999, para. 5). The USOU positioned itself as unique in the American higher education landscape by adapting that system for a virtual university. Accompanying the Supported Open Learning system of teaching and learning, both the UKOU and USOU provided strong student support services (Daniel, 2004; Steinberg, 2004; USOU Official 2, 2004). The USOU’s strong relationships with students were especially helpful when the USOU closed because the students knew they could rely on the USOU for help transitioning to their new institutions (USOU Official 2, 2004).

Admissions

The UKOU and the USOU diverged in their admissions policies. Whereas the UKOU had open undergraduate admissions, the USOU did not for degree-seeking learners. It welcomed “applications from any person who has the motivation and preparation to study successfully at

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the upper division baccalaureate level” (USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000, p. 8). The USOU stressed the upper division requirements because it was designed as a baccalaureate degree-completion institution and required applicants to bring at least 45 credits with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 from an accredited institution (USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000). Although this admission policy was not open to all learners, it was open to non-degree students who could take most courses without receiving credit (USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000).

Consistent with graduate programs in the United States, the USOU did not have open admissions. Although, it offered one notable exception. The Certificate in Management, part of the Certificate Access Program (CAP), consisted of four 400-level courses that could be completed in one year and was open with no educational entry requirements (USOU MBA 2000-2001; USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000). The CAP offered an avenue for those with relevant work experience and without an undergraduate degree. Although the certificate was technically at the undergraduate level, the courses transferred directly into the MBA at the graduate level. Therefore, the Certificate in Management was an open admission pathway into the MBA.

Educational Methods and Virtual Operations

From the beginning, the USOU had an online mandate for courses and student services because the American higher education landscape was headed in that technological direction, which differentiated it from the UKOU’s print-based correspondence methods (Steinberg, 2004). The two institutions shared the practice of providing students with course packages in the mail, but the USOU put course outlines, study guides, some tests, and asynchronous written discussions online (Steinberg, 2004). Certain tests required hard copies and physical proctoring,

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so the USOU asked students to suggest two convenient locations such as a library or community college and then arranged the proctored assessment (USOU Official 2, 2004). The two institutions approached student services differently. The USOU Senior Vice-Chancellor for Administration and Finance was surprised when she visited the UKOU and saw that the registrar's office was still using paper-based methods to service more than 100,000 students (Steinberg, 2004). The USOU conducted all student services online from its inception.

The USOU leaders thought the virtual university experience could nudge the UKOU in the same technological direction (Steinberg, 2004). However, the conditions were different in the two countries. The USOU leaders did not think the print-based correspondence model was sustainable and had to adapt to the online environment due to growing home computer use and Internet access. The USOU's first President of the Board of Governors, Sir John Daniel, articulated this rationale: "We are living in the information age and, as such, students have increasingly grown to expect higher education to be delivered to them via technology. As a result, non-traditional forms of higher education have become more and more important" (PR Newswire, 2001, p.1). However, the UKOU did not feel that way because of their proven success with the more traditional correspondence model supplemented with multimedia and the reality of less availability of Internet in the UK at the time (Steinberg, 2004). The cultural and technological differences came to a head when the USOU employed the use of Prometheus.

Prometheus was an open source educational software system that originated out of George Washington University (PR Newswire, 2001). USOU Chancellor Richard Jarvis explained that the USOU "selected Prometheus because its easy-to-use, scalable platform allows us to expand our market and enhance our students' experience while still preserving the hallmarks of an Open University education, such as mentoring, quality content and student

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interaction" (PR Newswire, 2001, p. 1). The platform worked well for the USOU because it could host course materials and assignments that, once developed, could be taught by any faculty member (PR Newswire, 2001).

The USOU had to convince UKOU officials that using Prometheus was worthy of adoption. Steinberg explained that the USOU "had to drag them kicking and screaming into using this platform just here in the U.S." (2004, p. 15). Although the UKOU reluctantly agreed to the USOU's new technology adoption, the UKOU was not interested in using something similar in Britain at that time.

Even with the online mandate, some programs included residential requirements. The specific details remain unclear regarding how, when, or where the residences were completed. However, some of the experiences were completed online (Steinberg, 2004). For example, the MBA program held a two-day group exercise where students developed a project and shared it online. The students responded positively with appreciation for the instructor's innovative methods (Steinberg, 2004). The program brochure for the MBA (2002) described the residential experience as "an environment devoted to your studies where you can learn directly from faculty, network with fellow students and involve yourself in group activities that will considerably advance your knowledge in a relatively short amount of time" (p. 4). The residential school was intended to be intensive and similar to the residency requirements at the UKOU. The MBA program required four three-to-five day experiences before a learner could progress to the second stage of their graduate program. The brochure did not describe the specific learning experiences nor the location of the residential schools. Presumably, students would receive that information via the enrollment and advising process.

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The residency requirements varied by program. The Computing and Information Technology brochure (2002) for undergraduate and graduate programs did not mention a residential requirement. The USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001 (2000) only briefly mentioned that certain courses within the English, European Studies, Humanities, and Liberal Arts Bachelor of Arts programs required residential learning experiences. Students were directed to the USOU website for further details.

The USOU also offered “portfolio assessment of knowledge and skills demonstrating a comparable level to conventionally awarded credits” (USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000, p. 13). It remains unclear how this worked. The university directed students to petition the Vice Chancellor for Educational Services for portfolio-based prior learning assessment as well as receiving credit for College Level Examination Program exams, American Council on Education approved courses, or courses from overseas institutions (USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000). Presumably, the Vice Chancellor’s office handled these on a case by case basis.

Degrees and Purposes of Higher Education

The USOU offered undergraduate degrees in the broad categories of business, computing and information technology, and liberal arts (Jarvis, 2002; USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000). The initial pilot trialed one UKOU-developed business course with corporate students in May 1999 and repeated it with a new group of corporate students in November 1999 (Krenelka, 2005). The pilot focused on the liberal and workforce purposes of higher education. In February 2000, the institution conducted a broader pilot with 89 students in seven courses facilitated by nine associate faculty (Krenelka, 2005). Although the names of those courses remain unclear, at least two of the courses that began in February 2000 were produced in the UK, adapted to the American context, and aligned with the Bachelor of Science in Computing and

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Master of Science in Computing (PR Newswire, 1999). Other programs that aligned with workforce and practical purposes of higher education included the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences, Master of Business Administration, and Master of Information Systems (Krenelka, 2005; PR Newswire, 1999).

The USOU offered Bachelor of Arts programs in English, European Studies, International Studies, and Humanities (Krenelka, 2005; USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000). These four programs fall into the humanist purposes of learning. The program descriptions for the four humanistic degrees illustrate the USOU's demonstration of advancement of the humanistic purposes of learning while also tying those purposes to workplace skills. For example, the Humanities program explained that students would learn about "a whole range of things that will delight, amaze, and intrigue you...[students] become valuable to employers because of what they have learnt about language, communication and clear thinking" (USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000, p. 21). That description demonstrates how the USOU intertwined the love of learning with workforce-oriented skills. The undergraduate and graduate USOU programs show a roll-out of degrees and multiple purposes of higher education that was realistic for attracting a variety of enrollees in a new virtual university. Whereas the early pilots and the graduate programs focused exclusively on the liberal purposes of learning, the USOU sought to balance practical workforce needs with the humanist purposes of learning at the undergraduate level.

The course descriptions in the English, European Studies, and Humanities programs indicated a European focus, which shows that the USOU did not adapt those courses to the American context. The International Studies program was broader. Those students were required to take POLS3400 The United States and the New World Order that explored the rise of United

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States to superpower status during the 20th century, which might have included some adaptation to the American context given the topic. Students in the International Studies program could otherwise customize their courses by selecting from Economics, English, and Political Science courses; but many were European-centric based on the course descriptions.

This European focus and lack of adaption to the American context might lead one to conclude that it contributed to the institution's ultimate demise. It is possible that American students who took USOU courses designed and facilitated by UKOU faculty might have decided to switch to other institutions that were more focused on the American context. However, given the UKOU's success partnering with other American institutions during the 1970s as discussed in Chapter 5 combined with the lack of existing evidence with students' feedback on the USOU courses, it is doubtful that the European humanities focus was a factor in the USOU's closure.

USOU Partnerships

The USOU sought partnerships with several American higher education institutions with varying degrees of success. The individual partnerships with the University of Maryland Baltimore County, Indiana State University, and California State University were successful. The online Master's Degree in Information Sciences program with the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) produced the most shared enrollments (Krenelka, 2005). UMBC was well-suited for this partnership because it had been exploring ways to move programs online since the early 1990s (Krenelka, 2005). Although the UKOU offered an information systems degree, the curriculum did not match the technological landscape in the United States and required adaptations (Steinberg, 2004). Indiana State University (ISU) was the other leading partnership. The USOU and ISU created an online Bachelor of Science in Business Administration which created opportunities and challenges for the USOU. Whereas the business

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program partnership helped the USOU grow enrollments, it created some friction between the USOU and the UKOU because the British institution did not receive royalties from the American partnership courses that did not utilize UKOU-created courses (Krenelka, 2005; Steinberg, 2004). Another partnership known as the CALTeach program, which adapted the UKOU's part-time teacher preparation program, was successfully implemented at California State University campuses; it survived the USOU closure and kept running under another name (Krenelka, 2005). UKOU consultants went to the USOU to help prepare these partnerships for the Supported Open Learning system (Steinberg, 2004).

The USOU also created partnerships with consortia and private corporations. The institution participated in the League for Innovation in the Community College, which created articulation agreements across 750 higher education institutions and 100 leading corporations in 14 countries. The USOU also offered tuition discounts for employees of Lucent Technologies and members of the American Society of Engineering Education (Krenelka, 2005). The success of these partnerships remains unclear.

Several partnerships were considered and not pursued or were in development when the USOU closed and never came to fruition. During its first year in operation, the USOU considered a partnership with their major competitor, The University of Phoenix (Krenelka, 2005). It is not clear why this opportunity was not pursued. Florida State University (FSU) faculty perceived USOU courses as inferior to FSU-created courses, so that potential partnership never materialized (Krenelka, 2005). A partnership with WGU also never materialized, despite the fact that Sir John Daniel and Sally Johnstone who were on the USOU Board of Governors, had connections with both institutions (USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 20000). The USOU planned an online teacher education degree in collaboration with Maricopa Community

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College and Rio Salado Community College in Arizona (Krenelka, 2005; Steinberg, 2004). A significant military service personnel educational provider, Central Texas College, was working with the USOU on a baccalaureate completion program (Krenelka, 2005). The partnerships with Maricopa, Rio Salado, and Central Texas were not implemented.

Pursuing these partnerships indicated the USOU's serious intentions to establish itself within the American higher education market. These partnerships offered benefits including sharing costs, sharing enrollments, increasing brand recognition, and establishing the new institution's respectability across the American higher education landscape (Krenelka, 2005). Whereas a few partnerships proved helpful in the short term, they were insufficient to help the USOU avoid closure.

Accreditation, Enrollment, and Financial Reality

The DETC accredited the USOU on June 2, 2001 (The Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education Training Council, 2001). Since DETC accreditation was nationally recognized, some organizations reimbursed their employees for taking USOU courses (Steinberg, 2004). However, many organizations required regional accreditation for their employees' tuition reimbursements. Recognizing the need for regional accreditation for employer reimbursements and to begin exploring students' federal financial aid eligibility, the USOU achieved Candidacy for Accreditation status with the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges in February 1999 (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2000; Davies, 1999). Once full accreditation was achieved, USOU and UKOU leaders expected USOU enrollments to increase even with the federal government's 50% rule barring financial aid to students enrolled in distance-teaching institutions (Krenelka, 2005).

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By the time the USOU closed, the USOU board anticipated that the full accreditation would be forthcoming within a mere three weeks (Steinberg, 2004). Reflecting on the closure, Steinberg (2004) noted that the early USOU leaders misunderstood "how long and difficult the roads to accreditation and building of enrollments would be" (p. 13), meaning that they were unrealistic about the time it would take to accomplish both financial sustainability and accreditation. Table 6 illustrates the imbalance between operating costs and tuition received.

Table 6

USOU Expenses and Tuition Received

Year	Expenses	Tuition Received
1999	\$1.7 million	\$32,000
2000	\$4.6 million	\$75,303

Note. Adapted from "A Review of the Short Life of the U.S. Open University," by L. Krenelka, 2009, In K. A. Meyer (Ed.), *Lessons learned from virtual universities* (pp. 65–72), Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

These figures convey the imbalance and unsustainability of financial expenses versus income, which was particularly problematic considering the USOU was funded via a loan from the UKOU. The USOU was supposed to repay that loan. Part of the problem stemmed from the British counterparts who established the enrollment projections without having experience in American higher education (Krenelka, 2005, 2009).

Additional problems included institutional plans that focused on academic rather than business goals and an overreliance on student tuition for working capital which never materialized (Krenelka, 2005, 2009). Regarding the UKOU's insistence on focusing on academic

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goals, Bacsich (2009) noted that "on business planning, the OU is a cautious animal and the paradigm has not really changed since its founding" (para. 7), meaning the UKOU was unwilling to take risks that departed from their academic planning focus. The UKOU was apparently unwilling to agree with USOU officials' ideas about pursuing grants and other external sources of funding that could have helped the new virtual university achieve financial sustainability (Steinberg, 2004).

Shortly before the anticipated final regional accreditation site visit, the USOU board decided to close on January 30, 2002, and remained open only for that semester (Arnone, 2002; Krenelka, 2005, 2009). Full-time faculty at the UKOU who adapted and led courses for the USOU retained their jobs, while full-time administrators and part-time faculty in the United States were unemployed (Arnone, 2002). Many students in joint-degree programs such as the University of Maryland Baltimore County and Indiana State University transitioned fully to those institutions and the USOU assisted other students with teach-out and transfer to undergraduate institutions such as Thomas Edison State University (Arnone, 2002; Steinberg, 2004).

Other institutional partnerships were left in an unforeseen predicament, such as Northampton County Area Community College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (Arnone, 2002). Presumably, that partnership would have created a degree-completion option for students at that community college. One month before it closed, the USOU also established a nationwide partnership to enable students to seek a bachelor's degree after completing their associate degrees (Arnone, 2002). Accrediting agencies were also surprised by the decision to shut down operations. DETC's executive director Michael Lambert stated: "We had great hopes for USOU... This was a solid, classy organization. We're sorry to see it go" (as cited in Arnone,

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2002, para. 16). The USOU closure was an unwelcome surprise for some partnerships and accrediting agencies. Numerous factors contributed to the closure of the USOU.

Closure of the USOU – Primary Factors

Relying on one main funding source, dealing with competition, lacking regional accreditation, and insufficient brand identity all inhibited the success of the USOU and contributed to its closure. The USOU received all startup funding from the UKOU (Krenelka, 2005, 2009; USOU Official 3, 2004). Debts accumulated faster than enrollments, which left the USOU in a financial predicament (Arnone, 2002). The USOU received approximately \$25 million in the form of a loan over the short life of the institution from the UKOU, which in turn was funded by the British government (Daniel, 2004; Steinberg, 2004). This arrangement hampered the USOU's ability to solicit external funding for increased marketing to raise enrollments and compete with other virtual universities like the University of Phoenix (Daniel, 2004; USOU Official 2, 2004). The University of Phoenix spent enormous sums on nightly television commercials to raise national awareness among nontraditional students of the potential of online learning (Meyer, 2003). Whereas the USOU received the total loan of \$25 million over several years, it was impossible to build brand identity sufficiently to compete with the University of Phoenix's annual spending of approximately \$25 million on national television advertising (Daniel, 2004).

Furthermore, the American market was already competitive when the USOU established operations (Jarvis, 2002; Krenelka, 2005, 2009). Beyond the University of Phoenix, the USOU faced stiff competition from other virtual universities such as WGU and Jones International University. Brand identity was especially difficult to establish in this context (Jarvis, 2002; Weinbren, 2015). The lack of a national print media market, which was fragmented by location,

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complicated the USOU's efforts to recruit students despite competitive course pricing (Krenelka, 2005, 2009). The USOU charged \$14 per credit compared to the average public comprehensive university tuition of \$29 per credit and \$139 per credit at a private university (United States Open University Tuition, c. 1999). The USOU estimated total degree cost was \$1,675 compared to \$3,480 at a public university and \$16,680 at a private university (United States Open University Tuition, c. 1999).

Accreditation was another contributing factor to the USOU's closure. The USOU obtained DETC accreditation in 2001 which helped some students receive tuition reimbursement from their employers, but many employers still required regional accreditation. The USOU was only a few weeks away from obtaining regional accreditation when it closed.

Federal financial aid was another obstacle related to regional accreditation. Although the USOU expected forthcoming regional accreditation that could open the door for students' access to federal financial aid, it remains doubtful if the USOU would have qualified given the 50% rules that excluded distance learning programs from receiving federal financial aid. These obstacles likely explain the lack of anticipated enrollment growth necessary to achieve financial sustainability.

Regional accreditation should have made the USOU eligible to participate in the DEPD, discussed earlier in this chapter. DEPD participation would have waived the 50% rules and granted financial aid eligibility. The USOU was likely aware of the DEPD because the institutional catalogs notified students that even though "federal financial aid is not generally available to students for non-classroom based programs...Recently adopted federal legislation has established pilot projects, which may result in a change to the present law" (USOU Graduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000, p. 11; USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000, p. 10). Even if

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the USOU had participated in the DEPD immediately after obtaining full regional accreditation, it remains unclear as to whether that would have been too little too late given the financial unsteadiness of the institution.

A final primary factor of the USOU's closure stemmed from their British sister institution. The UKOU faced domestic economic pressures and became unwilling to allocate more resources to their American partner, even to help them get through one more semester after the long-anticipated regional accreditation (Krenelka, 2005, 2009). Compared to the USOU, the UKOU was "much more driven by domestic [British] economic and political decisions" (USOU Official 3, 2004, p. 4), meaning the UKOU was beholden to the British parliament for funding. The UKOU was negotiating with the fledgling UK e-University created in 2000, which diverted British attention toward their domestic context rather than supporting the financially-unstable American sister institution (Bacsich, 2006). When the UKOU denied additional funding, the USOU board felt they were left with no option but to close, although the USOU board discussed the potential of seeking other sources of funding such as foundation grants to no avail (Steinberg, 2004).

Closure of the USOU – Secondary Factors

The USOU lacked extensive non-accredited options, like its virtual university competitors such as the University of Phoenix, that might have provided enough financial resources until it secured regional accreditation (Bacsich, 2006). Although, the USOU tuition brochure (c.1999) confirmed that the institution offered, or at least intended to offer, the following four non-degree program options: training for business and industry, adult basic skills training, continuing professional education, and leisure, recreation, and enrichment. The USOU

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would likely have needed more than four non-degree program options to increase their tuition income and achieve financial sustainability.

Additionally, Bacsich (2006) argued that the UKOU did not provide some of their best talent to support the USOU. This argument would benefit from clarification about the type of talent because the two USOU catalogs list every UKOU faculty member that developed or adapted USOU courses or served as the instructor of record for USOU courses; their collective credentials were impressive and indicative of extensive talent (USOU Graduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000; USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000). Perhaps Bacsich was referring to high-level leadership, but there again the catalogs list the following UKOU officials that served on the USOU Board of Governance: Marc Eisenstadt, Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Chief Scientist, Knowledge Media Institute at the UKOU; Ann Floyd, UKOU Vice Chancellor's Representative for International and Academic Collaborations; Linda Jones, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Curriculum and Awards at the UKOU; Roland Kaye, Dean of the UKOU's Business School; and Elizabeth Nelson, UKOU Council Vice-Chair (USOU Graduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000; USOU Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2001, 2000). Although their individual credentials were not listed, their UKOU positions indicate the expertise and talent necessary to fulfill their roles and effectively guide the USOU as board members.

The presence of these UKOU officials on the USOU Board of Governance might have contributed to the closure. Steinberg (2004) suggested that the USOU needed a broader base of support from within the UKOU, meaning that the USOU officials felt let down by their British counterparts who did not increase funding and thereafter quickly agreed with closing the USOU. When the USOU Board of Governance contemplated closing the institution, the British members delineated their support for the closure whereas several of their American counterparts sought

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funding alternatives in talks with unnamed foundations, a publishing company, and an international consortium to try to secure financial resources that would help the USOU sustain operations until it achieved full accreditation (Daniel, 2004; Steinberg, 2004; USOU Official 3, 2004). It is reasonable to surmise that the board members from the UKOU simply towed the line since they were beholden to the UKOU for their livelihood.

Other secondary factors regarding partnerships and perceptions could have influenced the closure. Potential partnerships with WGU, the University of Phoenix, and FSU were declined. The USOU created successful partnerships with CALTEACH, UMBC, and ISU, but were insufficient financially at least in the short term. Several other partnerships were still in the planning stages when the USOU closed and were therefore unable to contribute to the institution's financial stability.

It is also possible that Americans viewed the USOU as a foreign institution and therefore not on par with American higher education institutions. USOU Chancellor Richard Jarvis argued that the failure was due to "the queen and the cricket problem - that some [UK]OU courses could not easily be adapted because they had a distinctly European slant on things" (Jarvis, 2000, as cited in Weinbren, 2005, p. 177). However, the USOU utilized some courses that mitigated this potential problem of European-heavy content. Although the terms of arrangement were unclear, the USOU offered some courses from Athabasca University that were already adapted to the North American context (Pulker & Papi, 2021). Whereas it is possible that some American learners did not care for the European-focused content, it is unlikely to have factored in the low enrollments given that the UKOU's prior successful pilots, detailed in Chapter 5, efforts to adapt courses to the American context for certain disciplines, and the lack of other scholars sharing that sentiment.

USOU Summary

The USOU existed for only a few years. Their sister institution, the UKOU, sought to expand into the American higher education market by uniquely offering the Supported Open Learning system. Unlike the open-admission UKOU, the USOU did not have open admissions because it was a degree completion institution. It was created as a virtual university that relied on the Internet for student services and most learning experiences. Although, like their British sister institution, the USOU utilized some printed course packages and required residential learning experiences for certain courses. The USOU offered students prior learning assessment, which exhibits an important element of openness. The USOU relied on part-time faculty to guide students through the degree options that included both humanist and liberal purposes of learning.

The USOU obtained DETC accreditation and was on the verge of securing regional accreditation that would have enabled USOU students to receive more employer tuition benefits and potentially qualify for federal financial aid via the DEPD. If that had happened, enrollment may have increased and provided a viable path to institutional financial stability. Without participating in the federal DEPD and without external foundation or consortium funding, it was financially constrained by the sole funding source of a loan from the UKOU. Left with no alternatives, the USOU was merely a transitory participant in the American higher education landscape.

Comparisons – Contexts and Educational Characteristics

WGU and the USOU emerged in the context of the dot-com bust that shaped the national economic conditions. These two virtual universities embraced the widespread growth of the Internet and responded to the national neoliberal economic context of reduced resources for higher education and increased demands for graduates with specific employability skills. The

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degrees they offered, and their purposes of learning illustrate the importance of the economic context on the origins of both universities. Both institutions emphasized the liberal, especially economic, purposes of learning. WGU exclusively focused on workplace needs whereas the USOU also intertwined humanist purposes of learning that aligned with desirable employability skills.

Political conditions shaped the origins of WGU and the closure of the USOU. Both institutions were confronted with the policy context of the 50% rules for financial aid eligibility. The political context was elemental to the origins and successful regional accreditation of WGU because of the high-level political and financial support from policymakers, but not the USOU. WGU participated in the DEPD, which authorized financial aid eligibility, whereas the USOU did not. It remains unclear if the USOU sought the support of any American policymakers and why the USOU did not participate in the DEPD. The British political context had a direct impact on the closure of the USOU because of the financial loan situation.

The social context was the same for both universities as they were established toward the end of the mass expansion of higher education. They catered to nontraditional learners amidst national conditions of increased higher education participation of marginalized social groups combined with reduced de jure but persistent de facto discrimination during the 1990s. The 1980s Reaganomics policies cut higher education and social welfare spending with consequences for the marginalized social groups of nontraditional students of the 1990s. WGU and the USOU served these students nationwide, although WGU was designed for the western region of the United States. WGU benefitted from the external antecedents of the WGA and WCET whereas the UKOU was the institutional antecedent for the USOU.

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WGU and USOU shared some educational characteristics and diverged on others. Table 7 compares the educational characteristics for both universities.

Table 7

Educational Characteristics: WGU and USOU

Characteristic	WGU	USOU
Learning Centers	No, but required testing at designated centers	Planned, but not executed. Used public facilities for proctored tests
Open Admission	Yes	No
Prior Learning Assessment	Yes, via competency exam	Yes
Correspondence Courses	No	Incorporated into the Supported Open Learning system adapted to the virtual environment in the USA
Used UKOU Courses	No	Yes
Faculty	Initially part-time, later added full-time	American faculty were part-time
Individualized Learning Contracts	Yes	No
Educational television	No	Yes, but used recordings from UKOU
In-person courses	No	Residency component for certain courses

Both universities began with part-time faculty. WGU implemented full-time faculty positions in response to regional accreditation requirements and the USOU planned to do the same. Both institutions offered prior learning assessment. WGU did so via competency testing whereas the USOU offered portfolio assessment and testing from other providers. Both universities proctored some tests at designated locations and the USOU planned to establish regional learning centers

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like its UKOU counterpart. WGU required students to create personalized learning contracts whereas the USOU did not offer customized learning pathways. The USOU utilized UKOU-produced educational television recordings, UKOU adapted courses, the UKOU's Supported Open Learning system adapted to the virtual environment, and required residency components for certain courses or programs, but WGU did not employ these methods given its competency-based approach to learning. WGU had an open admissions policy whereas the USOU did not because it was created as a degree-completion university and required degree-seeking enrollees to enter with their associate degree or equivalent.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the origins of two virtual universities established in the United States during the 1990s. It explained the national political, economic, and social context that influenced the creation of WGU and the USOU. These virtual universities served students nationwide and therefore the regional contexts were less relevant to the origins than the national factors. The neoliberal context emanating from Reaganomics required higher education institutions to increase tuition amidst federal spending constraints aligned with a market-orientation definition of the public good. The dot-com bubble spurred the growth of new educational ventures that employed the Internet. Both institutions were virtual universities established in this context.

The federal financial aid policies allowed certain distance teaching universities to participate in an experimental program that waived the 50% rules, thereby increasing access for some nontraditional students during the tail-end of the mass expansion of higher education. WGU benefitted from these financial aid changes and high-level political support, whereas the USOU suffered without similar support and financial aid eligibility. WGU and the USOU

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diverged in their educational methods because WGU employed a competency-based approach where the USOU relied on the UKOU's Open Supported Learning methods. WGU thrived and the USOU closed.

The next chapter compares all eight institutions regarding their contexts, purposes of learning, antecedents, and open educational characteristics. It examines change overtime from the 1970s to the 1990s. It also offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter 7: Comparisons & Conclusion

Introduction

This study filled a gap in the history of distance education by comparatively analyzing the origins, contexts, antecedents, purposes of learning, and open educational characteristics of eight nontraditional and innovative universities in Canada and the United States. Athabasca University (AU), Open Learning Institute of British Columbia (OLI of BC), State University of New York Empire State College (SUNY ESC), Regents External Degree (REX), Thomas Edison State College (TESC), and University of Maryland University College (UMUC) were established during the 1970s and Western Governors University (WGU) and the United States Open University (USOU) were created during the 1990s. All eight institutions may be classified as open universities because they were open to people, places, methods, and ideas even though only three have been noted in the existing literature as such. The regional contexts were more influential than the national contexts for five of the six universities established during the height of the mass expansion of higher education of the 1970s. UMUC was the exception of that decade given its relationship with the military. The national context was more consequential than the regional context for WGU and USOU which were created during the 1990s. The United Kingdom's Open University (UKOU) as well as scholarly contributions from Charles Wedemeyer, Otto Peters, Borje Holmberg, and Sir John Daniels were among the most significant influences on the educational practices of the eight open universities in this study. The institutions varied in their open educational characteristics. By the dawn of the 21st century, all eight offered entirely online programs that catered to nontraditional learners.

This chapter begins with a summary of the early historical influences on the mass expansion of higher education that contributed to the public common good. It then analyzes the

influences of the distance education pioneers and situates the eight institutions in this study within the generations of distance education. National and regional contexts are subsequently compared, followed by a comparison of each open university's open educational characteristics and purposes of learning. Further research suggestions are presented.

Early Historical Influences on the Mass Expansion of Higher Education

John Amos Comenius, T. H. Green, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Cardinal Newman were early historical influences on the mass expansion of higher education. Comenius advocated mass general education that facilitated learning for problem-solving at a time when formal education was limited to the elite and training the clergy (Jergus, 2017). He challenged societies to provide multiple types of education so everyone could access formal learning (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2020). Comenius' ideas influenced 19th- and 20th-century initiatives including lifelong learning, extension programs, and expanding mass higher education (Jergus, 2017). Green believed that education was a noncompetitive public good that facilitated individuals' contributions to society (Mace, 2017). Humboldt advocated public education that emphasized research and practical-based purposes of learning (Kerr, 2011). Newman offered an idealist commitment to the humanist purposes of learning (Kerr, 2011; Thelin, 2019). Collectively, these ideas manifested in the mass expansion of higher education in numerous countries, including Canada and the United States. In addition to expanding traditional campuses, regional governments in both countries created nontraditional distance teaching universities, or open universities, all for the public common good.

Impact of Distance Education Pioneers

Although none of the sources consulted for this study mentioned the specific influence of distance education pioneers on the institutional origins, their theoretical contributions manifested

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in several ways. Wedemeyer, Peters, Holmberg, and Daniels furthered the field of open, flexible, and distributed learning with a strong commitment to expanding access to nontraditional learners. Wedemeyer's Articulated Instructional Media program at the University of Wisconsin, scholarship about open learning systems as well as correspondence education, and attention to back door learners influenced the creation of the UKOU and the global proliferation of open universities (Diehl, 2011; Diehl & Cano, 2019; Moore, 1999; Wedemeyer, 1982). AU, OLI of BC, SUNY ESC, UMUC, and USOU all implemented some form of articulated media strategy. Holmberg's guided didactic conversations and Peters' industrial model of distance education (Diehl & Cano, 2019; Keegan, 1983) were prevalent in the same five institutions that incorporated correspondence courses and used a course teams approach. Learners at REX, TESC, and WGU might have taken correspondence courses, but doing so was not required given the competency-based method of those three institutions; nor did they exhibit the industrial model of distance education pioneered by Peters (1967) because they had no need for the course teams approach to creating learning materials. Although beyond the scope of this project, the seven surviving institutions embody the successful implementation of Daniel's (1996) iron triangle concept as they maintained quality and controlled costs while scaling up access.

Generations of Distance Education

The six open universities created during the 1970s aligned with the second generation of distance education, discussed in Chapter 2, characterized by expanding access to underserved social groups, broadcast media, and a team approach to designing learning materials (Anderson & Simpson, 2012). However, the learning theories that influenced the learning methods of the institutions do not entirely align with the second generation. Anderson and Simpson (2012) and Anderson and Dron (2011) argued that the second generation was characterized by cognitive-

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behaviourist approaches and the third generation of distance education signaled the paradigmatic shift to social constructivist learning with the advent of computer mediated communication. The social constructivist approach supplemented the cognitivist approach at AU, OLI of BC, SUNY ESC, and UMUC because they usually required learners to first cognitively and independently connect with their learning materials and then actively engage in constructing new knowledge and skills, usually via interaction with fellow learners, tutors, and faculty in various ways that are compared later in this chapter. REX and TESC, the two competency-based institutions created during the 1970s, flexibly allowed learners to acquire their skills and knowledge by any method, which may have included social constructivist approaches depending on the individuals' preferences. The USOU and WGU, which were created during the 1990s, fall into the third generation because they were created as virtual universities. But of the two virtual universities, only the USOU required a social constructivist approach.

Comparing National Contexts

Federal legal policies in both countries mandated provincial and state authority over education. Canada's British North America Act of 1867 placed education authority with the provinces, resulting in variations that served provincial needs based on regional cultural, economic, political, and social differences (Jones, 2014; Ellis, 1986). Similarly, the Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution established state authority over education. Although both federal governments provided some funding, the states and provinces were the primary drivers of the mass expansion of higher education in both countries.

Canada and the United States shared similar post-WWII national economic and social contexts whereby the federal governments invested simultaneously in social welfare programs and the mass expansion of higher education. Keynesian economics and human capital theory

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justified those investments for the public common good. Both countries leveraged their wealthy economies and used higher education in an attempt to ameliorate existing social and economic inequalities. The six universities established during the 1970s benefitted from that context. By the time the two virtual universities were created in the United States during the 1990s, the national context shifted away from human capital theory and Keynesian economics towards neoliberal economic policies that constrained federal spending in favor of privatization and market-based decisions.

Certain national events influenced or paralleled the origins of the eight open universities in this study. In Canada, the Just Society campaign, immigration policy, energy policy, rural and women's educational needs, and an expanded federal authority especially regarding social welfare programs were prominent contextual factors relevant to the creation of AU and OLI of BC. In the United States, the Great Society social welfare programs, civil rights movement, war in Vietnam, women's movement, and the Attica prison riots shaped the four universities established in the United States during the 1970s. Reaganomics, availability of the Internet, the Dotcom Bubble, and persistent de facto barriers to equality for socially marginalized groups influenced or paralleled the origins of the two open universities created in the United States during the 1990s. Whereas the American federal government's 1998 Distance Education Demonstration Program did not impact the origins of WGU and USOU, the initiative helped WGU's learners secure federal financial aid, and therefore the means for institutional survival, just a few years after the creation of the institution.

The Canadian higher education system experienced reduced financial stratification across institutions compared to the United States because the former's financial allocation system distributed resources roughly equally across different types of higher education institutions

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(Davies & Zarifa, 2012). This parity limited external forces of inequality in Canada whereas American funding privileged the economic purposes of higher education and perpetuated some elite institutional dominance in the higher education system (Davies & Zarifa, 2012). Although these stratifying differences were relevant at the broad national levels, they turned out not to be a factor in the eight institutions examined in this study because all except the USOU were established with public funding and managed to sustain operations, even if not retaining institutional autonomy like the OLI of BC which merged into Thompson Rivers University.

The national context of Canadianization and the global proliferation of open universities influenced the identities of the two Canadian institutions. Even though the UKOU directly influenced AU and OLI of BC, each institution tailored their approaches to their regional contexts and in doing so created uniquely Canadian open universities that contributed to the Canadianization of distance higher education. The founders of the OLI of BC intentionally incorporated “open” into the name. Both Canadian institutions used “open” in their national branding at various points. This kind of national identity interest was not discovered among the American institutions, with the exception of the USOU, which adapted its name and open brand from its British sister counterpart.

Accreditation was a significant national and regional factor for the six American institutions, but not the two Canadian institutions. That country does not have national or regional accreditation regulations for the higher education system. Although, some programs are subject to disciplinary accreditation. Obtaining regional accreditation was important for the American open universities because it was a requirement for students to access federal financial aid and often employer tuition benefits.

Comparing Regional Contexts

The provinces and states that created all the institutions except the USOU enjoyed wealthy economies and political support for the new open universities. The economies of Alberta and British Columbia were driven by strong resource extraction sectors whereas the economies of New York, New Jersey, and Maryland were more driven by manufacturing and service industries. The American western states relied on long-standing traditions of economic cooperation and pooled resources to initiate WGU.

The institutions benefited from activist political support to varying degrees. New York's governor Republican Nelson Rockefeller believed in the potential for SUNY ESC and REX and used his political power to help bring those institutions into existence. Social Credit provincial governments in Alberta and British Columbia embraced human capital theory and used it to justify the creation of AU and OLI of BC. AU survived a political party switch when the Progressive Conservative Party assumed power in 1971 and became a distance teaching university due to a pilot project initiated by that political party. The Progressive Conservative Party subsequently relocated the institution's headquarters from Edmonton to Athabasca to promote rural economic development and decentralization. WGU benefitted from activist political support within the Western Governors Association that secured federal monies for the WGU and ensured that the federal Distance Education Demonstration Program was tailored around the needs of the new virtual university. TESC benefitted from the political activism of New Jersey's Chancellor of Education who pitched the idea for an open university as a cost effective way to expand mass higher education. Political support did not impact the establishment of UMUC because it was created by an institutionally-driven decision and operated without funding from the state of Maryland until 1989. American federal or state

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political support was not a factor in the creation of the USOU because it began operations with a loan from the UKOU, which was funded by the British government.

Provincial and state higher education commissions steered the creation of some of the open universities in this study that were established during the 1970s. The Heald Report of 1960 in New York called for an external degree and educational broadcasting accompanied by high quality correspondence courses. It preceded the British 1963 Robins Report that stimulated support for the creation of the UKOU. Thus, the first documented idea for the two New York open universities existed three years prior to their British counterparts, even though SUNY ESC and REX were created shortly after the UKOU enrolled their first learners. The 1972 Worth Report in Alberta laid the groundwork for AU with attention to the values of a person-centered society. The 1976 Winegard Report, the 1976 Faris Report, and the Goard Report and Distance Education Planning Group of 1977 outlined the need for expanded adult, vocational, and distance learning options that translated into the OLI of BC's mission. The 1966 Citizens Commission in New Jersey called for expanded mass higher education, but it was not until 1971 that the Chancellor of Education proposed an open university for that state. Similar higher education commission reports were not identified for UMUC, WGU, and USOU.

The higher educational landscapes varied, although all identified the need for distance-learning options that expanded learning opportunities for nontraditional students. The OLI of BC and TESC were created in contexts that lacked a well-developed system of higher education. The two New York institutions were created in a context that was slow to develop public options because private institutions dominated in that state. Maryland and Alberta had well-developed systems of higher education. The regional higher educational landscapes were not relevant for WGU and the USOU because they enrolled learners nationwide even though WGU catered

primarily to students in the western states. Only the OLI of BC experienced serious hostility from its British Columbian traditional university counterparts.

Shared Characteristics of Open Universities

Open universities share numerous characteristics. Open and distance teaching universities were established with a democratizing social mission to expand higher education to individuals, mostly adult learners, who could not attend a traditional university for a variety of reasons (Rumble & Harry, 1982; Tait, 2018). Open universities share commonalities such as being “part-time, distance, supported and open access” (Weller, 2020, p. 2). All the institutions in this study contributed to the democratizing mission of expanding access to nontraditional students with part-time and distance learning options. Many open universities across the world had open admission policies based on the assumption that individuals had the right to try to accomplish their academic goals, but some countries prohibited such policies (Daniel, 2019; Daniel and Macintosh, 2003; Mugridge & Ram Reddy, 1997). Canada and the United States did not have policies that prevented open admission because institutions, not governments, decided their policies. Seven of the eight institutions in this study had open admission policies. Only the USOU did not because it was designed as a degree-completion institution that required students to enter with the equivalent credits of an associate degree.

Political support was instrumental to the establishment of open universities globally (Mugridge & Ram Reddy, 1997; Perry, 1997b; Weinbren, 2015). Political support and public funding were crucial for all the institutions in this study except the USOU which was funded by a loan from the British publicly-funded UKOU. Unlike the UKOU’s transition from electoral gimmick to legitimacy, none of the institutions in this study appeared to have struggled with that

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kind of political skepticism. Although, the OLI of BC confronted significant hostility from their traditional postsecondary education counterparts.

Whereas some open universities across the globe were created to serve their entire nation as the sole distance teaching university, others such as Andhra Pradesh Open University and Fernuniversität, both discussed in Chapter 2, were created for state, i.e., regional, needs. The same is true for the six institutions in this study established during the 1970s. Even though AU and OLI of BC have been acknowledged as open universities in the literature, SUNY ESC, REX, TESC, and UMUC have been previously overlooked as being classified as open universities. All six serve as examples that open universities need not be designed to serve national needs to be categorized as open universities. The two institutions created during the 1990s were a bit different. WGU was designed for regional needs and quickly vaulted to the national stage because it harnessed the Internet as a virtual university. It has also been overlooked as an open university in the existing literature until now. The USOU was created with the intention to enroll learners nationwide as a virtual university, but it also targeted certain locations with specific programs and partnerships in their attempt to establish brand identity in the already-saturated and competitive American higher education landscape of the 1990s.

Globally, the institutions branded as open might or might not have fully-open admission policies, but they all exhibit openness in other ways such as being flexible with the pace of study, time, place, and using distance learning strategies (Guri-Rosenblit, 2019; Mugridge, 1997). Only three institutions in this study branded themselves as open. The OLI of BC and the USOU included “open” in the institutional name. The OLI of BC and AU used “Canada’s Open University” in marketing materials. The lack of “open” branding combined with an assumption that an open university must be solely a distance teaching institution, and not for example an

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external degree, competency-based institution, dual-mode, or extended traditional institution, may have contributed to the lack of the five American institutions, i.e., SUNY ESC, REX, TESC, UMUC, and WGU, being classified as open universities.

Educational Characteristics of Canadian and American Open Universities

Following the UKOU's ethos and mission which serve as a definition, open universities are open to people, places, methods, and ideas (The Open University, 1969; Weinbren, 2015). The eight Canadian and American institutions in this study exhibited key qualities of openness. Comparisons of these elements of openness are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Open to People

The institutions in this study were open to people, especially nontraditional learners including those from underrepresented social groups who were important constituents of the mass expansion of higher education. However, two institutions did not have open admission policies from their origins. The University of Maryland's College of Special and Continuation Studies (CSCS), the institutional antecedent of UMUC, restricted admissions. Although, CSCS expressed being open to people via off-campus night and weekend locations, including at the Pentagon, to circumvent American segregation laws that prohibited African Americans from accessing education for six years until the monumental Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* required integration in 1954. In doing so, CSCS flexibly responded to the national social context of racial discrimination. The institution subsequently offered open admissions once it created UMUC in 1970. The USOU did not have open admissions because it was created as a degree-completion institution. The other six institutions had open admissions from their origins.

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Open to Places

All eight institutions were open to places, but in different ways depending on their educational methods and learners' geographic considerations. The six institutions established during the 1970s were created to serve either provincial or state needs and thus focused initially on learners within those regions. AU and OLI of BC required tutorials via telephone or at regional learning centers. SUNY ESC required learners to meet regularly with faculty mentors. REX and TESC did not include these meeting requirements and students could acquire their competencies in whatever location they selected. From their origins, the two virtual universities established during the 1990s enrolled learners nationwide. The USOU had residency experiences that occurred either online or in-person depending on the program. WGU, like REX and TESC, did not stipulate where learning should occur.

UMUC was especially open to places given their close relationship with the American military's deployed troops in remote locations such as Greenland and Vietnam during the Cold War. The faculty traveled to conduct in-person courses with deployed learners and supplemented with correspondence methods when needed. Being open as to place presented significant logistical obstacles for UMUC. For example, in Greenland, the university had to deal with climate and terrain difficulties delivering course materials. UMUC's experiences in Vietnam during the war also illustrate its openness as to place and methods. Teachers and students dealt with wearing uncomfortable protective gear, traveling through dangerous terrain, regular electrical outages sometimes holding class by flashlight or in the latrine, checking MIA and KIA lists, and helping students navigate course completion when deployed without notice. Furthermore, the university had to stealthily hide their courses in Cambodia and Laos when the Americans were conducting secret wars there. To do so, faculty flew in on CIA surveillance

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flights and the university masked those locations on paper as being in Thailand. UMUC thus dealt with being open to places in ways that the other seven institutions in this study did not.

Open to Methods

The eight institutions varied in their openness to methods. The USOU used the UKOU's Open Supported Learning method and course materials characterized by high-quality course packages and faculty tutorial support. The USOU offered prior learning assessments via individual portfolio and approved tests from other providers, but details of those methods were not located for this study. Like the UKOU and USOU, AU and the OLI of BC utilized a course-teams approach at their origins to create correspondence learning packages supplemented by audio-visual media and tutoring. The OLI of BC relied more on audio due to geographic and technological obstacles whereas AU incorporated more video. AU later offered individual portfolio prior learning assessment. The competency-approach of REX, TESC, and WGU meant that learners could acquire their skills and knowledge by any method. SUNY ESC offered a range of open learning methods because it provided institutional support for correspondence courses, educational broadcasting in coordination with public television, and prior learning assessment whereby students and their faculty mentors customized personal learning contracts. SUNY ESC students could also take competency tests, like REX, TESC, and WGU, but could also demonstrate their prior learning for credit via a portfolio assessment. This SUNY ESC option was not only limited to individuals because entire groups could qualify for credit via a performance demonstration.

Open to Ideas

Being open to ideas is characterized by social constructivist learning and active student participation in their own meaning-making. The institutions, such as AU, OLI of BC, UMUC,

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USOU, and sometimes SUNY ESC, that offered course packages and tutorials or residencies required a social constructivist approach via their methods. Students in REX, TESC, and WGU could acquire their learning and skills by any methods. Although learners in those programs could have utilized some form of social learning, it was not required for the competency method.

Comparing Purposes of Higher Education

Purposes of learning were split into two broad categories for this analysis. The liberal purposes highlight employability and workplace demands whereas the humanist purposes align with learning for the sake of learning. Similarities and differences emerged with the eight institutions in these aspects. The OLI of BC and WGU focused on the liberal purposes of learning whereas SUNY ESC emphasized the humanist goals. AU, REX, UMUC, TESC, and USOU combined humanist and liberal purposes of higher education. All the institutions were created in the broad context of a post-industrial knowledge-society that required credentials.

In some cases, specific regional and national contexts shaped the degree offerings and missions for each open university. For example, the Canadian western provinces historically valued applied science programs, like those required by the American land-grant institutions mentioned in Chapter 2, because practical programs aligned with the civilizing goals of prairie settlement during the late-19th and early 20th centuries (Harris, 1979). Including liberal purposes as was the case with AU, and focusing on employability programs as was the case with the OLI, shows a continuation of the western provincial trends to prepare learners with practical degrees that could translate into filling provincial economic needs. Whereas the Worth Report's attention to the values of post-industrial person-centered society may have influenced AU's inclusion of humanist purposes, the decision to offer humanist degrees was likely more influenced by the fact the institution was a regional comprehensive university. Regional economic and employability

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considerations in the western United States were the foremost influence on WGU's mission and degrees. The national context of social turmoil during the 1960s directly shaped SUNY ESC's focus on humanist purposes as the institution insisted on providing socially relevant programs. The USOU's adoption of some of the UKOU's programmatic offerings likely influenced the degree options and purposes of learning more than the American national context. It is unclear how the regional and national circumstances shaped the decisions for REX, UMUC, and TESC to offer degrees aligned with workforce needs or that promoted learning for the sake of learning. It is likely these open universities simply sought to provide a variety of programs to their learners.

Comparing Institutional Antecedents

SUNY ESC, UMUC, WGU, and USOU had antecedents. The SUNY of the Air and Independent Study Program methods influenced SUNY ESC. Whereas SUNY of the Air was discontinued, SUNY ESC learned lessons from it about the cost of educational broadcasting and the Independent Study Program became part of SUNY ESC. Maryland's CSCS, created in 1947 within the University of Maryland system, evolved into UMUC becoming an autonomous institution in 1970. The Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications served as an antecedent for WGU, although it was a regional rather than institutional predecessor. The UKOU was the antecedent for the USOU.

British Influences and Partnerships

British influences emerged as significant influences on the institutions in this study. AU and OLI of BC intentionally adapted the UKOU's educational methods and had plans to modify some UKOU courses. The OLI of BC did so from the beginning whereas AU embraced the UKOU's methods once it embarked on the distance learning pilot. The UKOU partnered with

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SUNY ESC and UMUC on pilot programs to test UKOU courses in the United States during the 1970s. The UMUC partnership created the Open University of Maryland, which offered classes globally at least through the 1990s. The UKOU also created their sister institution, the USOU. It is not clear if the global proliferation of open universities generally or the establishment of the UKOU specifically instigated the New Jersey Chancellor of Education to propose an open university for that state. The concept of an external degree stemming from the University of London's External Degree, rather than the UKOU, influenced the origins of REX, TESC, and WGU.

Research Opportunities

Further research could be conducted into the UKOU's initiatives in the United States from the early 1970s onwards, the USOU's educational partnerships, and potential influence of the distance education pioneers on North American open universities. Other institutions such as Université TÉLUQ, Minnesota Metropolitan State College, and University of Mid-America consortium could be classified as open universities; their analysis would enhance the comparisons identified in this study. Updated histories that employ historical methodology and lead researchers back to the institutional primary sources would be welcome contributions for REX and TESC. Tracing the impact of neoliberalism on open universities and comparing that impact to traditional universities may lead to new understandings about macro-level convergences and divergences that influence higher education generally and distance education specifically. The potential for an open access global digital archive of documents related to the history of open, distance, and flexible education would facilitate potential collaborations across institutional archives and be a treasure for future historians, students, practitioners, and policy makers interested in learning from the past endeavors in this field.

Conclusion

This study employed historical methodology to investigate and comparatively interpret the national and regional social, economic, and political contexts that influenced or paralleled the creation of eight open universities in Canada and the United States. Six were created during the 1970s at the height of the mass expansion of higher education whereas two were established toward the end of that expansion during the 1990s. All of them contributed to the public common good by expanding mass higher education in the broad context of post-industrial knowledge society needs and opening up learning to previously underserved nontraditional students. The regional contexts were more influential than the national context on the origins of most of the open universities created during the 1970s because they were established to meet provincial and state needs. The national context was more important than regional factors for the two virtual universities created during the 1990s influenced by the growth of the Internet and neoliberal economic policies that constricted public spending on higher education. This research also identified and compared the purposes of learning, institutional antecedents, and elements of openness for the institutions. They were all open to people, places, methods, and ideas in various ways. The UKOU influenced the origins or partnered with six universities in this research project. All but the USOU survived in one form or another. The OLI of BC was merged into Thompson Rivers University. This study fills gaps within the history of open, flexible, and distance education as well as the broader history of higher education. Policymakers and practitioners in the 21st century who seek to help learners upskill, reskill, and engage in lifelong learning in the context of the 4th Industrial Revolution via open, flexible, and distance education may draw on this study to identify opportunities within their respective contexts to bring the

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world closer to the desired goal of universal access to higher education for the public common good.

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Appendix A: Types of Primary Sources**Table 8***Types of Primary Sources by Institution*

Institution	Types of Primary Sources
Athabasca University	Institutional documents, press clippings, educational commission report
Open Learning Institute of British Columbia	Institutional reports
Regents External Degree	Speeches
SUNY Empire State College	Institutional documents, oral history interviews
Thomas Edison State College	Institutional documents
University of Maryland University College	Institutional documents, press clippings
United States Open University	Interviews, course catalogs, brochures
Western Governors University	Institutional documents and reports

Appendix B: Examples of Institutional Histories

Table 9

Institutional History Sources

Athabasca University	<p>The Athabasca Advocate. (1990, June 25). <i>Athabasca University 1970-1990: Supplement to The Athabasca Advocate</i>. 1–16.</p> <p>Byrne, T. C. (1989). <i>Athabasca University: The evolution of distance education</i>. University of Calgary Press.</p> <p>Hendy, E. (1995). <i>Athabasca University: 25 years 1970-1995</i>. Athabasca University.</p> <p>Shale, D. (1982). Athabasca University, Canada. In G. Rumble & K. Harry (Eds.), <i>The distance teaching universities</i> (pp. 32–53). Croom Helm Ltd.</p>
Open Learning Institute of British Columbia	<p>Abrioux, D. A. M. X. (2006). <i>Strategic issues in single- and dual-mode distance education: The organizational blending of two Canadian distance universities</i>. Dominique Abrioux.</p> <p>Ellis, J. F. (1997). The Open Learning Institute of British Columbia. In I. Mugridge & G. Ram Reddy (Eds.), <i>Founding the open universities: Essays in memory of G. Ram Reddy</i> (pp. 87–100). Sterling Publishers.</p> <p>Hornblow, P. (2005). <i>Who killed the OLA? A post-modern-day British Columbian whodunit</i>. Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (ODLAA) Conference, Adelaide, Australia. http://hdl.handle.net/11072/1475</p> <p>Moran, L. (1991). <i>Legitimation of distance education: A social history of the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia 1978-1988</i>. (Publication No. NN75430) [Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.</p>
Regents External Degree	<p>Nolan, D. J. (1977). Open assessment in higher education: The New York Regents External Degree. <i>International Review of Education</i>, 23(2), 231–248. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00598831</p>
Thomas Edison State College	<p>Collins, G. (1997). <i>Thomas Edison State College: A “new tradition” in higher education—The first twenty-five years, 1972-1997</i>. Thomas Edison State College.</p>

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- Western Governors University Johnstone, D. (2006). *The rise of Western Governors University*. <https://archive.wgu.edu/sites/default/public/flipbook/4447/index.html#the-rise-of-western-governors-university/page/1>
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