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The Social Purposes of the University and Academic Research:
Between Excellence, Elitism, Equity, and engagement.

Administrational Reason and Academic Strategies

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Objective theory of reason

„It aimed at evolving a comprehensive system, or hierarchy, of all beings, including man and his aims. The degree of reasonableness of a man´s life could be determined according to its harmony with this totality. Its objective structure, and not just man and his purposes, was to be the measuring rod for individual thoughts and actions. This concept of reason never precluded subjective reason, but regarded the latter as only a partial, limited expression of a universal rationality from which criteria for all things and beings were derived. The emphasis was on ends rather than on means.” (Horkheimer 2004: 4)

“Reason was supposed to regulate our preferences and our relations with other human beings and with nature. It was thought of as an entity, a spiritual power living in each man. This power was held to be the supreme arbiter – nay, more, the creative force behind the ideas and things to which we should devote our lives.” (Horkheimer 2004: 7)

Subjective theory of reason

“(…) if we say that an institution or any other reality is reasonable, we usually mean that men have organized it reasonable, that they have applied to it, in a more or less technical way, their logical, calculative capacity. Ultimately subjective reason proves to be the ability to calculate probabilities and thereby to co-ordinate the right means with a given end.” (Horkheimer 2004: 4)

“In most cases, to be reasonable means not to be obstinate, which in turn points to conformity with reality as it is. The principle of adjustment is taken for granted. When the idea of reason was conceived, it was intended to achieve more than the mere regulation of the relation between means and ends: it was regarded as the instrument for understanding the ends, *for determining them*.” (Horkheimer 2004: 7)

“Having given up autonomy, reason has become an instrument. In the formalistic aspect of subjective reason, stressed by positivism, its unrelatedness to objective content is emphasized; in its instrumental aspect, stressed by pragmatism, its surrender to heteronomous contents is emphasized. Reason has become completely harnessed to the social process. Its operational value, its role in the domination of men and nature, has been made the sole criterion.” (Horkheimer 2004: 15)

Formal rationality

“*Formal* rationality with regard to economic action is defined as ‘the extent of quantitative calculation or accounting which is technically possible and which is actually applied.’
(Weber 1948: 85)

“(…) an economic system is formally rational to the extent to which all actions within the system can be expressed in a quantitative way. This means that they can be accounted for and computed and preferably can be expressed in money value.

(…) Formal rational behaviour thus needs no goals and values external to the social system of capitalism. It refers only to *one goal*’s being internal to the system.” (Israel 1971: 100)

Substantive rationality

“Substantive rationality concerns the distribution of products and refers to the degree to which a given number of persons can be provided with products in an adequate way.

(...)

Much of the political debate of today (...) refers to the question of whether formal rationality, with its demands for effectivity, or substantial rationality, with its emphasis on its just distribution of the social product, shall receive priority in social and economic planning. This seems to be one of the central problems in any society characterized as a ‘welfare state’ today.” (Israel 1971: 101)

NPM

“The functioning of free markets assumes the existence of companies that are privately owned. The dogma of the private company implies that the job of the state is to remove all obstacles to private ownership of companies, in particular former state-owned companies. All former state activities in the domains of education, social security and health care can be privatized and commodified so that they can be made efficient and profitable. In neoliberalism collective goods don't exist, in contrast with classical liberalism.” (Lorenz 2012: 602)

TINA principle: There Is No Alternative
(Kelsey 1997)

Money as perfect means

“From a purely technical point of view, money is the most ‘perfect’ means of economic calculation. That is, it is formally the most rational means of orienting economic activity. Calculation in terms of money, not its actual use, is thus the specific means of rational, economic provision.” (Weber 1948: 86)

NPM is VPM

“The functioning of free markets assumes well organized companies. Well-organized companies are in the interest of all shareholders because optimal management results in optimal efficiency and thus in optimal shareholders value. The management dogma makes the task of the state to remove all obstacles to efficient management. Because management equals efficiency in neoliberalism, it is Value for Money (VFM) by definition. NPM is VFM.” (Lorenz 2012: 602)

Money (formal) as means vs Time (substantial) as means

Money as means hides – under the myth of objectiveness and efficiency – the social relations (and unequal distribution of societal wealth) inevitably related to the process of production, i.e. the work process as such; whereas in contradiction *time as means* (see Marx) reveals the logic of distribution of societal wealth by equalizing labour by referring to time and not dividing manual labour from intellectual labour.

“Economic rationality has never, therefore, in essence, been *in the service* of any *determinate* goal. Its object is (we will come back to this shortly) the maximization of the type of efficiency that it knows how to measure arithmetically. The main indicator of this efficiency is the rate of profit. And the rate of profit depends, in the last analysis, on the productivity of labour. The pursuit of an unlimited maximum of efficiency and profit would therefore demand the greatest possible growth of the productivity of labour and, as a result, of production.” (Gorz 1989: 114)

Dialectic between form and content:

Leadership “guided” management and academic working conditions

“Form and Content are a Unity of Opposites: they are two aspects of one and the same thing, which in the process of development of the thing and in its cognition, interpenetrate one another, interact and transform one into the other - Form becomes Content and Content Form.”

(<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/help/glossary.htm>)

Instrumental-rational action (Weber)

“Instrumentally rational behavior, then, is behavior which takes its point of reference in the expectations that a person has concerning the behavior of others. These expectations assume that one’s own behavior will elicit a certain type of reaction in others, so that one is able to reach certain goals.”
(Israel 1971: 102)

Value-rational action (Weber)

“In the case of value-rational action, one sets up certain absolute goals. The one orients one’s action with regard to the goals in such a way that all action contributes to the achievement of the goal.

The difference between the two orientations seems to be that the first concentrates on the means to variable goals, while the second refers to certain absolute goals.” (Israel 1971: 102)

“Thus it appears that economic action which is called ‘formally rational’ is a specific type of the general category of instrumentally rational behavior, namely, economically instrumental action” (Israel 1971: 102)

Efficiency vs effectiveness

“All notions of efficiency are derived from the notion of mechanical efficiency, the ratio of a system’s work output to its work input. (...) Effectiveness, in contrast, is the power to be effective, that is, the quality of being able to bring about an effect. (...)

In practice cost-efficiency in NPM discourse is usually interpreted as at least the self-financing of organizations, and if possible it is expected to make them profitable.” (Lorenz 2012: 604 f.)

Deprofessionalization of academics and professionalization of management

“This trend is evident in the typical combination of (1) a constant decrease in the level of service; (2) a constant decrease in the level and quality of employment in the former public sector, which comes down to a steady process of deprofessionalization and a reduction in the number and the quality of jobs; and (3) constantly rising prices for the consumers of services such as education, health care, and social security.” (Lorenz 2012: 605)

The colonization of higher education by management

“The same holds for the unstoppable rise of ‘accreditation agencies’ that replace professional controls by handing out ‘stamp[s] of quality’ to individual departments and that determine whether they ‘serve the demand of the market.’ So here again NPM boils down to the notions that market rhetoric is good, and central control is better.” (Lorenz 2012: 607)

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“There is, as so to say, not any more an option of exit and therefore people tend to repeat internally all these management processes, that have been done to them externally. Everyone turns, so to say, to a high profile case of manager himself/herself...” (Adorno in: Horkheimer/Adorno/Kogon 1953: 124)

„Es gibt gleichsam keine Auswegmöglichkeiten mehr und deshalb tendieren die Menschen dazu, von sich aus nochmal alle jene Prozesse der Verwaltung in sich selber zu wiederholen, die ihnen von außen angetan werden. Jeder Einzelne wird gewissermaßen zum Verwaltungsfunktionär seiner selbst...“ (Adorno in: Horkheimer/Adorno/Kogon 1953: 124)

Strategies by academics

- **Open rebellion:** speaking out against Uni-Management in public
- **Committes and union:** working against the Uni-Management within borders (defined by Uni-Management)
- **Game player:** Playing the game, sorting out niches of action (salami publication)
- **Security and adjustment:** Instrumental reason and alignment to justify oneself
- **Step-up academic:** Careerist
- **Cooperating** with the Uni-Management

Open rebellion

10:06: ...disciplinary meeting: have brought the university in disrepute: it was just thin skin behaviour on this part no commanding officer can tolerate, me a captain, publicly criticize him, so it is the autocratic stuff, (...) the particular, the question of whether of many proper sense ahead brought the university into disrepute really didn't matter, it was just the thin skin reaction of an autocrat.

13:05 The significant point really is the outcome of it, the outcome being that we got a statement from them to the effect that academic staff were perfectly entitled to criticize university management.

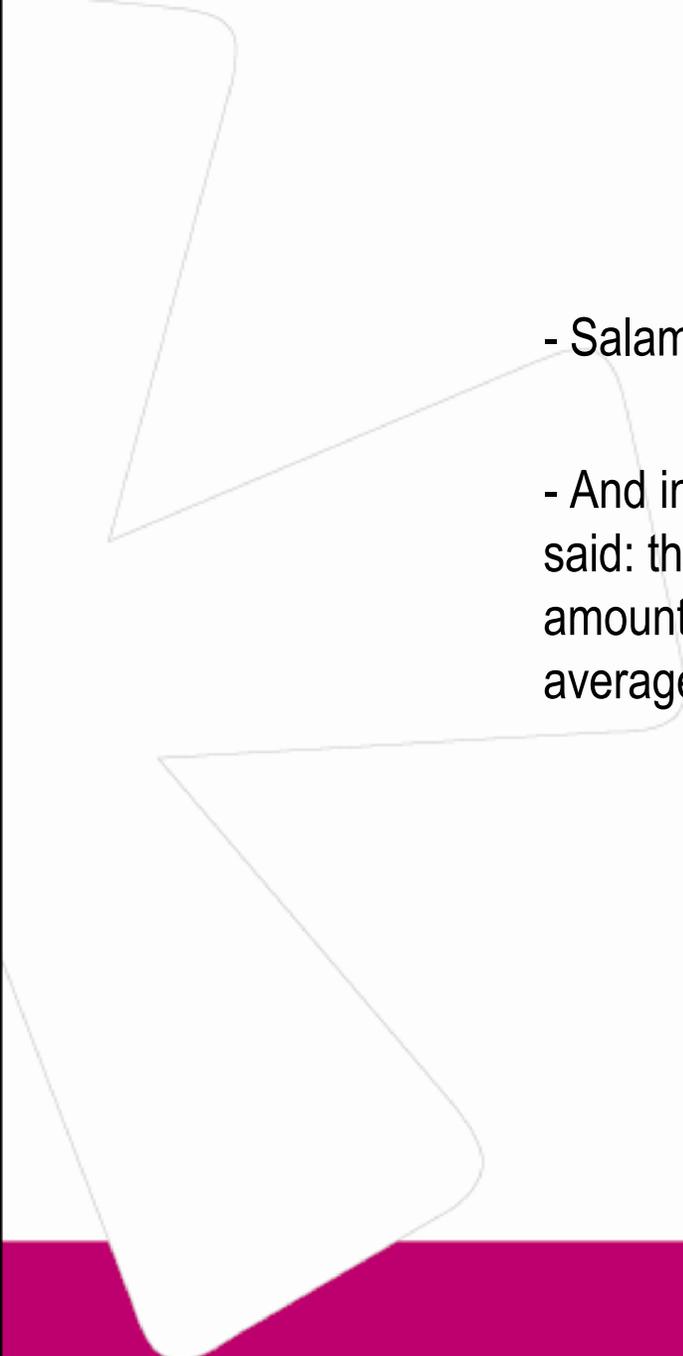
- **No committee work**
- **Criticized the pbrf publicly**

Another academic about committee work

22:07 but I think, things slipped out of the hands of academics. Perhaps because of size, but I think because they thought: Well this is wonderful we can get on with our work, we can leave all this to someone else. And that I think is probably a mistake, because they never get it back.

Game player

36:45 In terms of what the university expects: Yes. I think I am doing very well, I am very happy with the output creating. I am little bit more cynical about science in general about actually just I may produce, (let's) say 8 papers last year, I think something like that but I am, you know, everyone else is being trying to produce 8 papers as well, so now we just have a lot of papers out there which is nobody reading. (...) some things which you previously just been published is a report. Now people feel they need to have the peer review validation's stamp on it and it has to be a scientific article and with that we see this increase in journals which pay to publish converted to a pdf and put it online and that counts as a scientific article output as compared to a report. They both have the same information but one of them just has this peer review stamp – and perhaps that reflects, some of them came up in the symposium, which was that increased distrust we have just seen throughout society managers don't trust academics, academics don't trust another, people reading this academic outputs don't trust it unless it is peer reviewed.



- Salami publication

- And in another interview someone from science said: that even if the demand to produce this high amount of articles she just writes, let's say, 6 average papers instead of one really good article.

Security and adjustment: Instrumental reason and alignment to justify oneself

Pbrf

9:01 Well it certainly has had a big impact on me. It's helped me a lot, it provided much greater safety for me because now it doesn't matter what I say, whether it is published in the right journals, and it is. So I can be as critical as I want to be. So the pbrf has helped me. The Faculty want me because of the number of publications. Previously they didn't want me because of what I wrote about, but now what I write about doesn't matter. (9:47)

That means now it is more about quantity which gives you a greater deal in what you would like to do in quality because not the quality is measured (and observed)

10:02 Yes is suited me very well.

„One could almost say: The humans lose actually that, what used to be character, i.e. their coined uniqueness, that they take over from the past and preserve for the future, because this I is, as it were, a ballast, that seriously interferes with their progress within the societal giant machine. One could almost go that far to say, that within this process of adjustment that is serving to secure self-preservation, in exactly this process of adjustment they do lose precise that I, that himself / herself, they actually wanted to preserve and here lies the **satanic dialectic of these processes**, insofar it is about the human aspect.” (Adorno in: Horkheimer/Adorno/Kogon 1953: 130)

„Man könnte beinahe sagen: Die Menschen verlieren überhaupt das, was einmal Charakter war, die geprägte Eindeutigkeit ihres Ich, das sie von der Vergangenheit übernehmen und in die Zukunft hinein bewahren, weil ja dieses Ich gewissermaßen ein Ballast ist, der ihnen das Fortkommen innerhalb der gesellschaftlichen Riesenmaschine nur schwermachen könnte. Fast man könnte sogar so weit [gehen] zu sagen, daß in diesem Prozeß die Menschen, die sich all dem anpassen nur um ihrer Selbsterhaltung willen, eben in diesem Prozeß der Anpassung genau dieses selbe Ich, dieses Selbst, verlieren, das sie eigentlich erhalten wollen, und darin liegt die **satanische Dialektik dieses Prozesses** beschlossen, soweit es um seine menschliche Seite sich handelt.“ (Adorno in: Horkheimer/Adorno/Kogon 1953: 130)

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“Das, was an der jüngsten Entwicklung, die übrigens gar nicht so jung mehr ist, das Verhängnisvolle ist, das scheint vielmehr darin zu bestehen, daß ein Irrationales rationalisiert wird, d. h., daß das Resultat des:- blinden Kräftespiels der liberalistischen Gesellschaft, von dem Herr Horkheimer vorher geredet hat, nun fixiert wird und in einer möglichst geschickten, planvollen, klugen Weise so behandelt wird, daß diese fixierten Zustände sich behaupten können und daß die Menschen möglichst reibungslos ihnen sich einpassen, ohne daß im Ernst etwas geschieht, um dieses Resultat eines irrationalen, blinden Prozesses zu überwinden...” (Adorno in: Horkheimer/Adorno/Kogon 1953: 127)

„Es scheint mir nun so zu liegen, daß vielleicht das Charakteristische für die Situation gar nicht so sehr das Anwachsen der Verwaltungsapparaturen als solcher ist - bürokratische Apparaturen hat es ja *auch* schon zu allen möglichen Zeiten gegeben -, sondern vielmehr die Veränderungen, durch die die Menschen selber sich in Verwaltungsobjekte verwandeln. Man kann vielleicht sagen, daß die Menschen sich die Eigenschaften bewahren, die sie in dem Konkurrenzzeitalter erworben hatten, die ihnen heute die Anpassung an diesen Zustand erleichtern, also eine bestimmte Art von Tüchtigkeit, von Raschheit des Blicks, von Promptheit der Reaktion, von Wendigkeit, eine ganze Reihe derartiger Eigenschaften, auch eine bestimmte Art der Härte gegen andere und gegen sich selbst.“ (Adorno in: Horkheimer/Adorno/Kogon 1953: 129)