



UNIVERSALIZATION

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

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Universalization was introduced by Edmonds & Hewitt in 2014 to offer a vision beyond globalization that recognizes that we now reside in a tech-savvy ‘world within the universe’ driven by connectivity, 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.

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.’ It directly aligns with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) “that for this first time, articulated the rights and freedoms to which every human being is equally and inalienably entitled.” It aligns with the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) ‘universal policy agenda’ of cooperation for addressing all global issues, including from space. Further, it is the appreciation that it is no longer passion but compassion that drives innovation and decision making for sustainability. Universalization is:

“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.

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 nation-state model of globalization. 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.
- 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.
- aims to be enabling of the possibilities and mitigate the risks through harnessing the diversity and participation of our talent.
- values the singularity of human existence and the power of the diversity of talent from all over the world to secure our sustainability.
- reinforces that compassion and cooperation be the tenets of innovation and universal governance in this new universal world order.
- reminds us that this vast universal space has much to be uncertain about and as such introduces an element of fear and thus respect for this domain.
- 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. 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.