



Interdependence Of Educational Precincts And Their Fringe Areas

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ABSTRACT

National educational precincts and universities are sizeable landholders which have resulted in crucial outcomes in the urban landscape. Seen placed in the urban texture, they can be safely assumed to be sudden "invert zones", holding a large area, which the urban developments of the city have to acknowledge in two ways mainly: by circumventing them as a physical barrier, and adjusting to them socially, economically and morphologically. Out of the three models of university development (the campus, colonized and dispersed), campus universities are currently in the purview of urbanists and planners for traditional urban morphological analysis.

The fringe areas are that component of the university, which is at a maximum of interaction with the university, and this paper suggests that not attending to the socio-economic interdependency of the university and fringe areas creates the possibilities of complete disregard of an important dimension of the university community relations.

KEYWORDS

interdependency, fringe areas, educational precincts

Elizabeth L. Kenyon (1997) traces the history of the 'town and gown' relation in the context of the Oxford University. Town and gown are two distinct communities of a university town; "town" being the non-academic population and "gown" metonymically being the university community, especially in ancient the seats of learning such as Oxford. In her paper, the author describes the interaction between the community and the student population as a mixture of altercations between the two, and focuses upon this particular aspect of the town and gown relations. However, this is clearly not the only interaction taking place. There are other intangible and even tangible interactions that are taking place, which go unnoticed and are not addressed in the process of campus planning and expansion.

Similarly, according to Peter J. Larkham (2007) changes in industrial and corporate structure have left cities with a different cast of corporate characters who have fewer and weaker ties to the region. Universities, with their very deep roots, are looked up to as urban institutions that are unlikely to move due to mergers and acquisitions. If the university is surrounded by a neighbourhood that has received little new investment, we even expect our universities to become urban developers in a way that will achieve their core mission as well as provide positive spill-over for the neighbours.

The above statement helps in perceiving the long life of the university, and how deep it is rooted in the urban fabric and the community. This paper talks about the idea of the university as an "urban institution" and tries to begin the process of defining that term. By urban institution we mean an organization that is not simply an enclave with literal or figurative walls, but an institution of the city, engaged in reciprocal cultural, social, economic, and political relationships. If university leaders are guiding their institutions to take on new roles, what does that hold for the surrounding neighbourhoods and communities?

Literature Review

In this section, we set the stage for case studies to follow. To do so, we first need to understand the prominence of universities and cities in these times. Second, our intention will be to place the case studies in the broader Indian context of change enveloping cities and higher education in both developed and developing towns and cities. At the most general level, our argument will be that, for cities, at this moment, universities matter. Third, we want to show how cities, in turn, are formative environments for universities, suggesting how university

land development is better understood in a broader, urban, land development context. Our final goal for this section is to show how each of the following chapters contributes to this approach to the study of university real estate and land development. Each of these studies of the university and the city offers its own particular window through which to view and better understand some of the institutional factors of city building in the present era of globalization. We are clearly interested in the role of urban universities as real estate developers; we are also interested in their role as agencies of the "state" and the "market" in urban restructuring.

In an international collection of essays, Herman van der Wusten (1998) focuses on the contemporary importance of universities to cities, and vice versa, underscoring the cultural significance of urban universities as physical features of the urban morphology and as institutional partners or, in some cases, agencies of the modern state, as described in *The University As Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis* by David C. Perry and Wim Wiewel.

The relationship of universities to cities has been defined as much by what separates them as what binds them and is expressed in concepts such as the ivory tower, the political contentiousness of town-gown relations, professional legitimacy based on disciplinary autonomy and academic governance, and land-use and physical design rules of campus planning and real estate development (Dober 1991; Perry and Wiewel 2005).

An ambitious range of studies points to the increasing importance of cities in globalization (Scott 2005; Brenner 1999), stressing their place in the networks of production and distribution of the new world economy and their increasing prominence relative to the nation-state (Swyngedouw 1997). Conversely, in the literature more directly focused on higher education, it is argued that this changing global and local climate requires more of the tertiary sector throughout the world, as evidenced in studies of new management practices in universities (Gaffikin and Perry 2006; Gaffikin, McEldowney, and Perry 2006), as well as in new assessments of their economic import. The cities of which these universities are a part, have, in many cases, achieved new and reconfigured global prominence (Sassen 1991, 2002), but the role of their universities in such urban ascendancy is rarely the focus of study.

In the scant literature that does turn its attention to the relationship of the university to the economy of the city, the

discussion is as much prescriptive (Grogan and Proscio 2000; CEOs for Cities 2002; Clusters on Innovation Group 2004) as it is descriptively analytical (Perry and Wiewel 2005). More to the point of this book, these few studies of universities and the urban environment do not focus on the significance of land development as a critical nexus between the economic promise and political conflicts that shape relationships between universities, their neighbourhoods, and the other institutions of cities (Perry and Wiewel 2005).

When we speak of town and gown relations, these relations are mostly based on the altercations arising between the students, and the indigenous populace. *For those living within a neighbourhood, images of the home and neighbourhood are often imbued with expectations of privacy, personal choice, control, and security within a defensible space* (Despres 1993; Kenyon 1994; Sixsmith 1986) Events that threaten these expectations, especially those that are perceived to be beyond the control of the individual, undermine such images. However, there is a further reason for concentrating upon students living in residential communities. This relates to the fact that the locals' feelings of discontent and concern may be influenced by the social and economic reputation accorded to a residential area. Problems associated with the social and physical fabric of the neighbourhood can extend beyond the privacy of the home and its immediate surroundings into wider public life. Localized social and physical environmental problems, both tangibly displayed in the presentation of properties, and intangibly invoked in the local reputation of the area, can extend beyond the neighbourhood environs to influence outsiders' images of the economic and social value of residence there. This, in turn, can create concern for those who have invested, not only socially in the neighbourhood and the creation of a home, but also economically in property purchase and maintenance.

Discussion

The issues arising from institutionalised disregard towards town and gown relations can be categorised into four broad categories basically; social, economic, morphological, and infrastructural.

Social issues range from the safety and security of the settlement. Most of the local population in fringe areas don't even recognise most of the tenants in their buildings. This gives rise to security concerns as they cannot identify unauthorised people entering their premises. Also the floating population hampers the personalisation and the family character of the settlement, making it insensitive towards the moral and ethical aspirations of the neighborhood. Many people feel their own streets becoming unsafe for young women and children. Sudden incidents of rowdiness and irresponsible behaviour are disconcerting for the society as a whole. On another note, the floating population feels no moral responsibility towards property and services. For example, there is irresponsible usage of water, vandalism of property, overtaxation of sewage system etc.

Economically the whole system is secure and alive with transaction almost throughout the day. But though the turnover may be a lot, the income of the vendors is not much. And at the end of the day, they are playing at risk, considering that the population of students is their target customer.

The morphological character of the locality grows so rapidly that it goes beyond its sustainability. There has been disorganised growth, the reasons for which can also be attributed to the fact that there are no planning regulations in this area, and most part of it is unauthorized. This poses a dangerous problem for the future as this has become too big for the authorities to handle keeping in mind the interests of most people residing there.

Conclusions

Those aspects of university planning and development that have been discussed in the previous pages have clear and ob-

vious implications for the study of the urban form. Universities have very significant impacts upon the towns of which they form a part. This can be attributed to the increase in population, with the recent increase in higher education. In economic terms with the spending and the place of the university as a major employer, and in purely morphological terms, with the extensive land holdings of the university, as discrete campuses located in the fringe belts.

However, there still are a few problems posed by the scale and layout of the educational precincts, for the morphologist. The division of the urban fabric into streets, plots, and building mass often breaks down.

Also, when we talk about the interaction of an educational precinct with its neighbouring areas and fringes, we have to address the permeability and other sociological requirements of the campus. By sociological requirements we mean the need of the student community to interact with a particular population that is indigenous.

Without doubt there is scope for further research on the planning process of educational campuses. Our universities have reached levels where we are sharing roads and streets with the city, even for closed campus universities. We need measures to control the porosity and the permeability of the campus boundaries, and we need to come across solutions which will help in maintaining the continuity of the urban fabric, specially in the fringe areas.

We need to evolve strategies to regenerate the areas along the fringes to specifically strengthen and support their economical base and morphological character. Further we would also need to incorporate these areas with the social character of the university, so that the urban and social fabric is neither disturbed nor damaged, but is able to maintain the continuity and harmony, which will most likely result in a better growth.

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