

**INNOVATION, KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPMENT
RESEARCH CENTRE (IKD)
OPENING DAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2009**

It is a distinct pleasure to have been invited to speak on the occasion of inaugurating the IKD. I wish to thank Mariana Mazzucato, the Centre Director, and Les Budd, the leader of the Regional Transformation and Development Stream for arranging my visit.

After hearing the mission statements of Drs. Mazzucato, Papaioannou, Mohan, Simonetti, and Budd, I see three areas that are worthy of comment, namely, matters of structure and vision, educational enrichment and social conscience.

To be sure, the IKD reflects great vision and, in fact, optimism on the part of the director Mazzucato. Establishing a centre expressly based on interdisciplinary teamwork in the pursuit of contract and grant supported research marks a bold step. Clearly, the positive energy, expertise and optimism of Mariana Mazzucato infuse all associated with confidence. Because grant or contract supported research often faces complex field related issues of methodology and understanding, cooperation among experts in a variety of disciplines is often a solution leading to innovative results. Yet, it is no easy task to bring together and coordinate the mix of different expertise areas. For these reasons the IKD initiative is singularly impressive.

As part of the Open University, the IKD also shares a unique educational mission. From the American perspective, the OU has always been viewed as producing distant learning survey documents that are unparalleled in both their comprehensiveness and utility. Faculty and students abroad in the more traditional classroom setting have been using the course materials of the Open University for decades with distinctly positive effect. Consequently, it was with great enthusiasm that I learned the IKD intends to continue in the OU tradition by linking its present and future research to the dissemination of enriched educational materials that will be made available, not only to OU students and faculty, but to the academic communities everywhere. I consider this an invaluable contribution.

Finally, something must be said about the admirable sensibility brought to the research mission of the IKD by Mazzucato and associates. This centre is committed to dealing with issues of inequality, uneven development and human rights whenever these dimensions are relevant to research. Accordingly, the IKD staff can make the kind of difference in social issues that is important and which exceeds the utility of research results alone. Such social consciousness enriches further the deep vision driving the entire initiative of the IKD reflecting the distinct concerns of the directors and stream leaders. I commend this sensibility in the highest terms.

Mark Gottdiener
Professor
Department of Sociology
University at Buffalo- SUNY