

The Regional Impact of Universities

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‘Two men and three horses will do more in a day with the plough than twenty men without it.’

‘The miller and his servant will do more with the water mill than a dozen with the hand mill.’







Regional policy:

- a post WW II phenomenon
- related to the establishment of the welfare state
- with a strong belief in governmental planning



‘The conscious attempts by a government to coordinate public policies more rationally in order to reach more fully and rapidly the desirable ends for future development’

**G. Myrdal,
Beyond the Welfare State,
1960, p. 23**



The 'growth pole theory' (1960s):

- stimulating regional development
- in peripheral regions
- through governmental planning and investments
- in order to create synergy and multiplier effects



The herorientation in the 1970s:

- economic recession
- the rise of new technologies
- a new way of governmental policy-making: incrementalism



‘Incrementalism takes existing reality as one alternative and compares the probable gains and losses of closely related alternatives by making relatively small adjustments in existing reality’

**D. Baybrooke & Ch. Lindblom,
A Strategy of Decision,
1963, p. 49**



Modernisation in the 1980s:

- deregulation, privatisation, market coordination
- the rise of the information society
- the increasing interconnectedness of economies



A new regional policy concept:

- renewed attention for economic competitiveness
- interest in potentials and effects of technologies
- interest in a country's / region's knowledge base



The rebirth of the 'growth pole theory' (1990s):

- a distinguished research center
- a skilled labour force
- access to venture capital
- a nearby international airport
- a high quality of life



Globalisation and regionalisation:

- knowledge processes take place in a 'space of flows' (Castells)
- but are also embedded in social relations (Giddens)



Regional development = innovation

- innovation processes have a territorial dimension (Porter)
- innovation takes place in networks
- networks are about linkages (Putman)



Modern concepts of regional innovation:

- clusters
- endogeneuous growth
- learning regions
- mode 2 knowledge production
- triple helix



You see, Charlie', he said, 'not so very long ago there used to be thousands of people working in Mr. Willy Wonka's factory. Then one day, all of a sudden, Mr. Wonka had to ask every single one of them to leave, to go home, never to come back.'

'But why?', asked Charlie.

'Because of spies'.

'Spies?'

'Yes. All other chocolate makers, you see, had begun to grow jealous of the wonderful candies that Mr. Wonka was making, and they started sending in spies to steal his secret recipes'.

R. Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, 1964



The 'Open Innovation' Model:

- interaction between stakeholders
- creation of partnerships
- more than technology

H.W. Chesbrough, *Open Innovation.
The New Imperative for Creating and
Profiting from Technology*, 2003



The Regional Role of European Universities

crucial variables:

- R&D capacity
 - Number of researchers
 - Quality and size of research infrastructure
 - Skills level of regional labour force



The Regional Role of European Universities

crucial variables:

- R&D accessibility
 - size of spill over effects (patents, spin offs)
 - number of graduates
 - level of communication of research results
 - number of consultancy contacts
 - number of spin-off companies
 - university-Industry interaction: joint ventures, facility sharing, joint facilities



The Regional Role of European Universities

institutional strategies:

- create R&D capacity
 - focus and volume
 - economic clustering
 - foster co-operation
 - portfolio analysis



The Regional Role of European Universities

institutional strategies:

- stimulate R&D accessibility
 - anchored in university policy
 - human capital provision
 - knowledge transfer
 - entrepreneurial activities



Regional Impact Strategies:

- accept the 'Open Innovation' model
- build partnerships with stakeholders
- finding and reinforcing regional strengths
- in national and international contexts



‘Knowledge has to flow from those who know things to those who make things. There are many forms these flows can take, from the lectures, philosophical societies, and encyclopedias of the eighteenth century to the community colleges and internet of the twenty-first. But the institutions that facilitate these flows have to exist.’

Joel Mokyr, *The Gifts of Athena, historical origins of the knowledge economy*,
2002, p. 291

