"Covid-19 and interregional response:

The case of Open Higher Education"

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The Covid crisis and the digital response

- The Covid pandemic urged governments to take lockdown measures affecting most sectors of society like retail business, transportation, tourism, arts, and education.

- Societies and economies had to react in multiple ways in order to sustain economic and social life.

- The most notable social response was the expansion towards a digital society model, promoting digital economy and facilitating remote access to arts and education.

Regional Social Inequalities in Higher Education

- In Higher Education, social differences exist not only among classes, but also inter-regionally, where local economic, technical and social restrictions or prejudice, determine –to a varying extent- the academic prospects of the youth.

- This is also true both within national boundaries, as well as in the international context.

- The Covid-crisis blockades, while being a disaster, were an opportunity for expanding the reach and quality of distant and open education, especially in Higher Education.

Regional Technical Restrictions in Higher Education

- Face to face teaching in Higher Education, though generally accepted as more efficient in many ways, has a multiplicity of conditionalities and restrictions. Most obvious are:

- the condition of physical presence and living in a city or campus, for teachers and students,

- the uniqueness of classes and necessity of synchronicity,

- the increased costs of the whole procedure, and

- the reduced flexibility in syllabuses.

Concept and Advantages of Distance Education

Open and Distance education offers a flexible, economic and equitable distant learning modular system:
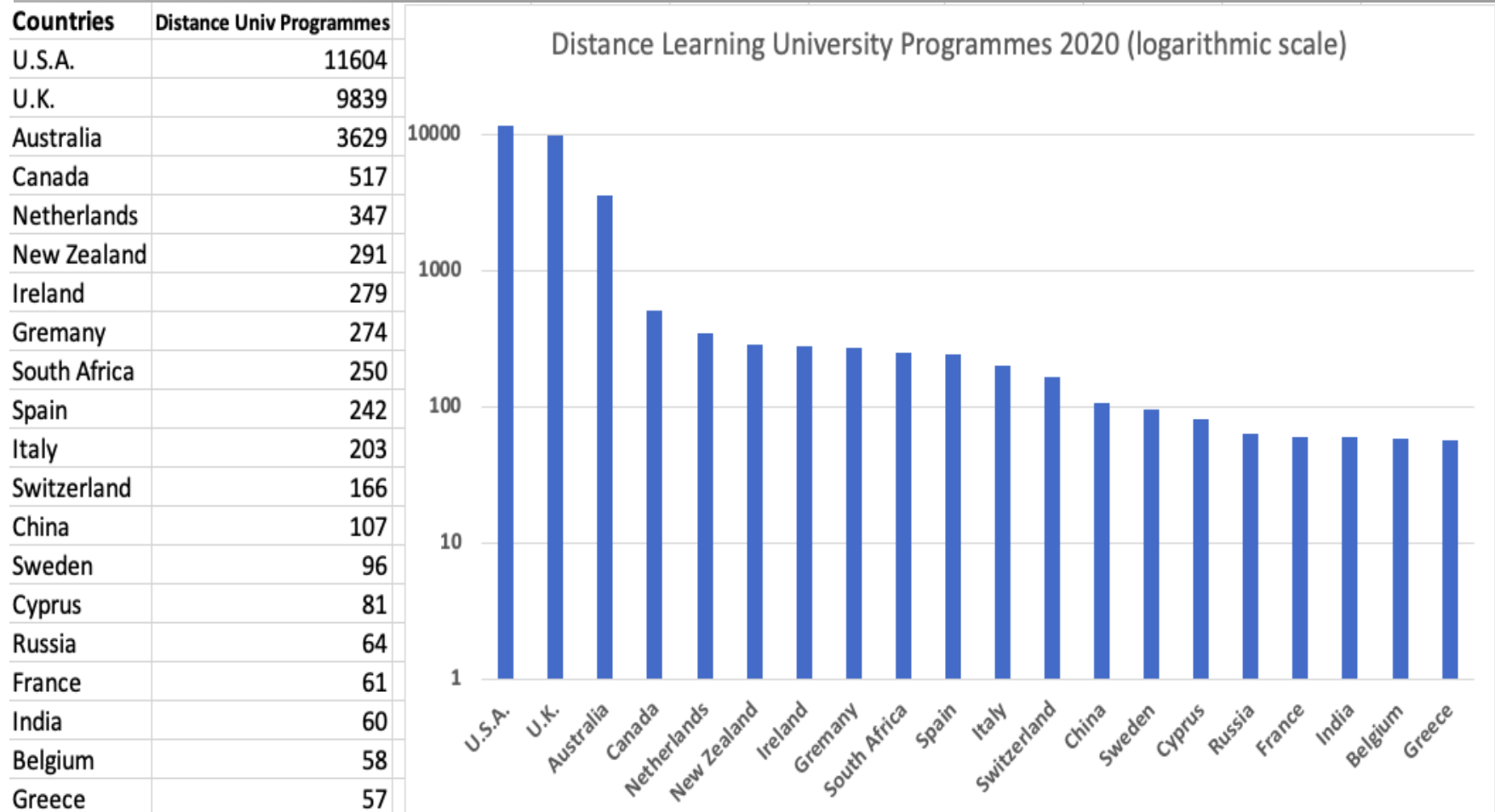
- Wider accessibility to academic knowledge and connection of distant teachers and students.

- Possibility of asynchronous lecturing, studying, testing and managing the learning procedure.

- Reduced costs of the whole procedure, and

- Increased flexibility in formation of a personal time schedule.

Open Universities: New Philosophy and Approach in Distance Learning

Manifestation and variants:

- An open university typically has an open-door academic policy, with minimal or no entry requirements.

- Open universities may employ specific teaching methods, such as open supported learning, or distance education.

- However, not all open universities focus on distance education, nor do distance-education universities necessarily have open admission policies.

Distance Learning at University level:
a fast-growing global academic and economic activity

Countries	Distance Univ Programmes
U.S.A.	11604
U.K.	9839
Australia	3629
Canada	517
Netherlands	347
New Zealand	291
Ireland	279
Gremany	274
South Africa	250
Spain	242
Italy	203
Switzerland	166
China	107
Sweden	96
Cyprus	81
Russia	64
France	61
India	60
Belgium	58
Greece	57

Distance Learning University Programmes 2020 (logarithmic scale)

Open Universities: new philosophy and Distance Learning approach

History of Open / Distance Higher Education

1858: The University of London External Study System established. Participants could continue to work while they studied and could sit their examinations even without visiting Britain.

1873: The University of the Cape of Good Hope established, later to become University of South Africa (UNISA). It had a similar model to the University of London external study system. It had no students, instead acting as an examination board for associated university colleges.

1879: The Royal University of Ireland, founded as an examining and degree-awarding university based on the University of London model. Many of the early graduates were **women**, because they were not yet admitted in other Universities.

In the late 1950s, in the Soviet Union , Nikita Khrushchev significantly extended higher education using a system of correspondence courses with part-time education, in which students took part while remaining in the workplace. By 1965, there were 1.7 million students in this part-time/consultation model, 1.6 million full time students, and 0.5 million students taking evening classes. The support given enabled working-class students, at little cost to themselves, to become useful functionaries and members of the Communist party. With the break-up of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, the system collapsed.

1969: the Open University of the U.K. first used the them **OPEN**. It aimed to widen the access to the highest standards of scholarship in higher education. It used a variety of methods for teaching, including written, audio and visual materials and after them, the the Internet.

1972: The National University of Distance Education (UNED) was established in Spain. In 1995 Catalonia set up its own distance learning Open University of Catalonia, with instruction in Spanish and Catalan language.

1997: Greece established the Hellenic Open University, with more than 40,000 students today.

Open Universities: institutions in Europe

Europe

Name	Type	Headquarters	Country	Dist.Learn	Phys.C.
Open University of Cyprus	Public	Nicosia	Cyprus	Yes	
Hellenic Open University	Public	Patras, Western Greece	Greece	Yes	Yes
Open University of the Netherlands	Public	Heerlen, Limburg	Netherlands	Yes	
Universidade Aberta	Public	Lisbon	Portugal	Yes	
Open Orthodox University	Theological		Russia		
Novi Sad Open University		Novi Sad	Serbia		
Intercultural Open University Foundation	Private	Granada	Spain	Yes	
Open University of Catalonia	Public	Barcelona	Spain	Yes	
Taras Shevchenko National University - KNU Open University	Public	Kyiv	Ukraine	Yes	Yes
Open International University of Human Development "Ukraine"	Private	Kyiv	Ukraine	Yes	Yes
The Open University	Public	Milton Keynes	United Kingdom	Yes	Yes
Commonwealth Open University	Private	BVI	United Kingdom	Yes	

Open Universities: institutions in Africa

Africa

Name	Type	Headquarter	Country	DL	PC
National Open University of Nigeria	Public	Abuja	Nigeria	Yes	
Open University of Mauritius	Public	Réduit, Moka District	Mauritius	Yes	Yes
Open University of Sudan	Public	Khartoum, Khartoum	Sudan	Yes	
Open University of Tanzania	Public	Dar es Salaam	Tanzania	Yes	
Open University of West Africa	Private	Accra, Greater Accra Region	Ghana		Yes
Zambian Open University	Private	Lusaka	Zambia		Yes
Zimbabwe Open University	Public	Harare	Zimbabwe	Yes	
International Open University	Private	Kanifing	Gambia	Yes	
International Open Institute	Private	Lagos	Nigeria	Yes	Yes
Université Général Lansana Conté	Public	Sonfonia	Guinea Conakry	Yes	

Open Universities: institutions in Asia (sample)

Asia

	Asia				
Name ▲	Type ⇕	Headquarters ⇕	Country ⇕	DL ⇕	PC ⇕
Al-Quds Open University	Public	Palestine	Palestine		
Allama Iqbal Open University	Public	Islamabad	Pakistan	Yes	Yes
Anadolu University	Public	Eskişehir	Turkey	Yes	Yes
Andhra Pradesh Open University	Public	Hyderabad, Telangana	India	Yes	Yes
Arab Open University	Private	Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	Yes	Yes
Benguet State University Open University	Public	Benguet	Philippines	Yes	Yes
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University	Public	Ahmedabad, Gujarat	India	Yes	Yes
Ho Chi Minh City Open University	Public	District 3, Ho Chi Minh City	Vietnam		Yes
Indira Gandhi National Open University	Public	Maidan Garhi, New Delhi	India	Yes	
Karnataka State Open University	Public	Mysore, Karnataka	India	Yes	Yes
Korea National Open University	Public	Seoul	South Korea	Yes	
Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University	Public	Guwahati, Assam	India	Yes	Yes
Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University	Public	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	India	Yes	Yes
Nalanda Open University	Public	Patna, Bihar	India	Yes	Yes
National Open University	Public	Luzhou District, New Taipei	ROC	Yes	
Nepal Open University	Public	Lalitpur, Kathmandu	Nepal		
Netaji Subhas Open University	Public	Kolkata, West Bengal	India	Yes	Yes
Odisha State Open University	Public	Sambalpur, Odisha	India	Yes	

Open and Distance Learning:
Social and educational issues in the Digital Society
1. Educational / academic drawbacks

- Complexity of the procedure with multiple screens, video, notepads, chat, screensharing etc.

- Dialogue between academic teacher and students is technically feasible and encouraged, but practice shows it is less vivid.

- Dialogue among students may also appear technically possible but is not practiced, and if/where practiced is less effective.

- Body language of the academic teacher and students is lost in most of the cases, as only face video is transmitted.

- Many subjects, which require studio work or laboratory sessions, cannot be taught from a distance, e.g. architecture, medicine, physics, etc.

Open and Distance Learning:
Social and educational issues in the Digital Society
2. Social limitations and drawbacks

- Technological: Multiple computers are needed in families with many distance working or studying members in the household. Strong internet connections, etc.

- Space: Multiple different quiet rooms / workplaces are needed.

- Timing: Difficulty to perform classes at a time that suits all, working students or not, or in different time zones.

- Cost: Cost of equipment and connectivity are not provided by the academic institution and may be a burden to poorer families.

Covid19 and Open and Distance Learning: Final remarks

- Covid 19 will eventually belong to the past. But there are changes that may become more permanent.

- One of them is Distance Learning: The digital capacity built during the 2-3 years of restrictions and quarantines will remain and continue to be used.

- There are advantages, like lower cost and increased accessibility for distant and interregional or international students.

- There are also problems like lack of academic/student life, reduced or lack personal contact with teachers, and finally a question of auditing and evaluating the true aptitude of the students.

спасибо

Thank You

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