

Visions of Society: New Universities and the Twentieth Century

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Providing the institutional framework for research and teaching, universities can be regarded as the space where political, economic and other social interests meet with and shape science and scholarship. The founding of new institutions of higher education therefore creates opportunities to rearrange (or affirm) the role of science in society. The conference held on occasion of the 100th anniversary of the (re-)foundation of the University of Cologne, focused on the relationship between the establishment of new universities and contemporary social change. It was intended, as RALPH JESSEN (Cologne) pointed out in his introduction, to shed light on the actors behind the founding of new universities, on their interests, and their visions of society. Jessen also touched on some key questions that would repeatedly reoccur in the papers presented and during the discussions: Which institutional models did the new universities draw upon? How did they relate to (national) traditions of higher education? And did innovative models succeed in their struggle for recognition and in the competition with established institutions?

Universities as means of nation-building, diverging views of modernity, and the role of civil society were themes that ran through the first two panels which covered universities that were founded between 1914 and the early 1940s. KERSTIN THIELER (Cologne) showed how nationalism as well as local patriotism shaped the arguments used to legitimise the founding of a new university in Cologne in 1919, resulting in narratives that linked the new institution to the ‚old‘ university founded in 1388. KATRIN STEFFEN (Lüneburg / Berlin) showed how diverging interests collided over the foundation of two

Polish language universities in Warsaw during the German occupation in the First World War. The occupiers supported Polish initiatives for these foundations as part of a modernization strategy that aimed at German economic interests. In the Polish population, by contrast, these Universities were seen as the institutions of a future nation state. ANTONIE DOLEŽALOVÁ (Prague) focused on the funding of new and existing universities in Czechoslovakia after 1918 and the nationalist conflicts that resulted from a (perceived) discrimination against the Slovak part of the country.

VESA VARES (Turku) presented the motives behind the foundation of a Finnish language university in Turku as an instance of a „cosmonationalism“ that aimed at strengthening Finnish culture while taking its models from other nations that were seen as more advanced. Vares also highlighted that the university was financed by a large number of private donations which points to the importance of financial sources and influences from civil society. How the involvement of private actors could contribute to institutional innovations was demonstrated by BARBARA WOLBRING (Frankfurt am Main) account of the founding of the university of Frankfurt am Main. Supported by donations from the local bourgeoisie, including an important number of Jewish citizens, the university responded to commercial and industrial needs, and was based on religious neutrality. Focusing on two main protagonists in the founding of a second Danish university in Aarhus, NING DE CONINCK-SMITH (Aarhus) showed how taking into account the life stories of the persons involved and the concrete circumstances of negotiations and networking yields a different perspective on the founding of a university. She argued for a broader approach in the history of universities drawing from „affective methodologies“ and combining them with the history of materialities, gender history, and the history of circulation of knowledge.

MICHAEL GRÜTTNER (Berlin) presented the history of the „Reichsuniversitäten“ Straßburg and Posen which were the only universities founded under national socialist rule and can be seen as the most nazified

universities. The founding of these institutions can only be understood as part of a policy of Germanisation in the annexed territories. While the university of Posen mainly attracted academics who received their first chair, Straßburg was presented as a model for a new national socialist university and proved attractive to scientists and scholars as well as students.

In his keynote lecture STEFAN COLLINI (Cambridge) outlined several fundamental trends in the history of universities since the late 19th century, thereby providing a framework for comparative analysis. On the international level there has been a convergence towards the common model of the research university. Despite a massive expansion of higher education and calls for social inclusiveness, this model has retained its status, new institutions gradually discarding their distinctive features. But at the same time the quantitative expansion gave rise to institutions' quest for hierarchical distinction and changed the internal structures of universities.

Panels 3 to 5 covered university foundations during the era of expansion in the 1960s and 1970s when universities increasingly were seen as an instrument to promote social and economic change. New institutional models were developed that sought to democratize higher education. But, as the presented papers showed, historical analysis should also focus on the question how far those new universities really departed from traditions, and to which degree they were able to preserve their innovative features.

In Germany, as WILFRIED RUDLOFF (Kassel) argued, the expansion of higher education provided opportunities for experimenting with new institutional models aiming to reform higher education. Rudloff provided four case studies on the University of Constance, the „Comprehensive University“ (*Gesamthochschule*) Kassel, the Distance University Hagen, and the University of Bremen, which can be seen as exemplifications of the most advanced and consistent reform models. Focusing on Helmut Schelsky's reform plans for the University of Bielefeld, FABIAN LINK (Frankfurt am Main) argued that some of the core concepts were formed under National Socialism, but trans-

formed after the war and combined with the US-american model of the cold-war university with close ties to politics and to the military. DANIEL WEINBREN (Open University, Milton Keynes) outlined the history of the Open University which was based on the concept of distance learning and aimed at creating educational opportunities for broader shares of the population. Subject to centralized government control and building on commercial and „industrial“ techniques of teaching, the Open Universities also spearheaded new developments in British higher education. ANNE CORBETT (LSE London) offered an analysis of the political processes that lead to the establishment of the European University Institute in Florence, stressing the role of political entrepreneurs like Walter Halstein whose efforts interacted with the interests of national governments. SUSANNE SCHREGEL (Cologne) broadened the discussion about institutional models by drawing attention to „counter-institutions“ and „free spaces“ that sprung from the student protests of the 1960s and the following social movements, and aimed at transforming the established universities which were seen as sites of epistemic inequalities and lacking social responsibility and participation.

TIMOCIN CELEBI (Duisburg-Essen) reminded that the new foundations of the 1960s and 1970s should be considered in the light of increasing tendencies towards governmental planning. He showed how the social-democratic government of the German *Land* North-Rhine Westphalia took up the idea of a cooperating higher educational system and combined it with the endeavor to ensure equality of opportunity in all regions. MAURO MORETTI (Siena) also chose a systematic perspective, arguing that the foundations of new universities in Italy after 1945 took place within an institutional and legal framework and relied on methods that date back to the fascist and the liberal era. Since the 1960s the established process that built upon local administrative and private initiatives interacted with new top-down policies that were intended to remedy overcrowding at the existing universities as well as regional imbalances. How important it is to place the newly founded universities in the context of overar-

ching developments was also demonstrated by WILLIAM WHYTE (Oxford) who argued that the new „Plateglass Universities“ in England, despite their claimed modernity, did not differ fundamentally from the older universities. On the one hand the new universities borrowed symbols and practices from the established institutions, on the other hand all of them were subject to similar trends, as there were an increasing central control and massification of higher education. Presenting a case study on the university of Maastricht, ANNE-MIEKE KLIJN (Maastricht) showed how the pressure to justify their existence can lead new institutions to experimenting with innovative models of teaching and distinctive study programs.

The sixth panel dealt with new trends that shape the history of universities since the late 20th century: increasing competition, privatization, and internationalization. JEROEN HUISMAN (Ghent) argued that the institutional landscape of higher education in Europe has seen only limited changes since the 1980s, as institutions that were based on new models have either converged towards existing models or remained „niche players“, like „open universities“ and private institutions. JULIAN LAMBERTY (Odense) analyzed the merger which led to the foundation of the University of Southern Denmark in 1997, and put it in the context of a political shift towards the paradigm of the „competition state“. Confronted with new market-based governance mechanisms, the participating institutions were motivated by the fear of being outcompeted by the two larger universities of Copenhagen and Aarhus. BALÁZS TRENCSENÝI (CEU Budapest) outlined the history of the Central European University which came into being as the result of cooperation between critical intellectuals from Eastern Central European countries with George Soros who, influenced by Karl Popper's concept of an „open society“, had been supporting dissident networks since the 1980s. Initially devised as a network that was supposed to introduce students to western ideas, the CEU evolved into a permanent research university and became more transnational.

Foundations of new universities during the 20th century, as this conference has shown,

often provided occasions to rearrange the relations between society and science. A variety of actors tried to articulate new social demands and inscribe them into new institutional models. At the same time it became clear how traditions of higher education reasserted themselves: The new universities needed to be legitimized in the light of pre-existing expectations. They had to compete with established and often more prestigious institutions, and gain recognition. Finally, the scientists and scholars who shaped these institutions had been socialized in the traditional universities.

Some of these aspects would deserve more systematic attention and further research. Firstly, which role did competition play in the complex relation between innovation and tradition? Under which circumstances did it lead to homogenization or diversification? And how did competition among cities or between nation states shape the universities? Secondly, during the conference there was much to learn about external actors and their motives to found and support new universities. But what was the motivation for scientists and students to come to these new institutions? How did their interests and practices shape the history of new universities? Thirdly, what was the long-term impact of new institutions on the regional, national and global systems of higher education and how did they shape the history of scientific knowledge by providing new opportunities for research, careers and collaboration. In order to answer these questions it seems necessary to establish closer connections between the history of universities and the history of science as well as applying theoretical insights from sociological sub-disciplines.

Conference Overview:

Panel 1: Ideas of Urban Modernity: Big Cities and New Universities in the Early 20th Century

Chair: Hans-Peter Ullmann (Cologne)

Kerstin Thieler (Cologne): Old Traditions, New Concepts: Founding Narratives of the New Cologne University Around 1919

Barbara Wolbring (Frankfurt am Main): Visions of Economic Prosperity and Urban

Modernity: The Bourgeois Founding of a University in Frankfurt 1914

Katrin Steffen (Lüneburg / Berlin): Crisis and Euphoria: The Establishments of Warsaw Universities During the First World War

Commentator: Ute Schneider (Duisburg-Essen)

Keynote Lecture

Welcome Address: Axel Freimuth (Rector of the University of Cologne)

Stefan Collini (Cambridge): The Long Run: Contemporary Universities in Historical Perspective

Panel 2: Nation Building: State Formation and the University in Interwar Europe

Chair: Georg Wamhof (Cologne)

Vesa Vares (Turku): Cosmopolitan Nationalism and Conservative Reformism in the Refoundation of the University of Turku, 1917–1920

Ning de Coninck-Smith (Aarhus): Aarhus University Between Modernity and Tradition. A Correspondence between Major Actors, 1919–1933

Antonie Doležalová (Prague): Pillars of the New Society: Universities in Inter-War Czechoslovakia Between Education, Nation, and Money

Commentator: Habbo Knoch (Cologne)

Michael Grüttner (Berlin): New Foundations under National Socialism: The *Reichsuniversitäten* Straßburg and Posen

Chair: Habbo Knoch (Cologne)

Panel 3: Modernizing Postwar Societies: Strategies in Higher Education in an Era of Expansion

Chair: Ralph Jessen (Cologne)

Wilfried Rudloff (Kassel): „Temples of Science“, „Castles in the Air“ and „Hotbeds of Red Cadres“. A Diversified Landscape of Higher Education in West Germany? (1960s and 1970s)

Mauro Moretti (Siena): „Adding to the Nation's Stock of Universities“. Main Trends and Issues Concerning the Establishment of New

Universities in Italy 1945–1990

William Whyte (Oxford): From Redbrick to Plateglass. Founding New Universities in the United Kingdom, 1950s–1960s

Commentator: Christof Dipper (Darmstadt)

Panel 4: Concepts of Reform: University Foundations in the 1960s and 1970s

Chair: Nina Verheyen (Cologne)

Fabian Link (Frankfurt am Main): Helmut Schelsky's Reform University in East Westphalia: Bielefeld University as an Amalgamation of Nazi Concepts, the Humboldt Idea, and the „Cold War University“

Annemieke Klijn (Maastricht): „The Maastricht Experiment“. On the Legitimation of a „New Style“ University in the South of the Netherlands in 1976

Anne Corbett (LSE London): The Creation of the European University Institute in Florence, 1972: A Lesson about Historical Memory, a Lesson about Europe and Higher Education

Commentator: Volker Barth (Cologne)

Podium Discussion: Neue Universitäten – Neue Gesellschaft? Gründungsgeschichten im Rückblick

Introduction: Hans-Peter Ullmann (Cologne)

Aylâ Neusel (*concerning Kassel*)

Wolfgang Schieder (*concerning Trier*)

Wolfgang Schluchter (*concerning Erfurt*)

Moderation: Manuela Günter (Cologne)

Panel 5: Open Society – Open University? Alternative Models in Higher Education

Chair: Jost Dülffer (Cologne)

Daniel Weinbren (Open University): „Disembodied and airborne“: Reflections on the First 50 Years of the Open University (UK)

Timocin Celebi (Duisburg-Essen): A Decentralized Institution of Further Education and North

Rhine-Westphalia's Comprehensive Plan for Higher Education: The *Fernuniversität-Gesamthochschule* Hagen

Susanne Schregel (Cologne): Where Freedom, Women and Monsters Meet. Some Remarks on Invented Universities

Commentator: Christa-Irene Klein (Freiburg)

im Breisgau)

Panel 6: Competition – Privatization – Internationalization: Developments in the Late 20th Century

Chair: Stefan Grohé (Cologne)

Jeroen Huisman (Ghent): Does the Higher Education Institutional Landscape in Europe Really Change?

Julian Lamberty (Odense): An Offspring of the Competition State? The Creation of the University of Southern Denmark in the Context of Late 20th Century University Politics in Denmark

Balázs Trencsényi (CEU Budapest): The Dilemmas of the Model of a Private Non-Profit „Missiondriven“ University: Post-Transition Developments in the „Other Europe“ and the Story of Central European University

Commentator: Ralph Jessen (Cologne)

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