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REFLECTIONS BETWEEN URBAN AND UNIVERSITY STRUCTURES AND PLANNING

Klaus Dietz and Gerhard O. Braun
Free University of Berlin, Germany

Honoured conference participants
Honoured chairpersons
Honoured colleagues and students
Honoured representatives of the press

It is our great pleasure to greet you as guests of the Free University of Berlin and of the Institute for Geographical Sciences.

We are satisfied, based on the financial support of the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Senate Administration for Science and Research and the Academic Office for External Affairs of the Free University, that the formal conditions, necessary to bring together in this conference more than 80 scientists from more than 45 countries, have been fulfilled. This foundation will enable you to discharge the tasks to which you have bound yourselves in the course of your commission's work. It is an honour for the University and for the Institute to be able to organise the conference.

With the quotation from Theodor FONTANE "I do not myself do well in life, I lack a sense of social spice" in a commentary on the Rector's opening of the Berlin University in 1948, a stone was loosened from the university landscape which was itself changing. This led to the founding of the Free University in the same year. This event was to have a lasting effect on the structure of the city. It was during the Berlin blockade and marked a time of great economic and social distress, of internal re-orientation, and political confrontation. Perhaps it was a time which was not really appropriate for founding a university. Or, as we hope you will concede at the end of our remarks, it was a time that was exactly right because of the long-term effects that the foundation of the Free University was to have.

In its demands for freedom in research and teaching, and independence from the pervading power of the State, the founding of the university aimed at a social condition well above the widespread poverty and near economic collapse of the time. The university's foundation, carried through by the students and supported by the American military government, initiated two aspects of the university as well as for German society, which have remained characteristic of Berlin:

- the readiness to offer support (shown, in the case of the founding of the FU, by Berliners, emigrants, international help and the Ford-Foundation) and
- the readiness to accept innovation (brought about by both the structure of the university's constitution and by the achievements of its researchers).

The relationship between political-social-ecological responsibility and the allocation of scientific responsibility seldom produces a balance. More often the tensions between these areas of responsibility produces swings between extreme positions - moreover, this was particularly the case in the political arena. This environment of uncertainty bred a climate of constant re-structuring which could only continue as the growth of democracy triumphed over dictatorship. Thus, it was from the university's high ideals - born in a difficult economic and social situation - that the almost obvious varied structures for the municipal organisation of Berlin were derived and developed further so that a close interdependent relationship was created between the city and its university.

In the first term after its foundation, 2140 students had matriculated in three faculties of the new "free" and "substitute" university. The first Rector called on these students and professors not to engage in competition against the Berlin University (today the Humboldt University) but to compete with each other, a situation chance which at that time, and is the case today, did not properly present itself.

In the following years the university quickly diversified, creating additional faculties (twenty-four in all) and six central institutes offering about a hundred academic disciplines. Prior to the building of the Berlin wall about one third of the students came from the eastern part of the city. After 1961, about two thirds came from outside Berlin. The evolving character of the university as a center of progressive thought facilitated great spatial and intellectual mobility on the part of its students and faculty. These traits help to explain the attractiveness of both the university and the city to the present day.

The rapid growth of the Freie Universität in an already built-up area meant that locational cohesion was lost. Despite the university's effort to concentrate its development at a few planned locations, the institutes are spread out over the whole S-W sector of the city. Moreover, there are branches strewn in other parts of the city as well. Libraries, living quarters and student services are quite often far away from these related institutes. For many students and the academic administration, a logistical problem has been created which has led both to friction and imaginative solutions.

Thus the locational problems of the Freie Universität have their parallels with the spatial city-structure of Berlin. This is indicated by the almost hierarchy-less

polycentric structure which was inherited when the formerly independent local authorities were first incorporated in 1920. The potential of the market locations were however diminished lagging synergy-effect because of missing suitable infrastructural network.

The current problems of the university are especially affected by both the substantial financial cuts and the negative effects of being a mass-university. These problems have led to a fundamental necessity for the creation of a new image, the sphere of resolution of which must be defined through research performance and political discussion. Based on the aims of your commission's work it is apparent that you address many similar problems. The three principal topics of discussion selected by your commission: "Restructuring", "Management, and Marketing" as well as your interest in "the informal economy" have parallels in the organisation and structure of the Free University.

Allow us a few explanatory comments on this theme in the hope that we may both stimulate solutions to your questions and be able to adapt your results to our tasks.

1. First, the process of restructuring the system of land settlement from a strictly hierarchical organisation to one which is network-like, is one which affects the universities. The smaller universities which lie outside large cities currently enjoy development advantages which stem partly from their current geographical location and partly from the movement away from hierarchies in the distribution of universities. It seems to be easier to develop new locations than to reconstruct old ones.

Added to this come the structural effects of the central allocation of the limited admission to university places, the formerly valid reasoning for which justified the allowing of expansion where the greatest demand existed, or at least to the tolerating of it, as well as the pressure for an urbane lifestyle and the free selection of a place to study.

Fulfilling its role, the Free University grew into one of the largest German universities. Its budget, however, could only be produced while the political function could be coupled to do so. The structural effects of this growth were above all

- the separate development of the contents of teaching and research,
- an adverse development in the relationship of care between lecturers and students,
- the proportion of student over-loading,
- the development of deficiencies in the teaching and research infrastructure,
- over-lengthy average lengths of study (with in the whole negative influence on the ability to study),
- very rapid growth in the sphere of administration, and

- an increase in intervention by the state, together with a growing inflexibility towards innovation; the opportunity for implementing innovative developments was made difficult because of the mass-effect.

Because of the hierarchical organisation of the university's administration, the problems moved downwards through the structure. Thereby, larger subjects in a university such as German, Economics and Law were as affected as smaller subjects. Some of the smaller subjects lost their earlier purpose because earlier conditions for study, as escape refuges, had changed. The Freie Universität shared this fate with other large universities which, having reached a state of diseconomies of scale, had to accept an ossification of its structure just as the city as a whole did. Both were affected by the strain imposed by long, forced, unrestricted economic and political growth which accumulated without a qualitative balance and without the opportunity to exercise influence over it.

To counter this situation, the smaller universities developed outside the large conglomerations knowing full well the quality of easier locational factors for current economic and social forces, as well as the advantages from economies of scope. This development was only possible through the building of a complete non-hierarchical spatial and structural network for information carriers and innovators. Scientists no longer needed to go to seek information because the information comes to the scientist. The infrastructural development advantages of the "Big ones" are thus reduced; however, their massive structures remain.

It is, however, more than a mere suburbanisation of science and research that has occurred. There has developed a new standard of university environment that corresponds more to current conditions; e.g., the current conditions established by the synergetic effect of university research and training with economics and society.

University planning is eagerly going to see which solutions are suggested for the current urban development problems caused by the old influences on modern growth through the current processes of destructuring and de-concentration.

One development path that has appeared clearly is the new creation of hierarchies on a global scale. This pattern, however, may not indicate a direction for all former growth poles.

2. Your second principal topic certainly calls for wider management and marketing strategies which are in equal measure meaningful for cities as for universities. Even if the products of universities can be described as research and training, the universities in their entirety, and just like the cities, are a long way from being products that can be traded exclusively as monetary wares dealt in specifically organised markets. Included here is not only research which is directly applicable economically or socially, but, above all, research which requires time to convert its

potential, basic research into the long-term cultural value out of which the stuff of social, political and organisational regeneration may be extracted.

In this context, please allow us to touch on two things which in my view will be significant in the future structures; namely, the management of invention within the university and the protection of university image. The Freie Universität has at present, and more than any of the other universities, to suffer the pressure of past mass growth and current budget control. In shorter and shorter periods new adaptations and strategies aimed at reducing these problems have been encouraged. Nevertheless, conditions which, when applied to the aims of a university, were ever more illogical continue to appear. The solutions to such conflicts are no longer to be found in the usual rational thinking but need expansive thinking which is separated from the logic of the short term objective. That means solutions which are to be found not in linear thinking but in self-created dynamics or the state of Autopoiesis. Thus, to make future structures self-aware, a new creativity is necessary, a creativity for which, as yet, no awareness exists.

In the sphere of product economics it is the case that those products on the market which are especially successful were not invented because the market demanded them - but before the demand for them arose. Nearly all current economic and social structures are frustrated in their attempt to cope with the demand for solutions to their structural problems. Such solutions must be appropriate to autopoietic conditions. Exceptions to this argument are the merely basic products and non-proprietary bulk goods to which neither universities nor municipal functions should be compared, if they wish to remain capable of surviving.

Autopoiesis demands invention, "as-if-realities". It demands new programmes which are de-coupled from traditional logic and linear thought structures, there must be freedom for illogical thinking, surprise, and the making possible of the virtual and the untrue. The task of the university is to organise itself in such a way as to create a situation which allows processes of thought beyond the limits of what has hitherto been usual, logical or true. It is necessary to go beyond what can be easily corroborated and nevertheless guarantee certainty for those who think in terms of future inventiveness.

That means that the management and marketing functions of the universities, as well as of municipal authorities must free themselves from the burden of offering only bulk products for the market place. The traditional duties of the universities should be handed over to the colleges, just as the cities must release certain decisions to their substructures on their spacious outskirts. Universities, equally, are not appropriate locations for "knowledge-shops", just as cities are not appropriate locations for supermarkets. The sites are too valuable. Universities and central cities should produce innovation, synergies and creative variety. Certainly, such a "culture of enterprise" demands its price from management when a High-Trust-Culture is

introduced. Only when conditions - like planning certainty, more individual freedom in more general safety, and freedom from individual risk - raise the assumption of the possibility of identifying with work and produce such an identification, it is currently possible to develop creativity and the willingness to take risks in order to develop the structures, which will be needed tomorrow and which cannot easily be taken into account today.

Consequently, expansive thinking depends decisively on a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Although, we are a long way from being able to offer such solutions for future university structures, useful working hypotheses can be identified in two different dimensions. One concerns itself with producing a dissolution of the mass-effect structures. This means in increasing measure not attracting students to the universities but, rather, to promote knowledge where students are involved in the Latin sense (i.e. those who strive for engagement and erudition). The second hypothesis takes into account the fact that people prefer to work where there are others with similar tasks and needs. Arising from this situation, specialisation and originality are essential prerequisites so that commissions can be accepted and solutions for tomorrow's problems thought through.

Transferred to municipal problems, the argument just presented means that cities can only be innovative with respect to growth and development when they are ready to de-centralise and take on highly specialised functions. Thus, the city of tomorrow could more closely correspond to the pre-industrial time than to trends in current metropolisation.

3. Your third principal topic is concerned with the informal economic sector. There are also demonstrable and substantial connections with university structures in this area. Although the term "Informal economy" is derived from less developed economies and from a planning point of view may be seen as a possibility for dealing with poverty, it must be made clear that this form of economy has achieved a growing importance in developed economies as well. Let us try to demonstrate this on the basis of two examples: the student labour market and "science at almost no cost". The Free University has over 60 000 students, about 4000 academics and 12 000 non-academic workers together with the structures of a large business (budget 1993: DM 1.3 billion).

Even if the students take their responsibilities seriously in accordance with college law almost all of them are more or less regularly employed up to half-days. Even with higher unemployment, regular workers for part-jobs are increasingly difficult to find. Thus, students as "corner workers" (who in general work for minimal wages and live in the residual housing market) are valued in the general economy for their qualifications and in the meantime have become economically necessary.

Discussion about studying for over-lengthy periods would profit from considering the impact on student behaviour of the multiple forms of employment.

The second example deals with "research at no cost". Most university institutes produce research the conversion of which to income only indirectly benefits the university or the researchers.

A university budget based at least partially on interest payments would be easy to manage, and could provide the capital for research for the national economy. Recalling the comments made above, this would, however, also mean that universities must become predominantly places of research and places for negotiating for research. This in turn, could only be achieved by securing the necessary certainty of planning. The political and academic management belonging thereto must be developed into invention-management for this purpose.

The suggestions we have made in these remarks should be accepted in the sense set out above; namely, to procure "illogical" processes of thinking. They should emphasize that the solutions offered by your varied discussions have complex parallels in other contexts.

We wish the conference creative power, to be able, in the sense of PRIGOGINE, to discover new routes leading into a new open existence.

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