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Methods and problems in Comparative Urban History, searching for New
Indicators of Success and Backwardness of Towns

Town and university – Manchester, Gothenburg and Tampere

Introduction

The location of universities and research institutes in the town is valued and considered important. They contribute to the local capacity for innovation in all fields of human activity. The university and city affect each other on economic, political and cultural level. Universities are part of the city's knowledge base. They generate knowledge that can be applied and made profitable. Universities create jobs and bring tax revenues, increase services. They help form intellectual traditions and art forms. Academics and students participate in civic life and politics. City life takes on a different colour as urban universities come into existence and take on their different profiles.¹

Universities are founded for many reasons, but nowadays the most common are to respond to the pressure of student numbers and to contribute to a regional economy. Universities have a profound impact on those whom they teach, their research output may have important contributions to intellectual or scientific life and from an economic, environmental and cultural point of view, a university may be expected to have a significant effect on its local and regional community. It is thought that the foundation of new universities would support the development of the infrastructure of the region. Nowadays many European countries like Great Britain, Portugal, Germany have created universities to act as catalysts of regional

¹ Wusten, Herman van der, A warehouse of Precious Goods: The university in urban context. *The urban university and its Identity*. Ed. By Herman van der Wusten. The Geojournal Library. 1998; *The University and city from medieval origins to the present*. Ed. By Thomas Bender. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1988. Ed. By Thomas Bender.

development. In many studies have pointed out that regions that did not have access to technology could not be innovative. Regions and towns need economic diversification to avoid the “good times-bad times” scenario.²

In my current research I analyse what has been the role of universities in the development of cities. The main idea is to analyse universities in industrial milieu. The examples are from England (Manchester), Sweden (Gothenburg) and Finland (Tampere). In this paper I will present some starting points for my research. In first part of my paper, I will give a short introduction to the history of different kinds of town-university relationships in old and new European university cities. Comparing the founding processes of Finnish and international universities it is interesting to contemplate the extent to which regional and local interests have been taken into account. On the second part of my paper I present some research results concerning the regional role of universities. I will discuss which factors could be used in a pertinent investigation and measurement of universities' influence to their cities and surroundings or is it possible to define such factors at all?

“Town and gown”

I am interested in the relationship between universities and their cities: how the local authorities have seen the role of universities in different times. The relationship between city and its university has varied enormously and this is rather neglected research area in university history.³ The history of European universities presents many interesting examples of the complex system of relations between town and gown. For example Rowland Parker has characterised the relationship between Cambridge University and Cambridge town as a 700-years' war.⁴ The late 19th century Britain witnessed the birth of the so-called red brick universities, new civic universities, of which Manchester was first. They had close relations to towns. Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool owed their existence to nineteenth century industrial philanthropy and some state funding was

² Bender, Thomas, Introduction. *The university and city*. Bélanger, Charles H., Can a University be both regional and global. *New universities and regional context. Papers from an international seminar held at Sundsvall, Sweden 14-18 June, 1992*. Ed by Urban Dahllöf, Staffan Selander. Uppsala, 1994, 67-74.

³ Brockliss, Laurence, Gown and town: The university and the city in Europe, 1200-2000. *Minerva* 38:147-170, 2000.

⁴ Parker, Rowland, *Town and gown the 700 years' war in Cambridge*, Stephens, 1983; Parsons, Kermit C., A Truce in the War between universities and Cities: A Prologue to the study of City-University Renewal. *The Journal of higher education*, vol 34, No 1 (Jan., 1963), 16-28.

introduced on a systematic basis from 1919. The new trend expected from institutions of higher education orientation and commitment to society's practical needs (technical sciences, natural sciences, medicine etc.) along the traditional university teaching.

Manchester

The University of Manchester has its origins in Owens College, which was established in 1851 in Richard Cobden's house on Quay Street, Manchester. John Owens (1780 - 1846) was a Manchester textile merchant who left a bequest of £96,942 for the purpose of founding a college for the education of males on non-sectarian lines.⁵

Manchester became the second city of England between 1800 and 1850. The population of Manchester trebled during the years 1800-1850. Manchester was built on cotton and textile. Cotton was the greatest industry of mid-Victorian Britain. The very important industrial product of Manchester was machinery, and the great engineering firms required a more skilled work force and paid to their workers an almost middle class wages. Manchester needed also clerks and other middle class persons, and its growing wealth was invested in banking, insurance and other business of middle class character.⁶

The middle class had very important role in forming and in creating the institutions of modern civic life. In Manchester were founded many intellectual societies during the 19th century. Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society was founded in 1781. The Lit & Phil. was the oldest enduring English Society given to scientific discourse and publication. Between its foundation in 1781 and the opening of Owens College in 1851, central to the achievement of a succession of major scientific figures.⁷ The Royal Institution of Manchester had been established in 1824, mainly to serve as an Art Gallery. The real step forward came through the group which originated in 1833 the Manchester Statistical Society. It was first of this kind in England. The main object of the founders of the statistical society was to apply statistical methods to the study and to the solution of social problems of their day: they promoted a series of social surveys and education was one of

⁵ Fiddes, Edward, *Chapters in the history of Owens College and of Manchester University 1851-1914*. Manchester University Press, Manchester 1937, 11-15.

⁶ Jones, David, R., *The Origins of Civic Universities*. ManchesterLeeds, Liverpool. Routledge, London, 1988.

⁷ Thackray, Arnold, *Natural knowledge in cultural context: The Manchester model*. *The American historical review*, vol 79. 672-709, 1974.

the chief of their interests. Bankers merchants and manufactures formed the main body of the society and their common bond was a keen civic consciousness and a sense of public duty. The public library of Manchester was established in 1851. The Manchester Free Public Library is an remarkable expression of local activity which has more than just local significance.⁸ Higher education institutions were founded, for example the Manchester Mechanics Institution. Manchester Grammar School was most important. Its student numbers grew steadily. Undoubtedly In the middle of the 1850s there were in Manchester many remarkable schools and higher educational institutions.

In Manchester, the middle class manifested its interests for the creation of a civic college earlier than elsewhere; there appeared will, opportunity and favourable preconditions for the new institution. The active middle class, intellectual societies and educational institutions created the base for the civic college.⁹

At the invitation of Statistical Society in 1836 H. L. Jones, a former fellow of Magdalena College, Cambridge, suggested in his lecture to found a University in Manchester. The Paper was published with the title *Plan of a university for the town of Manchester*.¹⁰ His idea was that new universities were needed in the great centres of population. In that way the education could benefit as many as possible. H. L. Jones was dissatisfied with old universities like Oxford and Cambridge.¹¹

The college was originally intended for the local boys of at least fourteen. It moved to the first buildings on Oxford Road in 1873. The buildings around the Quadrangle, designed by Alfred Waterhouse, were completed in 1902. The College was granted a Royal Charter in April 1880 as the Victoria University, a federal institution which established colleges in Leeds and Liverpool. These Colleges were granted their independence in 1903 becoming the Universities of Leeds and Liverpool respectively, and creating the Victoria University of Manchester. Since the late nineteenth century extension lectures had striven to bring the university to people when the people cannot come to the university. The Faculties of

⁸ Jones 1988, 48.

⁹ Hewitt, Martin, *Confronting the Modern City: The Manchester Free Public Library, 1850-80. Urban History*, 27, 1(2000), 63-88.

¹⁰ Charlton, H. B., *Portrait of a University 1851-1951*. Manchester University Press, Manchester 1951, 18-19.

¹¹ Charlton 1951, 18-19; Pullan, Brian & Abendstern, Michele, *A History of the University of Manchester*. Manchester University Press, Manchester 2000.

Commerce and Theology were instituted in 1903 and added to those of Arts, Science, Law, Medicine and Music. The Faculty of Education was added in 1914.¹² The Manchester Business School constitutes the Faculty of Business Administration and was established in 1965. The School of Biological Sciences was created in 1986. University of Manchester is one of the leading research universities in Britain. Nowadays there are more than 18,000 students from all parts of the UK and all over the world, and some 6,500 staff – including more than 3,000 academic, academic-related and research staff.

Gothenburg

The University college in Gothenburg has the same kind of prehistory as the Owens College in Manchester. Bo Lindberg who has written the history of the University of Gothenburg has compared Gothenburg university college with the redbrick universities in Britain for example Manchester. Gothenburg University College was established in 1891 with the help of private donations.¹³ The prerequisite for the success of the University College in Gothenburg was that there were many wealthy bankers, tradesman and industrialists who were concerned with education the best known of which were the families of Carnegie, Ekman, Wijk and Dickson. Gothenburg was during the 19th century an active, middle-class town with growing business and good dignity. There existed ideas, initiatives and possibilities for intellectual and practical cooperation.

In 1891 the first classes were held by seven professors teaching seven subjects to twenty-one students, four of whom were women. In 1907 it became an independent university college with the same status as the two national universities in Uppsala and Lund. Gothenburg University was formally founded in 1954 through the combination of this college with the Medical college, which had been established in 1949.¹⁴ During the 1950s and 60s, the University expanded rapidly, moving from 500 students in the late 1940s to approximately 21 000 in the late 1960s. During the years a number of previously

¹² Charlton 1951; Pullan, Brian & Abendstern, Michele, A history of the University of Manchester, 123-125.

¹³ Lindberg, Bo & Nilsson, Ingemar, *Göteborgs universitets historia I. På högskolans tid. Göteborg 1996.*

¹⁴ Lindberg, Bo & Nilsson, Ingemar, *Göteborgs universitets historia I. På högskolans tid. Ks. myös Fritz, Martin, Från handelsstad till industriestad 1820-1920. Göteborgs historia. Näringsliv och samhällsutveckling. Göteborg 1996.*

independent colleges have been incorporated into the University, the most recent being the College of Health.

In the beginning it was easy for everyone to be housed under one roof. Today, Gothenburg University has about 40 000 students, a staff of well over four thousand, and almost as many part-time teachers. There are approximately 70 departments in all, many of which rent facilities in old stone buildings and other properties in the centre of town. Several new university buildings have increased and most of the departments are located in the city centre.

Tampere

In the course of the nineteenth century, Tampere developed into Finland's only typical industrial town and the only town in Finland built on the basis of large-scale industry.¹⁵ However, Tampere was an important school town already in the 1880's. Practically all children attended municipal elementary school decades before the passing of the compulsory education act of 1921. From the 1880's onwards, several secondary schools where the pupils could eventually pass their matriculation examinations were founded in Tampere. The most significant vocational institute in Tampere was Tampere technical school, founded in 1886. This school was important for the industrial town, because the future foremen and clerical employees of Tampere metal and textile industries received their education there. In addition, several vocational institutes were founded in Tampere in the early years of the twentieth century.¹⁶

In the late 1920's, the fact that Tampere students had no opportunities to pursue their further studies in their home town after their matriculation examination was considered a problem. In the late 1940's Tampere was being systematically built into a university town. In 1960, the School of Social Sciences moved from Helsinki to Tampere, and five years later technical university education was commenced in Tampere.

¹⁵ Haapala, Pertti, *Tehtaan valossa*. Historiallisia tutkimuksia 133. Tampere 1986, 21, 103.

¹⁶ Kaarninen, Mervi, *Nykyajan tytöt*, Hki 1995, 148-154; Valorinta, Veikko, Tampereen Teknillinen oppilaitos 1886-1986. Jyväskylä 1986, 63-72.

As a formal decision the foundation of the School of Social Sciences took place in 1917, the year of the independence of Finland. Financial obstacles, however delayed the actual commencement of activities until the autumn of 1925, when the Civics College was established. In 1930 the institution was renamed School of Social Sciences. School of Social Sciences was from the outset a kind of “free university”, as its students were not required to have matriculated.¹⁷

The School of Social Sciences was a private institution but it was nevertheless dependent on state aid. The state was unwilling to increase the institution's appropriations, because the state was investing to the Helsinki University's Faculty of Political Science. At the same time that the School of Social Sciences was struggling with both economic and premise problems, the town of Tampere began to make plans to establish higher, university level education in town. In 1947 the town of Tampere set as its public local political objective an institution of higher education in Tampere. The idea of provincial universities and institutions of higher education was not familiar at the time, either. Only Helsinki and Turku were genuine university towns. Jyväskylä boasted a pedagogic institution.¹⁸ The town leaders had several reasons for their wish to get an institution of higher education in town. One of the reasons was the image of Tampere, how the town was known in Finland and abroad. Helsinki, Turku and Tampere were the largest towns in Finland. Helsinki and Turku were cultural centres. Tampere was known for its factories and working population. Certain leaders of the town were avid supporters of university education and academic careers. Naturally economic factors also played a role in the question of the institution of higher education. There were several secondary schools in Tampere in the late 1940's.

The debate on the location of the School of Social Sciences had lasted for nearly ten years. The transition stage was also a long one, as the institution opened in Tampere in 1960. The institution had 933 students. There were 24 teaching posts in all, ten of them were professorships.¹⁹ The amazing growth is shown by the increase of students from less than thousand to over four thousand between 1960-1965.

¹⁷ Rasila, Viljo, *Yhteiskunnallinen korkeakoulu 1925-1966*, Tampere 1973.

¹⁸ Laiho, Irma, *Ylimmästä hengenviljelystä tutkijaputkeen*. Koulutussosiologian tutkimuskeskus. Raportteja 13. Turun yliopisto, Turku 1993, 219-220.

¹⁹ Rasila 1973, 263, 272.

Table. Number of students in The School of Social Sciences/University of Tampere, 1950-1975

1950	661
1955	595
1960	933
1965	4049
1970	6766
1975	8548
1980	8630
1985	9206
1990	10955
2003---	15 000

In 1960 the institution only had a faculty of social sciences. The rapid growth is illustrated by the fact that a faculty of humanities was founded in 1964, faculty of economics and administration in 1965 and faculty of medicine in 1972. There were additional plans to found a faculty of mathematics and natural sciences. The institution ceased to be a school specialising in the social sciences, and it was renamed in April 1966 the University of Tampere. The town of Tampere gave important economic support especially to the founding of the faculty of economics and administration and the required teaching posts.²⁰.

Conclusion

The universities in Manchester, Gothenburg and Tampere have several common features in their early history, for example they all were situated in the industrial milieu. Moreover, in each of them there were several persons who understood the importance of the founding an institution of higher education. The beginnings of these university colleges were very modest and their first curricula emphasized liberal arts and social sciences. The Owens College in Manchester began its first academic term in 1851 with 62 students attending day classes. The number of students decreased during the following year: in the session 1856-57 there were only 33 students. The university college in Gothenburg had only 22 students

²⁰ Rasila 1973, 213; Kaarninen, Mervi, *Murros ja mielikuva. Tampereen yliopiston historia 1960-2000*. Tampere 2000.

in the first term in 1891. All three university colleges followed the idea of the free academy and organized lectures also in the evenings.

Idea in Owens College as in other redbrick universities (Leeds 1870, Newcastle 1871, Bristol 1876, Sheffield 1879, Birmingham 1880, Liverpool 1881) was to promote the industry and business life of their cities. Same kind of goals had the local authorities in Tampere during 1940s and 1950s when they struggle to get the School of Social Sciences in Tampere. They understood that old cotton industry could not in future provide wealthy for the inhabitants.

Ho to analyse the effectiveness of universities?

Premises

The interaction between universities and their regions has many different manifestations. In this context is used the concept of effectiveness.²¹ This concept include all kind of activities that university and higher education create for the mechanism of the society in all levels. But itt is difficult to measure the so-called effectiveness of the university. We can ask how the university has reached the before set goals. Several researches have also used the concept of “regional impact”.²² There can be found for example 1) educational impacts and labour force impacts 2) economic impacts 3) knowledge and innovation impacts and 4) social and cultural impacts. In Finland and in other European countries there have been several research projects in which especially social scientists have analysed the regional role of universities and they have published several reports.²³ The regional role of universities or their effectiveness has not been the topic of historical research. In Finland Matti Salo has tried to analyse the effectiveness of the university of Oulu to the development of northern Finland.²⁴ In the university of Tampere was published in year

²¹ Linna, Eila, Korkeakoulun vaikuttavuus ulkopuolisin silmin. Korkeakoulut alueidensa vetureina. *Viisi näkökulmaa vaikuttavuuteen. Korkeakoulujen arviointineuvoston julkaisuja 1999:2.*

²² Salo 2003, 37.

²³ For example: Publications of higher education evaluation council, Edita, Helsinki; New universities and regional context. Papers from an international seminar held at Sundsvall Sweden 14-18 June, 1992, Uppsala 1994.

²⁴ Salo, Matti, *Pohjoinen Alma Mater. Oulun yliopisto osana korkeakoululaitosta ja yhteiskuntaa perustamisvaiheista vuoteen 2000.*

1987 report concerning the economic impact of the university of Tampere to the development of Tampere region.²⁵

1) Educational impacts and labour force impacts

In the case of Oulu the University of Oulu has raised the educational standards at all levels in northern Finland. It has recruited about 70 % of their students from the northern part of Finland and placing approximately the same proportion of their graduates in these area. The university has created educational equality. Northern Finland has received qualified labour force from the University of Oulu. University has eliminated the shortage of academic manpower in the region. There are available qualified teachers and medical doctors. In Finland the foundation of new universities since the sixties linked to the other large scale social reforms in the health care and social services. Public sector workers were needed in Northern Finland and in Eastern Finland and new universities were destined to train them.²⁶

2) Economic impacts

In the case of Tampere before 1960s the young people had to move to Helsinki or Turku after matriculation. It was in Tampere's interests to keep the students and their money in the home town. Furthermore, an institution of higher education added to the town's appeal. Students from elsewhere would move to Tampere and bring their money with them. A university increased the town's tax revenue. University staff and students are actors in the local markets like housing market and all kind of local services. They consume in all sorts of ways. In Tampere case it can be said that the university had in a sense fulfilled its mission. Hundreds of new jobs had been created in Tampere due to the university.

The housing, health and cultural services for the students had an employing effect. The continuing rebuilding of the university created new jobs. The industrial town became gradually known also as a centre of education. This was naturally affected by the location

²⁵ Manninkainen, Veikko, *Selvitys korkeakoulujen taloudellisesta merkityksestä Tampereen kaupunkiseudun kehitykselle*. Tampereen yliopisto. Suunnitteluun liittyviä tutkimuksia ja selvityksiä. 1/1987.

of Tampere University of Technology.²⁷ It is also evident that the town of Tampere considered the Tampere University of Technology more useful co-operation partner, as the Technical University's relations with industry and commerce outside the scientific community were closer than those of the university.

The research report from the late 1980s tells about the remarkable economic impact which university of Tampere and Tampere University of Technology created in the Tampere region: for every FIM which was invested in the economic life through these institutions created on 1,5 increase in the region.

In Finland the university of Oulu has been of decisive importance for the development of Northern Finland in many respects. The university of Oulu played its part in the rapid change in the structure of society in Northern Finland and even accelerated that change. The university did much to ensure that the people of the region had other possibilities for making a living than simply moving elsewhere. In case of Oulu university 's economic impact came about largely by other means that had not been contemplated at that time. It did much to promote the traditional branches of industry. The university of Oulu produced graduate engineers and it did much to support the development of the economy of its region from primary production towards industry and services. Since 1980's its influence was most strongly felt in the training of labour for telecommunications and software industries.

In case of the three cities of Joensuu, Kuopio and Lappeenranta there are several positive impacts on; the universities have brought new employment to areas of high unemployment. Students from outside of each city have brought additional income; employers from outside the area have been attracted to science parks to recruit these students, there have been some benefits in terms of research and teaching links for a few local enterprises.²⁸

²⁶ Salo 2003; Antikainen, Ari & Jolkkonen, Ari, *New universities, Welfare State and Markets. The case of Finland. New universities and regional context. Papers from an International Seminar held at Sundsvall, Sweden 14-18 June, 1992.* Urban Dahllöf, Staffan Selander. Uppsala 1994

²⁷ Mannikainen, Veikko, *Selvitys korkeakoulujen taloudellisesta merkityksestä Tampereen kaupunkiseudun kehitykselle.* Tampereen yliopisto. Suunnitteluun liittyviä tutkimuksia ja selvityksiä. 1/1987. Tampere 1987.

3) Knowledge and innovation impacts

In the recent research literature concerning universities role in the society is used the concept of the ‘learning region’. This suggests that the ‘economic competitiveness of a region can be directly influenced by its ability rapidly to generate, access, understand and transform knowledge and information into learning,’ into innovation. Effective mechanisms for accessing knowledge and applying it as learning are vital in building up ‘endogenous potentials’ and they are vital incentives for attracting inward investment. And universities, which are, naturally a major part of the infrastructure of knowledge and learning of modern societies. And universities, naturally enough, figure prominently in research on the new regionalism and the learning region.²⁹

Universities innovate. Through their research they push back the boundaries of knowledge - and some of this innovation will, given appropriate structures of technology transfer, have commercial application. If this can be kept in the region, then it builds endogenous potential.

4) Cultural and social impacts

Universities raise the quality of human capital. Through their teaching they impart skills, whether vocational or more abstract, whether through traditional degrees, professional development or lifelong **learning**. If those who have been taught can be retained in the **region**, then again universities help build endogenous potentials.³⁰

The influence of the university of Oulu continued to be manifested most directly in its ability to satisfy the labour markets of the north, but it was also gaining a place for itself as a creator of educational capital and cultural identity among the population. Northern Finland became in a sense a model region for the influence of higher education on

²⁸ *Towards the responsive university. The regional role of Eastern Finland Universities.* Ed. by U. Dahllöf et al. Publications of higher education evaluation council 1998:8.

²⁹ Goddard, John, Korkeakoulut ja aluekehitys – yleiskatsaus. *Korkeakoulut alueidensa vetureina. Viisi näkökulmaa vaikuttavuuteen.* Toim. Anne Vähäpassi & Sirpa Moitus. Korkeakoulujen arviointineuvoston julkaisu 1999:2. Helsinki 1999, 23-33.

³⁰ Jeffery, Charlie, Universities and the new regionalism.

society.³¹ The regional universities have also impact on cultural institutions like libraries, theatres and symphony orchestra but this impact is very difficult to estimate.

Many research reports testify that universities have acted as a change agent and catalyst³²

Universities are a collective good also in a more diffuse sense. Their sporting and cultural facilities are often community resources, members of universities often play a prominent role in civic life, in providing advice and leadership for a community. In this way universities can help build 'social capital', reserves of trust and goodwill which give communities collective purpose.

³¹ Salo, Matti, Pohjoinen Alma Mater. Oulun yliopisto osana korkeakoululaitosta ja yhteiskuntaa perustamisvaiheista vuoteen 2000. Rovaniemi 2003.

³² Bélanger 1994.