



**The University as an Urban Cultural Institute
2nd UNICA ‘University, Culture and the City’ Conference**

**THE PLACES OF THE UNIVERSITY: RETHINKING
MISSIONS AND VALUES OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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STARTING POINT

- **Place as the essential condition of every historical event and every prestigious social institution.**
- **Two dimensions of place:**
 - **spatial**
 - **symbolic.**



The university and the city

- *The places of the first universities*
 - *Why did a university emerge in Paris rather than in Charter, in Oxford rather than in London?*
 - *When a city turns from a temporary shelter to a home of the university?*
- *The university as a cultural phenomenon*

The university and society

- *The contested essence of university today*
- *Some theoretical considerations*
 - *Voices of intellectual “fathers”*
 - *The capability approach*
- *In search of a new model of roles of higher education and university*

The university as the city cathedral



THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY (1)

How can we explain the concrete spatial localization of the first universities?

- ***Why did the first European university emerge in Bologna, rather than in Rome or Milan?***
- ***Why did a university emerge in Paris rather than in Charter, in Oxford rather than in London?***



THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY (2)

When a city turns from a temporary shelter to a home of the university?

- *Lessons from the history of the failed universities*
- *The city as providing living conditions for students or as a place which manages to incorporate them.*

The university as a cultural phenomenon



THE UNIVERSITY AND SOCIETY

The contested essence of university today:

➤ The three 'Ms':

- *marketization*
- *massification*
- *managerialism.*

➤ Towards a purely instrumental role for higher education?

➤ Is university losing its legitimacy?

Argument:

- **There is a need to reconsider the value and missions of higher education/university.**
- **Higher education and its main institution – the university – performs a plurality of missions/roles .**
- **Higher education has not only instrumental, but intrinsic and empowering value as well at both individual and societal level.**



VOICES OF INTELLECTUAL “FATHERS”

- **The distinction between science as a means and as an end in itself.**
- **The main principles for building of a university institution that today are still valid – unity of teaching and research, academic freedom, university autonomy.**
- **The mission of the university – development of both personality and science, understood as internally driven processes of self-development, which are not subjected to instrumental goals.**



THE CAPABILITY APPROACH

- **Developed by the Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen, and then by the political philosopher Martha Nussbaum.**
- **It is not so much the achieved outcome (functioning) that matters, but the real opportunities that one has for achieving those outcomes (capability).**
- **By emphasising important personal and social values, such as freedom, agency and personal (identity) development, justice and well-being, the capability approach sets a framework for critical evaluation of current developments in higher education.**
- **5 different ways in which education can be valuable to the freedom of a person: *intrinsic importance, instrumental personal roles, instrumental social roles, instrumental process roles and empowerment and distributive roles* (Drèze & Sen 2002).**



IN SEARCH OF A NEW MODEL OF ROLES OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND UNIVERSITY

- **Whether to start from ends and values or from resources?**
- **The raison d'être of higher education in contemporary societies – teaching, research and service.**
- **Institutional perspective towards higher education/university:**
 - Higher education “has an impact on society over and above the immediate socializing experiences it offers the young” (Meyer 1977).
 - It links the “role structure of society to universalized cultural knowledge” and “defines certain types of knowledge as authoritative in society on the basis of the highest cultural principles , e.g. science, rationality, natural law” (Meyer et al. 2007).



MODEL OF MISSION/ROLES OF HIGHER EDUCATION/UNIVERSITY

<i>Level of influence</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Society</i>
<i>Character of influence</i>		
<i>Instrumental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability (formation of graduates' abilities to find employment by developing relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes, identities) • Formation of status identity (being a student or a graduate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human capital development and well being • Legitimisation and stratification of different types of knowledge/disciplines • (Re)structuring of professional roles • Promoting economic growth • Cultural and intellectual centre
<i>Intrinsic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing and acquiring knowledge for its own sake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge development • Legitimisation of values in society: progress, rationality, equity (as fairness and inclusion), tolerance, freedom of thought, diversity
<i>Transformative/ Empowering</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality development - Formation of responsible identity - Development of abilities for independent and critical thinking and imagination - Agency development and empowerment of a person to control his/her environment • Promoting the individual's mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding human freedoms and possibilities. • (Re)distributive - facilitating social group mobility and the ability of different groups, disadvantaged included, to organise and express their interests)



WHAT IS NOT AND WHAT IS UNIVERSITY EDUCATION?

- **University education is not just knowledge transfer from knowledgeable teachers to unknowing students. It is a joint scientific life of a community of teachers and students.**
- **University education is not just vocational education. It is a way to join the world of knowledge, emotional empathy of the search for truth.**
- **University education is not just something useful. By itself and for itself it has value and brings satisfaction.**
- **University education is not only preparing for future life. In itself it is a way of life with its own specific goals and values.**

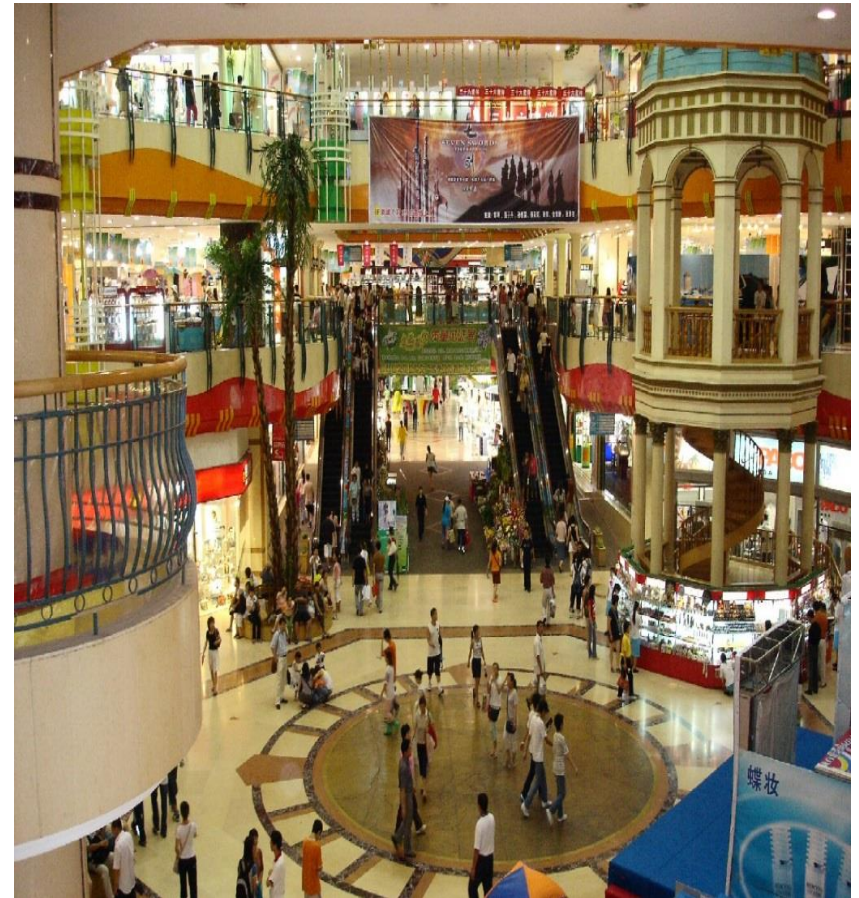


THE UNIVERSITY AS IVORY TOWER





THE UNIVERSITY AS SHOPPING MALL





THE UNIVERSITY AS THE CITY CATHEDRAL





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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