

Governing the World within the Universe: The Next Frontier of Universalization?

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Abstract

Are we experiencing a shift from globalization to universalization? What is apparent is that the combination of \$300+ billion in investments in outer space science and technology and development and the emergence of social platforms connecting billions of people worldwide is reshaping the power bases for privacy, security, and sustainability. The construct of globalization and our inability to advance universal policies through good governance and leadership such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) in this nation-state based model are being contested. New spaces of borderless net-states and boundless outer spaces are disrupting the very nature of how humanity governs itself on Earth, notwithstanding the governance of space and the world within it. There are new actors leading global, virtual and universal development without the skills, knowledge and experience. It is disrupting the very nature of how humanity is governed and led. No one knows the seriousness of this new frontier, but the risks could be defining for the sustainability and singularity of humanity. It is uncharted territory. What is for certain is the imperative for more scholarship, new curriculum and public dialogue in this area. We need to discern the shift(s) that are taking place and be intentional in leveraging our vast knowledge and experience in globalization, social justice and international studies to shape a future which envisions governance and leadership models that embrace cooperation 'for all, with all and by all' as a central tenet.

Keywords: outer space; virtual space; globalization; leadership; universalization; international; social justice; development; nation states; net states; military; cooperation; governance; UNSDGs; higher education.

1. INTRODUCTION

We are about to enter the next frontier; a frontier unlike any time in history in which we must envision our 'world – real and imagined - within an ever-expanding universe'. A new era of

‘space’ exploration and development is upon us, as now more than ever, our global society has become increasingly interconnected. We are moving closer and closer towards recognizing the possibility of settling and living – imaginary and real - outside the boundaries of our planet in virtual and outer spaces. It is not science fiction; it is real and ever-present. We are witnessing an exponential investment in virtual and outer space development, exploration, and security. Rapid advances in the sciences and technology, particularly in the energy, transportation, communications, satellite, and artificial intelligence sectors, combined with the unprecedented emergence of big data, mass communications and most recently cryptocurrencies, are reconfiguring access and sharing of information and new resources among people all over the world and in outer space. It is opening up vast opportunities in a single network of exchange [1] between global, virtual and outer spaces, otherwise referred to as ‘universal space.’ And it is doing so at a “dizzying pace” [2, p4] in a largely unregulated environment. This universal space is providing access to critical services, resources and unprecedented amounts of data for all countries and companies in this 21st century [3, p16].

As we expand into this new ‘universal’ frontier of borderless and boundless spaces, it is imperative to reflect on the period of globalization, our current state of affairs and the transition taking place on Earth and in space – virtual and real. We must be intentional in leveraging the lessons of our past and our capacities as we build our future in this new and exciting era. We must question this new frontier and in so doing redefine the environment in which we are existing, and do so in a way that offers solutions for sustainability on Earth and in space. Globalization is no longer serving the interests of all of us. And as such we have a leadership vacuum.

Globalization has brought forward unprecedented growth, development, and innovation in every sector reaching all of us in one way or another on Earth and now into space. But the implications of globalization are outweighing the benefits¹. We are living beyond our means and time is not our friend. The consequences of passion, conflict, and failure to lead and govern existing and emerging spaces with structures other than the nation-state model, has come with a

¹ Nature is in its worst shape in human history, UN report says. Available from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/un-global-biodiversity-report-1.5124089>

price; looming global and universal issues calling into question the future of our diversity and our destiny [4]. The travesty of globalization as experienced on Earth and also in outer - and virtual-spaces is to witness its investment in innovation for the sake of innovation, not sustainability, and not inclusivity [5] and our inability to partner across borders and sectors - real and imagined - to manage looming global issues. Pollution is now a 'universal' not global issue with the uncontrolled dispersion of space debris. Cyberwarfare and data breaches, like pollution, cross all domains. And nation-based space laws and models of governance or lack thereof do not provide an adequate framework for exploration and development [5, p15). Nor do they protect the interests of humanity or promote equity in the use of resources as a common benefit even though that was their intention [6, p92, 7]. It is intense and, like the pollution and cyber warfare on Earth, it is human-made and a result of lack of governance and leadership in the interests of growth and wealth and not social justice and culpability [5].

The imperative is for holistic and sustainable frameworks to be advanced in which all of humanity has a role. As a result, it should be understood that this is not a call for a *singular* culture or framework. Rather it is a call for a cohesive coming together of all cultures, backgrounds, languages, and knowledge into a governing framework that is embracing of our distinctiveness and diversity [1, p3). Further, the recognition that 'unity is variety' that for our methods to be sustainable and successful, our world within the universe needs to be governed 'not by balance but by dynamic change' as stated by Alexander von Humboldt [8]. What lingers is the growing uncertainty of the ownership of planet Earth, other celestial objects, and our collective destiny. Further, the question remains: Is it possible to govern the world within the universe? And if so, how? The first step to answer these questions is defining the construct of this emerging frontier in which humanity is now operating. If not globalization then what?

2. THE UNIVERSAL SPACE: ONE WORLD WITHIN THE UNIVERSE

In this universal space, the borders of Earth fall away. What was once a collection of nations becomes one entity, the planet Earth, one of the billions of celestial objects interfacing with virtual and outer spaces and transitioning into a universal construct; in ways never before experienced and for which we currently have little experience. Notwithstanding numerous

attempts, this universal construct – global, virtual and outer spaces - of borderless and boundary-less exchanges are ungoverned, unregulated and outside the domain of our traditional nation-state system and global governing bodies defined in the construct of globalization [9, p121]. What we witness is the lack of cooperation to secure public governance of outer space since the very beginning of exploration [6,10]. The same can be stated for virtual space and the global space. Humankind is already experiencing the impact. We have garbage on Earth, garbage in social media and garbage in space. It is intense and out of control. Where there is money to be made and power to be secured, cooperation generally, and in particular with the non-influencers, is seemingly not an option nor of interest. As long as it is ‘not in my back yard’ (NIMBY) or rather ‘not in my galaxy’ (NIMG), no one seems to really care and those who do care, struggle to influence. We are experiencing a crisis in universal governance.

In agreement with Likhotal [1, p4), “we have entered the disruptive world of risk societies when globalization and the digital technology are altering power structures and reshaping individuals, organizations, states, and societies.” No one knows the seriousness of this new universal frontier. There is growing trepidation over the growth of a select set of nation states and new private sector actors increasingly shaping its governance [2, 11]. There is increased concern about their lack of public accountability [2]. There is the concern that a ‘universal’ frontier will foster homogeneity rather than sustain the singularity of humanity as a vibrant, diverse community of (free) thinkers, cultures, linguistics, religions, and innovations. Further, there is increasing uncertainty of humankind living within a virtual, infinite and ever-changing universal frontier of possibilities and risks combined with a sense of growing disempowerment [1, p6]. This is uncharted territory of which “the vastness of the space domain, coupled with the accelerating pace of national activities in [outer] space for commercial, scientific, and military purposes, provides many opportunities for both cooperation and confrontation” [12, p91]. It just depends on the vision and the incentives, including fear. At this point, all are missing.

Governance of the universal space, to date, has largely been defined within the framework of globalization, a nation-state model with international reach through such tactics as trade, immigration, migration, tourism and conflict; global technology development and communications; the rise of multinational corporations and development agencies; and, since

1945, a United Nations (UN) [4]. Characteristics of globalization include the compression of time and space, greater systematic integration, increased interdependence and more diversity and heterogeneity [13]. Globalization has enabled the advent of an explosion of advanced technologies that are fueling innovation largely for the sake of innovation leading to unparalleled growth and opportunity among some communities and regions of the world [13] and often at the expense of others within nations and between nations – the NIMBY effect of them and us. This is coupled with world-wide unbridled garbage and pollution and looming global issues such as climate change, terrorism; the increasing wealth/poverty divide within most countries and among countries; and unregulated mass migration, too often at the expense of migrants and the receiving communities. Globalization has led to global awareness of the global space, its global culture, and diversity [14], and the limitations of governing in a nation-state model in the virtual and outer-spaces, notwithstanding the global space [5]. The realization is that “...the tragedy [of globalization]... are issues that can no longer be settled by a single state-nation, not even by a group of states (medium powers, large powers, and superpowers) which claim to be “global leaders” [15].

Although the term global as a global space has been traced back over 400 years, enlightenment of the common use of the term global and globalization emerged starting in the 1960s with Marshall McLuhan [14, Waters 1996 in 16] in which among many things, he coined the phrase ‘the global village’ [17]. What is notable is that his view of the global village seemingly a ‘soft welcoming term’ was, in fact, more about the introduction of internet technology and the incipient evolution of stress and conflict that would emerge over the lack of global cooperation. There is also the perspective that “globalization is nothing more than the last stage of universality,” referring to it as the historical account of the evolution of humanity’s development [15]. Whatever the case it has a storied history. Turner and Khondker (14, p19) perhaps best capture the story by remarking “in the global politico-ideological discourse, it [globalization] has become a highly controversial term, so much so that now there are both globophobics and globophiles. The former group embraces a doomsday scenario of the consequences of globalization, while the latter welcomes globalization with enthusiasm, seeing it as a universal panacea.” It is a matter of perspective and largely rests on what side of the

globalization story one resides. What is clear, though, is globalization is about ‘the Globe’ and not about the ‘world within the universe.’

Development of the universal space is offering significant value for humankind in all aspects of community life and more. It presents the potential for addressing major issues such as climate change, access to water, food security, advances in health and well-being, and energy. However, it has to be managed. As with opportunity, there also comes risk to humanity as the ecosystem for the development and control of Earth is shifting into this new and emerging network, increasingly creating global uncertainty and the potential for real crisis instability. It is here that the imperative for a universal vision and the mechanisms, systems and capacity for good governance and social justice must prevail. The stakes are high. In fact, it could be argued that this century is unlike any era and more significant to humankind than at any time in our history. The reason is that the risks affect all of us. Our full participation is central to effecting change if the interests of humanity’s sustainability prevail.

The risks are many, but in terms of governance two poignant, unintended developments have surfaced as a consequence of globalization. It could be argued that these developments place humanity at even greater risk than climate change because of their locus of control. The first being the domination and powerful monopoly of a few nation-states and private sector actors in the virtual and outer space domains with the resources, network, energy and influence to reshape all of the spaces comprising the universal domain and to do so with little or no public scrutiny [2,11]. It is about deep pockets, reach and the power to influence. It is not so much about a domain for ‘the sustainability of all’ resulting in the exclusion of the masses in public governance “once there is a common control of space” [5, p16].

The second, and most profound, is that outer space trumps all other forms of space and “security in space...is not a zero-sum game” [2, pvii]. The most important means of political space power is information and knowledge about the universal space. Today this is largely controlled by the private sector and “the willingness [of a select group of nation-states] to use outer space for the maintenance and extension of a country’s status as a world power” [7, p175].

We must pause to think collectively about our vision, leadership, and structures for the governance and sustainability of humanity, as our reach extends from Earth into these virtual and outer spaces and ultimately into the universe. Three examples offer important insights to the precariousness of this emerging universal order: virtual platforms recently coined as net states, digital currency otherwise referred to as cryptocurrency, and military operations in the form of space force and cyber warfare.

'Net-states' are borderless virtual platforms of social networking and data sharing [18,19]. Net states are led by a handful of now multi-billion dollar organizations and private sector leaders, largely based in the United States and China. It has a growing global membership of billions of followers and participants. There is even a reference to the public's increased faith in their ability to better serve the public as noted in a recent article on Amazon [20]. What is astounding is that we all entrust practically all of our personal information to these large digital media private sector giants along with many other data storing institutions. With that, they have access to formidable data profiling of civic activities [2] and concomitantly the beholders of likely one of the largest security risks to humankind. Further, the base of access is formidable. For instance, the network effect in the digital world took only 3 ½ years for social media to reach 50%, unlike the telephone which took 64 years to reach 40% penetration [2, p15]. This growth and reach place these organizations in positions of significant power.

As witnessed in the wake of recent and numerous data scandals, information, particularly civic information, is power to those in control. "Almost accidentally, these global tech giants have taken on civic roles, and with these roles, civic power. This includes the power to enable collective action, the power to communicate news, and the power to influence people's voice. [2]. The corollary is how security breaches, which occur far too frequently, are so disempowering to those directly impacted and underscore how very difficult, if not impossible, it is to protect our data. What is daunting is that current nation-state governance models do not align resulting in "the vast majority of these decisions [about the governance of net-states] not facing formal public scrutiny though they clearly and distinctly shape public discourse... Google executives 'exercise far more power over speech than does the [U.S.] Supreme Court" [2, p43].

An 'interesting' anomaly among the digital community is that many of the current day digital media tech giant's leaders and gamers were not envisioning themselves in the role of

policymakers. Quite the contrary, they were in it for the game, for the innovation. “What we are witness to by virtue of the magnitude, scope, and reach of virtual economies is a shift in the conception of the designers of virtual worlds from the deliverers of content to the governors of complex systems” [21, p794] and in so doing, the governors of its users, the general population. Moreover, and equally daunting is that these virtual platforms and the associated leadership know no boundaries and increasingly see themselves above the ‘law.’ The aspiration of these companies to withdraw from the public realm and to find spaces unfettered by legal restraint suggests a limited commitment to civic duty or at least to civic duty as it is currently framed [2]. Whereas today they are largely ‘seen’ as revolving around planet Earth, it is these platforms or net-states that can and will increasingly extend to space. As noted, space trumps all other spaces. It is only a matter of a few short years before “net states [and their leadership, unchecked could] ‘rule the world. Ignore them at your peril’” [19].

Another phenomenon that raises policy and governance questions is the creation of digital currency or rather cryptocurrency into the virtual market. Albeit, a rocky road, there is a growing interest and therefore increasing influence of the leadership of this commercial enterprise in the universal space. The original idea behind this innovation is to create a “world currency whose value is backed by the total productive capacity of the entire human community” [4, p109]. This to Jacobs [4] “liberates the creation of money and regulation of economic activities from the political control of national governments and central banks.” These currencies visibly present a disruptive ideology to the power and authority of nation-states. Take note, however, cryptocurrency or the likes, open the possibilities for ‘universal bartering and trade’ between Earth and space and possibly beyond a point that a cash society simply does not. Think of the implications. Cryptocurrency, unlike cash managers, makes it possible to build a universal economy extending into space. And it is no surprise that this too is an arena publicly ungoverned and largely unregulated.

Perhaps the most profound indicator of the role of a select group of nation-states looking to assert their ‘universal power’ is President Trump’s recent public announcement of his plans to build a ‘Space Force.’ As to be expected, alarm bells began to ring around the world. The potential need for the U.S. to counter aggression in space is real, as this comes with the

knowledge then that other nations, such as Russia and China, are similarly “lurking” in space. [12, p1]. Aganaba-Jeanty [7, p175] put it clearly, “the proliferation of space technology is [in this instance] a foe rather than a friend because it contributes to military and economic competition, and, above all, it empowers the exercise of the threat of force in, through and from outer space. The rivalry for leadership between the U.S. and the USSR at the dawn of the space age [and more recently China and other space-faring nations] is arguably not based on their desire to increase their knowledge of outer space” or to maximize the use of space for the betterment of humankind “but their common aim to gain power-political advantage” for themselves.

President Trump’s pronouncement, however, has taken us down a singular path, overshadowing a very real and much needed broader discussion on the imperative for the peaceful use of space and the need for shared space governance and shared military development and operations, including the protection of Earth and humankind from other unknown forces. By focusing on nation-driven military uses of space alone and the concept of a traditional military ‘force’ we lose sight of this larger picture. It belies the enormous complexity of this new and strategic domain [22, p1] as if we had the knowledge and experience to lead in this foreign, harsh largely unfamiliar territory [12, p2). Militaries infer hierarchy and conflict as a means to peace; as one power wins, another power loses. Allowing winners and losers in space is dangerous since whoever controls space effectively controls Earth. And what is often overlooked is that Earth from space is simply a celestial object in which a strike on Earth could have vast collateral damage far beyond the intended target and quite possibly the home of the attackers [12, pxi). The beauty of space and all of its possibilities to humanity would be lost in a battle for supremacy.

Moreover, the focus on the traditional concept of war, being fought by nations and a force of technologically advanced weaponry and people, eclipses a very important development in this new universal order. It is the digital world in the form of cyber warfare that is the likely enforcer to have a much greater strategic and targeted impact and minimal collateral damage to the aggressor than any other form of advanced weaponry or use of such means as nuclear power. Further, the digital world, particularly satellite technology in space is largely owned by the private sector as is the participation of the private sector in military technology and strategy

development and operations in space [10, p3, 12, p 89]. It is the private purse and control of the information sector that dominates.

These developments demonstrate the kind of power these seemingly intangible spaces now wield: “A new world [universal] order is emerging, in which a multitude of actors are competing with each other through hybrid wars, economic sanctions, virtual deterrence, cyber and information warfare. We have reached a turning point in the world where individual superpowers and authoritarian regimes pursue their own narrow interests without meaningful constraints, without regard for global peace, freedom, prosperity, and sustainability” [1, p4].

Virtual space and outer space emerged out of the construct of present-day globalization such that we now have multiple spaces with multiple models of development and with that multiple systems of governance. It is messy. Like the global space, virtual and outer spaces have offered sectors of the world tangible advancements in wealth, health and well-being and an explosion in new opportunities. They have also further exposed the vulnerabilities of our current construct of global governance; globalization fails to secure humanity’s sustainability. Moreover, the implications and risks of these virtual and outer spaces to the destiny of all of humanity are far-reaching, largely uncharted and of a scale and magnitude far beyond any frontier we have explored and developed until now.

Each of these emergent and disruptive spaces represents challenges to traditional approaches towards governance and our everyday interactions, and we must take their development seriously. Further, these traditional approaches have largely revolved around the importance and role of nation-states, which are seemingly becoming less able to address these emergent spaces. Nation-states and once-rigid borders are increasingly being challenged in this era of global, virtual, and celestial interaction, and we must begin to develop structures and frameworks to address them.

What further complicates this new universal space, is its nature. It is a borderless, boundary-less and infinite domain. It is the universe with new challenges facing humanity. The possibility for ownership of physical and intangible objects comes into question with, to date,

many proposals but no viable solutions [9]. Some countries are aiming to implement legislation legal frameworks for such things as minerals for asteroids, property on the moon, landing rights and for managing space debris [23]. There is, without question, a blurring of boundaries between the real and the virtual [21, p787) and according to Moore [2, p20] “the tech giants are looking to colonize uncharted spaces.” And for all the ideas being introduced to create structures, there is the recognition that there may be no end game as there is no end to the universe; at least as far as we know.

We have a governance vacuum, and surely we do not wish for universal supremacy to control our destiny by a few nation states and/or private sector leaders. Could it be that Humboldt’s insights of globalization “sound alarmingly prophetic” when, in 1801 “he painted a bleak future of humankind’s eventual expansion into [virtual and outer] space, when human’s would spread their lethal mix of vice, greed, violence, and ignorance across other planets...just as they were doing on Earth [8]. Some would contend that ‘borderless’ environments are not governable [5, p16]. Perhaps that is the constraint of globalization and its nation-state model of governance. Whatever the case, we are ill-prepared to govern in this changing world order under the construct of globalization as we have experienced it. As the former Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan stated in his annual address in 2000 in reference to the impact of human activities and the concern about our destiny in light of looming global issues “No one knows for sure how serious each of these dangers will be. But one thing they have in common: they do not respect state frontiers” [24].

Although Secretary-General Annan is speaking to the importance and value of the UN, it is essential to highlight that even it has limited to no power to effect a change of universal proportions. For example, the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) is symptomatic of the emergence of universalization within the global construct. What is notable is that the conversation on global issues spanning climate change to poverty, health, disability and gender equity largely did not change. What did was the UN’s approach to goal setting. It became inclusive. The most recent UN SDGs 2030 process espoused the imperative for all stakeholders, including the engagement of the private and broader public sector and minority groups worldwide to come together. Not

only was the process collaborative such that all 193 UN countries became signatories to the UN SDG agreement, but it also called for “a broad and *universal policy agenda* ... devoting ourselves collectively to the pursuit of global development and of ‘win-win’ *cooperation* which can bring huge gains to *all countries and all parts of the world.*” Although the implementation remains the challenge, the shift in orientation does not go without notice [25]. The emphasis and achievement was the process; it was all about the cooperation of all stakeholders for all of humanity.

The dilemma is that the UN, as a nation-based entity, is seemingly powerless to effecting real decision making as power does not reside within it. Power rests in a select few nations, global financial institutions, and private sector leaders; entities that elect to operate outside the influence of the UN. It has no incentives and creates no ‘fear.’ It is, however, the only body representing the interests of the entire world. There is no other similar body or bodies of stakeholders in place that are truly interested and committed to the sustainability of all of humanity and/or with the power to effect change in the interests of all of us. This is exacerbated by the continued amassing of uncontrolled global migration, pollution and climate change happening now in everyone’s back yard coupled with the inequity in access to evidence-based knowledge and education worldwide. The issue is that all of us are witness to our incapacity and powerlessness to address these looming issues, individually or collectively. And there is no institution able and enabled to lead the change necessary to mitigate these developments.

At some point, one has to move beyond the realization that governance today in the construct of globalization does not embrace the new realities of virtual and outer space any more than it advances innovation and solves problems for sustainability or global cooperation for the benefit of all on Earth. To date, too many institutions with the power to effect change continue to ignore that our world is in a crisis in terms of collective decision making on pressing issues facing humanity’s sustainability and destiny. This is leading to increased instability and mistrust among citizens worldwide of our current public governors and governance systems regarding our ability to secure our collective sustainability. The role of trust in the ‘institution’ is a necessary precondition for the functioning of a liberal state in general, and a liberal welfare state in

particular” [26]. Although understandable in light of current developments, it remains unfortunate.

This is further compromised by the recent and increased ‘trust’ in powerful dominating corporate institutions, such as Amazon, Google, Alibaba, Facebook and the likes by the public by entrusting unrestricted access to their personal information. It is problematic for such powerhouses to be trusted by citizens and to be entrusted, without public governance, with our personal information. Regardless of the message conveyed to the public, the motivation of the private sector is financial and domination and not civic duty [2, p33]. The instability and vulnerability of this situation are increasingly daunting as there is no vision or pathway, laws or structures in a site that will lead us through this growing enigma in the universal space. There is no pathway to safeguard the imperative for public governance and the accountability of all. This could be a travesty of epic proportions, and there is a need to transition to what is our real orientation and act accordingly.

The way we view space and Earth within space must evolve beyond the hallmarks of centuries of globalization as a “geological epoch that is shaped by the influence of human activities we are all experiencing on Earth,” [8, p298] in our global, virtual and outer spaces. As noted, this is witnessed by current day construct marred by climate change, rampant pollution, uncontrolled migration, and the real potential for global, space and cyber-warfare with far-reaching implications. Rather than foster trust and certainty, we are increasingly skeptical of our destiny. Do the perverse impacts of globalization have to define our future practice, in which an agenda of ‘us versus them; technological innovations for the sake of innovation; and a vastly disproportionate degree of wealth, knowledge and capacity of a few nations and private sector leaders’ prevail and not the sustainability of all.

“These problems cannot be solved within the existing [globalization] paradigms. They have to be addressed holistically, simultaneously and immediately, a new holistic economic, social and governance paradigm is needed. The new paradigm has to be human-centered and sustainable...” [27, p1]

The mission then becomes to ask the questions we should have asked the last time we charted a new frontier and before it is too late. Are we *all*, worldwide, in this together as we extend our reach into the universe – virtual and real? And, if so, how can we collectively advance humanity’s sustainability for our development through inclusion and cooperation in this universal space? Let it be our *next* frontier, not our *final* frontier.

With this in mind, growth in these spaces, particularly outer space, begs a reorientation of our world lens as they are our reality. We have transformed from a singular focus of humankind’s existence on planet Earth to an orientation of ‘*one world within the universe.*’ We are witness to a paradigm shift from globalization to (or back to) universalization [14] in the pursuit of humanity’s sustainability in this new construct. The question remains: what is universalization or, more importantly, what do we want it to be?

3. THE (RE)-EMERGENCE OF UNIVERSALIZATION

Universalization was introduced by Edmonds & Hewitt in 2014 [28] to offer a vision beyond globalization that recognizes that we now reside in a tech-savvy ‘world within the universe’ driven by connectivity [2, p19], offering infinite possibilities and also at some risk. And that to build our pathway sustainably we need to embrace our diversity and manage our innovations and do so cooperatively and in a way that: increases knowledge, builds inclusive infrastructure and policies, ensures full participation of all stakeholders, and increases access for all to engage in this universal construct [29]. The definition emerged from seeing the extension of our world within the universe and drawing on the experience of ‘universal design’ in the disability movement in which the outcome of interdisciplinary and inclusive cooperation led to access for people with disabilities that resulted in ‘all benefiting.’² It directly aligns with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “that for this first time [1948], articulated the rights and freedoms to which every human being is equally and inalienably entitled.”³ Further, it is the appreciation that it is no longer passion but compassion that drives innovation and decision making for sustainability. Universalization is:

² Is this the Century of Universalization? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wzv5ewGRvFY>

³ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2015) United Nations
https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf.

“an incipient concept describing the next phase of human development, marking the transition from trans-national to interplanetary relations and much more aggressive exploitation of opportunities that lie beyond the confines of Earth. As both a process and an end state, universalization implies an increasingly pervasive, abiding and singular human focus not only on global issues per se but on social, technological, economic and cultural challenges and opportunities extending into our solar system, our galaxy, and well beyond, where cooperation supersedes conflict negotiation. Its origins are associated with the incipient expansion of social, economic, and political relationships that have emerged in the wake of globalization and that increasingly define the planet, its place within the broader universe and the sustainability of humanity and our diversity.”

What distinguishes this definition of universalization from globalization and any other definition of universalization is the dissolution of borders and nation-states as we know it and its ability to embrace with the global space, new spaces such as virtual and outer space, and the boundless opportunities and challenges these new spaces bring to the table. Where it is in alignment with others who have referred to universalization is when the need for cooperation, mutual respect and equal participation of all communities is paramount [16]. Universalization has been described as an extension of globalization “through the spread of ideas, goods, inventions, experiments, etc. – universal, i.e., in the entire world... introducing universal order in the global scale [30]. In reverse, globalization has been described as the last phase of social and human development of the entire Globe otherwise referred to as universalization [15].

Universalization in this construct represents our world – virtual and real - one of the billions of celestial objects, functioning within an infinite, harsh, and uncertain environment of incalculable galaxies with boundless possibilities and formidable challenges. It affirms the presence and dominance of net states and outer-spaces as changing the narrative of citizens and that these spaces wield an enormous amount of power, potentially greater than what exists currently among our narrow and now antiquated nation-state model of globalization [19]. What universalization further offers over globalization as we are experiencing it, is that something else, a new framework and fresh start for governing in this phase of our development and the challenge to find and put in place inclusive governance frameworks. The potential extension of cryptocurrency into outer-space is just one example of a powerful way of moving capital among

all three spaces in this new borderless and boundless environment. It can be developed and can be governed, just not in a nation-state model. To navigate this arena, we need access to talent and their ideas from all disciplines and communities in all corners of the world and for the process to be governed in a universal construct.

Its significance is that it sets out a vision for sustainability that is inclusive of all spaces and our diversity. It offers a universal orientation that commands us to rethink and reconfigure the constructs, our laws, and agreements, of our local, national, regional, international, global, virtual and universal spaces to be synergistic in the interests of sustaining humanity. The aim is to be enabling of the possibilities and mitigate the risks through harnessing the diversity and participation of our talent. It values the singularity of human existence and the power of the diversity of talent from all over the world to secure our sustainability. It reinforces that compassion and cooperation be the tenets of innovation and universal governance in this new universal world order. It reminds us that this vast universal space has much to be uncertain about and as such introduces an element of 'fear.' It also reminds us that talent is mobile and ideas are borderless. To navigate this new space and to seek the solutions required in this complex and unforgiving space, and to do so peacefully, requires the engagement of all. These alone are powerful incentives to cooperate in the best interests of all of humanity. Hertzfeld et al. [5] views that luck may not be on our side when accidents occur in outer space as the primary reason why we have to take issues regarding space governance seriously. We need to take hold of our future and become experts in the field before any significant accident strikes. Accordingly, the thrust of universalization is on 'inventing the future' but for all of us and in a coordinated, strategic approach. Universalization as defined here is perhaps the panacea we are seeking.

4. NEXT STEPS

With a shift from globalization to universalization as our 21st Century paradigm, we need to move forward, talk about this, and global scholarship must inform the conversation. Key actors and institutions will have to draw upon all forms of local, regional, global, and universal models of governance and revamp the legislative framework to align with universalization.

What the definition of universalization offers is a starting point for having the conversation and creating awareness of this new universal order and its real and potential impact on all of us. What has yet to be achieved, however, is capacity building. How can new laws and institutions be developed and adopted by the broader community worldwide without the knowledge, discovery and the experience; for which we have very little? There are few institutions worldwide grappling with space governance notwithstanding universal governance [31]. If anything, universalization is disrupting the very construct of political sciences, law and international studies notwithstanding all other disciplines, as universalization, with its possibilities and risks, is experienced by all. It is a fundamental rethink of governance and leadership. This is our next step.

To evolve these disciplines, one needs a starting point for creating awareness and scholarship leading to an inclusive governance and leadership framework that is directed at humanity and its preservation. With one framework rather than a set of separate spaces siloed by terminology and out-of-date rules and regulations, there is a new, perhaps fresh, orientation towards our approach to governance and leadership. Like the universe, it is also a new frontier. What is apparent, however, is that all of us must change and change quickly. Metaphor drag or similarly ‘business-as-usual’ is not an option [27], even in academia.

Yet, what gives one pause is that past practice tends to be future practice without an intervention. If the goal is to govern and lead in this new construct of universalization, it is time for an intervention. The NIMG effect is not an option. But is it possible to change?

“The future will come for everyone, but not everyone will hold an equal place in it. History always punishes those who are late” [1, p6].

It is possible, with a clear vision as articulated in universalization. The reason is that humanity is about the possibilities and has the capacity for problem-solving. But, in this instance, we need to navigate our future in our collective interests and collectively with clarity and conviction to address universal issues. We must leverage the lessons of our past from all perspectives. We must bear witness to the state of affairs we are facing today in a universal construct – national,

regional, global, space and beyond - and draw on our best practices for social justice and good governance that align with universalization [27]. And we must do so while not leading us down a singular path of universal supremacy. The key is to create a sense of belonging in, and understanding of this universal construct among the global population. Evidently, this is not an easy task as has been the experience of globalization. For example, in the context of peoples' sense of belonging in the global space, Erez reported [26] that “globally speaking, only 7.8% of those surveyed in a recent research report that their sense of belonging is to “the world as a whole.”

Key policy groups are advocating space development through a cooperative and holistic approach. The UN Committee for the Peaceful Use of Outer Space (COPUOS) and organizations such as the Secure World Foundation and the International Astronautical Federation speak to these issues. The UN COPUOS has always brought to the fore the significance of international cooperation in the uses of outer space, with the primary objective of preserving space for peaceful purposes and avoiding conflict within and concerning outer space. This was achieved through the creation of a number of treaties, the first being the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 [10]. An international review commissioned by the 2014 Montreal Declaration led to the publication of, “Global Space Governance: An International Study,” [31] providing expert analysis of our changing interactions with space. The National Space Society (NSS) is building public engagement among youth around the world on universalization⁴. Although the collective mission of these activities is primarily to increase the profile of space governance, they are, in effect, fostering conversations and sharing knowledge around the governance of space and the world within it, in a universal construct. Notwithstanding these significant efforts, their reach is not mainstream and, as such, their voices are not sufficiently present in the public sphere. Therefore, much more visibility is required. “Resources alone will not be enough for successful space governance. We need to learn from our past and recognize that globally inclusive conversations are the most effective way to achieve success”⁵

⁴ International Space Development Conference 2019 spUN Debates (Space Policy and Universalization student debates) <https://isdc2019.nss.org/home/students/student-debate/>

⁵ Is this the Century of Universalization? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wzv5ewGRvFY>

The UN and its SDGs offer a vision and way forward. It has already begun laying the foundation for global cooperation and collective action through a universal policy agenda. It highlights the value of our universal space for building human bonds worldwide and in space. It advocates for development that embraces our diversity with an inclusive - all of us - agenda. It is also more in the public sphere. Let us leverage the UN by reexamining its governance structure to align with universalization. This will require determining the best approach for the inclusion of multiple actors and defining their formal role at the governance table. These include entities, in the public and private sectors, which have the ability, influence, and resources to effect change collectively. Let us extend the UN SDGs reach into the mainstream. For example, the introduction by Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings for measuring the success of universities based on their implementation of the UN SDGs that incentivize universities to be ranked according to their implementation of the UN SDGs⁶. These could represent important steps forward.

This does not, however, preclude the conceptualization of other and multiple models of governance that interface among the various spaces in universalization. On the contrary, what is needed is informed guidance, particularly as our activities in space continue to expand exponentially and we conceptualize settlements in space. Settlements on space platforms, the moon and potentially other celestial objects “suggests that the Earth is perhaps much better conceived not as a singular island but as a house on a street in the suburb of the Milky Way” [28]. As we move from nation/community building to world and galaxy building, we will need a framework that enables us to evolve in this new universal order and respond to both human-made and external forces not necessarily of our own making.

For progressive change to take place, this acknowledgment of universalization must occur among all sectors worldwide - the broader public and private sector leadership, the public and in the classroom of K-12 to higher education. They must be provided with both the knowledge and the tools for effecting change. We must move forward together with vision, scholarship, and leadership that is enabling. We must introduce new governance structures, laws and regulations,

⁶ THE developing ranking based on Sustainable Development Goals
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/developing-ranking-based-sustainable-development-goals>

which serve our needs in a borderless and boundless world within the universe and institutionalize universalization. A new governance system and/or network of systems must build trust through transparency, participation, and incentives that reinforce competition and decision making through cooperation with principles of diversity, inclusion, and equity. It must support creativity and innovation that advance and secures our sustainability and work to address our universal issues. Leadership for today must be about all of us.

Higher education as a leader in global capacity building and global networking through partnerships and its alumni has a significant and distinct role to play in this transformation to universalization and in the education, dialogue, scholarship and innovations that will emerge through the investment in talent and their ideas. It is in higher education that one has the opportunity to influence the next generation of citizens to ensure that they graduate as universal leaders: competent, confident, connected, cooperative and compassionate. It is essential that they be part of the leadership and knowledge brokers, in whatever discipline or profession they choose, carving out a pathway for universal sustainability. Higher education's obligation is one of knowledge, discovery, understanding, awareness, innovation, and problem-solving and dissemination of information worldwide. It is about creating for students on its campuses and virtual spaces a 'lived experience' of a model universal ecosystem that embraces diversity, good governance and innovation for sustainability. It is also about building the infrastructure for enabling global networks and friendships to be established through discipline and interdisciplinary cooperation. Central to this process is applying an inclusive and equity lens in all facets of its 'university' mission, policies and its partnerships with institutional and community stakeholders.

As noted, the concept of universalization is in its awareness-creation stage. Therefore, the onus lies on us in the academe to raise this awareness of people and start to build capacity through education, research, creative activity, and experiential learning. We need to bring Universalization and a universal policy agenda of cooperation and compassion into the academic mainstream including the creation of universal studies and courses, and incentivizing scholarship on universal laws, governance and social justice practice in our academic programs. It is also essential to advancing technological development with an 'innovations for sustainability'

imperative and which drastically limits the hazard of technology development for the sake of innovation only: and that is garbage on Earth and in space. Moreover, engaging the talent and knowledge base of citizens across all borders and languages is paramount in achieving this goal. We first have to begin visualizing the world within the universe as borderless and infinite. Problems must be solved collectively and cooperatively among all of us. The goal is to seek a sustainable advantage for harnessing the possibilities and mitigating the risks. And needless to say, we have to act now, and it is possible.

5. CONCLUSION

Unlike any period in our history, new approaches for governing ‘Earth within the universe’ have never been more important. No longer is global, virtual and outer space yours or mine to be divvied up, and no longer can it be left to the exclusive club of politicians, the military, engineers, scientists, astronauts, and investors from a few nations or big business. There must be room for all of us, worldwide to participate and benefit from the vast opportunities, regardless of the hemisphere, home country or space – real or virtual - in which we reside.

We have entered a new frontier whereby the universe and our world within it are now forever interconnected for sustaining humanity. We have shifted from globalization to universalization. And this definition of ‘universalization’ aims to provide a framework for understanding our current day emergent arena and to explain the transformation taking place in governing our new world or rather universal order. It serves to highlight the opportunities and risks associated with the exploration, development and commercial activities now extending into space, including the future governance of Earth. It offers clarity instead of confusion and calls for new leadership skills and tools to navigate this emerging frontier.

Universalizaaton, builds upon the notion of shared commonality and collective cooperation, entrusted upon us by the incorporation of virtual and outer space activities and its effects on our national governments, global institutions, and everyday lives [25]. It forces us all to rethink models of competition whereby cooperation not conflict negotiation is the dominating strategy. It does not, however, underestimate the challenges facing humanity to overcome past practice and

shift its orientation towards cooperation and innovation for the sustainability of all. This is no easy task but it is possibly the way forward for navigating our destiny.

Universalization defines the advent of innovation and problem-solving in this era as one in which cooperation supersedes conflict in the pursuit of the sustainability of humanity on Earth and in space – real and virtual. As such, universalization places emphasis on global collective shared interest to cater to global and universal problems, including looking for solutions and approaches to governance outside traditional hierarchical power structures that exist today. It serves as a disruptive force to eliminate hegemony and monopoly in global governance and politics, for example, and to replace it with a ‘world within the universe’ frontier in which all of us must have a way to be informed, to be included, to participate and to benefit. It challenges us all to relook, redesign and introduce new laws and regulations governing us in the context of a universal lens.

Even though the concept remains novel and at the awareness-creation stage in academia, universalization makes it possible to grasp the initial ideologies and visions of managing the future. It provides a critical look at current governance structures and development of the world within the universe and challenges solutions to be advanced cooperatively in all spaces for the benefit of all of us. Accordingly, it calls for higher education to advance new scholarship, dialogue and curriculum across the disciplines and professional programs that advances understanding, problems solving and experiential learning in universal [social justice] construct. It calls for higher education to prepare the next generation of leaders across the disciplines to not only be competent, confident and connected world-wide and in space but to be cooperative and compassionate in advancing policies, programs and innovation and good governance for sustainability, including peace and security, in our ‘world within the universe’. Let universalization be the next frontier of opportunities for all of us.

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