highest. Nevertheless, the educational benefits of higher education are undeniable, as they lead to better job opportunities, higher salaries, and increased social mobility. Higher education is often referred to as the “key to success” in the modern world. Only the Church has a longer continuous existence than Western institutions. Higher education has more than survived; it is in many ways a pivot in the social structure and in technological innovations. It is central for the generation of research and the advancement of new technologies. It is also central to the selection, training, and credentialing of men and women for higher-level positions in the occupational structure.

Among the most important sociological questions surrounding higher education are the following: (1) To what extent have advanced industrial societies become based on a “knowledge economy” closely related to university research and training? Related to this question is another: what extent do we see the rise of a “new class” of “knowledge workers” with advanced technical skills, differing in interest and outlook from business elites and earlier aristocracies of labor? (2) To what extent do institutions of higher education reproduce social inequalities by certifying cultural advantages of children from the upper classes, or reshuffle the social hierarchy by recruiting intellect and ability independent of social-class background? (3) Do institutions of higher education, with their traditions of collegiality and tenure, represent an alternative to bureaucratic forms of organization? These issues must be addressed only after examining the historical development, the existing organizational structures, and the contemporary pressures on higher education.

First, it is necessary to define the dimensions of higher education. Formal educational systems are conventionally divided between primary (the first six years), secondary (the next four years), and postsecondary education. Postsecondary schools offer courses of study that are narrowly vocational and very short in duration. These institutions (including secretarial, business, and technical schools) are of secondary importance. A whole range of other institutions, such as colleges, universities, and graduate schools, account for the majority of educational activity in society.
are transferable to higher-level colleges and universities. Above these lower-tier institutions were a vast array of colleges, universities, and professional schools that constitute the core of the education sector in all contemporary societies. These institutions in this institutional hierarchy are structured most fundamentally, by the type of credentials conferred. In the United States, for example, these are marked by movement from the associate baccalaureate to the master’s to the doctoral degree.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The distant relatives of today’s institutions of higher education go back in the West to the Greek and Roman institutions of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C.E. Academies, young men from the governing classes studied rhetoric and philosophy (and probably law) as training for public life (Marriner 1982). In the East, the roots of higher education go back to the training of future government bureaucrats at the feet of masters of Confucian philosophy, poetry, and calligraphy. In both places, a close relationship existed among class, high culture, and preparation for public service.

However, modern institutions of higher education trace a more direct lineage from the medieval universitas generale. In the first European universities (twelfth and early thirteenth centuries—Salerno, Bologna, and Paris), students and masters came together to pore over the new knowledge discovered in ancient texts and developed in the Arab scholars of Spain. These gatherings of students and teachers were a product of the age of scholarly inquiry in what has been called the twelfth-century Renaissance.” The medieval universities were similar to modern higher education institutions that were permanent institutions of learning.

typically with an emphasis on logic and rhetoric, were common preparation for students to enter three learned professions. Thus, from the beginning, a certain vocational emphasis is evident in the university. Degrees awarded on the completion of professional studies certified accomplishments that made their recipients worthy of entry into professional life. Nevertheless, the pursuit of inquiry was equally important in the new universities; these were places renowned for famous teachers, such as Abelard in Paris and Jordanus in Bologna. Civic competition led to a proliferation of universities. By the end of the Middle Ages, eighty had been founded in different parts of Europe (Rashdall [1985] 1936).

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the fortunes of colleges and universities varied. The causes for decline are numerous, including the attractiveness of commercial over scholarly careers, the interference (in some places) of religious and political authorities, and the insular faculty who jealously guarded their guild practices but resisted new currents of thought. This period, colleges and universities became concerned with the transmission of ancient rather than the further advance of knowledge. Professional training moved out of the institutions into Inns of Court, medical colleges, and seminaries. New elites interested in technologically and scientifically progressed established entirely new institutions rather than allying with the colleges and universities. Napoleon, for example, founded professional training institutions, the grandes écoles, and the early investigators in the natural sciences created separate elite societies to encourage research and discussion.

The revived university is the product of the eighteenth-century European reform movement in the beginning by intellectually oriented bureaucrats and eminent philosophers and theologians. The University of Berlin, founded in 1810 by Friedrich Wilhelm, king of Prussia, was a prime model.
Institutions of higher education were not formed in isolation; rather, they emerged in response to societal needs and values. The early German universities, such as the University of Heidelberg, were modeled on the medieval university, with a focus on liberal arts education and the cultivation of scholars. However, over time, the German universities began to expand their offerings to include more applied fields and science, in line with the Enlightenment's emphasis on rationality and progress.

In the United States, the founding of universities like Harvard in 1636 and Yale in 1701 was driven by the need for higher education in a rapidly growing society. The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 provided funding for the establishment of “land grant” universities, which were expected to provide both general education and practical training in agricultural and mechanical arts for the benefit of the state and nation. This was a significant departure from the earlier emphasis on the liberal arts, and it represented a shift towards a more applied approach to education.

The nineteenth-century emphasis on specialization is evident in the second two years of undergraduate study (the upper division) and in graduate and professional programs. The twentieth-century emphasis on research remains an important occupation of faculty and graduate students. The twentieth-century emphases on ancillary services, such as libraries, museums, theaters, and student unions, are now considered essential components of the university experience.
Modern institutions of higher education are not collegial in their authority structures. They also do not fit an ideal-type corporate model of top-down control. Instead, decision-making practices are based, at least in principle, on multiple spheres of power and ongoing consultation among the major “branches” of institutional governance. In this dual structure, both administrative and knowledge-based authority are represented. The academic hierarchy is based on the career paths of faculty members, with appointments (typically involving assessments of research, teaching, and service). Differences in rank are associated with both the number of years on faculty and the level of responsibility for administrative tasks. In addition, the professorial ranks include full professors, who are the most senior and have the highest level of authority. Finally, the top level of the administrative hierarchy is composed of a president or chancellor, who is responsible for fund-raising and interacting with important resource providers as well as the university’s alumni and other stakeholders.
Sociologists frequently use the term “state system” to describe national patterns of higher education. This term should be used advisedly, since national “systems” are not in fact highly centralized. Societies with strong traditions of planning have relatively centralized systems, while Russian, French, and Swedish systems are among the most centralized today. But in these countries, some private institutions are independent of the centrally organized system. Societies with weak traditions of planning and strong traditions of voluntarism, decentralized and highly diverse systems can co-exist, and higher education is a clear example of this pattern. Colleges and universities have been organized by religious bodies, secular elite, state legislators, and individual entrepreneurs. The result is a system of some 4,000 largely independent institutions. Institutions emulate and compete with one another in a complex ecological setting. Several major dimensions are defined by levels of public and private money, by institutional identity (for example, national or non-denominational, residential or commuter), and, perhaps most of all, by geographic location. One of the few forms of regulation is the expectation that curricular programs meet accepted academic standards.

It is possible to classify national systems of higher education in many ways. Clark (1965) proposed dividing them by the primary influence on the coordination of the system. He placed the former Soviet Union near the pole of state-based coordination. He classified Italy as the clearest example of coordination by an “academic oligarchy,” where powerful academics were the decisive influence on the development of rules and policies. The United States near the pole of market-based coordination. He classified Italy as the clearest example of coordination by an “academic oligarchy,” where powerful academics were the decisive influence on the development of rules and policies.
leaving examinations have been relaxed to allow for a larger flow of students into higher education. Nevertheless, both attendance and graduation rates in most of the industrialized world remain below half that in the United States. Thus, high-quality education in Europe and East Asia is no longer the preserve of the upper class, but it has not reached the levels of mass education found in the United States.

Theorists of postindustrial society have suggested that the growth of the knowledge sector in the economy is behind this expansion of the educational sector. Estimates vary on the rate of growth of the “knowledge sector,” depending on the definition used. Industries employing high proportions of professionals are growing faster, by a factor of two to three times, than other industries, but some estimates put them slowing down over time (Rubin and Starbuck 1986). Every estimate shows that they do make a significant contribution to the development of the knowledge product or even a dominant share of the gross domestic product of the dynamic export industries.

The growth of the knowledge sector is undoubtedly an important factor in the expansion of graduate and professional education. It is more difficult to measure the impact at the undergraduate level because an institution such as the University of Tokyo retains very close linkages to elite positions in the Japanese state and private economy. Nevertheless, the influence of these and other expanding educational opportunities for citizens. Another is the interest of students in using these opportunities, to differentiate themselves in the labor market. As secondary school completion rates approach universality and higher education attendance becomes more feasible, more students are likely to have a motive to differentiate themselves by obtaining higher degrees (Meyer et al. 1979). Finally, perhaps most important, is the increased role played by educational credentials as a route to access to desirable jobs in the economy.Credentials are not simply (or in many cases primarily...
cies of the larger society, because the curricular, information, motivation, and academic skills to pass rigorous examinations are highly valued with social class. Social-class advantages do generally allow a higher proportion of academically able students from the lower classes to succeed. The sheer size of a system does not, however, guarantee decreasing inequality (Blossfeld & Javitz 1993). Much depends on the circumstances of students in the system and the levels of evaluation within in the system. Since 1980, the number of college graduates in the United States has continued to grow, but this growth has occurred almost exclusively from among students whose families are in the top quartile of household incomes. Students from families in the bottom quartile are entering at higher rates, but they have graduated at higher rates. The reasons why these students are often less prepared and motivated to succeed, more likely to feel the strain of work and family responsibilities, and more likely to struggle financially with the high cost of two years of college. They are also more likely to go to two-year institutions emphasizing job-relevant training.

CONTEMPORARY PRESSURES

Colleges and universities are increasingly costly operations. In state-organized systems, growth is tied to fiscal circumstances and state priorities. In market-organized systems, developments are due to a considerable degree by the value of degrees in the labor market and by competition among colleges and universities. To finance growth that allows for development of new programs without sharp cutbacks in older fields, colleges and universities compete vigorously for research funds, private gifts, and preeminence in higher education services. They also compete with each other for largely moderate- to lower-income students who desire convenience and flexibility, and they juggle school, family, and work. In the former, the liberal arts tradition remains strong at the undergraduate level. In the latter, the emphasis is on practical, “consumer-friendly” job-relevant training. As a result of this bifurcation of institutions, the lower tier of liberal arts colleges has begun to disappear in the United States. In some cases, these institutions have transformed themselves into comprehensive colleges with undergraduate professional programs in areas such as business, engineering, technology, and education (Breneman 1994). The same general trend toward practical, job-relevant training is evident in all but the most selective public four-year colleges and universities.

The size of operations and the increased competition among institutions have strengthened the influence of top administrators. Managers started to think strategically about areas of comparative advantage, a striking departure from the model of the past, which emphasized repertory of all major fields of study. As a result of strategic thinking, most departments cannot depend on automatic replacements for outgoing faculty, even at the senior level. Administrators have also added resources to student services, development offices to strengthen their ties with key resource providers. For the first time in the postwar period, close partnerships have developed at some institutions with private foundations, which can provide new sources of research funding (Cohen et al. 1998). The ability to attract students and sizable research grants has in turn increased the position of some departments and programs, while weakening the relative position of others. Within institutions, power and influence continued to shift in the direction of the major professional school faculties and faculties in administrative, hard to reach departments that have expanded their influence over the last decade.
REFERENCES


UNION OF AMERICANS

sharing their common linguistic heritage, Hispanics are a heterogeneous and rapidly growing population that includes no less than three distinct national identities and corresponding legal and undocumented immigrants—groups whose ancestors predate the formation of the United States as we know it today. The term "Hispanic" is derived from Hispania, the Latin name for Iberia. In 1973 the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare adopted the term "Hispanic" at the recommendation of the Task Force on New Racial/Ethnic Categories to designate individuals who trace their origins to a Spanish-speaking country. Following suit, the U.S. Census Bureau adopted this label as a statistical shorthand for Hispanic national-origin groups (del Pinal and Singer 1997; Haverluk 1997). Originating in the Western United States, the term "Latino" has been adopted as an alternative by groups that view "Hispanic" as a conservative pan-ethnic label implying the government that ignores their political and economic struggles for equality and representation. These distinctions notwithstanding, both terms serve as umbrellas for a highly diverse segment of the U.S. population.

Hispanics are one of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. population. High levels of immigration combined with high fertility rates yield a growth rate for Hispanics that is seven times that of the non-Hispanic population (U.S. Department of Commerce 1993). In 1990 the U.S. Census enumerated 22.4 million Hispanics, representing 6.9 percent of the aggregate population, but 6.1 million, but this estimate is conservative because annual estimates since that time have consistently been exceeded (U.S. Department of Commerce 1996). Hispanics are projected to outnumber blacks as the largest minority by 2030—sooner, depending on the volume of legal and undocumented immigration from Central and South America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Already in 1998, Hispanic children outnumbered black children.

Although immigration has figured prominently in the growth of the Hispanic population since 1941, its influence on demographic growth and diversification and renewal, and population replenishment has been especially pronounced during the 1980s and 1990s. Immigration was responsible for approximately one-third of the growth of the Hispanic population in the 1980s and 1990s. At the end of the 1990s, two-thirds of the population were immigrants or children of immigrants (del Pinal and Singer 1997), and recent fertility trends and immigration suggested higher growth of the Hispanic population well into the 21st century. By the year 2020, the U.S. Hispanic population is projected to reach 52.6 million, representing approximately 16 percent of the total U.S. population (U.S. Department of Commerce 1993).

Nearly two-thirds of all U.S. Hispanics (62 percent) are of Mexican origin, while 11 percent trace their origins to Puerto Rico, 4 percent to Cuba, and 14 percent to other Central and South American nations. An additional 7 percent of Hispanics are of unspecified national origin, which includes mixed Spanish-speaking nationalities, Spaniards, and "Hispanos," the descendants of the original Spanish settlers in what is now known as Colorado and New Mexico. This national-origin profile of the Hispanic population evolved since 1970 because of the differential growth of selected groups. In particular, the Mexican, Central American, and South American population shares have increased, while the Puerto Rican and Cuban shares have decreased.