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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Sammelwerksbeitrag / collection article

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Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Herbst, J. (1982). Diversification in American higher education. In K. H. Jarausch (Ed.), *The transformation of higher learning 1860-1930 : expansion, diversification, social opening and professionalization in England, Germany, Russia and the United States* (pp. 196-206). Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-339608>

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Jurgen Herbst

Diversification in American Higher Education

In the United States the diversification of higher education antedates the period under discussion in this book by at least half a century. American higher education parted with the tradition of continental Europe's universities as provincial or national institutions under public direction before the beginning of the 19th century. Neither could one assume thereafter that only scholars or public authorities were the founders of universities nor could one expect local rulers or representative government to provide and supervise university administration. Most crucial for a discussion of diversification, one could no longer take it for granted that the purpose and the reason for the creation of an institution of higher education was necessarily wholly or in part related to *raison d'état* or the national or provincial welfare. Instead, institutions of higher education began to owe their existence to the activities of many diverse groups. Some were church bodies which acted not as ecclesiastic arms of the provincial or national establishment, but as private organizations. At times they viewed themselves as self-appointed stewards of the public weal; at others they pursued a policy of purely denominational or sectarian evangelism. Other bodies were promotional organizations like land and settlement companies or chambers of commerce; others yet were business or professional associations whose members cherished colleges or universities as potential economic assets and cultural as well as social attractions for their neighborhood. Religious, business, and professional considerations, primarily local in their immediate import, complemented the traditional public concerns that had led in the colonial period to the establishment of provincial colleges and, after the Revolution, to the creation of the first state universities.

Pre-Civil War Decentralization:

Diversification in the United States was linked to the appearance of private institutions and represented, in its first stages, an attack on the higher education monopoly held by the 18th century provincial colleges. If one is to grasp its full meaning, he must first consider the social, political, and intellectual ramifications of higher education as a public monopoly. In the colonies the colleges were the training grounds of a governing and professional elite precisely because their curriculum was undiffer-

entiated and corresponded, in a rough measure, to the instruction given in the arts faculties of continental European universities and in the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. While it was often emphasized that the colleges were to train ministers, this training was thought to be equally appropriate for lawyers, politicians, statesmen, physicians, businessmen and masters of the Latin grammar schools. The future men of affairs in every professional walk of life were educated together. Unless they had attended the college of a neighboring colony, they had been trained in *the one* institution of their province. There they had formed life-long friendships and imbibed a sense of loyalty and obligation towards their commonwealth. Higher education as a public monopoly had instilled into a society's elite a common devotion to public service in the spirit of *noblesse oblige*.¹

Diversification was to change all this. Going to college in the first half of the nineteenth century would not necessarily provide entry to the ruling elite; would not necessarily acquaint the student with the *one* education—the *artes liberales*—that certified him as a member of a provincial governing class; would not necessarily train him, as Benjamin Franklin expected his Philadelphia academy would do, to enter *any* profession, and would not always give him public status as an “educated man.” Diversification divided and privatized the educated. It destroyed the concept of the “man of affairs” as public leader and replaced it with an expectation of a widespread literacy and business competency among the many. Alexis de Tocqueville observed in the 1830's that “a middling standard is fixed in America for human knowledge,” and that this had led him to believe that there was no other country in the world “where, in proportion to the population, there are so few ignorant and at the same time so few learned individuals.”² It is, of course, not my intent here to argue that diversification of higher education caused the privatization and decline of an educated elite. This is a contention for which evidence would be hard to find, indeed. But the point is that in the United States diversification of higher education in its early stages reflected the decentralization of society and economy and favored private over public initiative and responsibility.

Diversification, decentralization, and privatization led to a decline in the social and academic prestige of the new institutions founded around and after the turn of the century. These schools were less expensive to attend as they first developed in the interior, away from the larger urban centers of trade and commerce. In a period of agricultural depression, particularly in New England, they were eager to attract boys from farming areas and families of orthodox and pious religious leanings.³ Their own poverty together with their frequently evangelistic sense of mission prompted them to enroll as many students as they could, without insisting too closely on past scholastic achievement or future promise. Their students lacked the more sophisticated backgrounds of their contemporaries from old established families in social and cultural centers, and they had been prepared for college in most cases through

1. I have discussed these developments at greater length in my *From Crisis to Crisis: American College Government 1636-1819* (Cambridge, Ma., 1982), part III.

2. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. by Phillips Bradley (New York, 1945), 1:54, 55.

3. On this see David F. Allmendinger, Jr., *Paupers and Scholars: The Transformation of Student Life in Nineteenth-Century New England* (New York, 1975), 12-15.

the Latin instruction of their local minister. Their financial means were limited, in many instances they worked during their college years to defray expenses, and their families paid college fees in produce. The relative absence of Latin grammar schools to prepare students for college and the limited resources of a private college inevitably forced the instructors to spend a good deal of their time in college-preparatory work. Many of the students were enrolled in the grammar school class, rather than in the college proper, and many attended college for one or several years without ever reaching the senior year or graduating with a bachelor's degree. Therefore diversification meant some lowering of academic standards—the “great retrogression” of which Richard Hofstadter once wrote⁴—and made it subsequently impossible to differentiate sharply between institutions of secondary-preparatory education and institutions of higher education.

We can understand and appreciate the meaning of diversification in American higher education during the first half of the 19th century only when we realize the close relationship between and even the identity of preparatory and collegiate institutions. Diversification originated in the institutions of preparatory education, not as a matter of governmental, administrative, or educational policy, but as response to competitive supply and demand on a large number of regionally diverse educational marketplaces. Settlers in the hinterland and on the frontier wanted educational opportunities for their sons and eventually for their daughters as well. They wished to raise up among themselves an educated leadership of their own: Lawyers and physicians, surveyors and accountants, engineers, and schoolmasters and schoolmistresses. As they welcomed among themselves the graduates of Princeton and Yale and other educational missionaries from the East, they expected these men to help them set up schools and colleges of their own and to bequeath to them the educational heritage of the civilized world. Eventually they would want to strike out into agricultural and industrial education as well. Though the sounds of classical learning echoed through the halls of the new institutions, the marks and interests of a new country and a new society were also plainly in evidence.

They gave to these institutions a wide range of purposes and names, and blurred the lines of distinction between secondary and collegiate education. If we look at Illinois for an example we find that before 1855 public elementary schools as we know them today did not exist in the state.⁵ Apart from the efforts of a few localities and of private schoolmasters who were concerned with common schools, the educational effort that existed was devoted in a rather undifferentiated manner towards preparatory and collegiate education. Institutions were chartered whose purpose was “the diffusion of knowledge,” “the promotion of the general interests of education,” and the qualification of “young men to engage in the several employments and professions of society ... to discharge honorably and usefully the various duties of life.” Their trustees were pledged to expend donations they had accepted “in conformity with the express conditions of the donor”—what ever they might be. As a result the

4. Richard Hofstadter, *Academic Freedom in the Age of the College* (New York, 1961), 209–222.

5. Henry C. Johnson, Jr. and Erwin V. Johanningsmeier, *Teachers for the Prairie: The University of Illinois and the Schools, 1868–1945* (Urbana, 1972), 12.

character of much of the educational work in the state remained on the level of preparatory secondary schooling, even though many of the chartered institutions had been given the right to grant academic degrees.⁶

What diversification actually meant may become clearer when one looks at the types and names of institutions founded in Illinois before 1855. There we find female high schools and teacher seminaries; literary and theological institutions; female academies; liberal institutes for the establishment and support of education; seminaries of learning for the advancement of religion, science, and "the cause of education generally;" at least one seminary for the promotion of "English and German literature;" one commercial and mathematical institute to teach "double-entry book-keeping and the laws of trade, of commercial calculations and the higher mathematics;" manual labor colleges, schools, seminaries, and universities; medical and literary colleges and universities as well as agricultural and female colleges and universities. In many instances, to be sure, these differences in designations amounted to no more than words. One may be reasonably sure that what went on in the classrooms did not differ much from school to school. What a teacher did or could do, after all, was largely prescribed by the state of prior education—or lack of it—of his students. But in comparison with the quite uniform and universally recognized character of an 18th century college curriculum, the differences introduced into American collegiate education in the first half of the 19th century were novel and momentous.

Evidently the diversification taking place in the first half of the 19th century represents an entrepreneurial response to demands from certain segments of the population. Parents were fearful that their children might succumb to the often decried "barbarism" of the frontier. If they were worried for their sons, they were even more concerned for their daughters. Colleges could "take care" of sons by preparing them for a better and socially more distinguished career than the parents had enjoyed. They would shelter daughters and, should there be need to bridge the waiting period until marriage or, even worse, to face the prospect of life as a spinster, they would get them ready for useful employment as schoolteachers. There were demands, too, for new professional career training in industry, technology, agriculture, business—all activities needed in the exploitation of the continent. Illinois does not exhaust the responses. In New York, for example, a technical college was opened with the Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute at Troy. Professional schools in medicine, law, and divinity were common in many states. After 1865 colleges for black students began to grant baccalaureate degrees in the North and to open their doors in the South. Much, though not all, of this educational upheaval competed with traditional preparatory and collegiate institutions and, in its spontaneity, appeared without benefit of or hindrance by governmental planning or public supervision. Diversification was a manifestation of educational *laissez-faire*.

Though the overwhelming numbers of new foundations were of private origin, public institutions were not entirely absent. The U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, was a federal institution, and state universities were created in Georgia, North Carolina, Vermont, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia, Alabama, India-

6. The quoted passages in this paragraph and the next as well as the various designations of academic institutions have been taken from Illinois State Statutes of the period.

na, Michigan, Missouri, Mississippi, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Advocates of new directions for higher education in teacher preparation, agriculture, and industry succeeded in mobilizing popular demand for federal aid to higher education and, with some help from the novel and pressing circumstances created by the Civil War, pressured Congress to pass the Morrill Land Grant Act in 1862. Its intent was to encourage colleges "to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts ... without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics ... in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."⁷ With the passage of that act diversification passed its early stages of spontaneous, even haphazard growth, and was recognized as a key ingredient of national educational policy. As such it had come to encompass at least three distinct purposes: 1) To satisfy the desire for educational opportunities for a socially, ethnically, and religiously diverse population; 2) to provide trained and skilled experts for many different areas of the national economy; and 3) to aid professional establishments in enforcing standards of performance by supervising entrance into the profession and by setting up and maintaining professional qualifications. In the next one hundred years, from the end of the Civil War to beyond the middle of the twentieth century, diversification among and within private and public institutions became the chief device by which American higher education maintained and enlarged the key role it began to play in the country's expanding economy.

Post-Civil War Differentiation:

After the Civil War diversification did not involve, as has sometimes been implied, a replacement of traditional liberal arts colleges with state universities or professional and vocational schools of various types. Instead, diversification added to the already existing variety of institutions. It surrounded liberal arts colleges with technical, mechanical, agricultural and other schools and thus supplemented rather than took the place of the traditional curriculum. Slowly but steadily diversification also raised the level of academic instruction until, towards the end of the century and thereafter, some professional schools (primarily law and medical schools) began to require a bachelor's degree as prerequisite for entry. The emerging pattern of the drawing-in of occupational and professional training into the universities was twofold: Some fields, such as teaching and commercial training, moved up from the academy or institute level of secondary education into collegiate degree programs. Normal schools became teachers colleges. Others like engineering and medicine brought on-the-job training of construction site and hospital into the classroom. As the liberal arts curriculum of the colleges was extended into the Graduate Schools of Arts and Sciences, it experienced a transformation towards professional instruction for teachers and writers, scholars and critics, civil servants and diplomats. We may therefore say that diversification before the Civil War had prepared a wide platform of institutional types on which with the onset of largescale industrial development a new configura-

7. For the Morrill Act see Edward Danforth Eddy, Jr., *Colleges for Our Land and Time: The Land-Grant Idea in American Education* (New York, 1956).

tion of academically and technically more advanced institutions could be placed and developed without making superfluous or destroying the older institutions.

Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, may serve as an example of post-war diversification where a traditional liberal arts curriculum was surrounded with many specialized studies on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. To this day the university's seal carries the words of the university's founder, Ezra Cornell, "I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study."⁸ At Ithaca and in many state universities the democratic impulse to provide opportunities for a broadly-based, diverse, and ever growing electorate spurred on the tendency towards diversification. The answer to the charge that colleges and universities were privileged sanctuaries for an elite came in the form of diversified institutional and curricular offerings. It was a response to student interest and social demand. A century later this departure from the curricular uniformity and socially limited "old-time college" pattern of higher education came to be derided as drift towards "academic supermarkets." But critics of the 1960s forgot or chose to ignore that founders like Ezra Cornell and university presidents like Andrew White had joined their democratic openness towards new students with their eagerness to accept new fields of study while insisting strenuously and successfully that intellectual discipline and scholarly excellence prevail among all students, no matter what their origin and their choice of field.

However "democratic" and responsive to popular demand diversification may have been at the large universities, it was distinct from its earlier occurrence at antebellum campuses where it had flourished on the preparatory and secondary level. The large university centers after the war diversified through calls for advanced scholarship, research, and professional training. These, it was argued, were needed to stimulate national economic development, not just to satisfy individual ambition. Considerations of a purely academic nature—that no discipline could grow in isolation, and that each needed new knowledge and insights from sister disciplines—were linked with references to the competitive position of American higher education with universities abroad. Pointing to the effect on American scientific, industrial, technical, and agricultural progress, American college graduates complained that the lack of opportunities for advanced training and research in American universities prevented them from developing their talents and serving their country. The interests of an individual career, of the advance of scholarship, and of the national welfare thus came to be blended in the new demand for graduate and professional education. The new universities laid claim not only to leadership in education and research, but in national, industrial, agricultural, and business development as well. Their aim was not learning for learning's sake alone, not research for the sake of pushing back the boundaries of knowledge, but learning and research as university contributions to the nation. Woodrow Wilson, then a professor at Princeton, expressed it well in 1896. "When all is said," he declared, "it is not learning but the spirit of service that will give a college place in the public annals of the nation."⁹ In the last analysis, public

8. Morris Bishop, *Early Cornell 1865-1900* (Ithaca, 1962), 74.

9. Woodrow Wilson on "Princeton in the Nation's Service," reprinted in Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith, eds., *American Higher Education: A Documentary History* (Chicago, 1961), 2:694.

service was both initial spur and ultimate justification for the diversification of the academic enterprise in the modern age.

The service ideal found its most explicit definition in the Midwest where, in conjunction with the political philosophy of the Progressive Party, it came to full bloom in the "Wisconsin Idea." To serve all the people of Wisconsin through research and teaching was declared to be the function of the state university. Research was to address the state's economic, social, political, and cultural problems, and the university's curriculum was to respond to the needs and desires of the people. As these problems, desires, and needs were diverse, so the university could no longer restrict itself to the transmission of a liberal arts curriculum to its students on the campus. For President Van Hise (1903-1918) the Wisconsin Idea provided the opportunity to distinguish the Madison campus from its many competitors among the private colleges in Milton, Beloit, Appleton, Kenosha, Ripon, and Racine. Already at the middle of the century newspaper editorials had demanded that the university as state institution should be "made accessible to the masses of the youth of the state—the poor as well as the rich," and that "a department of agriculture and mechanics as well as medicine and law" be opened.¹⁰ Such new and distinctive departures, Van Hise knew, carried weight with legislators in the state capitol as they deliberated on appropriations and would answer the question why the campus at Madison should receive public support when such funds would be withheld from the private institutions. But that was not all. Outreach activities had begun with agricultural short-courses and Farmers' Institutes all across the state. Faculty research and consulting, correspondence courses on every level including vocational and elementary school work, popular lectures, county agricultural agents, and faculty participation as advisors to state departments and commissions—all these activities became part of the Wisconsin Idea. The sleepy little Madison campus of mid-century was transformed by the first decades of the twentieth century into an academic center of national and worldwide significance. Diversification of its activities, its curriculum, its teachers and students had accompanied this change.

If service was the announced aim of the new university, research was the motor that made the new departure possible. By 1900 research had come to replace teaching as the university's most characteristic activity. Inquiry or discovery and the dissemination of the new knowledge rather than as in the past the transmission of traditional wisdom and of information came to be seen as a professor's task. The modern university structure of departments and institutes developed in response to demands for trained professionals in science, engineering, medicine, and public administration as well as in consequence of the universities' desire to excel in the traditional academic fields. In the latter the stress on scientific methods of inquiry had begun with textual criticism in Biblical studies, literature, and history. It had led to the opening of graduate seminars and libraries as "laboratories" of the humanities. It continued with the never-ending elaboration of new research methods and new theories in the various academic fields, an elaboration which made specialization and thus diversification the hallmark of the modern university. Research, wrote G. Stanley Hall of Clark Uni-

10. Editorial in *The Southport Telegraph*, February 15, 1850.

versity, became the university professor's religion. It was, Hall said, "the very highest vocation of man."¹¹

The rise of service and research inevitably lowered the prestige of teaching and of the undergraduate colleges that continued to cherish teaching as their central concern. This is not to say that research specialists could or would not teach, but it is to say that a shift occurred in the priorities scholars assigned to their varied tasks and in the self-image they cultivated. While within the large universities some professors and departments remained faithful to their teaching, others committed themselves to research and graduate instruction. Among institutions a similar diversification set in. Small undergraduate colleges stressed undergraduate teaching as their mission and advertised the close relationship between faculty members and students to be found in their class and seminar rooms; large research universities delegated much undergraduate teaching to graduate assistants and placed their professors in large lecture halls to speak before hundreds of students. As service and research rather than teaching became the professors' chief occupations their loyalties turned from their college and students to their specialty and their colleagues. As they shaped for themselves a new professional identity as scientific investigators, they came to compare themselves, as one professor once remarked, to army officers who loved their branch of the service but felt little or no attachment to the post on which they served. Institutional identification was temporary; commitment to their field remained permanent.

The new sense of professional identity also highlighted the importance of the profession in the life and work of the scholar. The professional association located the scholar in the world of work. The scholar's peer group consisted not necessarily, not even customarily, of colleagues in college or university, but of colleagues in the profession. The scholar was above all a biologist, or engineer, or historian; he was a professor or a teacher only secondarily. His or her prestige, salary, and place of work was not always determined by colleagues in the university, but by fellow-professionals who might have been employed by private business or government. As a consequence the scholar's decisions often reflected concerns of his professional colleagues about professional qualifications and certification or conditions of the marketplace rather than issues of moment to his college or university. Diversification, specialization, and professionalization thus lead us to doubt whether, towards the end of the nineteenth century, one could any longer speak meaningfully of "academic" issues, whether it was possible to find policy questions in higher education that could be considered in isolation from the organized scientific professions. From the ivory tower to the board or conference room might well describe the modern scholar's professional pilgrimage.

Last, but not least, diversification altered the meaning and effect of college teaching, changed, if you will, the "feel" of the classroom. The "old-time" professor had found his prototypical role like the clergyman-college president in the moral philosophy course, discussing with the graduating seniors any subject under the sun and exploring the lessons the students could draw from it for their ethical conduct as gentle-

11. In G. Stanley Hall, *Life and Confessions of a Psychologist* (New York, 1923), 338.

men-scholars. His successors, professors of the modern social sciences, now would see themselves as expert professionals dispensing information to future specialists and technicians.¹² As Cornell exemplifies the “democratic” university and Wisconsin the service ideal, President Eliot’s (1869–1909) Harvard enables one to understand better the meaning of diversification for teaching. Eliot introduced the elective system into the undergraduate college. He believed free elective studies to be more appropriate for students in a democratic society than compulsion under a uniform curriculum. The freedom to choose was in itself an educational experience, forcing the student to take stock of himself. Only with election was it possible, Eliot held, to accommodate the new fields and sciences, and only with such accommodation could Harvard hope to become a great university. The excitement of research and discovery had to pervade the faculty and through them enter into the classroom.¹³ Diversification, thus, could not be relegated to laboratory and seminar, but had to be introduced among the undergraduates as well. Research specialists had to be made aware of their responsibilities as teachers. Research and teaching had to go hand in hand.

Eliot’s views rested on the assumption that Harvard students would receive a general academic education in their pre-collegiate training. Thus he insisted in his 1893 report on secondary school studies that a general academic education be offered in all secondary schools to all students.¹⁴ He thus asked, in effect, that diversification in secondary studies be greatly reduced in favor of a common general education and postponed to the college and graduate years. His plea was to fail. American secondary education remained diversified and when, with the arrival after 1918 of the comprehensive American high school a general education program was introduced, it did not necessarily offer a strong academic preparatory curriculum for all college-bound students.¹⁵ At Harvard and in other colleges Eliot’s elective program was thus curtailed and balanced in the first two undergraduate years with studies in general education. In the undergraduate colleges, then, diversification reached its limits.

The American Pattern:

Did diversification in United States higher education follow a path different from that in Europe? If we compare the influence of state policy and industrial development on research and service and if we trace the growth of professional associations among scholars and scientists we shall find little difference on either side of the Atlantic. The interweaving of university research with demands of industry and business or with governmental and administrative directives reached full strength to-

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12. See Gladys Bryson, “The Emergence of the Social Sciences from Moral Philosophy,” *International Journal of Ethics*, 42 (1932), 304–323.
 13. See Hugh Hawkins, *Between Harvard and America: The Educational Leadership of Charles W. Eliot* (New York, 1972), 92–94.
 14. Known as the report of the Committee of Ten, the document is titled, *Report of the Committee on Secondary School Studies Appointed at the Meeting of the National Education Association, July 9, 1892* (Washington, D.C., 1893).
 15. See *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education: A Report of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, Appointed by the National Education Association, United States Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 35, 1918* (Washington, D.C., 1918).

wards the last quarter of the nineteenth century and has continued unabated ever since. It became a moot question whether scholars could be "free" when every aspect of their professional lives from finding employment to obtaining funding bound them with a thousand ties into the economic and political structures of their nation. The college as ivory tower no longer existed, and diversification obscured even the possibility of defining clearly the scholar's uniquely "academic" task. In these areas it became difficult, if not impossible, to discern differences in the effects of diversification on the two sides of the ocean.

But the case appears in a different light when one looks at teaching. Here history and tradition tell another story. In France the closing of the old universities and the creation of a national system of higher education and in Prussia the founding of the University of Berlin marked the marriage of the modern state and higher education. This, however, occurred before and at the beginning of the nineteenth century at roughly the same time when educational policies in the United States moved in the opposite direction. In its decision in the Dartmouth College Case of 1819 the United States Supreme Court protected colleges and universities against government interference in their affairs and declared *laissez-faire* to be national policy in matters both of business and higher education. Thus while in much of Europe higher education came under government control, in the United States the private institutions of higher education were given their magna charta. Private enterprise was encouraged to design colleges and universities independent of public directives. In France and Prussia centralized planning for both secondary and higher education, linking the one with the other in a system of initial preparatory general education with subsequent professional specialized training, reserved diversification for all practical purposes to the universities.¹⁶ In the United States the "release of energy" during the early national period stimulated the early onset of diversification in both preparatory and collegiate education.¹⁷

The effects on university teaching soon became apparent. While in Prussia diversification was built into the faculty structure of universities or, in France, was given in the very task assigned to the institutes or higher schools and increased gradually with the growth in numbers of students and of academic fields, in the United States the diversification among colleges tended to hold back curricular diversification within them. Eliot's long and only partially successful struggle for the elective system furnishes the best illustration for this contention. In Europe institutional and curricular diversification went hand in hand; in the United States the early beginnings of institutional diversification delayed curricular diversification. We may also note that in a comparative perspective, teaching in the university in contrast to research and service, retained a more central place in university concerns in the United States than it did in Europe. Curriculum as a word used to describe the offerings of a university was a term unfamiliar to European scholars, and was introduced widely into their debates only after World War II. These differences of approach to questions of teach-

16. I say "for all practical purposes" because I recognize the differentiation of secondary curricula into those stressing the humanities and others focusing on the natural sciences; see Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins* (Cambridge, Ma., 1969), 31.

17. The phrase "release of energy" has been coined by James Willard Hurst in *Law and the Conditions of Freedom in the Nineteenth Century United States* (Madison, WI, 1956), 17.

ing and of the curriculum derive, in the last analysis, from differences in point of departure. Where, as in Europe, educational policy was centrally planned, such questions were evaluated primarily for the import they had on national policies and on the labor market. Where, as in the United States, donors, parents, and teachers influenced the decisions of college administrators, questions of pedagogy, teaching, and the curriculum were apt to loom large in public discussion of higher education.

As a final illustration of these differences, let us consider the effects of this different emphasis on university structure and organization. The German university of the late nineteenth century has often been recognized as the model for the new American institutions.¹⁸ But rarely has it been pointed out that American universities did not adopt the German *ordinarius*, the full professor as head of a research institute and single representative of his discipline. Instead, American universities developed the department, consisting of several faculty members who, once promoted to full professorial rank, constituted a collegial unit for both research and teaching. In the more renowned universities these members shared administrative responsibility in rotation, their elected head serving for a time as *primus inter pares*. In the German university, however, the *ordinarius* served permanently with full responsibility over teaching, research, and service in his institute, and without the benefit of support from colleagues of equal standing to share with him the burdens of administration. The *ordinarius* was *primus sine paribus*. Even had he wanted to he could not devote his undivided attention to teaching; his administrative responsibilities as head of a research institute came first. The American department head, on the other hand, knew that he would return to teaching and that, when during his tenure in office he was pressed with administrative duties, he had his colleagues who assumed the teaching duties of the department.

Large-scale institutional diversification in the United States therefore antedated its counterpart in Europe by roughly half a century, whereas the onset of curricular diversification within institutions took place nearly simultaneously. The effects of both institutional and curricular diversification on research, service, and professional associations were very similar on both sides of the Atlantic, while significant differences became apparent in academic teaching. The reason for these divergences and the early beginning of institutional differentiation in the United States must be seen in the different historical roles played by public authorities and private enterprise in the development of higher education in the United States and on the European continent.

18. I have discussed this topic in my *The German Historical School in American Scholarship* (Ithaca, NY, 1965).