Within a few decades after its creation, the concept of the knowledge society is no longer an exclusive concept of the social sciences; it became common in politics, the media, and everyday language. It has gained new meanings and interpretations, even opposing definitions and uses, thus raising a number of questions. For example, what consequences does it bring for traditional forms of knowledge, such as academic knowledge?

Academic knowledge, recognized and appreciated for centuries, has gotten a new accent that may be well illustrated in a frequent phrase: "This is only academic knowledge." The attribute "only" expresses certain reluctance. It suggests that in addition to the "traditional" academic knowledge there is yet another knowledge—"modern" knowledge of higher value. It is promoted as "useful," "effective," and "productive," as opposed to "useless," "abstract," and "theoretical," that is, "only academic" knowledge. Academics around the world, especially those who work in the humanities and social sciences, are more and more frequently placed in a position to prove the "significance," "relevance," and "usefulness" of their allegedly suspicious "traditional" research. Did knowledge, for the sake of knowledge, become an endangered species in the knowledge society?

The knowledge society appreciates "useful knowledge," which is characterized by a high degree of *reliability*. Today, this kind of knowledge drives the economy. In the knowledge society, risk has been transferred to the managers, while reliability and certainty are expected from "knowledge workers." Useful knowledge, produced by them, is based on a specific research endeavor that is restricted to *certainties* only. This knowledge is being produced on campuses worldwide but also elsewhere: the production of "useful knowledge" is increasingly expanding into nonuniversity institutes and commercial enterprises.

Throughout their history, universities have been a space that permitted and encouraged another kind of research endeavor, which cannot be restricted to certainties only. Universities promoted themselves as places of intellectual confrontation—with the unknown spaces. Research confrontation with these dark spaces is confrontation with *uncertainty, with the unknown*. This is what really attracts a true researcher. Unfortunately, knowledge that is the outcome of this kind of research endeavor is today easily considered "useless."

But principled and instrumental knowledge, if we use a different set of words, are not a necessarily mutually exclusive forms of knowledge. They are just two forms of knowledge: two out of several epistemologies. One of the challenges universities face today is the profane interpretations of the concept of the knowledge society, which generate conflicts and a hierarchical relationship between "useful" and "*only* academic" knowledge. From a higher education perspective, it is therefore necessary to retheorize and reconceptualize the idea of the knowledge society—including criticism of its normative and ideological dimensions. This issue has major implications for the purposes of higher education, as well as the mission of higher education institutions.

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The Carnegie Classification of American Higher Education: More—and Less—Than Meets the Eye

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The Lumina Foundation and Indiana University's Center for Postsecondary Education will be taking over the important Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Lumina announced that its Degree Qualifications Profile will inform the 2015 edition of the classification. This development is yet another step away from the original intent of the classification—to provide an objective and easy-to-understand categorization of American postsecondary institutions.

In recent years, the Carnegie Foundation made its categories more complex: in part to suit the foundation's specific policy orientations at the time, and in part to reflect the increased complexity of higher education institutions. As a result, the classification became less useful as an easy yet reasonably accurate and objective way to understand the shape of the system, and the roles of more than 4,500 individual postsecondary institutions. Among the great advantages of the original classification were its simplicity and its objectivity, and the fact that it did not rank institutions but rather put them into recognizable categories. Unlike the *U.S. News and World Report* and other rankings, the Carnegie Classification did not use reputational measures—asking academics and administrators to rank competing colleges and universities.

It is not clear how the classification's new sponsors will change its basic orientation, and its new director says that the 2015 version will not be fundamentally altered. Yet, giv-

en Lumina's strong emphasis on access, equity, and degree completion, as well as designing a new national credential framework—highly laudable goals of course—it is likely that the classification in the longer term will be shaped to be aligned with Lumina's policy agenda, as it was more subtly changed in its later Carnegie years.

The original Carnegie Classification contributed immensely to clarifying the role of postsecondary institutions and made it possible for policymakers as well as individuals in the United States and abroad to basically understand the American higher education landscape as a whole and see where each institution fit in it. The classification was also quite useful internationally—it provided a roadmap to America's many kinds of academic institutions. An overseas institution interested in working with a research university, a community college, or a drama school could easily locate a suitable partner. We are likely to lose this valuable resource.

A Historical Perspective

The classification dates back to 1973, when the legendary Clark Kerr, having devised the California Master Plan a decade earlier and leading the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, wanted to get a sense of America's diverse and at the time rapidly expanding higher education landscape. The original classification broadly resembled Kerr's vision of a differentiated higher education system, with different kinds of institutions serving varied goals, needs, and constituencies. It included only five categories of institutions—doctoral granting, comprehensive universities and colleges, liberal arts colleges, two-year colleges and institutes, and professional schools and other specialized institutions, along with several subcategories.

Because the classification was the first effort to categorize the system, it quickly became influential—policymakers valued an objective data-based categorization of institutions and the academic leaders found it useful to understand where their own institutions fit. The classification had the advantage of simplicity, and its sponsor was trusted as neutral. Although the classification was not a ranking—it listed institutions by category in alphabetical order, many came to see it in competitive terms. Some universities wanted to join the ranks of the subcategory of "research university–I," those institutions which had the largest research budgets and offered the most doctoral degrees—and were overjoyed when their school was listed in that category. Similarly, the most selective liberal arts colleges were in "liberal arts colleges–I," and many wanted to join that group. Over time, the classification became a kind of informal measure, if not of rank, at least of academic status.

Fiddling and Changing

The classification's categories and methodology remained quite stable over several decades of major transformation in American higher education. In 2005, with new leadership at the Carnegie Foundation, major changes were introduced. Foundation leaders argued that the realities of American higher education required rethinking the methodology. It is also likely that the foundation's focus changed and it wanted to shape the classification to serve its new orientation and support its policy foci. The foundation revised the basic classification, added new categories such as instructional programs, student enrollment profiles, and others. The classification became significantly more complex, and over time became less influential. People found that the new categories confused the basic purpose of the classification and introduced variable that did not seem entirely relevant. The basic simplicity was compromised. Indeed, people still refer to "Carnegie Research 1" (top research universities) even though the category has not existed in the Carnegie lexicon for two decades.

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There may well be more fiddling—the US federal government's desire to rank postsecondary institutions by cost and degree completion rates may add a new dimension to the enterprise. A further dilemma is the role of the for-profit higher education sector—these entities are fundamentally different in their orientations and management from traditional non-profit institutions—so also are the new on-line degree providers. Should these new additions to the higher education landscape be included in the classification? These elements will contribute to "classification creep"—a bad idea.

Another Turning Point

It is likely that the coming period will see the largest change in the classification's history—and if recent statements from the new sponsors are indicators for the future, it is likely to be transformed beyond recognition and essentially destroyed in terms of Clark Kerr's original vision of providing a simple and objective analytic classification of

American academic institutions. The past several decades have seen the classification shaped to meet the policy objectives of the sponsors—the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The new sponsor, the Lumina Foundation, will no doubt shape the classification to suit its needs and advance its agenda—and the result is unlikely to be relevant to the original purpose of the classification.

What Is Really Needed

It is surprising that, in the four decades since Clark Kerr conceptualized the Carnegie Classification, no one has stepped forward to provide a clear and reasonably objective and comprehensive guide to the more than 4,500 postsecondary institutions in the United States. Resurrecting the basic purpose and organization of Kerr's original Carnegie Classification is not rocket science, nor would it be extraordinarily expensive.

It is of course true that the postsecondary education has become more complex. How would one deal with the for-profit sector?—probably by adding a special category for them. Many community colleges now offer four-year bachelor's degrees, but their basic purpose and organization has not essentially changed. There are a larger number of specialized schools, and many colleges and universities have expanded and diversified their degree and other offerings. Technology has to some extent become part of teaching programs of some postsecondary institutions—and the massive open online course (MOOC) revolution continues to unfold. Research productivity has grown dramatically, and research is reported in more ways. Intellectual property of all kinds has become more central to the academic enterprise—at least in the research university sector.

Yet, the basic elements of the original classification—those that help to determine the main purposes and functions of postsecondary institutions—remain largely unchanged, if somewhat more complicated to describe. The key metrics are clear enough:

- Student enrollment
- Degrees awarded
- Types of degrees offered
- Number of faculty, full-time and part-time
- Income from research and intellectual property
- Research productivity
- Internationalization as measured by student mobility.

A few more might be added—but again, simplicity is the watchword.

The types of institutions—6 main and 8 major subcategories—seem about right. These might be expanded somewhat to accommodate the growth in complexity and diversity of the system. Later iterations confusingly expanded the categories, in part to reflect the policy and philosophical orientations of the foundation. The basic purpose of the classification will be best served by keeping the institutional typology as simple and straightforward as possible.

While it is clear that these metrics may not provide a sophisticated or complete measure of each institution—and they require additional definitions—they will provide basic information that will make reasonably categorization possible. They lack the philosophical and policy orientations that have crept into the Carnegie Classification in recent years, and return the enterprise to its original purpose—describing the richness, diversity, and complexity of the American higher education landscape. ■

MOOCs in the Developing World: Hope or Hype?

Ben Wildavsky

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The first university class to carry the unwieldy acronym of the massive open online course (MOOC) was created in 2008 at the University of Manitoba. But the much-touted MOOC revolution did not truly take off until several years later, with the emergence of the Big Three: for-profits Udacity and Coursera—educational organizations, and the nonprofit Harvard-Massachusetts Institute of Technology collaboration EdX—an online course. They remain the best-known players today, typically featuring free noncredit classes that offer some mixture of short video segments, quizzes, online discussion boards, and writing assignments graded by peers.

From the start, the global potential of MOOCs, particularly in the developing world, was a large part of what made them so captivating. When two renowned computer scientists at Stanford University took their Introduction to Artificial Intelligence class online and offered it free to students anywhere in the world, they quickly attracted 160,000 students from 190 countries. There were famously more students from Lithuania enrolled in the class than there are members of Stanford's entire student body.

Since then, other MOOCs have expanded on a massive scale. Coursera, the largest MOOC provider, has registered 10 million students in courses offered by more than 100 universities. Its business model remains unproven, but it