Imagining the Role of the Student in Society: ideas of British higher education policy and pedagogy 1957-1972

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of Warwick, Department of History

July 2021
I read the news today, oh boy...


Our industrial sponsor’s close links with commercial television point directly to an even more far-reaching simplification. The only permanent buildings needed on the site will be students’ residence, exhaustively wired for sound and colour television. Students will no longer have to leave their rooms to attend lectures which can be delivered straight from the staff’s own houses or, better still, by means of pre-recorded video-tape.


The report goes slowly. But it begins to take shape. I calculate that, with luck, at the present rate I shall have a draft by the end of September. This doesn’t sound too long. But from day to day it seems an almost infinite distance away & I should dearly like to be able to forget it for a bit. Still it’s like bathing in not very good weather, once you’re in you enjoy it...

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<tr>
<td>APB</td>
<td>Academic Planning Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APR</td>
<td>Age Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUT</td>
<td>Association of University Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BI</td>
<td>Borthwick Institute for Archives (University of York)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAT</td>
<td>College of Advanced Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBI</td>
<td>Confederation of British Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHE</td>
<td>Committee on Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Central Institution (Scotland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNAA</td>
<td>Council for National Academic Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Central Statistical Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSP</td>
<td>Council for Scientific Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCP</td>
<td>Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Department of Education and Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECPC</td>
<td>Executive Committee of the Promotion Committee (University of Warwick)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBI</td>
<td>Federation of British Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEPI</td>
<td>Higher Education Policy Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HESA</td>
<td>Higher Education Statistics Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAS</td>
<td>Institute of Advanced Study (University of Warwick)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICI</td>
<td>Imperial Chemical Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>Institute of Economic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>London School of Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRC</td>
<td>Modern Records Centre (University of Warwick)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCTA</td>
<td>National Council for Technological Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUS</td>
<td>National Union of Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODNB</td>
<td>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QSL</td>
<td>Qualified School Leaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIBA</td>
<td>Royal Institute of British Architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbr.</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMJM</td>
<td>Robert Mathew Johnson Marshall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SED</td>
<td>Scottish Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SISTER</td>
<td>Special Institution for Scientific and Technological Education and Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>The National Archives, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCCA</td>
<td>Universities Central Council on Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGC</td>
<td>University Grants Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UIJC</td>
<td>University-Industry Joint Committee (CVCP/CBI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UoSA</td>
<td>University of Stirling Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEA</td>
<td>Workers Educational Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>YAT</td>
<td>York Academic Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YRM</td>
<td>Yorke Rosenberg Mardall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YUPC</td>
<td>York University Promotion Committee</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my grandfathers, Dayalji and Valentine,

I am hugely grateful to everyone who contributed to the provision of the privileges which have allowed me to thrive in higher education. I began my undergraduate studies in October 2013. Coincidently, this marked the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the Robbins Report. I had no knowledge of this at the time!

Firstly, thank you to Claudia Stein, who took me under her wing since I attended her undergraduate modules. Thank you for your unbelievable support and encouragement. Thank you so much for the weekly meetings in first year. Secondly, I cannot thank Mathew Thomson enough for his persistent, thoughtful concern. Thank you for being willing to contribute so much energy to helping me develop my ideas into something more concrete and to help me develop my skills as a historian. I also wish to thank Giorgio Riello for his counsel and stewardship in my first year. Thank you too to Charles Walton, Rebecca Earle, Rob Fletcher, Mark Knights, Sarah Hodges, Laura Schwartz, and Sara Hattersley, for your encouragement and guidance. Thank you to my friends in the department, including Pierre Botcherby, Faby Creed (for so much wonderful kindness and advice, you’ll go the furthest of us all I’m sure), everyone else in my cohort, everyone on the Warwick PGR Teaching Community team, and everyone else during my time at Warwick as my tutors, peers, and students – I learned so much from you all.

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It would be disingenuous if I did not acknowledge the enormous and transformative role of Warwick Sport and Warwick SU, and I want to thank everyone involved in those bodies. More than anything, from the bottom of my heart, thank you so much to everyone I met through UWSWP: Ruth (thank you so much for looking after me), Robyn, Dobbo, Katie, Jenny, Ollie, Christian (my ‘economics advisor’) and the ‘Relads’ boys (‘u-nay...UUUNAAAYYY’), Lily and the rest of you from that incredible 2017-18 team, Luke, Oba, Nick, Eliott and stretch and ‘saaauuuwwwnnnaaa?’ club, Maggie and Val (for making my 2020 office hours a uniquely fascinating and enjoyable experience), and everyone else. I could not have asked for a better community to have been a part of or a stronger team to grow with. In the end, I learned just as much from Wednesday afternoons (and

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i I didn’t go looking for this information, but I now know something of the historical context of ‘Doggy doggy doggy, wuff wuff wuff’ and why you dress up to go to Pop!: William Hadden Whyte, *Redbrick: A Social and Architectural History of Britain’s Civic Universities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 211.

evenings) as I did sitting in seminars. Undergraduate learning is immensely impoverished without these opportunities, as the academic year 2020-21 has shown.

Thank you also to Kirsty (and the rest of the Lincoln lot), and Ed, Lucy, and Dave. You guys are great.

Finally, thank you to Siân and Kiran, Nathan, Beth, and the rest of my family. I don’t think I will ever forget the very strange mixture of feelings I had while I was sheltering with you during the pandemic: confusion, real anger, and concern, but also the freedoms of runs exploring sandy hills and morning sea swims in the sun. Thank you for the love and support you have given me.

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iv See Conclusions.
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form, to this or any other University for a degree.

Signature:

Josh Patel
ABSTRACT

Today, the 1960s are fondly remembered as a time when higher education in Britain was understood as a public good. University was free for students, paid for by the state. This expenditure was to provide equality of opportunity, especially for those of lower classes and women. Since the 1990s by contrast, higher education has been based on a marketised funding regime. Self-interested students choose to purchase useful ‘skills’ from higher education providers in order to earn higher wages in the future. Much of the existing historical literature sharply distinguishes this ‘neoliberal’ era from the ‘social democratic’ era of the 1960s.

The historiography of post-war Britain increasingly challenges such ‘rise-and-fall’ narratives of social democracy and instead emphasises its dynamism and flexibility. This thesis shows there is much greater diversity than hitherto appreciated in ideas of social democratic policy and pedagogy. Universities in particular were less conservative or complacent in their ambitions than they have been perceived. This includes a complicated relationship with the place of personal flourishing in liberal thought. Education for citizenship and education for consumerism are not so easily disentangled.

This thesis explores the university ‘student’ as imagined by a vanguard of reformist university leaders. It begins with neoliberal economist Lionel Robbins, chairman of the famous Committee on Higher Education (1961-63). It examines how the choice of the individual citizen-consumer student was made central to determining the pattern and size of higher education. This followed Robbins’ conviction that the freedom of choice was central to the ‘good society’ and human flourishing, but that it must be secured by state intervention. To educate this student, university pedagogies were redeployed to meet the new challenges of the Cold War and modern technological society. Through liaison with industry, reformists imagined a university education would provide students with a holistic understanding of society. They would learn how to best apply their specialist knowledge in the service of liberal capitalism. This philosophy found its way into the pedagogy and built environment of the new universities, including York, Warwick, and Stirling. Throughout the expanding British higher education system were a series of complicated alliances between the priorities of the consumer and the market and the values of the fair, free, ‘good society’.
1. INTRODUCTION

UNIVERSITIES AND GOVERNMENTALITY

1.1. HARSENT

Millington Harsent – radical educationist, former political scientist, well-known Labour voter, mountain climber, bicycle-rider, (and alleged pot smoker) – was the vice-chancellor of the fictional University of Watermouth in Malcolm Bradbury’s classic campus novel, The History Man (1975). Like many of the new universities it satirises, Watermouth was founded in the early 1960s. Its campus was located on the hinterlands of its namesake, a middle-class town on the English south coast. Harsent meets Bradbury’s protagonist, new professor and ‘louche radical sociologist’ Howard Kirk, at a formal faculty party hosted at a converted farmhouse overlooking the suburbs one autumn evening in 1967.¹ To illustrate the scene, Bradbury sets moths fluttering about the two Englishmen as they discuss the ‘purgative value of pornography in the cinema’; but to properly conjure the atmosphere of higher education in the 1960s, as one former student recalled, you need to add a persistent smog of cigarette smoke.² During their conversation Harsent produces a smart brochure, a copy of the university’s development plan titled ‘Creating a Community/Building a Dialogue’, explicating how the new architecture and space at Watermouth would generate ‘new systems of human relationship’. Predictably this optimism was immediately quashed when in May 1968 student activists occupied the Watermouth administration buildings and Harsent fled, relocating his office to the boiler house.

² To hammer the point home, as the former student added, ‘by far the majority of players, students, lecturers, and of course, Council – were male, and even more overwhelmingly were white’: Judith Condon in Edward Palmer Thompson, Warwick University Ltd: Industry, Management and the Universities (Nottingham: Spokesman, 2014 [1970]), pp. xiv-xv. In 1969 the University of York University Council minutes reported that ‘Although it recognises the strain caused to non-smokers by smoke-filled examination rooms, the Student Body also recognises that many students cannot work at maximum efficiency without cigarettes’: BI UOY/M/UC/1/2, University Committee, 23 October 1969.
The Revolutionary Student Front went to see him, and asked him to declare the university a free state, a revolutionary institution aligned against outworn capitalism; the Vice-Chancellor, with great reasonableness, and a good deal of historical citation, explained his feelings of essential sympathy, but urged that the optimum conditions and date for total revolution were not yet here. They could probably be most realistically set some ten years away, he said; in the meantime, he suggested, they should go away and come back then. This angered the revolutionaries, and they wrote ‘Burn it down’ and ‘Revolution now’ in black paint on the perfectly new concrete of the perfectly new theatre.³

Bradbury’s characterisation of the vice-chancellor is caustic, but Harsent is clearly a left-leaning though bourgeois liberal, a politics emphatically rejected by the Maoist and Marxist student revolutionaries.⁴

This thesis takes as its subject the leaders of higher education and what they imagined the role of the student in society should be during the expansion of higher education over the ‘long sixties’ from the mid-1950s to the economic crises of the early 1970s.⁵ Like the fictional Harsent, these elites fancied themselves visionaries, and, like Harsent, they have also been lambasted as complacent.⁶ They were instrumental members of ‘the Establishment’.⁷ They authored government

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⁶ On the etymology of elite/élite see Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1985), pp. 80-82.
reports, served on consultative committees, recommended policy on issues such as the public arts and science education in schools, liaised with industrialists, promoted university interests, and led funding campaigns. They made speeches and addresses, sat on bodies such as the venerable Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principles (CVCP) or the gracious University Grants Committee (UGC), and staffed the Academic Planning Boards of new universities. The foremost amongst them became members of the House of Lords. Some had served in Whitehall during the Second World War, others had fought. They were generally well respected and socially well connected to official centres of power. The records of this small national network (speculatively numbering around two or three hundred men and a handful of women) provides this thesis with its source base.

These university leaders were auxiliaries to the reform of British higher education during the long sixties, characterised by rapid and exciting expansion of student numbers (and costs). It was part of a wider programme beginning during the Second World War of state welfare provision, to redistribute wealth to democratically agreed social ends in pursuit of social justice. Higher education was considered a public good: free for students and funded by the state. It would provide equality of

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10 For the authoritative narrative of this development and its complexities, see Shattock, *Making Policy*.
Introduction

opportunity, especially for those of lower classes and women, to maximise national productivity and to educate students so they might participate in the ‘good society’.

It is easy to draw a sharp contrast between the system of the sixties and the British higher education system today in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Higher education is no longer considered a public good, and the student’s role in society has become more self-interested. The student has become a consumer, concerned with maximising their future returns. They choose to purchase useful skills (or just a degree certificate) from higher education providers through a government loan and sell their labour on the labour market for a higher price than they might otherwise have obtained had they not paid to attend university. The government, meanwhile, has looked to secure a system which prioritises ‘high value’ courses based on ‘Industrial Strategy priorities’. Commentators and students alike worry over the effects of life-long student debt and the selfishness and individualism of such a consumer-based, marketised system. Students from outside the UK are ineligible for these loans and pay full fees. This has led some universities, such as the LSE, to become dependent on this extra income and their ability to attract it in a global marketplace of higher education. The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has dramatically exposed the sector’s vulnerability. Headlines warned of a £11 billion loss across the sector (more than a quarter of annual income) and that thirteen institutions (teaching five percent of the student population) were at risk of insolvency.

11 I was part of the first cohort of school-leavers in 2012 required to pay the new £9000 fees. I took a gap-year and went into further education for a year instead at my local college (paid for by funding from my local county council), before enrolling at the University of Warwick for 2013-14.
15 Elaine Drayton and Ben Waltmann, ‘Will Universities Need a Bailout to Survive the Covid-19 Crisis?’ (The Institute for Fiscal Studies, July 2020); see also Leo Goedegebuure and Lynn Meek, ‘Crisis – What Crisis?’
Much of the existing historical literature sharply distinguishes between the 1960s and today. They see little to connect the two systems, and often classify the former as ‘social democratic’ and the latter as ‘neoliberal’. This thesis argues that this narrative of the rise and fall of social democratic politics and the triumph of neoliberalism since the 1990s obscures as much as it reveals. It is also cautious of a number of claims since 2010 that the expansion of higher education of the 1960s shares a common spirit and aim with the market and loans system of today. Instead, this thesis explores the complexity, overlap, and contradictions in discourse promoting expansion in the 1960s. It seeks to respond to the call of Robert Anderson to integrate the history of post-war higher education within ‘social change and with broader intellectual and cultural developments’ which ‘as yet hardly exists’.16

The thesis focuses on one contested but central element of the higher education system in the long 1960s: the imagined role of the individual student. What sort of characteristics and behaviours did university elites intend to inculcate in their students? Placing the rhetoric and plans of a selection of university leaders and vice-chancellors into a wider intellectual context demonstrates how some reformist university leaders imagined that more students should be provided with the right to choose to attend higher education and embark on it in self-interest. Higher education, by immersing students in an academic community, would be a transformative experience. It would prepare students for their future careers or societal roles. They would not only gain specialised knowledge but cultivate their character so they might more usefully deploy their learning innovatively to face the challenges of the cross-disciplinary real world. Students would come to understand and maximise their contribution to (and returns from) the prosperous,
imagined ‘good society’ of liberal capitalism. Elements of these characteristics are today associated with post-1990s marketisation strategies. This re-examination nuances our understanding of the dynamism of social democracy and complicates the existing narratives of the development of higher education in Britain since 1945.

1.2. EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION 1945-1973

1.2.1. Higher Education

In this thesis, higher education refers to any formal education (full-time or part-time) after taking in England the Advanced level of the General Certificate of Education (GCE A-levels) or the Scottish Certificate of Education Highers Grade customarily taken at around age eighteen. After the Second World War, higher education in Britain became a matter of increasing importance in public affairs and received intense financial support. It experienced rapid expansion, growing earnestly in just about all measurements from the mid-1950s until the early 1970s. In 1962, 8.5 percent of the total population of young people attended all forms of higher education (a measure now referred to as the Age Participation Rate, APR). This had increased to fourteen percent in 1972. From 1945 to the mid-1970s there were three identifiable sectors of higher education, between which was a variable

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17 W.A.C. Stewart notes that ‘higher education’ as a term did not enter common use until after the First World War and at that point referred only to the universities and Silver argues this was maintained until the mid-twentieth century; only in the 1960s with the Robbins Report did the term come into more general usage and include advanced technological education and teacher education. W.A.C. Stewart, Higher Education in Postwar Britain (London: Macmillian Press Ltd; 1989), p. xiii; Harold Silver, ‘Things Change but Names Remain the Same’: Higher Education Historiography 1975–2000, History of Education, 35 (2006); Peter Scott, ‘Conclusion: Triumph and Retreat’, in David Warner and David Palfreyman (eds.), The State of UK Higher Education: Managing Change and Diversity, (Buckinghamshire: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press, 2001), p. 190. Confusingly ‘advanced further education’ was often used to label further education studies at degree level which this thesis includes in its definition of higher education. The Advanced Level of the GCE (colloquially known as A-levels) were taken after sitting Ordinary Level GCE (O-levels) taken at age 16, until their replacement in 1988 by the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). In Scotland the equivalent School Leaving Certificate was replaced by the Scottish Certificate of Education in 1962.

18 For a helpful timeline of events and developments but only to 2008, see Tight, Development of HE in the UK, pp. 29-51.

and contested degree of mobility: the universities, ‘further education’, and teacher training.\textsuperscript{20} Prior to the 1960s, higher education had developed without a centralised plan or national agenda.\textsuperscript{21} This messiness made higher education liable to attempts to reimagine its function and organisation, which competed for influence. It was assumed reform was needed so that higher education might better contribute through its research and teaching to the imagined ‘good society’, itself a contested vision.\textsuperscript{22}

The history of higher education in Britain since 1945 has an interesting dimension in that most contributors to the literature are also participants in it.\textsuperscript{23} It is a rapidly developing field, including the work of Robert Anderson, Harold Silver, and William Whyte.\textsuperscript{24} Many emerging histories are especially sensitive to gender, space and architecture, student politics, and increasingly race, sexuality, and global contexts.\textsuperscript{25} Higher education is often incorporated into the broader history of

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid; this is also the structure of higher education adopted by most of the historiography as explained in footnote 17.
\textsuperscript{22} Peter Scott, ‘Robbins, the Binary Policy and Mass Higher Education’, Higher Education Quarterly, 68 (2014). See CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 4. There were like in the early-nineteenth century, as William Whyte identifies, a ‘multitude of competing visions’ which could provide the basis for ‘an alternative history of higher education’. Whyte, Redbrick, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{25} For example, on gender: Carol Dyhouse, Students: A Gendered History (London: Routledge, 2006); Laura Schwartz, A Serious Endeavour: Gender, Education and Community at St Hugh’s, 1886-2011 (London: Profile Books, 2011). On architecture: Stefan Muthesius, The Postwar University: Utopian Campus and College
education, such as in the writings of Sheldon Rothblatt, Roy Lowe, and Peter Mandler. Universities
appear in histories of state building, such as Patrick Joyce and David Edgerton, and form the
backdrops to many intellectual histories. The most comprehensive accounts of higher education in
the post-war period have originated from higher education research, including Malcolm Tight, Peter
Scott, Nicolas Hillman, and Michael Shattock. An extensive ‘jubilee history’ exists both celebrating
and considering the history of institutions, particularly as many ‘new’ institutions reached their
fiftieth anniversaries during the 2010s (often sponsored by their subject institutions for fund-raising
or marketing purposes, raising obvious issues). Conversely, the development of higher education
policy in Britain has prompted extensive reflection, often highly critical of the governance and
‘marketisation’ of the university system, and not always writing exclusively as historians but writing
from ‘within’, including Stefan Collini and James Vernon.

(London: Yale University Press, 2000); Whyte, Redbrick; and his forthcoming volume The University: A Material
History; the Twentieth Century Architecture special issue on Oxford and Cambridge (11, 2013); and Alistair Fair,
History, 57 (2014). On the global context: Jill Pellew and Miles Taylor, 'Utopian Universities: A Global History of
the New Campuses of the 1960s' (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020); the special issue on European
Heffernan, Laura Suarsana, and Peter Meusburger, 'Geographies of the University: An Introduction', Peter
Meusburger, Michael Heffernan, and Laura Suarsana (eds.), Geographies of the University (Cham: Springer

26 Rothblatt, 'The Writing of University History at the End of Another Century'; Roy Lowe, 'The Changing Role of

University Press, 2013); David Edgerton, The Rise and Fall of the British Nation (London: Penguin Books Ltd,

28 Shattock, Making Policy; Tight, Development of HE in the UK; Peter Scott, The Crisis of the University

29 See Pellew and Taylor, 'Utopian Universities'; Pieter Dhondt, 'Introduction: University History Writing: More
Than History of Jubilees?’, in Pieter Dhondt (ed.), University Jubilees and University History Writing: A
Challenging Relationship (Leiden: Brill, 2015); David Hayes, ‘The Hard Task of Writing a University History’
(University Affairs/Affaires universitaires, 11 February 2015) <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/
feature-article/hard-task-writing-university-history> [Accessed 06 September 2020]; Gary McCulloch,
'Historical Insider Research in Education', in Pat Sikes and Anthony Potts (eds.), Researching Education from
the Inside: Investigations from Within (London: Routledge, 2008), especially pp. 59-61; and Michael Shattock,
'The Transformation of the Civic Universities', History of Education 31 (2002). Reviewing this vast literature for
all British universities, let alone higher education, would require an as yet unwritten bibliographic review
article. See Chapter Six for an overview of three of the New Universities: York, Warwick, and Stirling.

1.2.1.1. Universities

Figure 1. Growth in university institution numbers by type from 1880-2018. The expansion of higher education of the 1960s and the proliferation of university institutions is evident (red); but see also the redesignation of the polytechnics in 1992 (yellow). Precursor institutions such as institutions of University College status and technical colleges are not included. Data from Tight, The Development of HE in the UK, and from 2010-2020 from HESA.

In the first sector of higher education were the universities: autonomous and elite institutions which awarded their own degrees. They were dedicated, at least in reputation, to the pursuit of scholarly learning and truth through teaching and research, and the transmission of culture and civilising principles.\textsuperscript{31} In 1938 there were twenty-four universities, rising to around fifty in 1966 (where it

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remained until 1992). These universities represented a diverse pattern of ages, sizes, attitudes, and governance, to say nothing of their differences in educational philosophies. They ranged from the esteemed ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge (collectively referred to as ‘Oxbridge’ since 1850), the four ancient Scottish universities, secular London, the nineteenth-century civic or redbrick universities often developed from Victorian technical colleges, the later twentieth-century civics, and the ‘innovative’ New Universities and other institutions upgraded to university status in the 1960s (Figure 1). They were, by the standards of the twenty-first century, small communities. In 1962 only thirteen universities had more than 3000 students (the largest, Oxford and Cambridge, had 9000 each, and the federal University of London had around 23,000). The largest growth in student numbers was in the civic universities. From the period 1949-73 Leeds grew from 3000 to 10,000 students; Manchester from 5000 to 15,000; and Birmingham grew from 1600 students in 1938 to 7000 in 1970.

To attend universities, students were required to obtain a minimum of 3 A-level passes but many universities required higher grades. In 1939 the total UK university student population was 50,000. The total rose consistently after 1954, from 81,700 to 239,400 in 1973. While dramatic, this expansion was still, overall, small and unequally distributed through the population. In 1962 just

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34 CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 22-23. Prior to 1800 universities were even smaller. In 1800 between the English and Scottish universities there were barely 4500 students in total. Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, p. 17.
36 In 1914 the number of university students was as low as 24,000 and by 1920 had risen to 50,000, but the rate of expansion was not sustained, and stagnated at this level until the war. Numbers rose to a peak of 85,000 in 1950 as the system absorbed a peak of returning servicemen and declined slightly before beginning their rise in 1954. Michael Beloff, The Plateglass Universities (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), pp. 20-22.
four percent of British young people attended university and an even lower proportion of the total population of young women, just two and a half percent. Women’s share of places even fell overall from 31 percent in the mid-1920s to 28 percent in 1964 and did not rise much beyond these figures during the sixties. They were also concentrated in different universities and disciplines. Men increasingly monopolised science subjects. Under a quarter of students entering universities from 1955 to 1961 were children of manual workers, and the proportion even declined a few percentage points in the 1970s. Competition for university places rose substantially over the period. From 1945, a university education was increasingly a full-time education and universities became national institutions with national (even international) catchment areas. Students were ‘delocated’ with the proportion of students ‘leaving home’ to attend universities increasing from 58 percent in 1938 to 80 percent in 1961. Students attending British universities who were not British were called ‘overseas students’ and consistently through the 1960s were counted as just under ten percent of

38 The student populations of Oxford and Cambridge were only 12 percent female whereas the ‘New Universities’ approached greater equality; based on historian Carol Dyhouse’s calculations the average there during the 1960s was around 40 percent; see Chapter Six. Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 78; Dyhouse, Students: A Gendered History, p. 102; CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 12-17.
42 As competition for higher education places intensified, a national admissions scheme established by the CVCP, the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA), began in 1961: Ronald Kay, UCCA: Its Origins And Development 1950-1985 (UCCA, June 1985). In 1993 the UCCA merged with the Polytechnics Central Admissions System to form the Universities Central Admissions Service (UCAS).
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the student population. The proportion of students who were postgraduates also rose over this period, from 14.9 percent in 1955 to 19.1 percent in 1975.

While expansion is celebrated, it was obviously limited, and the post-war period continues to be criticised as the age of ‘donnish dominion’ and the complacent, elite university. All universities exercised and defended their ‘academic freedom’ to conduct their own affairs in teaching, research, appointments, and admittance of students, without ‘interference’ from the state. Throughout the sixties, universities held a reputation as the premier sites of a static pedagogy, the ‘liberal education’, particularly associated with Oxbridge. Such an education in sciences or arts in abstract or ‘pure’ principles was fit for a leisured, governing class who had no need for ‘applied knowledge’ or to perform technical or manual labour. There was deep suspicion

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47 This thesis does not attempt to compare or connect British higher education with the systems of other countries, except in exploring the differences between the Scottish and English university systems, a theme most clearly addressed in Chapter Six. It is worth making a very brief comparison with other first-world countries and the USSR, however. Compared to the heterogenous public and privately funded institutions American system, the British university system under the UGC was more homogenous by the 1960s. The British system had a higher entry threshold and had lower student drop-out rates (called ‘wastage’) than the continental European system which guaranteed entry to university on the condition of passing the school-leaving examinations. Only the USSR outclassed the British system in the degree of public funding provided. Robert Anderson, ‘The ‘Idea of a University’ Today’ (History & Policy, 2010), p. 142 <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/the-idea-of-a-university-today> [Accessed 03 September 2019]. For the differences between the British higher education system in the post-war period and those abroad, the Robbins Report and its fifth appendix provide an authoritative if descriptive and globally limited comparison. Committee on Higher Education, ‘Higher Education: Appendix Five to the Report of the Committee Appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins 1961-63: Higher Education in Other Countries’ (London: HMSO, 1964). See Pellew and Taylor, ‘Utopian Universities’.
of utility of the ‘pure’, elite education of the universities to the practical affairs of the world. In 1963 planners assumed an ongoing division of students studying arts subjects at 45 percent to science subjects at 55 percent; however as was widely lamented there was a sustained ‘swing from science’ during the sixties with its share falling to 50 percent in 1984 to 38 percent in 2012. Some observers, following the influential sociologist A. H. Halsey and his shock at the conservatism of university teachers, have been tempted to suggest that the university education developed little over the post-war period and resisted the economic purposes of higher education. This impression has persisted in the historiography. This line of historiographical argument has tended to hold that before the 1950s employers rarely viewed the university degree as preparation for working life in

49 During the 1960s, students studied courses in the arts (taken by 28 percent of university students) including classics and law, ‘pure’ sciences (25 percent), ‘applied’ sciences and technology (15 percent), and social studies (11 percent); as well as professional subjects: medicine (15 percent), education (4 percent) agriculture (2 percent): CHE, 'Higher Education Report', p. 25.

50 Albeit with a possible brief and small oscillation back towards the science in the 1970s. This swing was caused by a number of factors including the rise of ‘social studies’ and the new and more diverse demographic composition of higher education. Science has, since 2012, recovered to 42 percent in 2018: Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, pp. 155-79.

commerce and industry. It is certainly the case that employers mainly recruited young people at ages fourteen to seventeen and trained their workers themselves.\textsuperscript{52} Technical and managerial careers in industry were only pursued by a minority and did not require degrees.\textsuperscript{53}

However, ongoing historiographical developments have made it clear that university attendance was associated with the professions including medicine and law, and public service, and the civic universities especially educated middle-class students for careers as schoolteachers, chemists, and engineers.\textsuperscript{54} By the 1950s one study evidenced that ‘the universities now send more men into industry than into any other walk of life’, with 37.8 percent entering industrial occupations, a proportion that rose over the 1960s.\textsuperscript{55} The Scottish universities, with their ‘broader’ degrees, also more closely associated themselves with vocations.\textsuperscript{56} Comparatively, Britain had a very high uptake in the supposedly more vocational science and technology subjects.\textsuperscript{57}

1.2.1.2. Further education and teacher training

General concerns for scientific and technological ‘manpower’ (nearly always gendered male) were highly prevalent in the second sector of higher education. The ‘further education’ sector, with a 2 percent age participation rate, was part of a wider, diverse group of some three hundred institutions which provided both degree-level and sub-degree level study. It was constituted of, in 1962,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} Mandler, \textit{Crisis of Meritocracy}, p. 74.
\end{itemize}
numerous ‘Area’ and ‘Local’ colleges, twenty-five Regional Colleges of Technology, ten Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs), fifteen ‘Central Institutions’ in Scotland, and after 1969, the polytechnics, of which there were around thirty by the early 1970s. Derived from the nineteenth-century technical education tradition, and fostered under Local Education Authorities (LEAs), further education institutions were characterised as having a more concrete role to provide technologically inclined and vocational training. They offered, for instance, sandwich courses, and were generally teaching-led rather than research institutions. Prior to 1918, the further education sector almost exclusively provided part-time local education. However, full-time degree-level further education saw an even greater degree of expansion than the universities: growing from 6000 in 1938 to 91,000 in 1969. Students working at degree level at these institutions were examined for diplomas of technology (Dip.Tech) or the University of London external degree. After 1964 they were able to award nationally accredited degrees. As mentioned, many institutions provided a large number of high achieving upwardly mobile students with part-time or below degree standard study supposedly for something of an “aristocracy” of the working class. Further education also included, however,

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61 Simmons, ‘Civilising the Natives? Liberal Studies in Further Education Revisited’, p. 90. Perkin states there were altogether ‘over 8,000 State-aided establishments in Great Britain, with 2.6 million students’ including evening institutions. Of this number, 787,000 students were under eighteen’: Perkin, New Universities in the United Kingdom, p. 42. See also Richardson, ‘In Search of the Further Education of Young People in Post-War England’. Education authorities instructed many institutions to ‘shed’ these non-advanced students when they became universities or specialised higher education institutions. Roy Lowe has mentioned many of these
a wide variety of specialisms and subjects ranging from social studies to a vibrant arts college system that produced John Lennon and English pop art; the name polytechnic ('many-arts') encompasses this plurality. Courses such as 'bakery, chiropody and domestic science' were offered for female students.

In the third sector, attended by 2.5 percent of the population of young people, were the teacher training colleges (numbering roughly 150 in 1962) which educated future schoolteachers. 70 percent of the training college population were female in 1960 but this still represented only 3.8 percent of the total female age group. Teacher training experienced the most dramatic expansion, increasing from 13,000 students in 1938 to a peak of 131,000 students by 1972. Like institutions of further education, teacher training underwent significant changes and was the subject of fierce contestation. Education authorities feared a serious deficit in the supply of teachers needed, and debates raged over whether teaching should be a professional vocation. While a three-year course was introduced in 1960, the course type and length most suitable to train future teachers was still disputed.

Institutions began to offer advanced level work as a result of the increased number of servicepeople entering higher education after demobilisation. Lowe, *Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History*, p. 63.


Simmons has noted that when the foremost technical colleges became Colleges of Advanced Technology in 1965, 20 percent of their students were women. Dropping these subjects to concentrate on 'advanced' further education meant by the time they became universities there were only 8 percent. Simmons, 'Science and Technology in England and Wales', p. 8.

Dyhouse, *Students: A Gendered History*. Only 1% of the total population of young women entered further education institutions. These proportions included overseas students but excluded a number of training courses such as nursing and secretarial work: CHE, 'Higher Education Report', p. 33.


See William Taylor, 'Robbins and the Education of Teachers', *Oxford Review of Education*, 14 (1988). This thesis avoids examining these complicated debates too closely. Shattock identifies the issue of teacher training colleges as the most decisive force in higher education from 1944-64 because of the keen political interest over them by Local Education Authorities. The colleges of teacher training were subject to a period of equally dramatic constriction after the mid-1970s and were mostly absorbed into the further education sector. Shattock, *Making Policy*, p. 31; Stewart, *Higher Education in Postwar Britain*; William Taylor, 'The James Report
While they were governed under separate regulations, the further education sector and the teacher training institutions together came to be known as the ‘public sector’ from the 1960s. Local authorities, the Ministry of Education, and its successor body the Department of Education and Science (DES), as well as the Scottish Education Department (SED), had much greater roles in the operations of the institutions in the public sector than in the universities. Public institutions were often smaller than universities. In 1962, 126 of 146 teacher training colleges had under 500 students, though by the mid-1970s the polytechnics had an average of 7000 students exceeding that of universities at 5,250. They retained their lower entrance requirements (two A-level passes) and took more local students than the universities. It is widely held in the literature that the reputation of the public sector was not equivalent to that of the universities. Technical skills and qualifications were dismissed as an inadequate second-class substitute to a degree; teacher training was disparaged as feminine and cheap. Nevertheless, as indicated, the public sector saw the greatest degree of expansion in the second half of the 1960s, rising from 88,200 advanced full times students in 1962 to 139,500 by just 1966, a rise from 41 percent to 47 percent of the total student population.

1.2.2. Public Funding


Perkin, New Universities in the United Kingdom, p. 41.

government funding began to universities in 1889 (though the influence of the state long preceded this). It continued to grow to the extent that, in 1919, a new independent intermediary body was established, the UGC, to distribute a grant of £692,000 per annum. The UGC was initially constituted of just ten prominent academics, all over the age of sixty, on a part-time (one-fifth) basis, contributing to a venerable or amateur image. By 1934 a full-time chairman had been introduced and by 1964 membership had increased to twenty-two including industry representatives. Funds were provided in five-year blocks, called quinquennial grants. State grant money, direct from the Treasury until 1964 (when that responsibility was transferred to the DES), was redistributed by the UGC to the universities according to their self-declared needs. The UGC was widely conceptualised as acting as a ‘buffer’ between the state and the universities, minimising direct influence of the state over the universities and preserving ‘academic freedom’.

However, from 1946, the UGC began to exercise more guidance and control over the manner in which universities spent the increasing money they received. The grant doubled in 1945, and again from 1945-51. From 1937 to 1961 actual public expenditure on higher education rose from £7 million to £146 million, a rise from 36 percent of university income to as high as 80 percent in the mid-1960s (Figure 2). This effectively nationalised the universities as income from local authorities and fees dropped away (local authority interests shifted their support to local technical...

72 State interest in the nineteenth century was indeed substantial, especially in Scotland and Ireland, see Whyte, Redbrick; Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, especially pp. 80, 85-86, and 88-89; Evans, ‘University: The History of the Search for a Definition in England’; Keith Vernon, ‘Calling the Tune: British Universities and the State, 1880-1914’, History of Education 30 (2001).
73 TNA ED117, Keith Murray to Cologne, 8 October 1959; Perkin, New Universities in the United Kingdom, p. 36; Carswell, Government and the Universities, pp. 12-13, 79-82. Five of the original committee members, Carswell writes, were octogenarians, though he also says there were only nine original members. From 1953 the number of staff rose from 23 to 50 by 1963 and 116 by 1966, including 100 secretarial staff ranging from architects, quantity surveyors and senior administrators. Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, pp. 116-17; Salter and Tapper, The State and Higher Education, pp. 104-32;
74 Of which this thesis is concerned roughly with three, 1957-62, 1962-67, and 1967-72, though the grants system increasingly broke down over the final quinquennium and was essentially defunct.
76 Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, pp. 74-75.
education) (Figure 3). For some university leaders, the fact that the state supplied such a high proportion of university income gave it a potentially dangerous influence over academic affairs. Others supported greater interventionism to ensure universities were meeting the needs of society. In advanced further education, all funding was provided by the state through local authorities and departments of education. Accompanying this was a rapid rise in the public profile of higher education. Local and national columns covered the openings and happenings of new universities; television cameras captured the ‘smiling vice-chancellor, surrounded by the likely lads and groovy wenches’. ‘University Challenge’ first aired in 1962 and rivalled ‘Top of the Pops’, and in 1963 the national newspapers appointed their first university correspondents.

![Source of university income, 1920-1971](https://example.com/source-income-chart)

*Figure 2. University income, 1920-71 (see note in Figure 3).*

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78 Cantor, ‘Public Sector Higher Education, 1945-1986’, pp. 304-09. Cantor identified in the immediate post-war period local education authorities contributed 40 percent of the cost and the Ministry 60 percent, increasing to 75 percent for some institutions in 1952 before the implementation of a local authority Advanced Further Education Pool in 1959. Teacher Training was funded by a similar pool from 1946 until its merger with the Advanced Further Education Pool in 1975-76. See Shattock, *Making Policy*, pp. 124-45.

1.2.3. ‘Manpower’ and Demography

This ‘golden age’ of public finance was the result of two or three primary factors. The most evident at the time was an awareness of the importance of technological and scientific knowledge and what was called highly trained ‘manpower’ (and increasingly ‘womanpower’) to national security and prosperity. These concerns were emphatically animated by the memory of the atrocities and wars of the first half of the twentieth century and the ongoing Cold War, the splitting of the atom and the nuclear bombing of Japan by the USA, and the launch of the artificial satellite Sputnik by the USSR.\(^{80}\)

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A sense of the importance of technology was felt particularly acutely in Britain, where
decolonisation, a scarcity of natural resources, and a pervasive melancholy bemoaning perceived
national decline made the cultivation of intellectual resources a special political anxiety.\(^{81}\) C. P.
Snow’s ‘two cultures’ was often deployed as a shorthand to lament Britain’s elite culture, especially
universities which, he argued, privileged the unproductive ‘arts’ above ‘technology’.\(^{82}\) Unfavourable
international statistical comparisons abounded in public discourse, critically emphasising Britain’s
poor age participation rate and the apparent ‘swing from science’.\(^{83}\) Addressing these deficiencies
would induce a revolution in the ‘white heat’ of technology and bring about greater affluence and
leisure time, as Harold Wilson heralded.\(^{84}\)

These concerns led to what David Edgerton has termed a ‘techno-nationalist’ effort to use
state bureaucracy to increase the output of trained manpower. The Percy (1945) and Barlow (1946)
reports and the Committee on Scientific Manpower identified shortages in the quantity and
sometimes the quality of trained scientific and technological manpower\(^{85}\) They recommended
action. The number of science and technology graduates doubled just a year after the Barlow Report
had recommended it. However, investment in technological studies was funnelled into the
universities in the early 1950s and discriminated against most technical colleges for reasons, as this

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\(^{81}\) Barry Supple, ‘Fear of Failing: Economic History and the Decline of Britain’, in Peter Clarke and Clive
Treblecock (ed.), \textit{Understanding Decline: Perceptions and Realities of British Economic Performance}
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Edgerton, \textit{Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970}; Edgerton,
\textit{Science, Technology and the British Industrial ‘Decline’}. For a helpful summary of the relationship between
affluence and declinism see Lawrence Black, Pemberton, Hugh, ‘Introduction - the Uses (and Abuses) of
Affluence’, in Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton (ed.), \textit{An Affluent Society? Britain’s Post-War ‘Golden Age’
Revisited} (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Andrew Gamble, ‘Theories and Explanations of British Decline’, Richard

\(^{82}\) Nearly two-thirds of students at Oxbridge studied arts subjects in 1962, well above the national average of

\(^{83}\) On the proliferation of statistical comparisons see Glen O’Hara, ‘Towards a New Bradshaw? Economic
Statistics and the British State in the 1950s and 1960s’, \textit{The Economic History Review}, 60 (2007); and Edgerton,

\(^{84}\) Ortolano, \textit{The Two Cultures Controversy}, pp. 168-69.

\(^{85}\) Ministry of Education, ‘Higher Technological Education: Report of a Special Committee Appointed in April
1944’ (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1945); Committee Appointed by the Lord President of the
19. For a helpful summary, see Mark Blaug and K. G. Gannicott, ‘Manpower Forecasting since Robbins: A
Science Lobby in Action’, \textit{Higher Education Review}, 2 (1969); and Silver, ‘Higher Technological Education in
England: The Crucial Quarter Century’.
thesis will explore, which were abstruse (and continue to be misunderstood). \(^{86}\) Further decisive action came from the mid-1950s when the Ministry of Education re-designated ten colleges as CATs to provide honours degree-level studies. \(^{87}\)

The most significant factor influencing expansion, however, was the growth of demand for higher education from young people and their families. A demographic ‘bulge’ of children coming of age in the early 1960s was compounded by a ‘trend’ towards proportionally more of these children staying in education for longer. \(^{88}\) Peter Mandler has identified that the bulge, but especially the more consequential trend, were part of a groundswell of rising and prevalent aspirations across the working and middle classes. They demanded greater access to higher education as one of the ‘decencies of life’ and expected by right greater opportunities for themselves and their children in the post-war affluent society. \(^{89}\) What this demand for higher education meant in social terms requires a yet-to-be-written history from below, but in statistical terms, firstly, the number of live births peaked in 1947 at over a million. Secondly, the 1944 Education Act expanded secondary education for all up to the age of fifteen. Combined, this meant throughout the 1950s there was a six percent annual growth in students achieving the minimum entry to higher education with no indication the trend would cease. \(^{90}\) As demand rose competition for limited spaces increased.


\(^{87}\) The CATs were removed from local education authority control and funded them directly in 1961, and the original eight colleges were joined by two further colleges at around the same time. For a helpful contextualisation see Silver, ‘Higher Technological Education in England: The Crucial Quarter Century’.


By the mid-1950s university elites and policymakers recognised the impending crisis. University student number targets for the mid-1960s were raised to 124,000, and £60 million was pledged for new university construction. Pressure grew on higher education institutions to accommodate these increasing numbers of able and willing young people, and to make the most of these so-called ‘reserves of intellectual ability’. The availability of equitable access to state financial assistance for students expanded throughout the 1950s. Following the Anderson Report (1960) and the implementation of the mandatory grant in 1962, by 1963-64, nine out of every ten students received grants ‘almost wholly’ from public funds.

One report during this time, above all others, caught the contemporary and subsequently the historical imagination. In the often-cited words of one observer, little could rival the Report of the Committee on Higher Education (1963) ‘for copiousness, cogency, coherence, and historical influence’. The report became known as the Robbins Report after the committee’s chairman economist Lord (Lionel) Robbins. In remarkably readable and ardent prose and deploying a sophisticated programme of statistical and sociological analysis the report sanctified the direction of higher education expansion. It emphatically proved that there was no impending limit to the

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94 It did not, as it is sometimes credited, begin the programme of expansion or lead to the foundation of the seven canonical New Universities. In reality, as Whyte has argued, it did not do much more than ‘reinforce existing assumptions’, and Shattock describes it as reinforcing the ‘status quo’: Whyte, Redbrick, p. 235; Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 3, 43.
number of young people who might be able to benefit from attendance in higher education. It argued courses in higher education should be made available by the state ‘for all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so’, regardless of gender or class (the absence of race from the inquiry of the committee, and the use instead of the euphemistic ‘overseas students’, will be briefly examined in Chapter Three). The report recommended expanding higher education from 216,000 full-time students in 1962-63 to 507,000 in 1980-81. To pay for this, it calculated, the proportion of GNP devoted to higher education would need to double by 1980.

The report was accepted immediately by the government the evening of its publication. Prime Minister Alec Douglas-Home (with an eye on the looming general election) brandished a copy for television cameras in his welcoming statement. The actual expansion of higher education during the 1960s even made the report’s recommendations look conservative. By 1968-69 there were 37,000 extra full-time students in higher education than Robbins had predicted. By contrast, its recommendations for the pattern and governance of higher education were broadly ignored. The new DES, taking responsibility for all of higher education, prioritised expansion in the further education sector rather than the universities as Robbins had imagined, and in 1965 announced a

95 The expansionist Barlow Report (1946) assumed that there was a fixed proportion of the population (five percent) with the natural capacities enabling them to participate in higher education, but after 1945 national needs suddenly required greater numbers of trained manpower and ‘this natural ceiling magically lifted’. Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, p. 72; see also Adrian Wooldridge, Measuring the Mind: Education and Psychology in England, C. 1860-C.1990 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Sanderson, The Universities and British Industry, pp. 348-50.
97 Ibid. pp. 69, 207-8.
99 Richard Layard, John King, and Claus Moser, The Impact of Robbins (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1969), p. 13. It was reported there were 376,000 students and the report had anticipated there would be 339,000. CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 69.
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‘binary divide’ between the public sector and the autonomous universities. Unconvinced by the capacities of the universities to make the necessary contribution to society and make best use of ‘reserves of ability’, the state opted to reinforce the public sector. This sector, it argued, would be more responsive to immediate and demonstrable societal needs for especially scientific and technological manpower, and teachers.

The beginnings of economic uncertainty in the late 1960s squeezed higher education budgets, and wider disenchantment with higher education brought an end to this so-called ‘golden age’ by 1973. While it lasted, the massive investment in higher education was a key strategy of the welfare state. The Robbins Report was, as one vice-chancellor put it, proof that arguments of idealism and humanity had the ‘overwhelming support from those of the most elementary material prudence’. Historians hold the report in similarly high regard and locate it and the expansion of higher education as stalwart pillars of social democratic Britain. The state would provide a more equitable distribution of resources as part of a broader programme securing universal secondary education, full employment, national health, and the ‘good society’. The Robbins Report itself was,

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102 While this ‘golden age’ provides the timescale for this thesis, the conclusion will question whether or not it is still appropriate. See the ‘myth’ of the golden age as informed by perceptions of staff experience in: Tight, Development of HE in the UK, pp. 271-72.
as Carolyn Steedman has praised it, ‘A government report compiled in the spirit of social justice!’ It has become a metonym for social democratic expansionism.

1.3. THE DISPUTED LEGACY OF EXPANSION

1.3.1. Higher Education and Neoliberalism

In recent scholarship a rival to social democracy has been identified as determining higher education policy in Britain since the 1990s: ‘neoliberalism’. Neoliberalism has been seen as heralding a move away from interest in higher education as a public good, and towards the economic benefits obtainable from investment in the sector. James Vernon has identified that immediately following 1972 the social democratic Robbins regime began to retreat. Quinquennial grants and their supplementations were replaced by annual allocations in 1975 as their value was eroded by inflation and cuts to government spending deepened following the OPEC oil crisis. The image of the publicly-funded student suffered too, especially after the headline-grabbing student protests of 1968. They fell from the scholarly darlings of the press to immoral and seditious insurrectionists (the sort who terrorised Harsent), unfit to study at the taxpayer’s expense. The mission of higher education to transmit a shared common culture and induce national prosperity was brought into disrepute. At the same time universities continued to be critiqued as complacently assuming that

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106 See, for example, Catherine Coron, 'Reshaping the Model: Higher Education in the UK and the Anglo-Saxon Neo-Liberal Model of Capitalism since 1970', Revue LISA, XIV (2016).
108 See also the narrative in Tight, Development of HE in the UK, pp. 57-91.
an elite liberal education which they valued as possessing dubious vocational relevance was right for all; regardless, the nation could not afford such extravagance.

Because of these factors, from 1973 to 1981 the age participation rate stagnated at around 13 percent and funding per student fell by 35 percent.\footnote{Vernon, ‘The Making of the Neoliberal University in Britain’, p. 272; Peter Scott, ‘British Universities 1968 - 1978’, Paedagogica Europaea, 13 (1978); Shattock, ‘Demography and Social Class: The Fluctuating Demand for Higher Education in Britain’, p. 384.} From 1976, the variable determining the size of higher education shifted away from Robbins’ focus on student demand to being ‘cash-led’. In 1983 funding was split into grants for research and grants for teaching based ‘roughly per [student] capita basis’ to improve value for money.\footnote{Stewart, Higher Education in Postwar Britain, p. 223; Shattock, Making Policy, p. 6.} The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals in 1985 published the Jarratt Report, which promoted the idea of the student as a ‘customer’ and stressed the need for universities to consider themselves corporate enterprises and to maximise their return on investment.\footnote{Vernon, ‘The Making of the Neoliberal University in Britain’, p. 272; Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, Report of the Steering Committee for Efficiency Studies in Universities (London, 1985), pp. 9, 22, 38; Tony Becher, British Higher Education (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987); Tight, Development of HE in the UK, pp. 137-41; Blaxland, Swansea University, p. 191.} The UGC was replaced in 1989 by funding councils manned by businesspeople with the aim of securing this ‘efficiency’.\footnote{Vernon, ‘The Making of the Neoliberal University in Britain’; Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 77-78. The latest ancestor of the UGC, the Office for Students (2018) bares little family resemblance in its role as a ‘consumer watchdog’, including quantifications of ‘student satisfaction’. Collini, What Are Universities For?, pp. 16-17. On the change from the 1960s, see Ourania Filippakou and Ted Tapper, ‘Policymaking and the Politics of Change in Higher Education: the New 1960s Universities in the UK, Then and Now’, London Review of Education, 14 (2016), especially pp. 18-20.} Between 1989 and 1997 there was a further drop in funding per student by 36 percent - however, expenditure on higher education grew by 50 percent in real terms between 1985 and 1995.\footnote{Collini, What Are Universities For?, pp. 180-82; Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, p. 131.} Meanwhile, the discourse of governance of higher education shifted from Robbins’ erudite objectives and towards ‘instrumentalist and vocationalist’ economic purposes in the Dearing Report (1997), Browne Review (2010), and Augar Review (2018).\footnote{The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, ‘Higher Education in the Learning Society: Main Report’ (London, 1997); Ken Mayhew, Cécile Deer, and Dua Mehak, ‘The Move to Mass Higher Education in the UK: Many Questions and Some Answers’, Oxford Review of Education, 30 (2004), p. 68; see also Desmond S. King and Victoria Nash, ‘Continuity of Ideas and the Politics of Higher Education Expansion in Britain from Robbins to Dearing’, Twentieth Century British History, 12 (2001); John Sutherland, ‘Higher Education, the...
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the Research Excellence Framework (1989/2007) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (2017). These scores enabled ‘league tables’ from the 1980s to rank universities globally, intended to encourage competition, and to allow students to compare and choose the ‘best’ performing institutions. As many critics have dryly remarked, vice-chancellors keep as close an eye on league tables as football managers – as, of course, do students.

With this extension of student ‘choice’, the state shifted the burden of funding from public finance to private student investment. Tuition fees of £1000, introduced from 1998, had risen ninefold by 2012. The cost was shifted towards students in 2008 when annual government block allocations for tuition were completely withdrawn except for the sciences which were reduced by 80 percent. To pay these fees, students were entitled to receive a government loan, repayable with interest on an income-contingent basis over thirty years of students’ lives. The system was intended to encourage students to choose ‘high value’ courses that would provide private returns and justify their loan and repay the state. In 2020 universities charged an annual tuition fee of £9250 for UK

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121 Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, p. 131.

122 Maintenance grants to students were frozen in the autumn of 1990 and the difference made up with loans.


124 Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, p. 150.
undergraduates; non-UK students can be charged anywhere between £10,000 and £26,000 per year.\textsuperscript{125}

### Figure 4. Numbers of university students in the UK, 1945-2020.

Values from 1945-2005 taken from Tight, The Development of Higher Education in the United Kingdom since 1945, p. 55; from 2010-2020 values taken from HESA.

Alongside this reallocation of the burden of cost was a meteoric rise in student numbers (Figure 4).\textsuperscript{126} Student numbers grew 50 percent from 1989-94, and from 1995 to 2020 increased from 1.5 million to 2.5 million.\textsuperscript{127} This also involved a diversification of the student body with a greater proportion of non-white students, and the proportion of female students in universities overtook the proportion of male students. Women remained underrepresented at postgraduate


\textsuperscript{126} In the 1988 Education Reform Act the Secretary of State for education Kenneth Baker committed to increasing access to university from 13 to 30 percent of school leavers, and Prime Minister Tony Blair increased this to 50 percent. Vernon, ‘The Making of the Neoliberal University in Britain’, p. 277; Martin Trow, ‘The Robbins Trap: British Attitudes and the Limits of Expansion’, Higher Education Quarterly, 43 (1989). Ironically despite the emphasis on the student, estimates made in 2011 the state was expecting to subsidise around 30 percent of student loans; data in 2020 indicated it was over 50 percent. David Kernohan, ‘Quietly, the Rab Charge Is Reaching Worrying Levels’ (Wonke, 25 September 2020) <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/quietly-the-rab-charge-is-reaching-worrying-levels/> [Accessed 19 November 2020]. The ratio of students to staff declined radically, from 8:1 during the 1960s to 12:1 in 1990 and 17:1 in 2010. Vernon, ‘The Making of the Neoliberal University in Britain’, p. 272.

\textsuperscript{127} Shattock, ‘Private to Public Governance’.
levels and among academic staff, and other class and racial groups remain disadvantaged.\textsuperscript{128} The participation rate reached 12.5 percent by 1980, 35 percent by 1995, and nearly reached 50 percent by 2020.\textsuperscript{129} At the same time the definition of a university expanded. Teacher training colleges had long since been rationalised away or conglomerated; to improve their ‘effectiveness’, polytechnics became universities after 1992, nearly doubling the number of university institutions.\textsuperscript{130} By 2020 there were around 160 university institutions, out of 420 registered ‘providers’.\textsuperscript{131}

1.3.2. Robbins Revisionism?

For many commentators, students, policymakers, and academics, these developments marked the culmination of the neoliberal project to transform British higher education.\textsuperscript{132} Many look back to the 1960s, and particularly the Robbins Report as championing an alternative welfare vision of higher education.\textsuperscript{133} The Robbins Report and the expansion of higher education in the 1960s stands for public good, altruism, citizenship, values, even knowledge and truth; today’s higher education

\textsuperscript{128} Scott, ‘Conclusion: Triumph and Retreat’, pp. 192-93; Halsey, Decline of Donnish Dominion, pp. 216-34; Tight, Development of HE in the UK, pp. 55, 256-59, 91-94; and Tight reported even less research had explored the place of non-white academic staff; one study in 1997 ‘ran into the problem of being unable to identify any minority ethnic professors in their chosen universities’.

\textsuperscript{129} Nicholas Barr, ‘Shaping Higher Education: 50 Years after Robbins’ (London: LSE, 2014), pp. 33-35. APR is only a rough measure of the proportion of the population obtaining higher education qualification since it ignores mature students. Various other not technically comparable metrics have superseded it since. Mandler, The Crisis of Meritocracy, pp. 131, 51. See also Peter Brant, ‘It’s Not (Yet?) True That Half of Young People Go to University’ (Higher Education Policy Institute, 9 October 2019), <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2019/10/09/its-not-yet-true-that-half-of-young-people-go-to-university/> [Accessed 16 October 2020].

\textsuperscript{130} Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, pp. 114-15; Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 79-87, 93-94, 147; Roy Fisher and Robin Simmons, ‘Liberal Conservatism, Vocationalism and Further Education in England’, Globalisation, Societies and Education, 10 (2012), pp. 36, 39; Sharp, The Creation of the Local Authority Sector of Higher Education, pp. 129-44. Revised birth-rate forecasts slashed the need for teacher training. Only two teacher training colleges were merged into universities, one of them at Warwick: Robin Simmons, ‘Whatever Happened to Teacher Training Colleges?’, Post 16 Educator, 86 (2017).

\textsuperscript{131} Office for Students, ‘The OFS Register’ (2021).


\textsuperscript{133} See, for example, Scott, ‘Robbins, the Binary Policy and Mass Higher Education’; and John Holmwood, ‘Introduction’, in John Holmwood (ed.), A Manifesto for the Public University (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011). There has been significant academic attention given to the Robbins Report from a variety of historical and political perspectives, particularly around its anniversaries in a number of special issues. On the 25\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the report in, see Oxford Review of Education, 14 (1988), and for the 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary, see Higher Education Quarterly, 62 (2014).
system stands for private returns and markets, entrepreneurialism, consumerism, prices, lifestyles, and skills. The student has been turned into a consumer, anticipating maximum returns on their investment of higher education experience, and who determines through their purchasing power what they are taught at university.

Others see today’s marketised system as the true heir of 1960s expansionism. The Minister of State for Universities and Science in 2012, David Willetts, argued the higher education policy implemented by his twenty-first century coalition government was not antagonistic to the vision of the Robbins Report: rather, it extended it.134 The LSE hosted Willetts at a conference celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the report and broadly concurring with Willetts’ sentiments, featuring papers from the Robbins Committee statistical team, Claus Moser and Richard Layard. Two other contributors proposed that the 2012 student loans system in England was one that ‘Robbins would have approved’. Detaching student finance from public finance enabled the participation rate in higher education to expand as Robbins intended.135 Sociologist Steve Fuller has made the provocative argument that the Robbins Report ‘was very much grounded in market-based thinking’. Fuller argued that the Robbins Report conceived higher education in the 1960s as a dysfunctional market. It needed correcting in order that universities might maximise their outputs: productive students and economic growth. This, Fuller continued, meant that most of the positive features of

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134 David Willetts, 'Robbins Revisited: Bigger and Better Higher Education', The Social Market Foundation (London, 2013), pp. 1-5, 56-61; John Gill, 'David Willetts Interview: 'What I Did Was in the Interests of Young People'', Times Higher Education (18 June 2015); and Barr, 'Shaping Higher Education: 50 Years after Robbins'. For a response, see Patrick Ainley, 'Robbins Remembered and Dismembered, Contextualising the Anniversary', Higher Education Quarterly, 68 (2014). Willet’s pamphlet was published by the independent centrist think-tank the Social Market Foundation and supported by a pantheon of higher education institutions representing universities including Universities UK (the successor to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals); Lord Claus Moser, statistical adviser to the Robbins Committee, authored the pamphlet’s foreword. See, for example, the argument that the higher education system was now ‘closer than ever before to fulfilling Lord Robbins’ guiding principle that higher education “should be available to all who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue it”’, in Innovation and Skills Secretary of State of Business, Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility & Student Choice (London: Williams Lea Group on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, May 2016), p. 7. See also the earlier paper for the Dearing Committee by the Department for Education and Employment, ‘Achievements since Robbins’ (1996), discussed in Silver, Higher Education and Opinion Making, pp. 230-31. See also David Palfreyman, ‘Bring Back Lord Robbins?’, Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education, 16 (2012).

135 Barr, 'Shaping Higher Education: 50 Years after Robbins', p. xxiv.
higher education in Britain at present were owed to neoliberalism, including the democratisation of higher education.  

1.4. FINDING AN APPROACH: RISE AND FALL NARRATIVES

1.4.1. Higher Education in the Historiography of Post-War Britain

One tempting possible direction of inquiry is then: to which does higher education expansion and the Robbins Report really belong – social democracy or neoliberalism? This is a problematic question. Firstly, it ahistoricises ‘social democracy’ and ‘neoliberalism’ and assumes they possess a set of essential determining, perhaps mutually exclusive, characteristics. The historical record of course possesses greater nuance than these limited categories can provide and which obscure as much as they reveal. As this thesis will show, there was a complex interplay between various liberal ideas informing higher education expansion during the long sixties. This approach aligns closely with the new appreciation of social democracy in the wider historical literature. Higher education, and

136 Steve Fuller, 'Markets as Educators, or Have We Always Been Neo-Liberal?', Social Epistemological Review and Reply Collective, 5 (2016); Steve Fuller, 'Academic Monopolies Are Nothing to Be Proud Of', Times Higher Education (19 July 2018); Steve Fuller, 'Sympathy for the Neo-Liberal Devil', The Sociological Review (26 October 2015); Steve Fuller, 'Why There Is Less between Social Democracy and Neoliberalism Than Meets the Eye' (European Politics and Policy: LSE, 18 August 2018). For an excellent but very brief glancing assessment of the wider history of market ideas in higher education policy from the 1950s onwards, see Michael Kenny, 'The Rise of 'the Market' in Political Thinking About Universities', The European Legacy, 18 (2013).

137 This is precisely the direction the debate around Steve Fuller's argument took. Johan Söderberg, 'A Response to Steve Fuller and Johan Soderberg: Are Neoliberalism and Social Democracy Becoming Indistinguishable?', Global Policy (03 October 2018). Holmwood makes a similar argument based on rights, see John Holmwood and Gurminder K. Bhambra, 'The Attack on Education as a Social Right', South Atlantic Quarterly, 111 (2012); and Holmwood, "The Turn of the Screw", pp. 64-65. Many comparisons between Robbins and later policy documents have been made in these terms. See, for instance, Barnett, 'The Coming of the Global Village: A Tale of Two Inquiries'; Thomas Bailey, 'Contemporary English Higher Education Policy and the Robbins Report: Continuity or Change?', Retrospectives, 1 (2012); Sutherland, 'Higher Education, the Graduate and the Labour Market: From Robbins to Dearing'. The influence of neoliberalism is absent from Tribe, 'The 'Form' of 'Reform'. The Postwar University in Britain, 1945–1992', pp. 20-23. Other debates have attempted to use the degree of acceptance of 'human capital' to distinguish between the two philosophies – see, for instance, Mark Olssen and Michael A. Peters, 'Neoliberalism, Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy: From the Free Market to Knowledge Capitalism', Journal of Education Policy, 20 (2005), pp. 314-19. This argument will be reviewed in Chapter Two.

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universities in particular, were not the complacent or backwards looking institutions they have
sometimes been depicted as.

Moving away from histories which stressed pragmatism and consensus, histories of post-war
Britain have come to appreciate the role of ideology and ideas.\(^{139}\) They have begun to nuance a
narrative which describes the rise of social democracy, its subsequent fall, and the ascendancy of
neoliberalism from the 1980s. Guy Ortolano has identified two historiographical approaches to
explaining this ‘rise-and-fall’ narrative. The first is what he calls the ‘fallacy of sequence’, that social
democracy stagnated in the crises of the 1970s and failed to provide inventive solutions to national
rejuvenation. The second, the ‘fallacy of origins’, seeks to uncover the long history of neoliberalism
under the surface of fragile and precarious social democracy, dooming it to collapse.\(^{140}\) Both
approaches, Ortolano argues, underappreciate the ‘dynamism’ of social democracy and participating
historical agents.\(^{141}\) Historical actors, ‘seeking to make sense of volatile situations, [...] assembled
novel configurations of available ideas, eventually arriving at new frameworks for understanding,
managing, and shaping the world around them’.\(^{142}\)

Matching this plurality is an appreciation of the overlap between social democracy and
neoliberalism.\(^ {143}\) Individualism and consumerism have repeatedly been removed from the exclusive

\(^{139}\) Michael Freeden, ‘The Stranger at the Feast: Ideology and Public Policy in Twentieth Century Britain’,
Twentieth Century British History, 1 (1990); Jim Tomlinson, The Politics of Decline: Understanding Postwar
Britain (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2000).

\(^{140}\) Neoliberalism goes by a number of aliases in this literature, including ‘market liberalism’. In this thesis I use
neoliberalism as I explore the liminal space between the neoliberalism of intellectual networks and the really-
existant neoliberalism of policy and discourse. It is this second definition that market liberalism often refers to. See
footnote 172 below for a further note on terminology. Tomlinson, The Politics of Decline: Understanding Postwar
Britain; see James Vernon, ‘The Local, the Imperial and the Global: Repositioning Twentieth-century
Britain and the Brief Life of its Social Democracy’ in ‘Roundtable: Twentieth-Century British History in North
in David Marquand and Anthony Seldon (eds.), The Ideas That Shaped Post-War Britain (London: Fontana
Press, 1996); Jim Tomlinson, ‘De-Industrialization Not Decline: A New Meta-Narrative for Post-War British
History’, Twentieth Century British History, 27 (2016).

\(^{141}\) Guy Ortolano, Thatcher’s Progress: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism through an English New

\(^{142}\) Ibid. p. 27.

\(^{143}\) Avner Offer, ‘The Market Turn: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism’, The Economic History Review,
70 (2017); Middleton, ‘The Concept of ‘the Establishment’ and the Transformation of Political Argument in
domain of post-1979 Thatcherite competitiveness. They have been identified as a constituting element of working-class identities, left-wing politics, and youth culture from the 1950s to the 1970s.\textsuperscript{144} As aforementioned Peter Mandler has persuasively argued that democratic demand for education and aspiration across social classes was a primary driver of education expansion.\textsuperscript{145} Jon Lawrence has observed that ‘The great epochal shift from social democratic to neo-liberal politics looks a lot messier when seen from below’.\textsuperscript{146}

This thesis takes these two historiographical perspectives forwards to better examine the development of higher education. It considers the dynamic range of ideas across social democratic higher education policy which can be identified during the dramatic changes of the 1960s.\textsuperscript{147} By examining the records explaining and justifying expansionism and consider the principles which characterised their arguments, the thesis will challenge the political and philosophical labels currently used to describe them. This will contribute to an explanation of how social democracy’s dynamism may have had ‘unintended consequences, in the accommodation of priorities that helped secure a rival ideology’.\textsuperscript{148} To begin this task this thesis will first turn to a body of literature on ideology and ideas situated in post-war Britain.\textsuperscript{149}


\textsuperscript{145} Mandler, \textit{Crisis of Meritocracy}.


\textsuperscript{147} Ortolano elsewhere even identified the dynamism of this moment himself. Ortolano, \textit{The Two Cultures Controversy}, pp. 138-39.

\textsuperscript{148} Ortolano, \textit{Thatcher’s Progress}, p. 17. See also Shattock’s framework for the development of higher education in Shattock, \textit{Making Policy}, pp. 1, 3.

\textsuperscript{149} This thesis is wary of using the term ‘ideology’ as it retains too much of a Marxist structuralist model of a core power base transmitting to a passive recipient and a sense of self-deception and false-consciousness. I
1.4.2. Ideologies and Liberalisms in Post-War Britain

Histories interested in the ideological factors apparent in the governance of the United Kingdom generally emphasise the influence of liberalism. Patrick Joyce characterises the liberal state as a state ‘which deploys political freedom as a means of governance’. This has for Joyce been ‘the most fundamentally significant, form of the British State from 1800 to present,’ and for Joyce while there is variation between different forms of this liberal governance since 1800, ‘the underlying similarities mean more than the differences’.  

Michael Freeden has, however, argued that ‘There is no single, unambiguous thing called liberalism’. This thesis aligns itself with Freeden’s ‘morphological’ approach and his proposal to ‘map’ liberalisms ‘to place, locate and trace the features of different liberalisms both shared and distinct’. This method aims to describe coherent but fluctuating sets of political ideas held by identifiable groups, functioning to ‘explain, justify or contest’ political arrangements. In the context of this study of the history of higher education, it permits an examination of the range of liberal influences on the historical imagination of university leaders.

Freeden identifies five overlapping ‘layers’ in liberalisms, interacting, in tension with, even contradicting, and obscuring certain elements of the layers beneath them differently in different variations and species of liberalism. The first core layer was a concern for the exercise of freedom by individuals over their selves, actions, and property without restriction by the arbitrary will of others. This was circumscribed by the restriction that the same freedoms were held by all others.
intercourse’ through the exchange of goods. This was emphasised by nineteenth-century classical ‘laissez-faire’ liberalism. It implicated the state in managing these interactions and ensuring ‘free trade’ between free property-owning actors across market spaces. Since individuals possessed different capacities and could accumulate property at different rates, this consequently defended inequalities and justified arrangements such as the direction of the working classes or colonial spaces as a kind of free exchange. The third layer which Freeden associates closely with J. S. Mill modifies the first: individual freedom was not just hedonistic (maximising pleasure and minimising pain), but the capacity of individuals to seek progressive human growth. A free society would enable individuals to ascertain greater forms of self-expression and was consequently a prosperous and melioristic society. Freeden’s fourth element recognised more explicitly that individual freedom needed to be balanced, and perhaps limited by the state, in order that fuller freedom and prosperity might be achieved. Freedom was necessarily a consequence of support from other members of society. Enthusiasm for interventions into society in order to better determine the distribution of resources became known as ‘planning’, ‘collectivism’, or ‘state interventionism’. It was the ‘Zeitgeist of post-1929 England’. Freeden associates this layer closely with the ‘New Liberals’ of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and Ben Jackson associates it with social democrats and the post-war welfare state. The inequalities and inhumanities wrought by the industrial revolution and later the consequences of the Great Depression prompted government action and legislation in the twentieth century in the form of ‘health and unemployment insurance and graduated income

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155 Ibid. p. 46.
156 At its most extreme end support for planning eclipsed concern for personal liberty and in Freeden’s schema ceases to adequately meet the criteria of a liberalism. From the end of the nineteenth century socialists launched a political project resting on removal property wholly or to a large extent from the command of individuals to place it at the control of the community for redistribution by the central state. Critiques of capitalism and the success Stalinist policies and the USSR during the Second World War meant proposals for high degrees of central planning had many proponents in the west as late as the 1960s. Martin Beddeleem, ‘Recode Liberalism: Philosophy and Sociology of Science against Planning’, in Dieter Plehwe, Quinn Slobodian, and Philip Mirowski (eds.), *Nine Lives of Neoliberalism* (London: Verso, 2020), pp. 28-29; Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning: The Debate on Economic Planning in Britain in the 1930s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
tax’. These interventions into free society were necessary to redistribute wealth, redress lack of opportunity, and secure social justice, in order to permit ‘individual flourishing’.  

This was the determining feature of Britain’s war-time ‘command economy’ in which market mechanisms were widely suspended in order to safeguard national security. Similarly, after 1945 Labour and Conservative governments adopted a Keynesian economic policy, involving high government expenditure and progressive taxation: policies in the interests of the working classes which were justified as leading to fuller freedoms and consumption. The fifth element, which Freeden identifies as a more contemporary layer, incorporated greater degrees of plurality as to how far different individuals might choose different ends for their personal growth.

1.4.3. Neoliberalism

One group of liberals professed alarm at the consequences of centralised planning on personal freedoms. A body of historical literature developing since the 1990s and spearheaded by Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe has identified a small intellectual network beginning in the 1920s: the ‘Neoliberal Thought Collective’. This literature has identified the collective’s centre of gravity at the exclusive Mont Pèlerin Society (first meeting in 1947), but it also recognises the plurality of the

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158 Freeden and Stears, 'Liberalism'.
strands of liberalism the collective encompassed. The protagonists of the collective before 1939 include economists Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, and, importantly, Lionel Robbins (an irony quietly observed by commentators on the Robbins Report).  

This collective initially described themselves as ‘neoliberals’ but after the 1950s rescinded this label, preferring the nondescript (and deliberately obfuscating) ‘liberal’. Neoliberals are however distinguishable from classical liberals and from ‘New Liberals’. Neoliberals held that individual freedom was a necessary prerequisite of a prosperous and ‘good society’. They also recognised that *laissez-faire* of the nineteenth century was inimical to freedom. However, the neoliberals were alarmed at the possibility of strong state interventions redistributing resources according to centrally calculated needs of society. Instead, Hayek and other neoliberals proposed to repurpose a strong state to construct the conditions by which freedom might be best secured. This included maintenance of the rule of law and the interventionist construction of market spaces. Through these spaces, individuals would be free to exchange resources in their own subjective best interest, increasing their prosperity and engendering the good society.

Robbins’ economic science was central to the neoliberal political project, and his definition of economics is frequently cited as foundational to modern economics. For neoliberals, prosperity meant the capacity for subjective individuals to participate in free exchange of the resources

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available to them. Individuals became considered producers of their own satisfaction. Michel Foucault tracked the emergence of this paradigm in English language economics through Robbins’ *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science* (1932). Robbins moved the focus of analysis in economics away from classical liberalism and a focus on the mechanisms of production, exchange and consumption. In classical economics, workers simply sold a ‘unit’ of labour at a market price. To Robbins, by contrast, labour was how subjects choose to use the resources available to them. Economics became the study of the means of how these resources are allocated by subjects to competing ends. These resources included elements of the self. By reallocating resources of the self and exchanging them on the labour market, an agent might produce their own satisfaction.

This moved the subject of analysis of economics away from a historical process to a subjective activity. Labour potential, the time available to perform labour and cultivate personal knowledge and skills, became a form of personal capital. An individual could invest in this capital and obtain a future income. These skills became ‘human capital’, the analysis of which emerged from economic unorthodoxy in the late 1950s. Subjects could maximise their returns on their human capital through ‘educational investments’: schooling and professional training. Higher education therefore emerges as a principal target of neoliberalism.

Freeden has expressed serious doubts that neoliberalism satisfactorily ‘possess[es] the minimum kit to be located squarely at the heart of 21st century liberalism’ and is instead a form of

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166 Tribe and Backhouse, *The History of Economics*. For the difference between neoliberal, classical economic (including Keynes) and Marxist analysis, see Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, pp. 219-22.
167 Ibid.
conservatism.\textsuperscript{172} It is worth however reappplying Freeden’s own approach and considering how variations in neoliberalisms overlap with other liberalisms.\textsuperscript{173} The historiography on neoliberalism has primarily focused on the Neoliberal Thought Collective as a node. While clearly delineating its subject matter, this as the effect of obscuring the peripheries of neoliberalism, especially species superficially less significant after the 1970s and 1980s.\textsuperscript{174} Robbins, for example, generally disappears from the historiography after his departure from the Mont Pèlerin Society in 1949.\textsuperscript{175} However, Jackson, Plehwe, and others have stressed the range of early neoliberalism and the existence of neoliberal ‘welfare provision agendas’.\textsuperscript{176} Plehwe has also called for further research to understand the ‘crisscrossing relationships between the left-leaning social liberalism and the right-leaning

\textsuperscript{173} For example, Foucault distinguished between Ordoliberalism in Germany from the 1940s, and the more quantitative Chicago School liberalism. Quinn Slobodian, has added a further Geneva School neoliberalism, and has expanding the analysis outside the West to Eastern Europe and to South Africa. Wider literature has explored neoliberalism in Chile and New Zealand. See Foucault, The Birth of Biopolitics; Quinn Slobodian, Globalists: the End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism (London: Harvard University Press, 2018); and for an overview, see Mirowski and Plehwe, The Road from Mont Pèlerin. Mirowski has also drawn a distinction between ‘esoteric’ neoliberalism and ‘exoteric’ neoliberalism. Esoteric neoliberalism is understood by a small elite of neoliberals and is generally described by historians through the tools of intellectual history through biography. Exoteric neoliberalism by contrast is neoliberalism-as-operates-in-the-world described by social and political historians, sociologists, and journalists. This thesis, with its focus on higher education institutions and policy, will contribute to the expansion of the description and influence esoteric neoliberalism and a framework which might contribute to the study of the degree to which esoteric neoliberalisms lead to the adoption of exoteric vernacular neoliberal selves through higher education.
neoliberalism’. Elsewhere, Amy Offner and James Vernon have argued for a move away from elite intellectual histories, and for diversifying the agents featured in these narratives and exploring the vernacular liberalisms they deploy. This thesis hopes to contribute to this body of literature by diversifying its subject matter using higher education as a case study. It explores the relationship of marginal neoliberal-liberal thought and social democratic ideals and practices. It considers their interplay in the complexities of policy-making environments, networks, and higher education institutions.

1.4.4. Freedom and Power

This new appreciation of the range of historical liberal thought means it is necessary to look again at the arguments used in advocating expansion of higher education during the long 1960s. What sort of freedoms were higher education bureaucracies and institutions intended to cultivate? How was it assumed this contributed to the good society? An especially helpful tool to begin to contribute an answer to these question is the Foucauldian notion of power.

Foucault conceived of freedom as a technique of liberal ‘governmentality’. Governmentality rested on his conception of power as subjective knowledge, dispersed rather than enforced ‘top down’. For Foucault, power is not the direct influencing of the actions of one by


179 Shattock, Making Policy, p. 3.


181 Etymologically, governmentality was formed by adding to ‘government’ the suffix ‘-ality’, pertaining to the condition or quality of participating in being governed (in the sense of ‘music’ and ‘musicality’). This is perhaps more oblique than the etymological understanding in some literature (reportedly a consequence of a mistranslation) that governmentality was named by attaching ‘govern’ to the Foucauldian concept of a ‘mentality’. If sacrificing some elasticity, this understanding more clearly links governmentality to Foucault’s wider project of understanding the organised practices of internal mentalities, rationalities and techniques which subjects adopt and are disciplined and governed. Foucault, The Birth of Biopolitics, p. 186; Roger Cooter
another. For example, the state does not exert its power by curtailing the natural liberties of its subjects and reorienting them to its own ends. Instead, power is the delineation of knowledge and behaviour based on mutually accepted practices and norms. In this sense power relationships are maintained by self-disciplining, auto-regulating subjects. They internalise knowledge, ideas, and ideologies which inform their possible behaviours, ‘characters’, and freedoms. The personal is, of course, political.¹⁸² Collectively, these practices are known as the ‘intellectual technologies’ of governmentality, or the ‘conduct of conduct’.¹⁸³ Foucault’s study generally concentrated how these technologies become realised through the establishment of institutions to conduct the ‘conduct of mad people, patients, delinquents, and children’. He wondered, however, whether such a framework of power ‘may equally be valid when we are dealing with phenomena of a completely different scale, such as an economic policy, for example, or the management of a whole social body’.¹⁸⁴

As this study suggests, it is equally applicable to higher education. The importance of ‘character’ formation to societal progress in Victorian liberal and socialist thought has long been recognised by a vast literature and has been extended by Jeremy Nuttall to the politics of Labour in the twentieth century.¹⁸⁵ Liberal governmentality has been identified as acting through the welfare state which, as we have seen, higher education was a central element. Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose explore how the British state from 1962 to 1975 did not intervene in direct day-to-day investment decisions. Instead, it produced quantitative targets of economic growth and proposed methods of

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¹⁸⁴ Foucault, The Birth of Biopolitics, p. 186.
calculation which agents internalised to deliver this growth.\textsuperscript{186} Joyce holds education as central to how human agency was reoriented towards the aims of the state.\textsuperscript{187} Similarly Whyte argues that exploring how individual and social behaviour are structured by university spaces is ‘an undeniably intriguing invitation to further research’.\textsuperscript{188}

I understand liberal governmentality as realising ‘freedoms’ through a process of mutual, perhaps contested, negotiation between behaviours, practices, and thoughts, by which the goals of the subject and communities are internalised and aligned. I refer to these behaviours, practices, and thoughts as ‘ideas’. In this definition of an ‘idea’ I adopt a Pragmatic understanding of knowledge as a ‘warranted assertion’, in the vocabulary of John Dewey, or a sufficiency of understanding of the world to permit constructive action.\textsuperscript{189} In this Foucauldian context an ‘idea’ would be a warranted assertion when it permitted the subject to satisfactorily conduct herself around the regimes of governmentality present in her community. I follow Ian Hacking’s critique of Foucault which recognised that Foucault’s governmentality is insufficiently concerned with the adoption of practices by actors. Hacking buttressed Foucault’s ‘top-down’ perspective with pragmatist sociologist Erving Goffman’s account of how individuals perform different behaviours in social contexts to achieve different social ends.\textsuperscript{190} This ‘bottom up’ perspective considers how by inhabiting certain useful

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{186}{Miller and Rose, ‘Governing Economic Life’, pp. 1-8, 16-18.}
\footnote{187}{Joyce, \textit{The State of Freedom}, p. 24.}
\footnote{188}{Whyte, \textit{Redbrick}, p. 12. Stefan Muthesius hinted that when discussing the new universities of the 1960s ‘One is sometimes tempted to use the term ‘total institution’, though not, of course of the kind found in the prison or the asylum’. Muthesius, \textit{The Postwar University}, p. 4. See also Cheeseman, Matthew, ‘The Pleasures of Being a Student at the University of Sheffield’, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 2010), pp. 10-11; and Harold Silver ‘Knowing and not knowing in the history of education’, History of Education Journal, 21 (1992), p. 101.}
\footnote{190}{Writing in 2007 Hacking was unaware of any pragmatist professing admiration of Foucault and Hacking himself emphatically rejected the label of pragmatist (though he immediately followed this repudiation with the remark ‘Who cares about a label?’). At least one other commentator has included Foucault on a list of philosophers who expressed pragmatist ideas. Ian Hacking, ‘Between Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman: Between Discourse in the Abstract and Face-to-Face Interaction’, \textit{Economy and Society}, 33 (2004); see his later comments in Ian Hacking, ‘On Not Being a Pragmatist: Eight Reasons and a Cause’, in Cheryl Misak, \textit{New Pragmatists} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Douglas McDermid, \textit{The Varieties of Pragmatism: Truth, Realism, and Knowledge from James to Rorty} (London:, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2008), p. 13. On links between pragmatism and the history of science through Kuhn, see Bojana Mladenović, \textit{Kuhn’s Legacy: Epistemology, Metaphilosophy, and Pragmatism} (Columbia University Press, 2017), pp. 2-7, 167-93. See the similar critique of Foucault in Mirowski, \textit{Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste: How Neoliberalism }
Introduction

personas, characters, behaviours, and beliefs, individuals can participate in society and navigate social encounters creatively. In the context of this thesis such personas include the ‘student’ and ‘graduate’, with modifying types such as the humanist, scientist, technologist, and social scientist; undergraduate and postgraduate; with pass, honours, first, second, and third class variations; and male and female. The thesis considers how they were taught, overlap, and negotiated through participation in the ‘system’ of higher education. What was the nature of the technologies of governmentality advocated in higher education policy, plans, and physical spaces? What freedoms and ‘choices’ were endorsed, and what were the wider social roles that students exercising these choices were intended to serve? What was the intention behind increasing access to these freedoms by expanding higher education? How were these freedoms intended to be ‘taught’?

It is not only students who were subject to disciplinary regimes but elites too. Harold Perkin has argued the government funding and freedom provided to the New Universities meant they could realise their own ideal to an unprecedented degree. This assumes that their freedom was not already delineated by liberal governmentality. Stefan Collini has identified that in higher education in ‘broadly liberal societies’ attempting to exert overt control over the ‘ungovernable play

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192 For an alternative theorising of the student as discourse, see Troschitz, *Higher Education and the Student: From Welfare State to Neoliberalism*.


of the enquiring mind' requires subtler methods of coordination than top-down direction towards societal ends. How was the conduct of academics, so protective of their ‘academic freedom’, aligned with the aims of the community?

1.5. METHODS

1.5.1. Sources

To explore these questions, this thesis firstly examines the records of government and national bodies, and universities. I utilised minutes, agendas, sociological and educational surveys and particularly their methodological remarks and statistical returns, and correspondence. Secondly, I considered published material including academic monographs and edited volumes, journal articles, conference proceedings, national, local, and university media, student newspapers, and other ephemera. Thirdly, I examined personal papers, reflections, autobiography, and obituary. I also made use of oral testimonies, audio-visual media, and other accounts gathered by universities. Much of this material was collected for special anniversaries, and often celebratory or nostalgic. Following my appreciation of institutions as possessing spatial and bureaucratic dimensions, I also considered architectural plans, and enriched and qualified my understanding of these documents by visiting and experiencing the existing built environment.


197 In the early stages of this thesis, I informally spoke to Michael Shattock, who provided me with a good deal of advice and encouragement. I approached Richard Layard, but he declined to be interviewed.

198 See also Catherine Burke, Peter Cunningham, and Ian Grosvenor, "Putting Education in Its Place": Space, Place and Materialities in the History of Education', *History of Education* 39 (2010). There are of course limits to how far these experience of built environment were helpful given the changes in institutional form and function over the past sixty years. However, in the light of the travel restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic and the new appreciation of the relationship between space, learning, and community, I believe these experiences were especially helpful. This research was based at the University of Warwick, where I had studied since 2013. During that time, the university has undertaken a considerable construction programme which has radically changed much of the space, including new buildings, skylines, the removal of old and opening of new green spaces, the demolition and construction of residential accommodation, and pedestrianisation. As well as this appreciation of the chronological development of the built environment, my deeper experience of Warwick meant I was able to appreciate the less successful elements of its built environment. I visited the LSE numerous times, from day visits to visits of several weeks, between 2018 and 2019, though most of this time was spent in and around the Lionel Robbins Building. I visited the University of York between 22-27 July 2019,
1.5.2. The Imagined Student

It is important to acknowledge that because of its source base, the subject of this thesis is not the student themselves but an imagined student, invented by university elites (like Harsent). Their plans for higher education and its role in society are kinds of fictions. They remain useful however in informing us about attitudes and aspirations, and form parts of the disciplinary discourse of liberal governmentality. University leaders tended to assume the majority of their students were full-time undergraduate students, predominantly male, aged 18-21, middle-class, and overwhelmingly British – that is to say, white. This imagined student was related to, but distinctive from, the historical reality of the corporeal student (who emphatically did not conform to this profile) and her/their experiences. The thesis’ sources contain little direct evidence of how far corporeal students (or tutors) internalised or remixed these imaginary characteristics. The thesis therefore focuses on the debate over the sort of student that the universities should produce (in contrast to what we might consider they actually produced). It concentrates mainly on imagined and ideal systems, proposals, and pedagogy, in which the liberal influences might be more readily indicated and accessible. When these ideas did find expression in practice, they were often failures. My

and the University of Stirling between 09-15 December 2019 (kindly supported by the Economic History Society). In these instances, I took the time to explore their built environments and landscapes and in the case of York and Stirling visited their corresponding towns. These shorter visits nevertheless provided a richer understanding of the physical and temporal dimensions of these spaces. For example, at York I stayed in one of the colleges and was catered for in another. At Stirling, the complex that the Robbins Centre is a part of was undergoing major renovations. This also effected the time I had available in the archives, but I was able to use the extra available time to explore the Airthrey Grounds and visit Pathfoot, for example. See Chapter Six.


200 See Burkett, ‘Introduction: Universities and Students in Twentieth-Century Britain and Ireland’. Both the historical ideal student and the historical real student were as ‘real’ as each other. It is unhelpful to distinguish one as imaginary and one as real. I have chosen to use the label corporeal student to signify the experiencing student in contrast to the imagining student in government and institutional plans. Of course, the corporeal students of social history are as fictitious as the imaginary student of the vice-chancellors of the 1960s. See the distinction explored in Harold Silver and Pamela Silver, Students: Changing Roles, Changing Lives (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997), pp. 13-14.
research is therefore a preliminary step in understanding of the nature of ideal systems that would assist an assessment of their dissemination and adoption by students and teachers ‘from below’.  

1.5.3. Universities

This thesis mainly considers universities. This choice was made at the beginning of the inquiry as it appeared that the universities as autonomous institutions would be more concerned with issues of ‘freedom’ and more liable to draw upon the ideological tools provided by liberalism to justify their operations and plans. The state was not supposed to demand the type of student produced nor what they should be taught. Other types of higher education institution did not seem to have this element as salient to their identity. The vocational further education sector was considered to be more responsive to the state’s determination of the immediate and calculatable societal needs for manpower. Central government officials and local authorities assumed the mandate to direct their output. This thesis is primarily interested in the further education system as a foil for the universities, and from the perspective of university leaders. For the universities, the CATs and the polytechnics offered an alternative philosophy of higher education to the vision of the universities that was sometimes collaborative, sometimes rivalrous.

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202 This thesis does not consider the university as the (or, indeed, a) definitive higher education institution. Instead, it attempts to provincialise the university, considering the idea to represent a plethora of evolving, historically situated, socially privileged practices and philosophies of education operating as part of regimes of governmentalities. See Ellis, ‘Beyond the University: Higher Education Institutions across Time and Space’.
204 Crosland reflected that the control the DES could exercise over further education was much stronger and decisive than that of the schools: it could determine which institutions became polytechnics, and what sort of courses they should follow. Boyle, Crosland, and Kogan, *The Politics of Education*, p. 195. This thesis does not have the scope to do justice to the literature on the philosophy and evolution further education or teacher training colleges, or satisfactorily contribute to history of the development of these institutions. For further education, see, for instance: Robinson, *The New Polytechnics*; Scott, ‘Robbins, the Binary Policy and Mass Higher Education’; Watson, ‘Robbins and His Children: The Theory and Practice of Higher Education Inquiries, 1963–2013’. Gareth Parry, ‘Robbins and Advanced Further Education’, *Higher Education Quarterly*, 68 (2014).
205 This focus of course does not preclude what must have been equally innovative and interesting forms of education in the institutions of further education and further research in this area would complement the research of this thesis. William Richardson and Keith Tribe call the history of the development of further education from the 1960s to the 1990s, especially at the sub-degree level, ‘neglected’: Tribe, ‘The ‘Form’ of ‘Reform’. The Postwar University in Britain, 1945–1992’, p. 20; Richardson, ‘In Search of the Further Education of Young People in Post-War England’, p. 386. See Simmons, ‘Science and Technology in England and Wales’;
1.6. CHAPTER SUMMARIES

With these guiding principles, the obvious place to begin investigating is in the area of the greatest contention: Lionel Robbins and the Robbins Report. Robbins’ idiosyncratic liberal economic thought informed his attitude towards higher education to a greater degree than hitherto acknowledged. Chapter Two explores the importance for Robbins of the individual student and consumption to personal flourishing and the good society. A university education, Robbins argued, was necessary so that students might appreciate how to deploy their specialist technological knowledge in order to best support freedom of the individual. This appreciation goes some way to nuancing Robbins’ supposed ‘conversion’ to social democracy after 1947. It complicates the prevailing narrative that the post-war ideological consensus completely overrode any imaginable alternative.

With this perspective, Chapter Three demonstrates that an overly prescriptive dichotomy between supreme but complacent social democratic higher education expansion versus economic visions of higher education obscures great complexity in the Robbins Report. It advocated an expansion of higher education that understood the student as a citizen-consumer. The state, it argued, should empower students to make subjective assessments of the value of higher education in order so they could maximise their private and social return on investment.

Robbins’ proposals were, by and large, rejected. The new DES actively pursued a binary policy, following techno-nationalist concerns to engage a wider proportion of the population in scientific and vocational training to secure national prosperity. The CVCP, the body constituted of the chief administrators of all university institutions, has long been accused of reflecting the complacency of liberal academics and failing to appreciate this need. By contrast Chapter Four shows that while the committee was indeed often complacent, when most threatened, a reformist

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Simmons, ‘The Historical Experience of Liberal Studies for Vocational Learners in Further Education’; Simmons, ‘The Historical Experience of Liberal Studies for Vocational Learners in Further Education’; Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, pp. 98-122; Sanderson, The Universities and British Industry, pp. 372-74. See also the idea by Tom Steele, Richard Taylor, and Anthony Haynes that the polytechnics as conceived by Toby Weaver were part of the same impetus of new university foundations required to revolutionise higher education so it might properly perform an essential role in modern society: Steele, Taylor, and Haynes, British Labour and Higher Education, p. 83.
vanguard of the committee defended the universities. They promoted a university education as providing citizens with skills critical to meeting national needs.

Chapter Five further problematises the myth of complacent universities by revisiting their relationship with industry. As pressures grew on universities to demonstrate their societal usefulness, some prominent university leaders and industrialists reimagined a university education. Universities should teach students to appreciate the wider societal context of their specialisms and how to apply that knowledge to achieve practical ends. By the end of the period, the idea that a university education should in itself reinforce the values of industry and implicitly appreciate liberal capitalism was widespread.

The thesis concludes in Chapter Six with three case studies, examining the early development of three ‘New Universities’ and the plans of their vice-chancellors: Eric James at York, John ‘Jack’ Butterworth at Warwick, and Tom Cottrell at Stirling. Local industrialists were key proponents of a university at York and Robbins led its Academic Planning Board. At Warwick, industrialists played an even more significant role in leading the early university. National establishment figures and industry representatives were key to Stirling’s development, and Robbins became its first chancellor. By comparing the planning and experiences of these universities, the thesis shows how liberal education, rather than being a static pedagogy, took on new dynamic forms in tuition. Its practical virtues and the importance of individual initiative became key determinants of the universities’ built environment and educational practices (though with variable success). This qualifies the impression of these institutions as Oxbridge satellites and highlights their wider purposes in regimes of liberal governmentality.

As we shall see, when vocal portions of their student populations apparently signalled that they rejected the values of liberal society in student protest, vice-chancellors felt they were at risk of condemning the future of western liberal capitalism. In an interesting historical coincidence, few British institutions were affected more by the student unrest of the late 1960s than the LSE, under
Robbins’ governorship. Robbins himself thought the horror with which many students viewed the atrocious state of the world in the 1960s was one that his generation would do well to share.²⁰⁶ It is to his fascinating vision of how universities and their students could help address the challenges of technological modern society that this society turns first.

LIONEL ROBBINS ON HIGHER EDUCATION
‘ROBBINS THE ECONOMIST’ MEETS ‘ROBBINS THE RENAISSANCE MAN’

2. ROBBINS REMEMBERED

2.1. Robbins in Review

LSE professor of economics Lionel Robbins (1898-1984) was one of the leading free-market economists of his day. He nevertheless prominently served in Whitehall during the war, overseeing the introduction of rationing and post-war employment policy. His name is irrevocably linked with the massive expansion recommended by the Committee on Higher Education. He was, and continues to be, polarising and puzzling. The responses to Robbins’ Autobiography of an Economist (1971) are particularly telling. Thomas Balogh, the prominent critic of the Oxbridge classicists who he claimed dominated the civil service at the expense of experts, reviewed Robbins’ Autobiography for the New Statesman. Despite Robbins’ wartime service he, as Balogh charged, ‘was and still remains completely limited by the neo-classical system’. By contrast Balogh’s fellow critic of the arts Charles P. Snow in his review wrote in praise of Robbins and his ‘classical virtues’ of courage but also humility. It would be easy, Snow suggested, to imagine Robbins as

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a Victorian intellectual, a friend of Bagehot, Trollope, George Eliot [...] He would have been a pretty good member of the 18th century American colonies and would have been extremely useful in drafting the Constitution.

Snow then, dissonantly, compared Robbins’ ‘solidity and certainty of character’ to that of the late Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev. There was widespread praise for Robbins’ unorthodox portrait of an art-loving economist. Surprisingly perhaps, the Times Higher Education Supplement was not overwhelmingly positive. Their review described Robbins and his friend and ally at the LSE Friedrich Hayek as the ‘baddies’ of economics in the 1930s: Robbins was in his politics and economics ‘the classical economist par excellence’. But another reviewer reported the joke that ironically many more socialists came out of Robbins’ seminars than from those of Harold Laski, Robbins’ socialist undergraduate tutor and later colleague at the LSE. Foremost British economist of education John Vaizey outlined ‘two Lionel Robbinses. One is the devoted and loyal teacher and sensitive lover of the arts and ideas [...] The other is the admirer of businessmen and their governments, the devotee of free markets’. No wonder then that the historiography on higher education is hesitant to address Robbins’ life except for occasional, sometimes mystified, allusions to his variegated career.

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4 C. P. Snow, ‘Classical Virtues’, Financial Times, 16 September 1971. Snow and Robbins were in correspondence prior to Snow’s review. Ortolano also highlights Snow’s efforts to bring capitalism and communism into dialogue and that Snow had declined a place on the Committee on Higher Education because of his commitment to his cause: Ortolano, The Two Cultures Controversy, pp. 202-03, 31.
9 For example, Peter Mandler calls him a ‘complicated and not always predictable character’ but investigates no further: Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, p. 84. For the exceptions discussing the Robbins Report, see Introduction.
2.1.2. Economist or Renaissance Man?

Robbins’ biographer, Denis O’Brien, erected a similar dichotomy between Robbins the economist, and ‘Robbins the Renaissance man’.¹⁰ For O’Brien, Robbins’ economics had little to do with his writings on higher education.¹¹ This divide is very similar to the narrative of Robbins’ life which generally prevails in the historical literature.¹² In 1929 aged just 31 Robbins was made a professor at LSE and de facto head of the economics department, where he was remembered as a handsome, charismatic teacher.¹³ His foundational *The Nature and Significance of Economic Science* (1932) remains methodologically important.¹⁴ It drew on two economic traditions: the first followed English utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill and Phillip Wicksteed.¹⁵ The second was the so-called Austrian

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¹² This is not the place for a comprehensive evaluation of the historiography of Robbins’ life, but it is perhaps worth including a note on his biographical treatments. The first, published in 1988 four years after Robbins’ death, is that by O’Brien: a thematic analysis of Robbins’ economic science and political philosophy. O’Brien, *Lionel Robbins*; see also O’Brien, 'Lionel Charles Robbins, 1898-1984'; Richard Wright, 'Robbins as a Political Economist: A Response to O’Brien', *The Economic Journal*, 99 (1989); Denis P. O’Brien, 'Robbins as a Political Economist: A Reply', *The Economic Journal*, 99 (1989). The second treatment is a large body of work produced by another economist, Susan Howson (a student at the LSE from 1964-69), who has painstakingly processed Robbins’ extensive personal papers and curated a wealth of publications since the 1990s. This work culminated in an invaluable and comprehensive chronicle detailing Robbins’ personal, professional, and public life over a thousand pages, published as *Lionel Robbins* (2011), not quite warts-and-all but still ‘as it happened’. This does mean it tends to concentrate on events rather than intellectual influences; for a succinct criticism see: D. Wade Hands, 'Lionel Robbins' (EH.Net, December 2012) <https://eh.net/book_reviews/lionel-robbins/> [Accessed 17 March 2021]. Howson was lent Robbins’ personal papers by his family for the purpose of writing his official biography before the papers were deposited at the LSE. Her findings were critical for the competition of this chapter during the pandemic. Susan Howson, 'Economists as Diarists: An Editor’s and a User’s View', *Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, 30 (1992), p. 252; Susan Howson, 'Lionel Robbins', in *The Elgar Companion to John Maynard Keynes*, Robert W. Dimand and Harald Hagemann (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019); Susan Howson, 'Robbins, Lionel Charles, Baron Robbins (1898–1984), Economist', *ODNB*; Lionel Robbins and Susan Howson, *Economic Science and Political Economy: Selected Articles* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1997). See also Susan Howson and Donald Winch, *The Economic Advisory Council, 1930–1939: A Study in Economic Advice During Depression and Recovery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Elsewhere, Robbins has been the subject of the literature describing the development of neoliberalism and the history of economic thought, which will be addressed later.
¹⁵ O’Brien, 'Lionel Robbins and the Austrian Connection'.
school, particularly economists Ludwig von Mises and Hayek. Through this second group Robbins became a founding member of Hayek’s infamous Mont Pèlerin Society in 1947, the core of the Neoliberal Thought Collective. However, the historical attention on Robbins dissipates after 1947.

It is widely assumed that Robbins underwent a ‘conversion’ around that time as the idealism of the post-war era brought about a strong consensus that few could resist. As one commentator put it bluntly: in the 1930s, Robbins ‘subscribed to one ideology (Manchester liberalism), and, 30 years later, [...] another ideology (Keynesianism)’. Robbins’ stance on higher education was both an outcome and confirmation of the sincerity of his reform. Without such a conversion, many observers have found it difficult to understand Robbins’ position.

Another of Robbins’ biographers, Susan Howson, provides the most comprehensive account of Robbins’ post-war activities as a ‘Renaissance man’. As well as participating in public debate on British economic policy, Robbins was centrally involved in arts administration at the Courtauld Institute, National Gallery, and the Royal Opera House, and a key negotiator with government officials including R.A. Butler and David Eccles. In higher education Robbins continued to lecture at the LSE until 1982, and as well as chairing his famous committee, he chaired the Academic Planning Board of the University of York (1960-63), and became the Chancellor of the University of Stirling.

16 Hayek appointment to the LSE to the Tooke chair of Economics and Statistics in 1931. Howson, while frustrated by a lack of surviving correspondence between Hayek and Robbins in the 1930s (due to their close working environment), has detailed their friendship. They were of similar ages, both served as artillery officers from 1917-18 albeit on different fronts and sides. Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 1081; Bruce J. Caldwell, ‘Hayek’s Transformation’, History of Political Economy, 20 (1988), pp. 516-17.


19 Söderberg, ‘A Response to Steve Fuller’. See the introduction of this thesis for the context of this comment.

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(1968-78).\(^{21}\) He took up chairmanship of the Court of Governors at the LSE during the student troubles there.\(^{22}\) He also managed to act as chairman of the *Financial Times*, director of *The Economist*, and a director of British Petroleum.\(^{23}\)

Although Howson discusses Robbins’ contributions to the arts, she does not extend this analysis to his writings on education.\(^{24}\) She quotes Robbins’ argument in 1957, that public patronage of the arts was justified in the same way as:

- maintenance of sources of high excellence in learning and pure science,
- Archaeology, Pure Mathematics, Astronomy, for instance—subjects of no special relevance to practical affairs as such, but which impart quality and meaning to life on this planet by reason of their mere existence.\(^{25}\)

Howson has shown that Robbins believed that the market did not have the capacity to provide the optimum level of art (as a product) as it conferred both a collective and private benefit, in the same way as public hygiene or urban planning.\(^{26}\) It was therefore right that state might intervene through taxation in order to fund and produce these public goods.\(^{27}\) The benefits included the pleasure of contemplation, the inspiration of new works of art, and the formation of taste. These look like very social democratic arguments.\(^{28}\) There were however deeper meanings that Robbins imbued in the benefits of education left unexplored by Howson. While Robbins infrequently commented on the teaching of economics prior to 1960, after 1963 he was never far from the national discussion of

\(^{21}\) See ibid. pp. 987-88, 1060-61. Robbins continued as a member of the successor body to the York Academic Planning Board, the Academic Advisory Board, from 1964-68.

\(^{22}\) Robbins remained active at the LSE and continued as an occasional lecturer until 1982 when he suffered a stroke, before his death in 1984. O'Brien, 'Lionel Charles Robbins, 1898-1984'.

\(^{23}\) Howson, 'Robbins, Lionel Charles, Baron Robbins (1898–1984), Economist'.


higher education policy. His two edited collections, from 1966 and 1980, indicate a strong continuity of thought. For Robbins, the benefits of higher education were related to the importance of freedom to creative genius, of specialisation to the everyday work of the world, and an understanding of the proper operation of the good society. Exploring his vision for higher education challenges too homogeneous picture of the post-war social democratic consensus and provides something of a more complicated background to the Robbins Report and its educational philosophy. Robbins is especially helpful as his influences were eclectic and he was certainly idiosyncratic.

The chapter begins by challenging the ‘conversion narrative’ of Robbins’ long career and opens up the possibility of a less polarised understanding of Robbins’ position on higher education. Section 2.2 shows that Robbins was deeply anxious about the consequences for human freedom of the technological wonders and horrors of the twentieth century. He saw higher education as tool for the realisation of freedom. Section 2.3 demonstrates Robbins’ ongoing faith that individual free choice permitting human flourishing was necessary to realise the ‘good society’. But he maintained that it was only through the responsible deployment of state interventions, made possible by technological innovation, that maximal freedoms might be achieved in the future. As section 2.5 explores, Robbins’ advocated expansion of higher education as part of an effort to secure this

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29 Robbins made no comprehensive statement of university philosophy or pedagogy. Arguably, of course, the Robbins Report was his statement, as Chapter Three will explore. The report can hardly be said to have been ‘definitive’, however, or unambiguous. The first of his edited collections, published as The University in the Modern World (1966), was a collection of speeches and other memoranda made over two years from December 1963 to December 1965 printed largely as delivered. It was dedicated to the statistical team on the Robbins Committee, Claus Moser and Richard Layard (‘Comrades in a difficult country’). A later second volume was titled Higher Education Revisited (1980). It presented its content in the form of a collection of letters addressed to an imagined correspondent (‘My dear X’) in an attempt to increase the accessibility of the volume and emphasise the ‘personal attitudes’ it exposits. This slightly artificial treatment does not fully disguise the original forms of the letters (their decontextualization is occasionally jarring), ranging from speeches to graduation addresses and newspaper opinion articles from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s. For example, letter three, ‘Content and Specialisation’ had its origins in Stirling University Graduation Address on the 5 April 1968 (UoSUA/A/4/1/5); letter eight, ‘Student Militancy and Unrest’ was a speech ‘Present Discontents of the Student Age Group’, given in Portland, Oregon in March 1968 (LSE ROBBINS/8/2/5); the final letter ‘Higher Education and the Future’ was derived from a Financial Times article ‘A Question of Degree’, 18 March 1978: Robbins, Higher Education Revisited, p. vii. Robbins also gave numerous other addresses on higher education which have not been widely published. These include other graduation speeches at Stirling. He also published further articles on higher education, for example in the Financial Times and Times Higher Education Supplement: Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 1064.

balance of technology and freedom. Robbins was very explicit that freedom was not natural and that interventions, including provision for universities, needed to be made to secure it. In one prominent address, he argued that:

The life of a free society is not a spontaneous phenomenon: it is the product of institutions and customs [...] Rousseau said that men are born free. Nothing could be more ridiculous: they become free only by adaptation and education. The habits of self-restraint and toleration, which alone make possible a free society, are not to be seen in the cradle or the nursery.\textsuperscript{31}

Freedom was, Robbins identified, a result of a process of learning and discipline. As he later explained at another speech in 1965:

The values of a free society can be cultivated, but they cannot be imposed [...] these habits are best inculcated as a bye-product of something else. [...] Our education for citizenship should be an education in modes of thought and judgement from which habits appropriate to freedom emerge as a natural consequence.\textsuperscript{32}

The chapter concludes with section 2.6, detailing how Robbins proposed to reform universities along the lines of his experience of the LSE to best provide students a necessary broad education.

2.1.3. Nuancing the Conversion Narrative

To deal with Robbins’ attitude to higher education it is necessary first to address the broader ‘conversion’ narrative. The conversion narrative, and Robbins’ disappearance from the historiography of neoliberalism after 1947, rests on three misleading events. Firstly, Robbins deserted the Mont Pèlerin Society after the first meeting.\textsuperscript{33} The schism was mutual: the neoliberals excommunicated Robbins from the pantheon of neoliberal orthodoxy. Hayek recalled Robbins ‘fell

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Neoliberal economist Milton Friedman included Robbins in an informal ‘blacklist’ of society members who failed to exercise society values, citing the Robbins Report. Secondly the historiography has identified a divergence of the thought of Hayek and Friedman away from Robbins. Thirdly, in Britain for the next thirty years (when Robbins was most active in public life) the Neoliberal Thought Collective appears in uninfluential fringe forms such as the marginalised think-tank the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), which exerted little influence on economic policy during the 1960s.

None of these factors are entirely satisfactory evidence of a ‘conversion’. Historians, including Fabio Masini, George Peden, and not least O’Brien himself, have expressed dissatisfaction with a conversion narrative. These interpretations favour placing Robbins along with other British post-war neoliberal economists including Jewkes and Peacock on a broad continuity or spectrum between the neoliberalism of Hayek and the social democracy of Keynes and the Director of the LSE William Beveridge. A series of professional and personal disagreements between Hayek, Robbins, and their families, and later other members of the then unsuccessful Mont Pèlerin Society, appear more pertinent to Robbins’ decision to leave than intellectual differences. Robbins maintained life-

40 Hayek provoked a scandal at the LSE in 1950 upon announcing his plans to leave the school, divorce his first wife, and to marry his cousin. The Robbins and Hayek families were close. When Robbins had departed to London to work in the Economic Section in 1940, the Robbins’ family had shared their war-time Cambridgeshire cottage with Hayek’s children and wife; Hayek was homed in Kings College by Keynes. In a letter to economist and later secretary of Mont Pèlerin Society Albert Hunold, Robbins resigned from the society and explained that he believed Hayek had ‘behaved in such a way which I find quite impossible to
long friendships with other neoliberals and Mont Pèlerin Society members after his departure, such as Karl Popper, Alan Peacock, and John Jewkes (Mont Pèlerin Society president from 1962-64).41 There was, as Robbins noted, some intellectual and political divergence. To what extent Robbins joined the Keynesian camp is a matter of perspective and will be examined later. But Robbins’ and Hayek’s divergence was primarily due to movement in Hayek’s thought on the grounds by which interventions into society could be said to be justified.42 In 1960 Robbins favourably, if critically, reviewed Hayek’s earnest restatement of his denunciations of centralised planning in Constitution of Liberty (1960).43 By 1961 Robbins and Hayek had resumed friendly correspondence and Robbins attended the wedding of Hayek’s son that July while the Robbins Committee was sitting.44 Robbins’ reconcile with the conception of his character and his standards which I have cherished through twenty years of friendship [...] so far as I am concerned, the man I knew is dead and I should find it almost intolerably painful to have to meet his successor’. See also: Alan Ebenstein, Friedrich Hayek: A Biography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 81, 155-56, 204, 98; Nicholas Wapshott, Keynes Hayek: The Clash That Defined Modern Economics (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), pp. 214-15; Stedman Jones, ‘The Radicalization of Neoliberalism’, p. 41. Robbins subsequently fell out with Hunold in 1958 over anti-Semitic remarks made by Hunold at dinner with Robbins’ family. Factious infighting at the Mont Pèlerin Society as the society drifted away from the discussion of liberalism as a framework for society in the early 1960s further dissuaded Robbins from any reconciliation. See: Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 703-06, 847-48, 1071, 664; Martin Beddeleem, ‘Michael Polanyi and Early Neoliberalism’, Tradition & Discovery, 45 (2019), p. 41.41 He also continued to attend some Mont Pèlerin Society activities as a guest from at least 1952.42 Stedman Jones, ‘The Radicalization of Neoliberalism’. Robbins recanted some of his earlier youthful Austrian exuberances most influenced by Hayek. Robbins declined to republish his account of the causes of The Great Depression (1934). Robbins reassessed the value of these abstract works based on a new appreciation for the capacity of state interventions to engender future freedoms. Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 743, 845-47, 1086-87; Robbins, Autobiography, p. 12; Lionel Robbins, ‘Hayek on Liberty’, Economica, 28 (1961), p. 79; Robbins and Howson, Economic Science and Political Economy: Selected Articles, p. 3; Robbins, Autobiography, p. 154; Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 1081-2. More fundamental was the movement in Hayek’s thought away from a more reconciliatory position (such as in the first statement of aims of the Mont Pèlerin Society, drafted by Robbins), and away from economics and towards the circulation of knowledge: Tribe, ‘Neoliberalism and Liberalism in Britain 1930-1980’; ‘Statement of Aims’ (Vaud: The Mont Pèlerin Society, 08 April 1947); Innset, ‘Reinventing Liberalism: Early Neoliberalism in Context, 1920 – 1947’; and in Ebenstein, Friedrich Hayek: A Biography, p. 145; Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 662-64.43 Robbins, ‘Hayek on Liberty’; see also George Peden, ‘Neoliberal Economists and the British Welfare State, 1942-1975’, Journal of the History of Economic Thought, 39 (2017). Robbins restated his admiration in his autobiography: Robbins, Autobiography, p. 128. Robbins’ conversion is overstated in the account of the review in Wapshott, Keynes Hayek: The Clash That Defined Modern Economics, pp. 222-25. See below.44 Howson notes that Hayek and Robbins met ‘for the first time in eleven years at the wedding of Hayek’s son Laurence on 15 July 1961’. On the mending of their relationship, see Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 846-8, 634. Their renewed friendship endured. After attending Hayek’s eightieth birthday party (hosted by the IEA) in 1979 Robbins was invited as a guest to attend a meeting of the Mont Pèlerin Society that September. p. 1062. I have not seen any discussion, other than an exchange of letters cited by Howson, on the differences on education between Robbins and Hayek (pp. 847-9); but see also the overlap between Robbins, Hayek, and Friedman’s support for public funded education for citizenship: Ben Jackson, ‘Richard Titmuss Versus the IEA: The Transition from Idealism to Neo-Liberalism in British Social Policy’, in Lawrence Goldman (ed.), Welfare and Social Policy in Britain since 1870 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
relationship with the IEA is outside the remit of this thesis but it is nonetheless interesting to note that Robbins for the rest of his life continued to warmly associate with its members, especially Peacock. Robbins favourably drew on research from the thinktank, particularly on student loans as Chapter Three will explore.\textsuperscript{45} He also indicated support for Friedman’s school voucher-based education system.\textsuperscript{46}

This is not to suggest that there was no intellectual movement, nor that there is an alternative identifiable coherent narrative of Robbins’ intellectual development.\textsuperscript{47} This chapter instead demonstrates some threads of continuity and overlap between Robbins the neoliberal economist and Robbins the Renaissance man and social democrat. A prescriptive ‘conversion’ fails to satisfactorily account for Robbins’ support for higher education expansion. Robbins believed that state intervention was necessary to secure higher education as a space of education for freedom.

2.2. LIBERAL EDUCATION AND TECHNO-NATIONALISM

2.2.1. Liberal Education

To begin to challenge the idea of a prescriptive post-war consensus in the expansion of higher education, this section locates Robbins’ support for higher education expansion as existing between

\textsuperscript{45} See Michael Kenny, ‘The Rise of ‘the Market’ in Political Thinking About Universities’, \textit{The European Legacy}, 18 (2013) on the IEA on higher education policy (though Kenny does unhelpfully use the word ‘conversion’ to describe Robbins ‘striking’ acceptance of loan scheme, which is neither a conversion nor especially striking). Robbins’ relationship with the IEA was good. While he marked himself as an outsider he clearly admired its values, made clear in a flattering address given in 1981. He chaired lectures and seminars, published papers, and attended events at the institute. However, in 1970 (likely bearing in mind his precarious position as Chair of the Court of Governors at the LSE in the midst of the troubles; see below) he declined a trusteeship of the Institute, telling IEA founder Ralph Harris that ‘he wished to avoid commitments which might be time-consuming and would appear to label him’. A speech by Robbins in April 1976 at the private University College Buckingham (where Peacock was principal and from 1980-1984 vice-chancellor) was published as an IEA Occasional Paper in 1977: see Howson, \textit{Lionel Robbins}, pp. 999, 1032, 59-60, 62; Lionel Robbins, ‘The IEA, 1957-81 – an Appraisal’, \textit{Economic Affairs}, 1 (1981); see also the similar ideas to Robbins on education in Alan Peacock and Jack Wiseman, ‘Education for Democrats’, IEA Hobart Paper 25 (London, 1964).


two identifiable educational philosophies in Britain: firstly, that of ‘liberal education’, and secondly, the ‘techno-nationalists’. The first drew on the nineteenth-century defence of liberal education by John Henry Newman, and John Stuart Mill’s apparent repudiation of vocational training at universities. In the post-war period, such an education was promoted by prominent educational leaders R. H. Tawney, Professor of Economic History at the LSE (alongside Robbins), and Lord Lindsay, master of Balliol College Oxford, allied to expansionist first full-time University Grants Committee chairman Walter Moberly.

This Anglican group’s centre of gravity was J. H. Oldham’s ‘Moot’ (where the group met several times a year from 1938-47). The Moot was deeply concerned with the efficacy of British higher education. They were particularly animated by another LSE professor, Austrian professor of education Karl Mannheim. The fate of the inter-war German higher education system, and horrors that the Nazi regime had inflicted on its population, illustrated the potential dangers. For the Moot, scientific training in German technological institutions had armed its students with incredible technical knowledge but ‘moral vacuity’, and the ancient universities became instruments of

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48 Both Collini and Anderson have demonstrated that Mill should not be read as promoting an entirely detached liberal education at the expense of worldly engagement: Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, pp. 106-07, 09; Collini, What Are Universities For?, pp. 46-66. Robbins read Newman’s The Idea of a University (1875) to prepare for his chairmanship of the Committee on Higher Education but found its repudiation of utility repellent: Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 862.


50 Mannheim had come to Britain as part of the Academic Assistance Council conceived by Beveridge and Robbins in 1933 to rescue academics dismissed by the Nazi regime. Mannheim had been invited to the LSE by Laski. Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 236-38, 43-44; Steele and Taylor, 'Oldham's Moot (1938-1947), the Universities and the Adult Citizen', pp. 189-90; Ralph Kohn, 'Nazi Persecution: Britain's Rescue of Academic Refugees', European Review, 19 (2011). Ludwig von Mises was also involved. See Robbins’ account: Robbins, Autobiography, pp. 143-44. Robbins’ wife was also present at the famous meeting in Vienna.

51 See Tom Steele and Richard Kenneth Taylor, 'Oldham's Moot (1938-1947), the Universities and the Adult Citizen', History of Education 39 (2010). Lindsay himself had served as special advisor to an Allied commission on the reform of the higher education system in Germany. Taylor, 'Keele: Post-War Pioneer', pp. 39-40. For the importance of universities to the formation of national identities see Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, pp. 87, 102.
indoctrination. There were strong fears that English students were similarly ‘overspecialised’ and lacked the educated mind necessary to combat illiberal influences. To tackle this, Tawney and Lindsay drew from their association particularly with the Oxford branch of the Workers Educational Association (WEA) which took to heart the nonconformist creed of the ‘priesthood of all believers’. It aimed to bring undergraduate standard education to working class men. Tawney’s Protestant Christianity attempted to steer a flock, commending “individual responsibility, [...] diligence and [...] self-discipline” within a democratic society. These values were held to be embodied in a small elite, which T.S. Eliot at the Moot termed the ‘clerisy’. Through teaching and residency, a university education transmitted this ‘common culture’ and liberal arts of the Hellenic and Hebrew tradition. Adhering to this culture would ensure that society would never again misuse science in the same way as their German counterparts. Lindsay argued that the transmission of such a ‘philosophy of life’ was necessary to provide democracy with the intelligent citizenry necessary to meet national technological manpower and local cultural needs. Lindsay championed these values at what is usually thought of as an experimental and limited scale new University College of North Staffordshire (1949), later the University of Keele (1962). The programme was developed after Lindsay’s death by physicist Arthur Vick, and a student of Mannheim’s from the LSE, W. A. C. Stewart.


The liberal education of the universities has usually been presented by the historiography as diametrically opposed to the second, widespread educational philosophy, techno-nationalism. Embodied by the Percy Report (1945) and Barlow Report (1946), techno-nationalists demanded greater output of scientific and technological manpower from the universities and other higher education institutions. These techno-nationalist calls were commonplace and propagated through the media, from articles for *Nature* to discussion groups on the BBC featuring Solly Zuckermann, Lancelot Hogben, Hugh Gaitskell, and J. D. Bernal. They culminated in the headline interventions of Snow and Balogh in 1959 who bemoaned the amateur liberal arts education. For these techno-nationalists the ‘scientific revolution’ and the construction of new bureaucracies and meritocracies manned by experts would bring about national prosperity. Techno-nationalism has been assumed in much of the historiography to have been the main driver of higher education expansion in the post-war period. For example, Guy Ortolano places the Robbins programme as part of this expansionist technocratic movement and portrays Robbins as a technocrat in alliance with Snow.

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63 Ortolano was perhaps nudged in this direction because Snow’s antagonist, F. R. Leavis, seems to have been especially hostile towards the expansionism of the Robbins Report. It would seem to be the case Robbins would have generally aligned himself with Snow over Leavis. Despite what Ortolano called Leavis’ ‘radical liberalism’ on account of Leavis’ individualism (Ortolano suggests Leavis would have responded positively to Hayek’s politics if not his economism), Leavis would have been a good candidate for the sort of elitist Robbins attacked in his address to the House of Lords in 1965. Ortolano, *The Two Cultures Controversy*, especially pp. 86-88, 231. Robbins, *University in the Modern World* p. 152. The story is more complicated, as Ortolano would certainly admit. Howson has identified that Robbins’ *Nature and Significance* and its definition of science (see below) found in 1933 a relatively receptive audience in the magazine *Scrutiny* published by Leavis and his wife.
2.2.2. Technical Education and the Historiography

The existing literature has tended to focus on these techno-nationalist expansionist demands and Snow’s conflict between the ‘two cultures’ of arts and sciences. The ‘Oxbridge’ liberal education, in the forms promoted by some of its staunchest defenders including Michael Oakshott or Snow’s archnemesis F. R. Leavis, did of course preserve many elite values. Liberal education was a period of interim withdrawal from the world suitable only for a few. It was inclined against materialism, and the vulgarity of industry and profit-generation. Fraternisation with vocationalism was unbecoming and a subversion of the right detached character. The caricature of post-war liberal education saw it firmly as allied to the ‘arts’: a protectionist attempt to preserve elite values, and which maintained a monopoly positions of authority even in the state. Because the ‘arts’ did not understand ‘science’, they were suffocating British prosperity by resisting the use of science and technology. Such thinking informed the decision to implement the binary divide between the universities and a vocationally-based ‘public’ sector of higher education from 1965.

This conception of liberal education as self-perpetuating cultural snobbery and conservatism is maintained in the historiography, which sees liberal education in the post-war period as a static pedagogy (see Chapter Four). Emphasis is placed on the frequent articulations of the ‘need’ for more science and technological education and the regressive liberal forces that suffocated supply.

Q. D. Leavis: Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 232-33. Ortolano overstates Snow’s direct influence on Robbins and the Committee on Higher Education, as this chapter and Chapter Three will show. Snow is not mentioned in Robbins’ autobiography; Eric Ashby (see below) is. Robbins, Autobiography, p. 272.

Steele, Taylor, and Haynes, British Labour and Higher Education, p. 60. On Leavis’ see Ortolano, The Two Cultures Controversy, especially pp. 127-139. For an appraisal of Leavis’ writings on university pedagogy see Rogan, Moral Economists, pp. 143-45; Silver, Higher Education and Opinion Making, pp. 47-49. See also Silver on Michael Oakeshott, pp. 119-120; Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, p. 148. See particularly Ortolano’s description of Leavis’ pedagogy in Ortolano, The Two Cultures Controversy, especially pp. 126-132, where he describes how one of Leavis’ students recalled “We were particularly hostile to what we called ‘working for a First’”. These were longstanding debates stretching back at least to the 1860s. See Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, pp. 106, 42.


Lowe, Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History, p. 153; Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, pp. 113, 16-17, 27-29, 31-44.
This argument echoes the declinist narratives of Martin Wiener and Correlli Barnett which criticised British society for elevating the arts at the expense of entrepreneurial ethics.\(^{68}\)

Elsewhere, however, the historiography of post-war Britain has challenged declinist narratives of the marginalisation of science and technology. David Edgerton and Jim Tomlinson, among others, have established that British economic decline can at best only be said to be relative to other Western societies.\(^{69}\) The impression of a static liberal education is increasingly problematised, and its antagonism of science has also been shown as overstated.\(^{70}\) As Silver and Ortolano more generally have shown some defenders of liberal education repudiated not ‘science’ but the legitimacy of university expansion which they saw as diluting a meritocratic elite. The elite clerisy alone possessed the capacities to understand and transmit the common culture necessary to lead society. This was often expressed as a fear for declining ‘standards’. Ortolano has identified that Snow’s ‘cultures’ were more rival politics: productive, progressive, optimistic, interventionist techno-nationalist ‘science’ and allied forms of literature; counterposed to an elitist, conservative, meritocratic, generally anti-expansionist ‘arts’.

2.2.3. Between Liberal Education and Technical Education

The overemphasis on liberal education as an antagonist of the ‘national needs’ for science and technological students has overemphasised the liberal education as a regressive and underappreciated how it was imagined the liberal education could contribute to modern society. Emphasising Robbins’ position shows how liberal education in fact underwent significant


diversification across the period, and how its values could be turned to the practical ends of realising a free and prosperous liberal society.

Like Tawney and Lindsay, the role of the university, Robbins could agree, was to expand general mental capacities, ‘cultivate intellectual and moral habits suitable for adult membership of a civilised society’, and act as a bulwark against illiberal influences in the modern world. This included abuses of science, technology, but additionally bureaucracy and collectivism that had ensnared not only Germany but especially Russia. Like the Moot, Robbins was also animated by the experiences of European emigres, but of a different species: his fellow neoliberals, Hayek, Popper, and Michael Polanyi. Polanyi was a participant in the Moot but also a founder of ‘The Society for Freedom in Science’ in 1940. These neoliberals especially feared the politicisation of science, all dogma, attempts to subject scientific inquiry to planning, and the erosion of academic freedom. They particularly decried the dangerous veneration of the methods of the Soviet Union which they saw as opposed to free, creative inquiry. Polanyi, for example, challenged Snow’s thesis that

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72 There was of course prior to 1956 still widespread support amongst the British intelligentsia for Soviet style centralised government, not least by Snow, whose patience with cold-war rhetoric Ortolano has shown was very thin. Ortolano, The Two Cultures Controversy.
science was marginalised and proposed instead it had attained a dangerous and arrogant authority.75 Both he and Hayek further criticised Mannheim’s socialism and willingness to use state bureaucracy on the grounds that their plans were vague, overoptimistic of the potential of planning to achieve the good society, and underappreciated the significance of freedom.76

Robbins does not seem to have engaged with these debates directly.77 In fact, Robbins confessed to being ‘bored’ by most abstract statements on the values and organisation of higher education. One exception was his attraction to the work of vice-chancellor of Queen's University Belfast, Sir Eric Ashby.78 The admiration was mutual. Ashby described reading the Robbins Report upon publication in a ‘thrilling 36 hours’.79 Ashby advocated a new ‘technological humanism’ to replace liberal humanism. Silver has shown Ashby, trained as a biologist, attached special importance to scientific and particularly technological studies to modern societies. However, students, Ashby argued, needed to appreciate the social context of technology, without which they could not hope to satisfactorily deploy their specialisations. In an example Ashby often deployed, a brewer needed knowledge of biology, microbiology, fermentation, to appreciate the design and architecture of public houses, a knowledge of the history of consumption, and understand the

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75 Ortolano, The Two Cultures Controversy, p. 187.
77 Polanyi is not mentioned in his autobiography or the Howson biography. But for their friendship see Nicholas Wapshott, Keynes Hayek: the clash that defined modern economics (2012), chapter 4; Gábor Biró, The Economic Thought of Michael Polanyi (Routledge, 2019); and hints in Edgerton, Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970, p. 221; and noted but not analysed in Agnès Festré, ‘Michael Polanyi’s Vision of Economics: Spanning Hayek and Keynes’, GREDEG Working Papers Series (HAL, 2 December 2020).
78 Robbins, Autobiography, pp. 271-75; Silver, Higher Education and Opinion Making, p. 92. Similar programmes, Silver has identified, were advocated in the mid-late 1940s. This included the ‘Association for Education in Citizenship’, founded in 1934 by Ernest Simon and which launched Universities Quarterly; membership of the association included Sidney Webb, Moberly, Laski, G. D. H. Cole, Beveridge, and Barbara Wootton.
relationship of alcohol with religion and ethics. Ashby has been identified as bridging liberal education and demands for greater specialisation, especially in science and technology.

Robbins propounded a similar educational philosophy but one which was much more intensely concerned with the role of freedom in achieving the ‘good society’. As section 2.3 will explore, Robbins’ reorientation of the liberal education is partly to be understood in biographical terms. Abandoning his families’ strict Calvinist-Baptist faith after the death of his mother when he was 11, Robbins nevertheless remained committed to the importance of its underlying Christian moral values. This was also intertwined with his disciplinary position. Robbins dispelled much of the elitism of liberal education and imagined an economic system based on democratic, individualist principles. Sharing a concern for the encroachment of fascism and socialism Robbins positioned universities as able to provide what he called the ‘creed of freedom’ (note the not insignificant religious semantics). This ‘common culture’ was necessary so that a wider range of students (no longer a ‘clerisy’) might deploy their specialised knowledge to the benefit of the good society. This meant for Robbins, liberal education had significance for economic growth and was foundational to the prosperity of the West.

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2.3. THE ‘CREED OF FREEDOM’

2.3.1. Freedom and Goodness

Robbins’ thinking on higher education begins with his faith that it was only through free conscience that ‘goodness’ was achievable. This conviction informed his liberal economic thought. Robbins came to argue that only by exercising free, subjective choice might individuals fulfil their personal desires and attain higher forms of being. O’Brien and Howson have speculatively linked this commitment to subjectivity and conscientious choice to his Baptist upbringing, though they did not develop the link. The importance of conscious choice for Robbins also aligns with Michel Foucault’s account of the development of the framework of power in western societies. Foucault suggested that through the ‘pastoral power’ of Christianity the interior conscience of the subject was aligned the goals of society. The importance of conscience was later secularised in bourgeois-capitalist societies.

Implicit in Robbins’ conception was the idea that through this subjective conscience human agents might choose and were oriented towards the achievement of ‘goodness’. Robbins was influenced in his formation of the behaviour of subjects by Max Weber’s ‘means-ends rationality’, which likely found resonance with the lingering importance for the young Robbins of his understanding of individualistic Calvinist doctrine of the believer being ‘saved’. Weber theorised that in Calvinism it was held the sign of an individual being a member of the predestined but

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unknowable elect might be found in success in their personal worldly industry and ‘vocation’. This vocation was dependent on a personal heavenly ‘calling’ that only the individual believer might know. Success in pursuit of exercising one’s conscience to follow their vocation was proof of their ‘goodness’.\(^9\) Weber argued this engendered what he called the ‘Protestant Work Ethic’ and capitalism’s unrelenting stress on profit generation.

This emphasis on subjectivity was expressed in Robbins’ economics in the importance he placed on the role of individual internal conscience and its relationship with goodness. Robbins’ economics used a ‘subjective theory of value’ where value was not an inherent property of a commodity. Rather, the value of any good was subjective and temporary, dependent on the utility that any individual in any instance obtained from it. For Robbins, economic agents exercising control over these resources available to them could subjectively rank their chosen ends in order of preference, in order that they might best realise their vocation.\(^9\) Despite his wholly secular outlook, Robbins still maintained in an important pamphlet in 1955 that the repression of conscience and choice was an ‘ethical sin against the holy spirit’.\(^9\)

For Robbins, importantly, individual choice was not just simply individual pleasure or profit maximising for their own sake, and he therefore rejected utilitarian psychic models of human agents.\(^9\) Instead, he followed J. S. Mill’s understanding of freedom as the capacity of individuals to seek progressive human growth and beneficial forms of expression free from dogma. Mill, indeed,

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placed this understanding of freedom as central to a university education in 1867. Importantly for Robbins therefore economic freedom was about far more than the creation of wealth or material welfare though this remained highly important. It included access to ‘concerts, theatrical performances’ and appreciation of decorative architecture. Indeed, it extended to any activity ‘attaining to any chosen ends, material or non-material, in conditions of scarcity of resources’. 

Robbins also permitted himself what he recognised was an unscientific but egalitarian assumption in the name of fairness which permitted him to advocate the expansion of ‘pastoral power’. There was, he recognised, no way to scientifically prove that utility or satisfaction obtained by one individual from any given resource was of equal satisfaction to another individual. In an example he would frequently deploy, if members of another ‘civilisation’ told ‘us [...] that members of his caste were capable of experiencing ten times as much satisfaction from given incomes as members of an inferior caste, we could not refute him [...] in any objective sense’.

He clarified elsewhere: ‘A Nazi or a Brahmin will choose one method of counting, a western liberal another’. But Robbins permitted the assumption on the grounds of moral necessity that the good society should assume that all individuals did possess equal faculties for the realisation of satisfaction. As

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he remarked in 1966, the choice between these assumptions should be measured in terms of ‘implications for action. [...] one leads to the caste society or the gas chamber, the other to an emphasis on the importance of education’ and human flourishing.\textsuperscript{100} For Robbins, society should actively orient itself towards the realisation of these Western, quasi-religious, individualist but melioristic values.

Robbins’ strong emphasis on the internality of conscience and the importance of one’s vocation and choice in determining the direction of their personal growth meant he was intensely suspicious of state interventions into individual freedoms. For Robbins, von Mises’ contribution to the socialist calculation debates following the Russian Revolution were a strong early and ongoing influence.\textsuperscript{101} Von Mises and his neoliberal allies (among them the young Hayek) argued with socialist administrators and politicians that the centralised determination of the distribution of resources advocated by socialists would always be less efficient than using price-mechanisms and a free market to distribute resources.\textsuperscript{102} The centralised bureaucracies of states armed with new technologies of governance, which socialists lauded, were criticised by the neoliberals as never possibly being able to truly know the subjective needs of any individual. This meant that state redistribution would always fail to meet their needs and tend towards unfulfilled needs, and at worst despotism. By contrast, by signalling their needs to other economic agents across markets through price mechanisms, individuals could work collaboratively to satisfy their chosen ends and bring about personal and societal goodness.

\textsuperscript{102} Plehwe, ‘Introduction’, p. 11; Slobodian, \textit{Globalists}. 
Following von Mises, Hayek, and later Popper, Robbins shared this concern with the rise of collectivist interventionist government within the free society. These themes appear especially clearly in Robbins’ 1937 and 1939 publications in which he attacked national and international syndicalist interests (ranging from unions to class groups to nation states) who purported to protect special interest groups. Robbins argued their protectionism would actually be detrimental to their interests by denying centralised initiative. Consequently, for Robbins, if individuals were prevented from distributing their own resources in any capacity (typically by state interventions) there was a risk of the misallocation of resources, inefficiency, and repression of initiative and would therefore fail to realise individual satisfactions or the ‘good society’.

2.3.2. Economic Science, Socialism, and Academic Freedom

The importance of this interiority of goodness for Robbins meant that students and academics should be free to pursue their vocation unincumbered by dogma. Only then could attain personal growth. His experiences as an undergraduate were foundational. After serving during the First World War with the Royal Artillery, Robbins became entirely disillusioned with socialism during his study at the LSE (1920-23). Concerned with the lack of critical attention socialists paid to economic science, Robbins turned away from socialist method and cultivated a strong liberal individualism, attracted to what he saw as the ‘analytic rigour’, fairness, and ‘objectivity’ of a strictly limited deductive ‘pure’ economic science. The LSE was then still small and quite young. Founded in 1895, it joined the nondenominational Benthamite university tradition of the University of London in 1900. The LSE

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105 On the Guild Socialism Robbins was initially attracted to see: Rogan, *Moral Economists*, pp. 29-40.

began awarding the degrees, unusually principally in the social sciences including the BSc(Econ), in 1901. Its culture was inflected with the programme of its founders, the Fabian socialists Sidney and Beatrice Webb: the application of value-free social science to resolving social difficulties. Robbins internalised this foundational belief, and attributed it to his tutor, future Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Dalton. Dalton convinced Robbins that ‘that the ultimate criterion of social action was its effect on the happiness of human beings rather than its conformity to preconceived ideas of intrinsic goodness or badness’. Robbins also studied under Edwin Cannan, whom he admired, and Laski, who personified everything Robbins came to regret in socialism.

For Robbins, for the individual to attain personal flourishing and to provide genuinely useful knowledge in the service of society, they needed to be free from distorting influences no matter how attractive they seemed. For Robbins, economic science was a tool or technology by which one might repudiate all worldly distractions and calculate how best to achieve one’s chosen aims in order to produce good for all. He was fiercely attached to the detachment of economic science, and its capacity to ascertain quantifiable relationships between different variables. In *Nature and Significance*, Robbins redefined economic science as an objective and theoretical study deploying impartial deductions to produce positive statements of how subjects’ subjective wants might be best

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111 Robbins rejected the idea that because economic science required detachment from society and separation in university spaces, this therefore meant it had no practical implications for the good society. He seems to have absorbed and defended the values of a liberal education as of practical importance as early as 1923: Lionel Robbins, 'Modest Proposals for the reform for the London examination system' *Clair Market Review*, 4:1 (Michaelmas Term 1923).
realised with the resources available.\textsuperscript{112} It was necessary to identify and reject external pressures which polluted this process, such as emotional value judgments. Such unscientific intrusions needed to be purged if economic science was to be most useful in building the ‘good society’.\textsuperscript{113} For Robbins, until the end of his life, detached economic science warned socialists like Laski (who he often described as emotional) that their economic methods and interventionist policy orientation were contaminated with unscientific value judgements. Overly preoccupied with enacting what appeared to be helpful policies, such economics undermined its own basis and thus ironically were more likely to be detrimental interest groups it sought to defend.\textsuperscript{114}

The creation of truly helpful rational scientific knowledge also required absolution of individual conscience from orthodoxy. The power of the state enabled by modern technologies was a particularly dangerous threat and was especially prone to distorting influences. Spaces for academic freedom were therefore imperative. Robbins abhorred centralised control over higher education when he saw it on visits with the Robbins Committee to France, Germany and the USSR.\textsuperscript{115} He fiercely advocated the ‘buffer principle’ of the independent University Grants Committee to distribute state funding to the universities in the best interests of the population.\textsuperscript{116} Unsurprisingly he maintained that the universities’ financial activities should not be open to the scrutiny of the


\textsuperscript{114} As he wrote in his \textit{Autobiography}, it was not that he ‘turned against my former beliefs and had suddenly become supporter of the status quo. It was rather that I had discovered that, far from resting on conclusions soberly reached by candid intellects in possession of all the facts and all the arguments, they were in fact the by-products of emotional reaction and wishful thinking and that nobody that I knew of was sifting them further’. Robbins, \textit{Autobiography}, p. 68; Howson, \textit{Lionel Robbins}, pp. 131-32.

\textsuperscript{115} Robbins, \textit{Autobiography}, p. 274.

\textsuperscript{116} Robbins, \textit{University in the Modern World} p. 48.
Without academic freedom, the critical and conscientious spirit of the universities would wither.

For Robbins then, goodness and prosperity of society arose from economic agents following their conscience in pursuit of their own personal development. Higher education was one such site of human flourishing and goodness. The knowledge and technology produced from academic study, however, Robbins believed, could easily be distorted by uncritical or emotional value judgments. Rather than assisting the good society, he argued, such knowledge even if deployed in good faith might lead to the repression of individual initiative and to the detriment of the good society. However, Robbins recognised that there was a necessary balance of freedoms.

2.3.3. The Balance of Freedom

Robbins acknowledged ‘that freedom is reduced if we all consider ourselves free to behave as gangsters’, and this balance deeply informed his proposals for higher education. This understanding of freedom was broadly shared by most neoliberals of his time. As such, they were not as distinct from collectivist socialists, and the reformist New Liberals as might be expected. Robbins, following his ‘Nonconformist conscience’ fiercely opposed Keynes’ protectionist policies, writings, and proposals in 1930. But the ‘feud’ between them (which O’Brien places in quotation

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120 Robbins refused to back Keynes’ ‘agreed diagnosis’ on the causes of and solution to economic depression at the secret ‘Committee of Economists’ for Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald. Robbins rejected proposals for the investment of public expenditure in public works, and the introduction of a tariff. Robbins instead wrote a minority report. Keynes was initially furious, but Robbins recalled the spat was short and Howson has confirmed this. Robbins’ throughout the 1930s and later recalled the disagreement with embarrassment. In his 1971 autobiography, Robbins regretted his opposition to additional expenditure and spoke with admiration of Keynes. Susan Howson, ‘Keynes and the LSE Economists’, Journal of the History of Economic Thought, 31 (2009); Robbins, Autobiography, pp. 152, 93. On Robbins’ ‘Austrian Phase’ see the discussion on Robbins’ Great Depression in footnote 42 above, and Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 1081.
Lionel Robbins on Higher Education

marks) is well documented to have been overstated.\textsuperscript{121} Even at the Mont Pèlerin Society in 1947, the ambition of many like Robbins was to establish neoliberalism as the route to overcome the ‘fatal split in the humanitarian camp’ between liberals and socialists.\textsuperscript{122} In the place of collectivist interventionist planning, neoliberals proposed to repurpose strong state infrastructure, enabled by technologies, to secure liberty and market spaces that might allow free exchange: an alternative ‘positive programme’ in fellow neoliberal Henry Simons’ phraseology.\textsuperscript{123} Such a programme would engender the prosperous, stable, and good society desired by all. Technological knowledge, Robbins recognised, had great power to both destroy freedom and deliver it.

The importance of technology to securing the greatest possible freedoms also accounts for Robbins’ actions in service in the advisory Economic Section of the UK Cabinet offices during the war from 1940-45. He worked closely with Keynes and had a key role in imposing many policies of centralised planning and constructing a command economy, apparently contrary to his inter-war political philosophy.\textsuperscript{124} Following Keynes’ death, Robbins’ gave the 1947 Marshall Lectures at Cambridge (drafted while at Mont Pèlerin, and published later that year as \textit{The Economic Problem in Peace and War}). In them, he capitulated and accepted a greater role for the state in managing aggregate demand to maintain employment levels.\textsuperscript{125} But, as Cambridge economist Joan Robinson


concluded in remarks following Robbins’ lectures, they represented only a ‘partial conversion’ which permitted Robbins to preserve ‘his faith’; Robbins called it a ‘restatement’. In his restatement he argued on identical grounds to the neoliberal ‘positive programme’. Interventions into free society were justified when they might engender future freedoms exercised through the market. The suspension of the market in a time of war (because the initial distribution of money prior to the beginning of the war was not conductive to the optimal distribution of goods for the war effort, whether against the Nazis or hypothetically against the USSR) was justified only if it secured greater freedoms once victory was achieved.

Expanding on this philosophy in an important and understudied post-war pamphlet, ‘Freedom and Order’ (1955), Robbins drew on much the same literature as his pre-war neoliberal political economy including von Mises, Simons, and Popper. Robbins argued that it was necessary to constantly re-evaluate the capacity of any intervention into individual freedom (particularly taxation) to generate future freedoms. Striking a balance between freedom and freedom-limiting interventions was, as Robbins saw it, ‘the grand problem of the art of liberal politics’.

Autobiography Robbins pointed to Peace and War and ‘Freedom and Order’ as the two primary

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127 Robbins, Peace and War, pp. 5-6, 11, 30-31. Additionally, Robbins claimed for example that rationing only ‘does not work very badly’ when goods were in universal demand and could be easily standardized in ‘the adoption of single-line rationing, on a complete egalitarian basis, or upon a very simple classifications of assumed need’. LSE ROBBINS/1/24, Lionel Robbins, ‘Economic Planning - Impossible in a Free society?’, ND, p. 7. See also Robbins, Autobiography, pp. 176-77. See his (reluctant) willingness to reintroduce war-time controls should war break out with the USSR. Lionel Robbins, ‘Preparation for Defence, “Drastic Financial Policy”, Times, 2 January 1951.


statements on which he would ‘still take my stand and by which [...] I should wish to be judged’. It does seem likely that Robbins’ wartime experiences increased his optimism in the capacity of the state to engender future freedoms. In his review of Hayek’s *Constitution of Liberty* Robbins admitted that state provision of social services had provided some of the identifiable improvements in health, manners, and wealth over his lifetime. He still, however believed that most were a consequence of free enterprise. The task of the state was therefore for Robbins to help cultivate the balance of freedoms to secure greater freedoms in the future.

Expanding opportunities for the participation in a community of scholars was a key tool in achieving this, as section 2.4 explores. Robbins remained concerned about the relationship between technology and the balance of freedom in higher education. As he wondered at one meeting of the Robbins Committee, ‘at what point does central control become illegitimate?’

### 2.4. EGALITARIANISM, ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND BREADTH

#### 2.4.1. Equality, Choice, and Prosperity

As we have seen, Robbins’ conception of the good society meant establishing spaces for the exercise of free subjective judgment and exchange of available resources in order to engender personal and societal prosperity. He subscribed to the Benthamite utilitarian notion of the greatest good for the greatest number, only possible by empowering individuals to act in concord with their subjective

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131 Lionel Robbins, ‘Hayek on Liberty’, *Economica*, 28 (1961), pp. 79-80. There are some similarities between the arguments and phraseology used in ‘Freedom and Order’ and ‘Hayek on Liberty’.

wants. This meant he was a strong advocate for interventions to expand access to higher education, but there was a limit to his advocacy for expansion.

Robbins maintained an assumption that all ‘citizens are sufficiently mature to know their own interest or to be guided towards it by reason and persuasion’ and advocated the removal of barriers to choice wherever he saw them. Following Mill he did exclude ‘children or imbeciles’, who lacked the ‘maturity of their faculties’. But for Robbins these were outliers. The rest of the population should be free to exercise subjective choice in pursuit of personal growth. Unlike neoliberals Wilhelm Röpke and William Hutt who saw problems of racial ‘immaturity’ in capacities to choose in populations in Southern Africa, in ‘Freedom and Order’ Robbins seems to have completely discounted, to the point of not even mentioning, the possibility of racial immaturity, or indeed class or gender. He rejected the idea of the law as a prescriptive moral code, voted in the House of Lords to reform ‘the barbarous laws relating to homosexuality, abortion and divorce’, and spoke progressively on other matters such as birth control and suicide. But most clearly, Robbins was always a committed supporter of expansion of higher education. As early as 1955 Robbins was already proselytizing on the need for expansion. In June 1961, as meetings of the Committee on Higher Education began but long before any substantive statistical returns of his committee’s surveys, Robbins urged York to accelerate its programme of expansion. He was also particularly

For those lacking such facilities, until their maturity, Robbins capitulated ‘there is nothing for them but implicit obedience to an Akbar or a Charlemagne, if they are so fortunate as to find one: Robbins, ‘Freedom and Order’. Robbins elsewhere argued that excessive freedom for children would produce only ‘bewilderment and even neurosis’. LSE ROBBINS/8/1/3, Lionel Robbins, ‘Graduation Address’, 24 June, 1977, p. 8. However, Robbins recognised, citing Fritzjames Stephen’s critique of Mill’s paternalism, that the delineation of what ‘maturity of faculties’ meant was extremely vague and left the issue as an open problem.


LSE ROBBINS/8/2/5; Lionel Robbins, ‘Future Problems of Higher Education’, ND, p. 4; Lionel Robbins, ‘The Teaching of Economics in Schools and Universities’, The Economic Journal, 65 (1955); BI UOY/F/APB/2/4, Lionel Robbins to West-Taylor, 28 June, 1961; see also a later and much more confident statement: ‘Extract from letter from Lord Robbins to Lord Hames’, 8 August 1962; on the statistical returns of the surveys of the

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137 LSE ROBBINS/8/2/5; Lionel Robbins, ‘Future Problems of Higher Education’, ND, p. 4; Lionel Robbins, ‘The Teaching of Economics in Schools and Universities’, The Economic Journal, 65 (1955); BI UOY/F/APB/2/4, Lionel Robbins to West-Taylor, 28 June, 1961; see also a later and much more confident statement: ‘Extract from letter from Lord Robbins to Lord Hames’, 8 August 1962; on the statistical returns of the surveys of the
proud of the results of his committee’s calculations of the (theoretically limitless) size of the pool of ability. It seems likely that part of this pride was its confirmation of a more equalitarian understanding of human behaviour. It justified his life-long suspicion of psychology and social biology which he believed deployed methods of dubious scientific value to explain human wants.  

While Robbins believed economic agency was almost universally obtainable, he certainly did not believe in equality of mental faculties. Robbins rejected the honorific of ‘egalitarian’ on multiple occasions. He was much more, in Popper’s terms, an ‘equalitarian’ in his belief in the equality of opportunity. Robbins drew a distinction between equality of opportunity and equality of achievement, which was ‘something that will never occur – unless by prevention of superior performance’. This ‘superior performance’ of educated men and women was socially desirable: without it, ‘there is no progress, and [...] the danger of decline’. Supressing the benefits derivable

139 There is something of a contradiction here. Economic agency for Robbins is universal, but not natural and must be obtained.
140 Lionel Robbins, 'Equality as an Objective', Crossbow, 1 (1957), p. 21. LSE ROBBINS/8/1/3, Lord Robbins, 'Reflections on eight years of expansion in higher education', Financial Times, 21 August 1971. On the use of 'egalitarian' to describe Robbins, see O'Brien, 'Lionel Charles Robbins, 1898-1984', p. 120. This label was not always in praise; see, for instance, comments in LSE ROBBINS/8/1/3, Oxford, Vol. XIX, 2 May 1964, p. 62, which called the Robbins Report a piece of 'sour Benthamite egalitarianism'.
141 Stedman Jones, Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics, pp. 42-47. 'Equalitarianism' was a term which Robbins was certainly aware of but does not seem to have used. See LSE ROBBINS/3/1/1, William H. Hutt to Lionel Robbins, 29 September 1939; Robbins, 'Equality as an Objective', p. 21; Ortolano, The Two Cultures Controversy, p. 50; Perkin, The Structured Crowd: Essays in English Social History.
143 Ibid, p. 5.
from genius by the redistribution of income via taxation remained particularly troublesome to Robbins throughout his life.\footnote{See Robbins, 'Equality as an Objective', p. 21; LSE ROBBINS/1/33, Lionel Robbins, 'Notes on Public Finance', Llyods Bank, 1st Proof, 29 August 1955, p. 1; Lionel Robbins, ‘Problems of Tax Reform’, \textit{Financial Times}, 19 July 1956.}

Yet Robbins’ conception of genius was not as limited as many of fellow meritocrats.\footnote{On Eric Ashby’s understanding of a ‘thin clear stream of excellence’ see: Anderson, \textit{British Universities Past and Present}, p. 148; and Chapter Five; Scott, \textit{The Crisis of the University}, p. 60.} Robbins believed elites were necessary but given his subjectivism he was unsurprisingly suspicious of elites who believed that they ‘should rule the world’.\footnote{LSE ROBBINS/8/1/3, Lord Robbins, and Professor F. G. T Holliday, ‘Graduation Addresses’, Speech, 28 June 1974, p. 5. LSE ROBBINS/1/44, Lionel Robbins, Address at the Opening of the Headlands School, Bridlington, 27 May 1966. He was hardly entirely free from suspicion of democracy. He supported the role of a (weak) unelected House of Lords which was ‘better-informed, more mature, and more even-tempered’ than most populist House of Commons. Robbins, \textit{Autobiography}, pp. 184-85.} He celebrated the 1944 Education Act and was not opposed to grammar schools but was critical of the 11+, calling it wasteful and premature, and rejected the unhelpful differentials in social esteem it entrenched.\footnote{LSE ROBBINS/1/44, Lionel Robbins, 'Address at the Opening of the Headlands School Bridlington', 27 May 1966, p. 6; ROBBINS/1/44 University of Sheffield Degree Congregation, 15th July 1967, 23rd August 1967.} In the context of universities, he was similarly less unfavourable towards Oxbridge than critical of the lack of state and benefactor support to provide more institutions of comparable excellence.\footnote{Robbins, \textit{University in the Modern World} pp. 59-60.} Fundamentally Robbins believed in equality of dignity throughout a meritocratic hierarchy. He argued that it was not good to isolate ‘first class’ ability from ‘second class’ ability too soon. They should mix ‘with more ordinary people and learn that there are qualities of character and sensibility, other than the purely intellectual, which are also deserving of respect’.\footnote{Ibid. p. 8.} Unlike most other meritocrats, Robbins repeated that:

\begin{quote}
The main important work of the world is not done by the “firsts” as we should call them; it is done by the “seconds”; and it is desirable that the “seconds” and even the “thirds” should have the opportunity of a university education.\footnote{ROBBINS/8/2/5; Lionel Robbins, ‘Future Problems of Higher Education’, ND, p. 6; Hayek, ‘The Intellectuals and Socialism’.}
\end{quote}
For Robbins, higher education was to harness many more young people’s own capacities to attain greater standards of being, even something like their entrepreneurialism, rather than impart on a small number the stewardly knowledge of the clerisy.  

2.4.2. Specialisation and the Division of Labour

Superior performance for Robbins was not the same as possessing specialised knowledge. Specialisation certainly was important for Robbins; during his undergraduate studies he described his choice of specialisation as following a ‘Heavenly vision’, and, in an article written in 1924, argued that economics, not theology, was now the tool of the WEA workman for the betterment of material world. After his wartime service, he recognised that the pressure of an increasing population and the maxim ‘la carrière ouverte aux talents’ had triggered a new appreciation for the outputs of higher education. His experiences had taught him that economics and social studies were of much more practical use than he had previously thought. Snow’s ‘two cultures’ was clearly an important touchstone for Robbins. In exchanges with another prominent technocrat, nuclear physicist John Cockcroft, Robbins was critical of:

The general climate of opinion, which makes it possible for poets and art historians, [...] to think of the twentieth century as a horrible period in which, on the whole, the human race has been running down and instruments of destruction have been invented, and in which nothing very creditable has occurred and to be oblivious of the stupendous things which have happened. This is wrong.


He condemned arts educations which denigrated science and technology. ‘For Art and Literature to realize their full potentialities’, Robbins told an audience at the Royal College of Art in July 1964, ‘it is desirable that they should be cultivated in a milieu in which there is understanding and admiration for all the spiritual achievements of the age’, mutually with science and technology.\(^{156}\) In 1977 in an address at Stirling, Robbins urged graduates to shed the romanticism of the arts and consider careers in industry.\(^{157}\) Robbins was therefore a promoter of specialisation particularly in graduate schools. He was a keen advocate for postgraduate study in his administrative roles at the LSE and York, including in business studies.\(^{158}\) This was a departure from the likes of Lord Lindsay and his plans for Keele which had disdained postgraduate studies.\(^{159}\)

As indicated, however, Robbins’ conception of equality of opportunity did also not anticipate a system of the wholesale democratisation of scientific education, as in cruder techno-nationalist arguments. Rather than simply assuming a relationship between knowledge and prosperity through technological advance, Robbins imbued his writings on higher education with Adam Smith’s theory of economic growth.\(^{160}\) For Robbins, free economic agents would collectively participate in the division of labour according to the strengths of their faculties, and specialise.\(^{161}\) Specialisation increased productivity by enabling individuals to concentrate and enhance their capacities in a


\(^{158}\) BI UOY/F/APB/1/1, Academic Planning Board, Minutes, 6 October 1960; BI UOY/F/APB/1/4, Lionel Robbins, University of York Academic Planning Board: The Organisation of First Degree Courses in Social Studies, January 1961; BI UOY/F/APB/2/4, Lionel Robbins to J. West-Taylor, 5 December 1960. After 1963, Robbins advocated integrating a graduate school of business into the LSE itself rather than independently under the University of London. Such a school, the London Business School, independent but associated jointly with the LSE and Imperial College, opened in 1965. Dahrendorf, LSE, pp. 420-21; Williams, *The History of UK Business and Management Education*, pp. 83-89. On business studies see sections on Warwick Business School in Chapter Six.

\(^{159}\) Steele, Taylor, and Haynes, *British Labour and Higher Education*, p. 58.

\(^{160}\) See, for example, the predominance of Smith in Robbins, *Theory of Economic Development* particularly the final lecture, pp. 150-171, especially pp. 164-165.

specific practice, which increased their output and their returns on the labour market.\textsuperscript{162} For Robbins this individual initiative to specialise was the primary cause of prosperity. As we shall see in Chapter Three, this theory of economic growth appears in the Robbins Report. The importance of individual initiative was also critical to Robbins' support for a scheme of repayable student loans.\textsuperscript{163}

2.4.3. The Importance of Breadth to Economic Growth

Like Lindsay, however, Robbins accepted there were deficiencies to specialisation, and like his colleague R. H. Tawney, Robbins cherished the importance of broad learning. Tawney's remark that it was difficult to exaggerate how much the prosperous United States had benefited 'by the fact that such a substantial proportion of its citizens had had at least the smell of a university' was one Robbins would often repeat. He credited it as persuading him of the importance of expansion and was paraphrasing it as early as 1955.\textsuperscript{164} For Robbins, it was no good for students of lower ability to pour over such specialised study as 'the arcana of utility theory of the geometry of the analysis of the firm'.\textsuperscript{165} Indeed, he repeatedly stressed that his recommendation for the expansion of higher education in the Robbins Report was on the condition that the expansion should mainly be in courses of 'breadth'.\textsuperscript{166}

\textsuperscript{162} In Smith's famous example of a pin factory, workers could make more pins if they worked together and divided up the labour between them and exclusively focused on one element of pin-making. This would make more pins than if workers individually attempted to sequentially undertake each of the operations required in manufacturing one pin for every pin.


The great importance that Robbins attributed to breadth was related to his understanding of the importance of the proper application of science and specialist knowledge to societal problems. Robbins saw the issue as a fundamental problem of the division of labour. Smith, who Robbins drew on again, had identified that specialisation in capitalism was morally and physically torpifying. As Robbins explained:

Specialisation without a broad basis of foundational knowledge [...] narrows the windows of the mind. It limits the range of sympathy. It increases mutual dependence but it inhibits mutual understanding.

Robbins pointed out that Smith had deviated from his main argument in the *Wealth of Nations* to propose an educational policy which advocated the provision of small parish (and therefore, for Robbins, publicly provided) schools. There, broadening and invigorating influences would be taught. Robbins took this argument forwards for higher education in the twentieth century. While specialists were essential, balancing specialisation with versatility and mobility was necessary to allow members of the good society to retain their vigour and tackle general problems. The equivalent to Smith’s parish schools was, Robbins suggested, that the social sciences should be:

...taught in close conjunction with the study of the social values which such sciences are ultimately designed to serve [...] the young man or woman who emerges from a social studies faculty adept at Decision Theory or the applications of multiple correlation analysis, but ignorant of the implications of what social choice is about, is surely only half educated.

For Robbins, following Eric Ashby, the key basis of a university education was:

171 UoSA UA/A/4/1/5, Lord Robbins, Inauguration Address, University of Stirling, 5 April 1968, p. 5.
Whether it can be taught so as to enlarge the general powers of the mind [...] some of the traditionally ‘pure’ subjects as historically, and even sometimes contemporaneously, taught, would fail to satisfy that criterion.\footnote{Robbins, \textit{Higher Education Revisited}, p. 6. Emphasis original.}

This therefore elevated the study of technological studies at university level, if studied within a liberal framework.\footnote{Robbins, \textit{University in the Modern World} pp. 102-03, 40.} The general powers of the mind Robbins identified included numeracy, literacy (able to, for example, author a ‘memorandum capable of serving as the basis for a discussion at the Civil Service working party or at the meetings of a company board’), a foreign language (better yet, two), and an appreciation of English literature and the ‘history of the Western world’. Such communication skills enabled collaboration, and ‘versatility and the quick acquisition of special techniques’.\footnote{Robbins, \textit{University in the Modern World} pp. 102-03, 40.}

For Robbins, liberal education had been and remained a form of training and preparation for students’ role in the productive and good society.\footnote{Robbins, \textit{Higher Education Revisited}, pp. 5, 52-63, especially pp. 61-63.} Robbins explicitly linked these skills and the establishment of a good minimum standard of general education to productivity per head and economic growth.\footnote{Robbins, \textit{Theory of Economic Development} pp. 76-77.} Unsurprisingly, Robbins agreed with the reported position of the Federation of British Industries that students with a broad education were better suited to management roles in industry and commerce.\footnote{Robbins, \textit{University in the Modern World} pp. 96-97.} For Robbins, a broad education in preparation for management included the capacity for example to understand the difference between a technical optimum to an economic problem and the economic optimum to maximise chosen ends.\footnote{Ibid. pp. 125-26.} Robbins also worried that without greater efforts to introduce broad degrees graduate unemployment might become a chronic issue.\footnote{Martin Sherwood, ‘Robbins plus 10’, New Scientist, 1st November 1973, p. 345.}
As commentators have frequently pointed out, Robbins did not believe that economic growth was the sole aim of higher education. It is, however, an overstatement to argue that Robbins believed that the purpose of liberal education was divorced from economic growth. For Robbins, economic development was ‘not the main objective of life in this world’, but:

it offers a relief from that grinding poverty [...] I do not think that it is materialistic to hope, [...] for better health, better nourishment, better living conditions, more leisure and a greater variety of possibilities of using that leisure. That is the real meaning and ultimate objective of economic development.\(^{180}\)

As well as this association between human flourishing and economic growth, Robbins gestured towards the unquantifiable element of economic growth and prosperity derived from ‘inventiveness, understanding and adaptability’.\(^{181}\) Britain, Robbins explained to an American audience in 1964, with limited natural resources was especially dependent on this sort of economic growth.\(^{182}\) For Robbins, there was no contradiction between the realisation of the good society, economic growth, and a breadth of interests.\(^{183}\) They were mutually reinforcing goals.

As well as ensuring students were adaptable enough to contribute to the wide-range problems of modern society, breadth was also necessary to ensure the knowledge students deployed was deployed responsibly and appropriately. For Robbins, a broad education was the only way for students to maintain the objectivity of economic science. This characterised his teaching and his limits on the capacity of economics in business education as early as 1932 right up to 1977.\(^{184}\)

Robbins’ close friend Claus Moser reflected that Robbins ‘liked to quote Adam Smith, who wrote:

\(^{180}\) Robbins, *University in the Modern World* p. 137.
\(^{181}\) Ibid. pp. 27-28.
\(^{183}\) See for example his address LSE ROBBINS/1/44, Lionel Robbins, ‘Battersea Training College’, 12 November 1965.
“the economist who is only an economist [...] is not much use to society even as an economist.”

If the advice provided by economic science was tainted by unscientific value judgments then any results provided might seriously mislead. Any good student of economics needed a holistic understanding in order to appreciate the distinction between what was objective knowledge or method and what was a political value judgment. Robbins was therefore cautious: economics in particular was a specialist tool only to be taught at university level. To understand and deploy the social sciences properly required a good broad ‘core’ of skills. His opposition of education for management arose from this concern that students would not have a sufficiently broad skill base and would overspecialise, not any anti-vocationalism. The student of economic science, Robbins argued, and like all technological specialists should be aware of their powerful but strictly limited contribution to society.

2.5. DELIVERING BREADTH

2.5.1. University Reform

Like critics of the liberal education, Robbins recognised that universities were not fully suited to deliver an education suitable for participation in modern society. His primary concern was, however, that universities needed to move their ‘centres of gravity’ away from specialised study.

For Robbins the premier example of a broad education was that which he himself had received: the ‘old’ BSc(Econ) degree at LSE, covering economics, politics, scientific method, and geography as well as translation. The small size of the LSE when Robbins was an undergraduate (numbering no more than 1000 full-time students, around 30 percent of whom were women, and seventeen full-time staff, housed in inadequate accommodation such as the army ‘huts’) meant, as

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185 Moser, 'The Report', p. 31. Moser went as far as to describe chapter two of the report, in which the reports four objectives for higher education are promulgated, as ‘about [Robbins’] own work’.


189 Robbins, University in the Modern World p. 140.
Robbins later nostalgically recalled, there was a particularly strong sense of a free, antidogmatic and progressive community.\[190\] This education was, supposedly, open to all: Robbins later praised the ‘great traditional sense of non-discrimination’, at the LSE. ‘No one ever suffered at the School on account of race or sex or nationality’.\[191\] His students were not studying ‘primarily because he [sic, ironically] wants to fit himself for making an income or a career but because he wants to find out. *Rerum Cognoscere Causas*.\[192\] Beyond a limited and instrumental understanding of education, Robbins’ students shared his understanding of the applicability of objective knowledge, free from dogma, to ameliorate human affairs and for facilitating the prosperous society.\[193\] He particularly sought to preserve this breadth in the protracted reforms to the BSc(Econ) from 1949-61.\[194\] Robbins also recognised breadth in the Scottish tradition, which he admired. While Robbins declined the chancellorship of the ex-College of Advanced Technology Brunel University, Robbins accepted the chancellorship of Stirling.\[195\] He was also a strong advocate both at LSE and York for a four-year

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\[190\] Dahrendorf, LSE, pp. 142, 73-75. There were additionally just under an additional 2000 ‘occasional students’ and forty-two part-time staff. On women in the LSE, see Maxine Berg, *A Woman in History: Eileen Power 1889-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 142-43.


\[192\] ‘To know the causes of things’, the LSE motto.

\[193\] Robbins also adjected an irreverence and a disinclination towards ‘portentous doctrinaires’ of the left or the right: ‘Most of us probably have J. S. Mill’s feeling that nearly everything is provisional’. LSE ROBINS/1/37, Lionel Robbins, ‘Fellows Dinner 1959: Health of the Guests’, 1959.

\[194\] Robbins, *Autobiography*, pp. 75-79, 277. Dahrendorf, LSE, p. 430. Howson, *Lionel Robbins*, pp. 694-95. Howson, *Lionel Robbins*, pp. 837-42; Robbins, ‘The Teaching of Economics in Schools and Universities’, pp. 586-8. I have not been able to access, due to the pandemic, records Howson has identified to really address the perceived weaknesses of these reforms. Howson has provided an invaluable narrative of events of these reforms and Robbins’ life more widely and from which this chapter is indebted, but she is interested in documenting the events themselves and there is little analysis of wider influences and causes. The best summary I am aware of is in Robbins, ‘The Teaching of Economics in Schools and Universities’, pp. 591-92. See Thomas, ‘Nature and Significance and the M2t Seminar’, pp. 422-24; and also Jim Thomas, ‘History of Economics at LSE’ (STICERD: LSE, 2019) <https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/_new/about/history/default.asp> [Accessed 18 March 2021].

degree, or, failing this, a three-year broad undergraduate degree with a one-year specialised master’s.196

Breadth in these course, Robbins believed, was achieved largely through the ‘daily talk of participants of different specialisms’, the value of which Robbins found ‘morally important’ and ‘difficult to exaggerate’.197 Robbins was not overly enamoured with the Oxford college system, considering its disorganised and wasteful.198 Unsurprisingly the LSE was his model: the school was not organised along formal departmental lines until the 1960s; teachers could in the 1930s sit ‘around one big table in the middle for coffee and conversation’, in the Senior Common Room or deliberate in Robbins’ famous seminar (which ran until 1965).199 Small institutional sizes were therefore important to Robbins. In the 1940s he was nervous of increasing full-time students numbers at the LSE above 1350 and of the necessary equivalent rise in staff numbers; he favoured increasing social science tuition at other London colleges instead.200 He was also later wary of the targets of 20,000 students for the new universities at Essex and Warwick and thought beyond 3000 students some sort of ‘collegiate system’ such as at York was needed to ‘keep things human’.201 Robbins with Alan Peacock even attempted to form a ‘school’ of social sciences at York to recreate the LSE experience.202 There were limits to breadth however. Institutional memory records Robbins as prepared to ‘weed out’ those at the LSE who did not share his views of economics.203

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197 Robbins, University in the Modern World p. 6. Here Robbins was drawing from the Humboldtian German tradition of personal development (Bildung). On Wilhelm von Humboldt and the influence on British universities see Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, pp. 28-31, 100; Robbins, Autobiography, p. 89.
199 Dahrendorf, LSE, pp. 209, 98; Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 932. Thomas, 'Nature and Significance and the M2t Seminar'.
200 The LSE actually expanded to 3000 students without an equivalent expansion in accommodation where it remained into the 1960s. Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 655.
203 Dahrendorf, LSE, p. 221.
Where Robbins’ enthusiasm for breadth is most evident is in his forceful rebuttal of the binary divide which he saw as preventing the broadening of the educations provided at the universities and polytechnics. He spoke in the House of Lords in December 1963 unsuccessfully in support of his committee’s recommendation for a single decentralised Ministry for the Arts and Sciences for higher education. Robbins appears to have had a major hand in proposing this recommendation in order to best secure academic freedom and broad universities. By the time of his second speech in the House of Lords in December 1965, the Ministry for the Arts and Sciences had been unequivocally rejected. In its place was the Department of Education and Science (DES) which followed a more techno-nationalist philosophy in advocating a separate vocational sector of higher education. Robbins was appalled by the ‘positively wrong’ policies of the DES under a minister he otherwise admired, Anthony Crosland. By erecting a second sector of higher education, the polytechnics would inevitably preserve the inferior status of technological studies, ossify the universities, and fail to provide equality of opportunity or make best use of the resources of ability. This was a deeply hypocritical policy when Crosland’s policy for schools was to dissolve selection at 11. Robbins repeated these comments in 1980. He located the binary system in the ‘jealousy’ of the DES and Local Education Authorities for control over academic affairs and particularly teacher training. The centralised control they exercised posed grave danger to the broad education and the free and prosperous society. He deplored, for example, the DES blocking the agreed merger between Warwick and a technical college. He did however eventually see some benefit of the polytechnics not following the universities down the path of greater specialisation.

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204 See his emphatic comments in the preface to University in the Modern World, p. xii.
206 Robbins, Higher Education Revisited, pp. 97-104.
207 Ibid. p. 103.
2.5.2. LSE Troubles and the Student

The challenges of major student disruptions at the LSE and Stirling did not dampen Robbins' enthusiasm for breadth.211 Robbins concluded that the cause of unrest in the late 1960s among the majority, ‘sensitive and intelligent young people of goodwill’, was the despair he shared in the shadow of the worst half-century of ‘injustice and horror’ in history.212 He rejected the idea the dissent was broadly the result of the erosion of liberal or Christian values or decline in standards, though he was still concerned that large universities were fractured communities.213

It is clear however that Robbins still saw university students as existing in a state of immaturity that breadth would help them develop out of. An unhelpfully large proportion of an address Robbins gave in March 1968 on student unrest criticised foreign and ‘extremist’ agitators for influencing otherwise naïve followers.214 While he was generally open to dialogue with students, he argued it was inappropriate for students in such an early ‘stage of their careers’, not yet fully inculcated with prerequisite shared values, to participate in matters of admissions, appointments.

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211 The DES’s unilateral and discriminatory rise in fees for overseas students in 1966 and other cost-saving measures provoked discontent among students; see Chapter Four. 1967 saw strong and growing opposition to the Vietnam war, which grew after 1968 and Enoch Powell’s racist ‘rivers of blood’ speech. J. M. Lee, ‘Overseas Students in Britain: How Their Presence Was Politicised in 1966-1967’, Minerva, 36 (1998). The events of the Troubles at the LSE and Robbins’ role in them has been told elsewhere and will not be repeated here. Tensions continued to mount at the LSE after the appointment of a new director, Walter Adams, Principal of the multiracial University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (which had an awkward relationship with the white minority government of Rhodesia). Robbins, taking on Chairmanship of the Court of Governors of the LSE during the Troubles, was loyal to Adams as they worked together on the Academic Assistance Council (AAC) during the 1930s. Adams was AAC secretary, and subsequently briefly served as secretary of the LSE. However, as Howson has detailed, Robbins found Adams to be indecisive and a poor administrator. Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 975, 323. For a narrative of the troubles see Dahrendorf, LSE, pp. 443-75; and his bibliography of accounts of the troubles, pp. 442-443; see also Hoefferle, British Student Activism in the Long Sixties, pp. 47-48; or Colin Crouch, The Student Revolt (London: The Bodley Head, 1970). See the more recent account of Michael Cox, ‘LSE Festival 2019 | Whatever Happened to the Revolution? LSE in the 60s’ [LSE, 26 February 2019] <https://www.lse.ac.uk/lse-player?id=4626> [Accessed 07 October 2021]; and his forthcoming history of the LSE, The “School”: LSE and the Shaping of the Modern World. On Robbins’ perspective, see Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 975-1021; LSE ROBBINS/8/1/3, Lionel Robbins, ‘Graduation Address’ (22 February, 1975) p. 10-11. On student disruptions at Stirling, Holger Nehring, ‘Challenging the Myths of the Scottish Sixties: Student Protests in the Wake of ’1968’ at the University of Stirling’, Moving the Social, 64 (2020), p. 68. See Silver and his portrayal of Robbins as quite sympathetic: Silver, Higher Education and Opinion Making, p. 202.


and promotions, or ‘law and order’. He also belittled suggestions that university interests were allied with capitalist exploitation. ‘Nothing is more characteristic of the propaganda to which students are nowadays exposed than the allegation that the teaching at the School has been dictated by business interests’, Robbins wrote in 1970 following an incident at Warwick where industrialists were accused of exercising inappropriate control over academic affairs. Robbins from the 1970s began stressing the importance of maintaining ‘standards’ of the broad education. He often mused on whether students had adequate motivation to study and recommended delayed entry to university and the benefits of military service (no doubt recalling his own socialist salad days) to absorb broadening influences of the real world.

2.6. CONCLUSIONS

Through his faith in choice and economics, Robbins aligned the tradition of the liberal education and the new demands made on higher education and their students by modern society. As this chapter has shown, partitioning Robbins and his vision for higher education into prescriptive definitions of neoliberalism and social democracy obscures this reimagining. While his recommendation of the expansion of higher education in the Robbins Report looks very social democratic, at the same time there is a strong undercurrent of neoliberal thought in his justifications. Robbins maintained his intense suspicion of the capacity of modern technologies and collectivist bureaucracies which threatened individual freedom and the good society. It was imperative for Robbins that young people should be empowered to follow their individual initiative and pursue human flourishing (which transcended but did not exclude pecuniary returns) and specialise. It was this, which Robbins believed was the root cause of the prosperity of the West.


However, Robbins also recognised both that complete freedom for all was not equitable with maximal freedom, and that specialised knowledge and interventions had a role to play in human flourishing. He was cautious. To best secure individual initiative and the good society students needed to appreciate the dangers of technologies and specialisms, including economic science, and to use them responsibly and with a full appreciation of their applicability. This required a holistic education in breadth. If it worked, Robbins’ programme was a virtuous cycle. Increasingly, educated citizens appreciation of the creed of freedom would increase their productivity and perpetuate the creed, maximise future freedoms, and engender the good society. This is what Robbins meant when he made comments, often misinterpreted as typical academic complacency, that higher education was not just about economic growth.\(^\text{219}\)

Famously, Robbins was not initially enthusiastic about taking up chairmanship of the Committee on Higher Education.\(^\text{220}\) He was adamant he wanted to finish a final, authoritative monograph on the ‘Principles of Economics’. He was, however, persuaded when a Treasury colleague asked him whether writing such a book ‘was likely to be as important as trying to sort out the contemporary problems of the system of higher education in this country’.\(^\text{221}\) Having been convinced to abandon the culmination of his life’s work, it would have been odd indeed if Robbins had not brought the full weight of his convictions to the committee. Treasury observer to the committee John Carswell described Robbins’ ‘high principles and noble goals’ and his liability ‘to ignore or wave aside brutal or inconvenient realities. [...] He intended from the first that his report should mark a great advance’.\(^\text{222}\) It would be facetious to claim that Robbins exercised total control over the report. He did, however, imbue it with his keen vision of the good society of mutually growing, free economic agents educated in breadth so that they might perpetuate the ‘creed of

\(^{219}\) The centralised planning of the USSR delivered ‘economic growth’ of course, but it was not the ‘good society’. See Robbins, ‘Freedom and Order’.

\(^{220}\) Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 860.


\(^{222}\) Carswell, Government and the Universities, p. 28.
freedom’. As the next chapter explores, from this perspective, rather than a perpetuation of static liberal education, the Robbins Report looks more like a liberal reimagining of a national system of higher education, and a fascinating example of the dynamism of liberal democracy.
3. CITIZEN AND CONSUMER OF EDUCATION: THE IDEAL STUDENT IN THE ROBBINS COMMITTEE, 1960-1963

ALL THOSE ‘WHO WISH TO DO SO’

3.1. THE REPORT AND ITS CONTEXTS

3.1.1. Problems

By November 1960 there was a critical need to assess whether the existing fragmented British higher education ‘system’ was fit to fulfil its responsibilities to society. A particular focus was higher education’s governance and funding structure. The universities were financed by direct grant from the Treasury. Some 90 percent of expenditure on teaching, research, and administration was met from public funds, and 80 percent of university revenue. Total public expenditure on welfare was contested but rising. This was partly due to demographic expansion, and partly by the way a new generation of civil servants and politicians reviewed the success of the welfare state in an intensifying Cold War context. Higher education needed to make its case for a share of this expenditure, particularly due to the Treasury’s new appreciation for the necessity of economic growth.

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1 As was frequently noted at the time, there was little sense of a national system, but it is important to note that what was meant by this prior to 1963 was a centrally ‘planned’ system. Shattock, Making Policy, p. 6; Halsey, Decline of Donnish Dominion, pp. 59-60. On Robbins and its formation of a national higher education system see Scott, ‘Robbins, the Binary Policy and Mass Higher Education’; Scott, The Crisis of the University, p. 75.

2 The Treasury in particular was concerned that its status as the direct funder of the universities made it both an arbiter and advocate of expenditure, or, in an often-repeated phrase, gamekeeper and poacher: TNA ED 116/1, Minutes, 14 April 1961; John Carswell, Government and the Universities in Britain: Programme and Performance 1960-1980 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 19; Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 890.


These concerns were closely related to wider societal agendas. For a vocal lobby of technonationalists, national prosperity was only achievable through technological advance. In Alfred North Whitehead’s often-quoted phrase ‘The race [sometimes nation] that does not value trained intelligence is doomed’. There was a widespread sense that Britain was especially oblivious of this truism. Evidence was found in new and frequent international statistical comparisons with other developed nations, which emphasised Britain’s slow growth, even ‘decline’, and limited provision of higher education. There was concerted effort throughout the 1950s to expand technological and scientific education. The Ministry of Education White Paper *Technical Education* (1956) designated eight Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs). From 1954 to 1962 the number of full-time further education students working at degree level in England and Wales tripled from under 10,000 to 28,000.

Secondly, declinist concerns were linked to improving deficiencies in the capacities of the existing meritocratic education system to fully utilise all ‘reserves of untapped ability’. The 1944 Education Act had raised the school leaving age to 15, abolished fees from state schools, and promoted a meritocratic tripartite system. There was an expansion in participation for working class children and girls, but selection at age 11 came under criticism as overly determinist and wasteful. Parallel to this was the post-war demographic growth and increasing demand across social classes.

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8 Two further colleges were designated in 1961.
for the ‘decencies of life’. By 1955 it was becoming clear to university leaders and the University Grants Committee (UGC) that existing higher education provision could not accommodate this demand. New university student number targets announced by the Treasury and UGC jerked upwards from 106,000 in 1956 to 124,000 in 1958. These factors were all interrelated, and compounded when the Anderson Report in 1960 recommended the implementation of a mandatory grant (acted into law in 1962) for full time British-resident students who had achieved two A levels and were accepted to an institution. As pressure mounted in 1962, the Treasury and Conservative government were forced to retreat from their initial offer of a smaller-than-expected quinquennial university grant to allow the universities to respond to these increasing demands.

Simultaneously a small, unfashionable, but vocal anti-expansionist cabal worried that expanding university education would result in a decline in standards of ‘excellence’. They believed only a limited portion of the population were of an inherently high enough intellectual ability to make best use of a university education. These fears were personified by novelist Kingsley Amis and his slogan ‘MORE WILL MEAN WORSE’ and evidenced by sociologist W. D. Furneaux.

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13 Shattock, UGC and the Management of British Universities, pp. 74-75; Perkin, New Universities in the United Kingdom, p. 69.
14 Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 48-49.
15 The Anderson Report recommended, as well recompiling all public awards (awards supporting 83 percent of students) into the mandatory grant paid through local authorities, the abolition of the parental means test and rejected the idea of a student loan system. The Anderson Committee made these recommendations supposing that that then current targets for expansion would not rise again. It was chaired by Colin Anderson. It was not mentioned by the Robbins Report, though its implementation was clearly accepted and discussed. See Hillman, ‘From Grants for All to Loans for All: Undergraduate Finance from the Implementation of the Anderson Report (1962) to the Implementation of the Browne Report (2012)’; and Malcom, ‘Anderson Appreciated’; Carswell, Government and the Universities, pp. 23-25; David Willetts, ‘Introduction’, in Nicholas Barr (ed.), Shaping Higher Education: 50 Years after Robbins (London: LSE, 2014), pp. 4-6; Ross, ‘Higher Education and Social Access’, p. 36; Troschitz, Higher Education and the Student: From Welfare State to Neoliberalism, pp. 63-65.
16 Carswell, Government and the Universities, pp. 34-37; Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 117-22.
17 Kingsley Amis, ‘Lone Voices: Views of the ‚Fifties‘”, Encounter, 15 (July 1960); Robbins, University in the Modern World p. 40; Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, p. 82; Lowe, Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History, pp. 154-55, 65; W. D. Furneaux, The Chosen Few: An Examination of Some Aspects of University Selection in Britain (London: Oxford University Press, 1961). Furneaux assumed that the current level of
3.1.2. Publication

The Committee on Higher Education, chaired by Lionel Robbins, was appointed in February 1961 to consider these issues and make recommendations on the principles the development of higher education should be based. After two and a half years of deliberations and 111 recorded meetings, their Report was rushed into publication on 24 October 1963. The universities of York and East Anglia had just welcomed their first students; Britain was enthralled by surging ‘Beatlemania’; with an election in 1964 looming the incumbent Conservative government were hoping to survive the fallout of a sex-spy scandal, the ‘Profumo affair’; however, just six days before the Report’s publication Prime Minister Harold Macmillan resigned. Labour leader Harold Wilson, the man who would defeat them and form the next government, had already given his famous speech calling for Britain to be re-forged ‘in the white heat’ of a revolution in technology and economic and social attitudes. The spectre of nuclear war still lingered following the Cuban Missile Crisis the year before. In this time of change the Report urged the government to follow what became celebrated as the ‘Robbins Principle’: to make courses in higher education ‘available for all those who are qualified by university attendance of children of professional classes was representative of a maximum level across the population. Extrapolating from this, he concluded that at maximum only 7.5 percent might attain university level: Layard, ‘What Was the World Like Then? The Context in 1963’, pp. 19-20; Annan, ‘British Higher Education, 1960-80’. Furneaux and Amis (by reference to his slogan) are referenced in: Committee on Higher Education, ‘Higher Education: Appendix One to the Report of the Committee Appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins 1961-63: The Demand for Places in Higher Education’ (London: HMSO, 1963), pp. 63-64.

In its terms of reference, the Committee was ‘to review the pattern of full-time higher education and advise [...] on what principles its long-term development should be based’: CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. iii. On the appointment of the Committee, see Silver, Higher Education and Opinion Making, pp. 142-44.

The Robbins Report consisted of three main parts. The first and primary part was the three-hundred-page published report proper; the second, the six published appendices of further evidence and method: CHE, ‘Appendix One’, p. 1. Subsequently, the Committee published seven volumes of written and oral witness evidence received by the Committee. Appendix One: ‘The demand for places in higher education’, Appendix Two (A and B): ‘Students and their education’, Appendix Three: ‘Teachers in higher education’, Appendix Four: ‘Administrative, financial and economic aspects of higher education’, Appendix Five: ‘Higher education in other countries’. Only Appendices One, Three, and Four were published concurrently with the report in 1963. Appendices Two (A and B) and Five of the Committee’s findings, and witness evidence, were published later in 1964. For an account of the activities of the committee, see Carswell, Government and the Universities; Simon, Education and the Social Order 1940-1990. The best chronological narrative of the Committee’s activities can be found in Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 867-91.

The Beatles’ popularity, even before their first album, was ascendant. ‘She Loves you’ had just ended its first stint at number one in the charts earlier in week of the publication of the Report but returned to the top spot later in November: MacDonald, Revolution in the Head, pp. 83-85; Scott, ‘Robbins, the Binary Policy and Mass Higher Education’; see also Osgerby, ‘Youth Culture’. 
ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so’ regardless of their class or gender (as this chapter will address, race was absent from the scope of the Committee).  

Following an introduction intended to be ‘something between a Times leader and a Nature leader’, the Report demonstrated with reference to a substantial body of statistical calculations that there were more young people in Britain who would qualify to enter higher education than there were places available for. It dismissed any limit to innate biological intelligence in the ‘pool of ability’ for at least twenty years. This was evidenced by the sociological research of Phillip Vernon, Jean Floud, and David Glass, the Committee’s own surveys, and work of Government Committees over the 1950s. It emphatically demonstrated a child’s socio-economic and cultural environment overwhelmingly influenced future attainment and their suitability for higher education rather than any innate intelligence. Furthermore the Report demonstrated that attainment had been increasing across the social classes since 1944. While there might be the greatest reserves of ability

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25 This included prominently the Ministry of Education 1954 report on ‘Early Leaving’, which found that children of lower socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to leave school early irrelevant of the type of school they attended. The Kelsall Report (1957) found that Oxford and Cambridge had a far smaller proportion of men and women with fathers in manual occupations than at other universities and in grammar schools. In 1958 the West Riding of Yorkshire Education Authority demonstrated that in areas with fewer grammar schools, children of high measured ability were less likely to attend top universities despite equivalent intelligence. The Crowther Report (1959) of the Central Advisory Council of England on the ‘15-18’ schooling had established comprehensively there was a close relationship between a father’s occupation and educational achievement at school, with children of men working in manual labour performing markedly worse academically: see Annex DD in CHE, ‘Appendix One’, pp. 307-41.
in the ‘poorer sections of the community’, there was also still untapped ability among children of middle-class parents.\textsuperscript{26} There were similar reserves of women and girls in society who did not enter higher education or could potentially return to the labour market after marriage, and mature students. All, like in war time, ‘must be mobilised if critical shortages in many professions are to be met’.\textsuperscript{27}

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\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Number of full-time home students recommended 1962/63-1985/86 \\
\hline
1962/63 & 195 \\
1965/66 & 262 \\
1970/71 & 312 \\
1975/76 & 396 \\
1980/81 & 507 \\
1985/86 & (632) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Home and overseas students in full-time higher education: Past trends and future needs: Great Britain 1924/25-1985/86}
\end{table}

\hspace{1cm}
The Committee was especially alarmed at signs that the current crisis, where with continuing population growth and increasing attainment many worthy applicants were denied higher education opportunities, would worsen. Meeting this demand would entail an expansion of higher education from 216,000 students in 1962-63 to 507,000 in 1980-81, to an estimated 632,000 in 1986 (Table 1; Figure 5).\(^{28}\) The Report described its estimations as the right order of magnitude but ‘conservative’, particularly because of the ‘unlikely’ assumption there would be a static rate of growth in women desiring entry into higher education, which was growing more quickly than men.\(^{29}\) Most students would go to universities, but the colleges of education for the training of teachers should also expand, as should the further education sector. The ten CATs would become universities, six new universities should be founded, and at least ten further education institutions would aspire to become universities over the next twenty years, for a total of twenty-six new universities.\(^{30}\) Public expenditure on higher education would need to rise from £206 million in 1962-63 to £742 million in 1980-81, which the Report in a piece of exceptional understatement described as ‘big sums’.\(^{31}\)

The Report was confident sustained expansion at such expense was necessary to engender the ‘good’ and prosperous society. Higher education had, the Report declared, four objectives.
would, firstly, equip young people with the skills they needed for their working lives; secondly, elevate their minds; while thirdly, participating in a community tasked with the pursuit of truth and; fourthly, preserving and transmitting a so-called ‘common culture’. The Report was even predisposed to think about the needs of society in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Despite the cost, its headline recommendations were irresistible, its statistical evidence amassed incontrovertible, and, appearing just prior to the election, its acceptance was a foregone conclusion.

3.1.3. A Contested Legacy

The Robbins Report looms large in the historical and social memory. It certainly heralded an unprecedented degree of public enthusiasm for higher education rivalling schools and hospitals and accelerated the expansion of higher education for a decade or so after its publication. However, the expansion of higher education the Report sanctified was already underway. It also made little immediate impact on the pattern of higher education. There was to be no ‘Ministry of Arts and Sciences’ to represent higher education, and aside from the CATs only one of its recommended new universities was founded, Stirling in Scotland. Further education was expanded to take up a much larger proportion of higher education by 1967-68 than the Report anticipated (Figure 6). Where the Report’s legacy was strongest, and where its appeal remains, is in its enthralling vision of higher education. Herein lies the primary point of contention.

35 Tight, Development of HE in the UK, pp. 66-67.
36 The expansion was instead found in existing institutions and polytechnics. The higher education in Northern Ireland was excluded from the Robbins Committee’s terms of reference.
Most historians have rightly placed the Robbins Report in the social democratic political tradition of the welfare state, especially in retrospective or comparative accounts.\(^{37}\) Drawing on the memory of the Second World War and the spirit of the post-war social contract, the Report argued the state should provide the best opportunities for the peacetime children of those who had fought

and suffered in the war, and make best use of their abilities for the ‘life of the community’. As Claire Callender argued, the ‘audacious’ funding demands of the Robbins Report and its immediate acceptance by government can only be understood within this context. Others have been tempted to locate the beginning, or at least the ethics, of marketisation of British higher education within the Robbins Report. This argument is especially appealing given Lionel Robbins’ background as a neoliberal economist, whether one wishes to strike a celebratory note or conspiratorial tone. Conversely, the Report’s apparent lack of interest in the financial practicality of its proposals have led to criticism that its programme of expansion arrogantly assumed that the wasteful, amateur ‘Victorian/Edwardian’ university system and liberal education was right for all. For all of Robbins’ eminence as an economist, Michael Shattock calls the Report’s financial arrangements a ‘fudge’, the result of puzzling ‘latent idealism’ in the Treasury. Finance, Shattock concluded, was clearly a ‘second or even third order problem’. Overall, as A. H. Halsey wrote, Robbins in its support for the existing university system, ‘in effect, described an article of faith’. Halsey spoke better than he knew. This chapter argues that attributing the Report unequivocally to either social democracy or neoliberalism fails to satisfactorily capture the nuances of the Report’s arguments or its historical

38 CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 256-57, 76. In quite a moving paragraph, the Report argued that ‘The trials that their parents had to undergo are in themselves sufficient reason for the country to exert itself to meet the needs of their children’: CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 256-8, 76.


41 Trow, ‘The Robbins Trap: British Attitudes and the Limits of Expansion’.


context. Instead, the Report’s form and argument derives strongly from Robbins’ idiosyncratic liberalism.

3.1.4. Citizen and Consumer

Continuing to address the dynamism of liberal democracy and the principles on which higher education expansion was predicated, this chapter will revisit the Robbins Report in the light of Lionel Robbins’ economic thought. It will show how these concerns for science, technology, national prosperity, and democracy were navigated and how they found an ally in Robbins’ own personal liberal convictions and his faith in freedom of the individual. The Report therefore advocated freedom of the ‘student’ to pursue their chosen ends by consuming education to realise their best selves with the aim of inducing the good society.

There has been some appreciation for greater overlap between various liberal philosophies justifying higher education expansion. Desmond King and Victoria Nash, Brian Simon, and John Holmwood have argued that egalitarian, and social democratic plans for education to produce economic growth did not ‘contrast as much as might be anticipated with alternative views of the benefits of higher education, such as Marxist or neo-liberal’ visions. But this work tends to produce a picture of a homogenising and prescriptive consensus. What has not been appreciated by the historiography is the extent to which a diversity of liberal ideas, including Robbins’ liberal economics, were able to participate in this consensus whilst preserving their coherence and identity. One Committee member recalled that Robbins planned that the Report should have an underlying

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philosophy: ‘idealistic but very practical’.46 What this ideological foundation was has not been addressed.

The Robbins Report needs to be understood in the context of the evolution of economics and sociology as key disciplines and their relationship to the developing post-war welfare state.47 Centrally important was a new role for economists in the tug-of-war between meritocrats and democrats. Meritocrats stressed the importance of ladders of ability to elevate those with inherent capacities throughout the population to their most appropriate societal roles. By contrast democratic sentiments advocated less deterministic understandings of ability and for greater expansion of opportunity for all individuals.48 The Report drew heavily on an emerging sociological paradigm informed by democratic sentiments and the work of British poverty studies like that of Quaker sociologist and philanthropist Seebohm Rowntree. It considered poverty not as a moral failing of the individual or any inherent capacities but a problem of the distribution of resources: a result of environmental, structural, social, and economic barriers.49 While some eugenics-oriented research emphasised the distribution of intelligence, this approach fell out of favour by the 1960s as methods of intelligence testing were criticised as unsatisfactory.50 The need for greater democratisation of education was made clear by reports of existing meritocratic ladders of opportunity ‘wasting’ reserves of ability, such as by the Workers’ Educational Association.51 As Shattock and Simons identify, by 1962 it was widely argued by journalists, sociologists, and

46 Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 868.
48 Wooldridge, Measuring the Mind; Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy.
51 The WEA reported one 30-year-old printer who left school at 14 and subsequently undertook a course at the LSE with a mature state scholarship. He reportedly said that ‘“it never occurred to me when I failed the 11+ that I would do anything else except leave at 14 and do the same as my father”’: CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. E’, p. 1628.
educationalists that there was no scientific evidence of any limit to the reserves of ability that a meritocratic ladder might be able to recover.\textsuperscript{52}

As Jean Baptise Fleury and Melinda Cooper have explored, this new appreciation for conditions of scarcity in social environments enabled economics, including human capital theory, to play a much greater role in welfare policymaking in the US through the late 1950s.\textsuperscript{53} Unsurprisingly this is also when Robbins’ 1932 redefinition of economics as the study of choices made in conditions of scarcity (see Chapter Two) gained ascendancy, and economics expanded in earnest beyond the traditional economic domain. From the 1960s this expansion allowed economics to reposition itself and address wider social problems.\textsuperscript{54} Poverty, this new economics showed, had a double cost: it limited economic and social opportunities for individuals to make the most of resources available to them and strained public expenditure on welfare programmes.\textsuperscript{55} Similar ideas were already influencing British policy. The Treasury over this period developed an increased appreciation for a role for the state in re-energising failed market mechanisms, removing barriers for women to enter the labour force, and labour flexibility, to secure long-term economic growth and greater economic efficiency.\textsuperscript{56} Elsewhere the literature on post-war Britain, has developed an understanding of the


entanglement citizen and ‘consumer’. As Emily Robinson et al. have argued, it is important to remember that ‘social services were never conceived of as a liberation from the market, but as a means by which to make market capitalism fairer and create better ‘market actors’’. The Robbins Report similarly intertwined concepts of democracy and market participation, complicating a division between investor, consumer, and citizen in the ‘student’.

This chapter will proceed, in section 3.2, to explore how Robbins’ liberalism naturally allied with the concerns of the higher education establishment expansionists who dominated the Committee. Robbins further wielded epistemic authority through his and his advisors’ exceptional command over statistics. Section 3.3 will stress the great importance the Report, guided by Robbins, attached to individual student choice and private returns. Implicit in this was the role of ‘human capital theory’ which remains either overlooked or oddly underexamined by the historiography. The Report assumed that if provided the right conditions by the state, all young people were capable of becoming ‘students’ and making subjective assessments of the value of higher education to maximise their private returns. This in turn would engender wider social returns. The Report was hesitant to provide quantitative measurements of these wider social returns, not because it was


58 Robinson et al; ‘Telling Stories About Post-War Britain’; see also Agar, ‘What Happened in the Sixties?’, p. 574; and in the context of higher education, see hints of this idea in Scott, ‘Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy’, pp. 201-02.

complacent, but because it feared that excessive precision would provide an unscientific account of the economic and social benefits of higher education. But it had no doubt that such returns were genuine. However, Section 3.4 shows that Robbins was especially concerned that universities needed to reform to be able to provide an education of greatest value to students. Section 3.5 shows how the Report’s policy recommendations for making the most of the reserves of ability in the population was concerned with un-inhibiting or inculcating a melioristic and economic rationality in students, balanced with the need for redistributive justice. This complicates the possibility of making the judgment, as Peter Scott does, that the economic case for expansion was secondary to the social case in the Robbins Report.\textsuperscript{60} It is equally difficult to say that ‘The individual citizen, not economic man or the mass consumer, was at the centre of the Robbins inquiry’.\textsuperscript{61}

3.2. CONSENSUS IN THE ROBBINS COMMITTEE

3.2.1. The Necessity of Expansion

The vast weight of evidence presented to the Committee was in support of expansion, and all parties, including the strong influence of techno-nationalist discourse and Robbins’ liberalism, also favoured expansion. Beginning with weekly meetings from 10 March 1961, and subsequently sometimes multiple times a week, the Committee heard witness testimonies of representatives of government, local authorities, and other interest groups, visited institutions in Britain and abroad, and discussed the results of quantitative analysis of the Committee’s six major sample surveys in Britain (1961-62).\textsuperscript{62} The Committee began its inquiry with informal interviews with prominent figures...

\textsuperscript{60} Scott, \textit{The Crisis of the University}, p. 122; see the related argument that ‘discourse about higher education became less associated with the welfare state and more associated with human capital’ after the Robbins Report in Hillman, ‘From Grants for All to Loans for All’, p. 263; or Michael Shattock’s narrative of a transition from Robbins’ social view of higher education to an economic view from the 1980s in Shattock, \textit{Making Policy}, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{61} Scott, ‘Blueprint or Blue Remembered Hills?’, pp. 33-34; but see his apparently contrasting comments in Scott, ‘Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy’, p. 198.

\textsuperscript{62} CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 2699-301. The Committee minuted its meetings and catalogued Committee papers which were examined and discussed, ranging from Committee reports and drafts, similar documents from government bodies such as the Ministry of Education, published research, press reports, and opinion. Its surveys included surveys of undergraduates and postgraduates in higher education, university teachers, the report’s flow survey of twenty-one-year-olds, and used the data from many more surveys including those undertaken elsewhere and other minor surveys from Moser’s statistical team.
(mostly men with a few women) in higher education and public affairs, including Eric Ashby, Geoffrey Crowther, Eric James, Charles P. Snow (who declined to serve on the Committee himself), Peter Venables, UGC chairman Keith Murray, and representatives from the Treasury and the departments of education. Following this consultation the Committee revised its terms of reference and consulted more widely. The Committee received some 400 memoranda, formally interviewed ninety organisations and thirty-one individuals, and considered some 300 further papers. In receiving this evidence the Committee rarely heard opinions that deviated from general received wisdom of the desirability of expansion. The demographic pressures and the need for a higher output of scientific and technological so-called ‘manpower’ were paramount.

Robbins himself in particular seems to have been particularly concerned with international comparisons. In 1962 the Committee made visits to Switzerland, Netherlands, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Sweden, for three to five days each, to the USSR for two weeks, and the USA for three weeks, to compare their higher education systems. The surveys and visits gave the Committee several qualitative impressions, even if quantitative comparisons while attempted by the Committee were viewed with some reticence. These impressions epitomise a declinist narrative. Higher education in Britain was underutilising, perhaps seriously, many of its young people with ‘second-class’ ability. Young people of this ability level benefited from higher education

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63 Ibid, pp. 303-04. The techno-nationalist modernisation lobby and Snow’s influence on the Committee is overstated by Guy Ortolano, as was discussed in Chapter Two: Ortolano, The Two Cultures Controversy, pp. 107-08, 66, 202-03. Like Thomas Balogh, Snow was critical of the UGC and the universities reportedly calling them self-satisfied. See Silver, Higher Education and Opinion Making, p. 144. By contrast, as the previous chapter explored and this chapter will reinforce, Robbins saw the UGC as essential to ensuring the universities could make their best contribution to society.

64 CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 1. The records of the Committee list 300 papers ranging from newspaper clippings to notes of informal discussions to government reports. TNA ED 117/30, List of Committee Papers.


66 CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 303; see CHE, 'Appendix Five'. Howson has reconstructed the enviable but exhausting programme: ‘first Switzerland (July 1961), [with a trip to Edinburgh in December 1961 for five days] then Holland, France, and Germany in January, February, and March 1962 [with a few days in Cardiff and Manchester], the US for three weeks in April and May, the USSR in June and finally Sweden in October 1962’: Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 268, 74-75.
opportunities elsewhere, particularly in the USA and USSR.\textsuperscript{67} The total proportion of young people gaining entry into higher education in Britain, without taking into account differences in entry standards and ‘wastage’, compared unfavourably to these international competitors.\textsuperscript{68} However, the standard of achievement was broadly understood as extremely high in Britain, with one exception. There was no British equivalent to the continental technological institutions, such as Germany’s \textit{Technische Hochschulen}. In these institutions, technological studies were taught with parity of esteem to other ‘pure’, abstract sciences and humanities. In Britain this was not the case.\textsuperscript{69} Britain was also unique in western Europe in that it was unusually hierarchical, with Oxbridge occupying the apex, down to further education at the bottom; in its very generous provision of residential accommodation; and in the high proportion of funding for higher education deriving from public finance.\textsuperscript{70} Most concerning was the impression that Britain had, by contrast to other states, a ‘disquieting’ lack of planning for future expansion.\textsuperscript{71} Even the much larger and inclusive US system was advocating further expansion.\textsuperscript{72}

3.2.2. A (Reformed) University Hegemony

Despite these declinist fears, the Committee was resilient to techno-nationalist demands for greater centralised control over higher education. This was, firstly, because consensus making was particularly easy in the small (no larger than twelve members), manageable Committee insisted by

\textsuperscript{67} Robbins, \textit{University in the Modern World} p. 8; see also, TNA ED117/27, Professor Rosenhead (Department of Applied Mathematics, Liverpool, 1 July 1961.

\textsuperscript{68} CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 40-42, 45. Compared to countries such as France, Britain was significantly better at avoiding what was widely at the time referred to as ‘wastage’ of ability due to young people dropping out of higher education before they graduated.

\textsuperscript{69} On the British perception of the \textit{Technische Hochschulen} see Edgerton, \textit{Science, Technology and the British Industrial ‘Decline’}, pp. 52-53; see also Introduction for brief discussion of subject choice and declinism; and Peter Mandler, ‘Educating the Nation: IV. Subject Choice’, \textit{Transactions of the Royal Historical Society}, 27 (2017).

\textsuperscript{70} CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{72} President’s Science Advisory Committee, ‘Scientific Progress, the Universities, and the Federal Government’ (Washington, D. C.: The White House, 15 November 1960), p. 2. The paper was seen by the Committee and was frequently alluded to in witness testimony. See, for example, CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. D’, p. 1111.
Robbins, and who were generally drawn from the same national network of university leaders.\footnote{This sort of internal professional network informing the policy-making process was typical for higher education at the time. Howson has described that most members had already met Robbins or at least had mutual friends. Kitty Anderson was an ‘old friend’ of Robbins’ sister having attended Royal Holloway College together: Howson, \textit{Lionel Robbins}, pp. 860-62. Members were chosen not as representatives but as individuals with the intention of providing a breadth of experience in the interests and issues from inside higher education: Shattock, \textit{Making Policy}, pp. 88, 254; Shattock, \textit{UGC and the Management of British Universities}, p. 144; Ted Tapper and Brian Salter, ‘Who Will Speak for The Universities? The Committee of Vice-Chancellors And Principals in the Age Of Mass Higher Education’, \textit{Higher Education Quarterly}, 51 (1997), pp. 121-22; Barnett, ‘The Coming of the Global Village’.
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Macmillan feared in early 1961 that the proposed membership of the Committee was ‘overwhelmingly Conservative in political complexion’.\footnote{TNA ED 46.941, 6 January 1961. For a narrative of how members of the Committee was chosen see Howson, \textit{Lionel Robbins}, p. 860.} Moreover, the most widely cited account of the Committee, by Treasury observer John Carswell, argues there was a ‘common sense of purpose’ between Whitehall and the Committee which gave it confidence. This was compounded by the fallout from the 1962 funding crisis, which essentially gave the Committee a ‘blank cheque’ for higher education expansion.\footnote{Carswell, \textit{Government and the Universities}, p. 27.} While this looks like further evidence of an insiders ‘old-boys’ club conspiring to perpetuate the status quo, there is a layer of nuance. Robbins himself appears to have been selected in part due to his measured, even austere, but reasoned consideration of arts administration.\footnote{See particularly Robbins’ chairmanship of a Treasury Committee which recommended against the rebuilding of the bombed concert hall Queen’s Hall (1954-55), for which Robbins also requested international comparative statistics, and wrote the report himself. See Howson, \textit{Lionel Robbins}, pp. 776-82; and ‘No New Queen’s Hall’, \textit{The Times} (28 May 1955); ‘Queen’s Hall Plan Abandoned’, \textit{The Times} (22 December 1955); see also the comments of Lord Taylor, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), ‘House of Lords Official Report’, Vol. 253 (London, HMSO), 11 December 1963.} It was this capacity to reason through Robbins and his statistical team which drew the Committee towards an expansion predicated on an ‘objective’ calculation of the size of higher education.

3.2.2.1. Absorbing Further Education into the Universities

University expansion was indeed by far the most important issue for the Committee.\footnote{Carswell, \textit{Government and the Universities}, p. 31.} British university men were heavily represented. With Robbins they formed an authoritative ‘inner,
unofficial group’. Sir Philip Morris, Vice-Chancellor of Bristol (1946-66), was a formidable member.\(^78\) Morris had been Director of Army Education and a member of the McNair Committee into teacher training (1942-44) where he had supported closer relationships between teacher training and universities.\(^79\) As chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (1955-58) he was a close ally of Murray.\(^80\) Murray himself, though only an assessor to the Robbins Committee, was reportedly another influential key member.\(^81\) Sir Patrick Linstead, rector of Imperial College London (1955-66), represented the sciences.\(^82\) He had been a member of the Crowther Committee (1956-61), which recommended the raising of the school-leaving age to sixteen on the grounds that this would benefit individuals and provide social and economic benefits.\(^83\)

The strength of this inner group has led critics, commentators, and some historians, to accuse the Committee of overemphasising universities at the expense of vocational and technological education in further education.\(^84\) Indeed, the first draft of the Report was criticised by other members of the Committee for giving ‘insufficient attention to higher education outside the universities’.\(^85\) The university men subsequently restricted wider discussion of the final drafts of the

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\(^78\) In another indeed, example of a reminiscence providing incorrect details (see Carswell’s significant error below), Moser in his reflections in 2014 misidentified Phillip Morris as his brother Charles Morris, vice-chancellor of Leeds, but Moser did nevertheless recall he was expansionist. Moser noted, at least, ‘I may do injustice to people who are dead’. Moser, ‘The Report’, p. 28.

\(^79\) On the fractious activities of the McNair Committee and Morris’ place in it, see Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 31-34.


\(^81\) Caston Geoffrey, ‘Murray, Keith Anderson Hope, Baron Murray of Newhaven (1903–1993), Agricultural Economist and University Administrator’, ODNB; Shattock, Making Policy, p. 39.


\(^85\) TNA ED116/7, 7 December 1962, 71; as is well known, the first draft of the report was destroyed by the Committee’s secretary; see footnote 132.
Report in 1963 under the pressure of the short-term university places crisis. Criticism of their dominance of the Committee has been sustained by the assumption the Robbins Report promoted an elitist ‘Oxbridge’ university model. In fact, the ‘inner group’ saw themselves as promoters of a reformist university model, which will be explored later. They were less associated with Oxbridge, instead affiliated with civic universities or London; and were all ardent expansionists for a broader role for universities in society. Expansion was part of this reform, enabling universities to take on technical and vocational roles.

Representatives of the social studies and vocational subjects were also more readily predisposed towards universities than techno-nationalist education models. The social sciences were fully aligned with universities through Robbins and their intended representative, James Drever, professor of psychology at University of Edinburgh and later, in 1966, first Principal of the newly independent University of Dundee. He was one of two representatives of the broader and more vocationally-minded Scottish university tradition. The second was also the intended representative

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86 Ibid. p. 14. On the limitations on discussion made in the name of practicality see the Committee minutes or their summary and related correspondence in Howson, *Lionel Robbins*, p. 885.


88 Robbins was of course an undergraduate at the LSE (as was Moser) and worked briefly at Oxford; similarly Linstead’s alma mater was Imperial; Murray studied agriculture at Edinburgh though also briefly worked at Oxford; the most prominent Oxbridge alumni was Morris who obtained a second class PPE degree from Trinity College Oxford but also a teacher’s diploma at London University and had become vice-chancellor of Bristol; Drever studied philosophy at Edinburgh and Cambridge before turning to psychology and succeeding his father as professor of psychology at Edinburgh; Kitty Anderson studied history at Royal Holloway College, London; David Anderson graduated Associate in Mechanical Engineering of the Royal Technical College, Glasgow. Neither Southall nor Herbert appears to have attended a university. The influence of the ancient universities was of course not negligible but definitely of a secondary importance. Shearman studied history at Oxford; Chenevix-Trench gained a scholarship to Christ Church, Oxford aged sixteen. Elvin (Cambridge and Oxford) and Gardner (Oxford, but also Birmingham between 1934-41) were the intended representatives of the ancient universities. Consider also William Whyte’s related argument that the civic universities had much more to do with the expansion of higher education of the 1960s: Whyte, ‘Learning from Redbrick’.

of technical education, David Anderson, who had headed two university institutions-to-be:

Birmingham Central Technical College (1930-46), and Royal College of Science and Technology in Glasgow (1946-59). Curiously, and possibly because he identified the wrong ‘David Anderson’ in Who’s Who, Carswell incorrectly claimed there was no representative of technical colleges on the Robbins Committee. Anderson and Drever’s contributions were limited, but did bring a Scottish inflection. Like the reformist university men, this meant they blurred the distinction between vocational further education and liberal academic university education. These two groups together emphasised the values of a university education at the expense of any imaginable technonationalistic alternative.

3.2.2.2. Teacher Training and Academic Freedom

The second and more incendiary point of contention for the Committee was trigged by the majority of the committee siding with the universities over the importance of academic freedom and on matters of teacher training, opposing the influence and interests of Local Education Authorities.

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92 They certainly did not disparage the work of technical colleges as severely as some critiques of the Report seem to indicate. The committee, as we shall see, believed there was a role for technical education in continuing to foster ‘in addition to their characteristic work in science and technology, educational experiments in fields such as the teaching of modern languages and many aspects of business studies’: CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 271, 146; see Scott, *The Crisis of the University*, pp. 122-23.
(LEAs) and the Ministry of Education. In the Committee, teacher training was assimilated by expansionist university ambitions. It was represented by the authoritative Morris and H. Lionel Elvin, Director of the Institute of Education at the University of London (1958-73), and former principal of adult liberal education college, Ruskin College, Oxford (1944-50). Elvin additionally represented the ancient universities, and was intended to act as a left-wing counterweight for the more conservative elements of the Committee, but described himself as an ‘active lieutenant’ of Morris and followed his determination to associate teacher training much more closely with universities. The third Committee member with an interest in teacher training was Harold C. Shearman, chairman of the Education Committee of the London County Council, and representing local authority education administration. Shearman is the most evident voice of dissent on the Committee, having authored the ‘Note of Reservation’ attached to the Report as a condition of his signature. Shearman advocated placing higher education under the Ministry of Education to represent the whole ‘seamless robe’ of education from primary education to universities.

The Committee had, after considerable debate, formally recommended a new decentralised Ministry of the Arts and Science for higher education, separate from schools, bearing a strong hint of Robbins’ own interests in the arts. In this proposed ministry, public funding would be distributed through an expanded UGC, and acting as a conduit for networking, persuasion and coordination, including limited use of earmarked grants, mutually agreed salary levels, and student-staff ratios. This proposal was intended to secure academic freedom. To make their national contribution, the Report argued, universities needed freedom to admit, educate, and research as they wished as a

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94 Elvin was also on the town council and education Committee at Cambridge, and a member of the Education Department at UNESCO. Elvin, Encounters with Education, p. 184.

95 Sharp, The Creation of the Local Authority Sector of Higher Education, p. 5.


97 See his impassioned defence of the proposal, which he was perfectly happy to admit derived from the structure of governance in the USSR, in the House of Lords: Robbins, University in the Modern World pp. 48-56.

necessary condition for the proper [and efficient] discharge of their higher academic functions’, of intellectual progress and moral responsibility. Such arrangements were necessary to preserve initiative and spontaneity, and to act as a barrier against external, especially collectivist, forces that might pull the universities towards illiberal, unsuitable, or even nefarious ends. Immediate state control over appointments and expenditure represented a ‘real danger to the foundations of free society’. The Report was especially cynical of the centralised control exercised by the Russian state’s Gosplan over higher education, and starkly warned of the fate that had befallen the German universities under the Nazi regime. While centralised techno-nationalist demands for greater output of scientific and technological manpower were not explicitly mentioned, the Report’s defence of academic freedom did act as a barrier to such calls and other perceived corruptions of a university that might be wrought by too strong state intervention in higher education.

The Report’s description of the centralised and interventionist governance of the Ministry of Education and LEAs over the Teacher Training Colleges was far from favourable. It claimed LEAs suffocated academic excellence with overly bureaucratic and pettifogging administrative practices, including adhering to restrictive salary scales, or, in Elvin’s example, assuming staff in residence prescriptively worked nine-to-five hours. This concern was shared by many university representatives in evidence but was rejected by Shearman based on his contrasting experience of

100 Ibid. p. 230. See Chapter Two.
101 CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. D’, p. 1126; CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. F’, p. 2028; Economist Alan Richmond Prest in his evidence cited Friedrich Hayek in his opposition to the move of the UGC and universities directly under the Ministry of Education: ‘It might be argued that any such development is not of great consequence; that given the traditional wisdom of British parliamentary and Civil Service control, there is nothing to worry about. One can accept this up to a point. ‘The Road to Serfdom’ may be a very long one with all sorts of more or less permanent and acceptable resting places along its early stages. But serious misgivings must arise all the same’. CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 2’, p. 141.
103 See Robbins’ response to Thomas Balogh’s criticisms of the report’s defence of academic freedom discussed in Chapter Two, and in Robbins’ speech to the House of Lords, 11 December 1963, reprinted in Robbins, University in the Modern World, p. 48.
104 Though see also Robbins at the House of Lords where he claimed to ‘have the very greatest admiration for the traditions of the Ministry of Education - the tribute [...] from our report, happens to come unaltered from my own pen’: Ibid. p. 52

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the London County Council. For the Ministry of Education and LEAs who were anxious to retain control over teacher training, and the Treasury, who were concerned with securing ‘value for money’, the Report’s defence of academic freedom doubtless looked like a typical university protectionism or amateurism.

It is, however, possible to overstate this disagreement despite its prevalence in the historiography. Shearman’s objection was not of ‘essentials, but only on machinery’ of government. Shearman was concerned with preserving the continuity of knowledge and education. His argument was made in broadly the same terms as the Report’s rejection, as we shall see, of any policy of artificial hierarchies in higher education and its support of a more inclusive and expansive role of autonomous universities as leaders in a unitary system. The decision of the machinery of government was also, relative to the Committee’s primary and earnest recommendation for the expansion of higher education, less important.

3.2.2.3. Gender, Race, and Resources of Ability

While not all the Committee were initially expansionist, the Committee readily accepted the evidence that there was a large reserve of ability latent in underprivileged social groups. There were only two women on the Committee, both satellites of the university world, and together intended to represent their gender in higher education. The first was Dame Kitty Anderson, headmistress of North London Collegiate School for girls, and a member of the UGC (1959-61) and its New

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105 CHE, ‘Appendix Four’, p. 43. As Elvin recalls, The LCC was a particularly liberal council whereas other LEAs were far from as benevolent. Elvin recalled a turning point was visiting an unnamed LEA chairman, who was ‘as different from the Sidney Webbs, the Margaret Coles and (if I may say so) the Harold Shearmans, as could well be imagined. It seemed to us that his Committee’s colleges were in tutelage to it. When we asked the chairman if these procedures were right for institutions of higher education he said that kind of control was “democracy”. We might have found a less pleasant name for it’. Elvin, *Encounters with Education*, pp. 183-85. See discussion in Oral Evidence given by Capt. Sir Offley Wakeman, Mr. A. Lubbock, Mrs. M. H. Hichens, Mr. S. T. Broad, Dr. F. L. Ralphs and Mr. L. W. K. Brown on behalf of The County Councils Association, 24 November 1961, Committee on Higher Education, *Higher Education: Written and Oral Evidence Received by the Committee Appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins, 1961-1963*, Part 1, Vol. C (London: HMSO, 1964), pp. 736-37. See also Simmons, ‘Science and Technology in England and Wales’, p. 9.


108 Shearman was certainly not advocacy any form of binarism as Carswell has eloquently identified: Carswell, *Government and the Universities*, p. 73.

109 LSE ROBBINS/8/2/2, Eddie (?) to Lionel Robbins, ND.
Universities’ Sub-Committee. The second was distinguished literary scholar Helen Gardner, fellow of St Hilda’s College Oxford (1942-66), representing Oxford, Cambridge and the arts. Gardner seems to have been the most vocal opponent of expansion of any member of the Committee. However, as she remembered she was persuaded by the weight of the sociological and statistical evidence, as were, according to statistical advisor to the Committee Claus Moser, ‘one or two’ other members of the Committee. Moser recalled Robbins ‘pushed [the Committee] to the other extreme’, of expansion. Robbins, as Chapter Two explored, was already predisposed towards accepting the expansionist direction of the Committee’s statistical findings. Other members seem similarly inclined: in an address as early as November 1961 Drever confidently stated that ‘There is no support for the view that we are scraping the bottom of the barrel’.

One of the predominant impressions of the Report is this egalitarianism, but this should be tempered. Together the two female Committee members did raise questions of gender throughout the Committee meetings. The Committee assumed the increasing participation rate of women would continue to grow until it reached parity with the male participation rate. However, it was...

111 Gardner was probably less disposed against expansion than this simple sketch suggests. Guy Ortolano has identified Gardner, in *New Statesman*, favourably reviewed C. P. Snow’s *Time of Hope* (1949) and his literary project which was optimistic of the effects of modernity on the human condition: Ortolano, *The Two Cultures Controversy*.
113 Helen Gardner, *In Defence of the Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), p. 155; Moser, ‘The Report’, p. 27; Layard, ‘What Was the World Like Then? The Context in 1963’, p. 16’. Otto’ Clarke of the Treasury reportedly based his objections on the grounds that he doubted there were enough graduate level jobs for an increased number of graduates, an argument which probably held little water with the expansionist university men who thought that a university education was more than preparation for a specific vocation.
often assumed there was a distinctive contribution female students might be expected to make to society, particularly as teachers (one biographer of Gardner described her as ‘no feminist’).\textsuperscript{117}

In one other significant way the Report’s egalitarianism must be qualified. Astonishingly, from the perspective of the twenty-first century, the scope of the research of the Robbins Committee nearly entirely avoided the issue of racial discrimination in higher education.\textsuperscript{118} The Report certainly was strongly opposed to discrimination against students and teachers on ‘racial, social or other grounds extraneous to academic suitability’, and institutions that excluded on ‘grounds of social origin would have scant claim to unconditional subventions from public funds in a free society’.\textsuperscript{119} These ‘other grounds’ probably included then still illegal homosexuality judging from the support vice-chancellors later gave to the Sexual Offences Act (1967).\textsuperscript{120} It also probably included physical disability, also invisible, and age, though while mature students were appreciated they were considered offhandedly.\textsuperscript{121} But despite acknowledging race, the Committee collected no data on the

\textsuperscript{117} K. M. Lea, ‘Gardner, Dame Helen Louise (1908–1986), Literary Scholar’, \textit{ODNB}.
\textsuperscript{118} Robinson and others, ‘Telling Stories About Post-War Britain’, pp. 297-9. Only exceptionally does the question of race explicitly appear in the Committee minutes, in evidence to the Committee, or in Committee papers: Oral Evidence given by Mr. Richard Horby, M.P; Mr. George Thomson, M.P; and Mrs. F. Bolton on behalf of the Council for Education in the Commonwealth, 7 February 1962; CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. E’, p. 1539. Shearman in comments on the first draft of the Report assumed the Report ‘would avoid any statement which might be construed as favouring any discrimination, on grounds of race, between one kind of overseas student and another’: TNA ED116/7, 7 December 1962, p. 71. In Appendix Four, William G. Bowen (see below) briefly cited Gary Becker’s findings that the return-on-investment in a college education for non-whites in the US was ‘about two percentage points lower’ than the 9% for ‘urban white males in the United States’: CHE, ‘Appendix Four’.
Citizen and consumer of education: the ideal student in the Robbins Committee, 1960-1963

ethnicity of students entering higher education. There was limited consideration of the consequence of non-white children’s socioeconomic backgrounds, childhood, or educational experiences in their surveys or calculations. This invisibility of race reflects a clear, if not an assumption then an unchallenged normativity, that attendance in higher education in Britain as a British citizen was synonymous with whiteness.

The exclusion of race from the scope of inquiry of the Committee was likely a consequence of an assumed assumption of the ‘national’ dimension of British higher education contraposed to its role in fighting in the Cold War. In the discussion of ‘overseas students’, a discussion of race was implicit but generally unstated. The Report found 70 percent of overseas students originated from ‘less-developed countries’ and media coverage portrayed particularly these and commonwealth students as coloured and male. The Report believed that overseas students were a beneficial and

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122 By contrast see the activities of the NUS on action such as discriminatory lodging schemes: Jodi Burkett, Constructing Post-Imperial Britain: Britishness, ‘Race’ and the Radical Left in the 1960s (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 118-25, 59-61, 82-91. Tight’s review of the literature on participation of ‘ethnic minorities’ begins from 1982, for example: Tight, Development of HE in the UK, pp. 262-65.

123 The data the Robbins Committee used to calculate the size of the pool of ability is cited as sourced from the Government Actuary’s Department and Registrars General Office. All children born between 1945-62 would have been included in Robbins’ calculation of the size of the age group for 1963-1980. Estimates of the birth-rate from 1981 included net inward migration of all ages from all countries overseas (which it was assumed would halve from 100,000 to 50,000 per annum over the course of the 1960s (with a net outward migration from Scotland also declining): see CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 56; and CHE, ‘Appendix One’, pp. 93-95. It is outside the remit of this thesis to assess how accurate the assumptions made by the Robbins Committee were regarding the measurement of the performance of non-white schoolchildren. There are a number of examples in the existing literature where graduates were denied jobs because of their race, but I am not aware of an account of racial discrimination in applying for university, despite the ample literature detailing racial discrimination in schooling. See Robinson and others, ‘Telling Stories About Post-War Britain’, pp. 297-9.

Edgerton, The Rise and Fall of the British Nation, p. 257.


125 See the review of some of the literature on ‘colonial’ students, ‘overseas’ students and ‘foreign’ students in Tight, Development of HE in the UK, pp. 248-50.

welcome element of higher education and their proportion should be sustained at ten percent of the total student population.\textsuperscript{127} However, overseas students were expected to return ‘home’ rather than contribute to British society.\textsuperscript{128} The education of these overseas students at a cost to the taxpayer of £9 million was understood as a form of ‘well justified’ foreign aid.\textsuperscript{129} The Report suggested that fee payments for overseas students might be reformed and centralised. These subsidies could then be targeted to ‘needy’ applicants (without specifying by what criteria this might be defined) in order to make a more apparent contribution to ‘international development’.\textsuperscript{130} Higher education was somewhere between an export, an extension of the civilising mission, and a ‘soft-power’ cold-war weapon against communism in decolonising spaces.\textsuperscript{131} Beyond this race had little importance for the committee.

The remaining members of the Committee made few contributions: headmaster Anthony Chenevix-Trench; director of British Petroleum and Vice-President of University College Swansea (1956-64) Reginald B. Southall; industrialist Sir Edward Herbert; and from the Treasury secretary without government scholarships: Bailkin, \textit{The Afterlife of Empire}, pp. 96-97. See a table of selected destinations of students from Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda including the UK in 1959 and 1968 and ‘Total African students’ increasing from 8000 students to 10,000 students over the same time, up from 1000 in 1946, in: Timothy Nicholson, ‘East African Students in a (Post-)Imperial World’, in Shirleene Robinson and Simon Sleight (eds.) \textit{Children, Childhood and Youth in the British World} (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), pp. 117-18. Most studied law and secondarily, tellingly, engineering. See also Anderson, \textit{British Universities Past and Present}, p. 56.

\textsuperscript{128} See also Robbins’ summary of the benefits of overseas students where he praises their presence as a broadening influence but assumes that they would return home and form ‘official and business connections’: Robbins, ‘Why the Cuts Impair Important Freedoms’. For one first-hand account of the expectation of students to return ‘home’ see Stuart Hall and Bill Schwarz, \textit{Familiar Stranger: A Life between Two Islands} (Duke University Press, 2017), pp. 158-9. In an interesting coincidence Hall recalled an encounter and later acquaintance with Gardner. See also C. P. Snow’s comments in Ortolano, \textit{The Two Cultures Controversy}, p. 57; and the tension between liberal race relations policy and illiberal immigration policy of the Labour Governments discussed in James Hampshire, ‘Immigration and Race Relations’, in Peter Dorey (ed.), \textit{The Labour Governments 1964-1970} (Oxon: Routledge, 2006).


\textsuperscript{131} See Lee, ‘Overseas Students in Britain: How Their Presence Was Politicised in 1966-1967’. Interrogating what this meant in terms of participation in higher education for non-white British citizens is outside the remit of this thesis; see Bailkin, \textit{The Afterlife of Empire}, pp. 95-131; and Nicholson, ‘East African Students in a (Post-) Imperial World’.
citizen and consumer of education: the ideal student in the Robbins Committee, 1960-1963

philip. S. Ross. The Committee was therefore able to reach consensus that universities as national institutions were the primary site of higher education and that the sort of education provided at these institutions should expand. While mindful of women, they were also able to compartmentalise issues of gender and concentrate on a normative, essentially white male student studying full-time and in residence at autonomous universities.

3.2.3. Robbins and the Statistical Team

The epistemic authority of the Committee’s statistical evidence similarly needs to be historicised.

Robbins himself appointed and presided over by far the most consequential element of the Committee: the statistical team. Just ten days after accepting the chair of the Committee, Robbins asked claus moser to become the statistics advisor to the Committee. Appointing a statistical advisor, at least one contemporary noted, was ‘unusual’. Moser had settled in Britain after his

132 The records of the Committee affirm carswell’s assessment that none of these Committee members had any particular special influence over the broad form or argument of the report. Chenevix-Trench was headmaster of a private school, Bradfield college, and was made headmaster at Eton while the Committee was in session: TNA ED 116/8, 8 March 1963. He was dismissed from Eton in 1970, and in the 1990s long after his death his alcoholism and programmatic use of humiliating and privately administered corporal punishment was brought to light in a series of publications and national media discussion: Mark peel, ‘Trench, Anthony Chenevix- (1919–1979), Headmaster’, ODNB. Chenevix-Trench’s Wikipedia page contains an interesting but indigestible summary of the debate as it emerged in national newspapers. Robbins also had a directorship of BP; it’s unclear whether he and southall already knew each other: TNA ED 116/7, 7 December 1962, p. 2; M. A. James, ‘Southall, Reginal Bradbury (1900-1965), Oil Refinery Director’, in Dictionary of Welsh Biography (The National Library of Wales, 2001) <https://biography.wales/article/s2-SOUT-BRA-1900> [Accessed 13 January 2021]. Herbert served on the Grand Council of the Federation of British Industries (1953) and was Chairman of the governing body of Loughborough CAT (1957). Herbert did not attend many early meetings of the Committee and died in April 1963 before the report was published and was not replaced: TNA ED46.941, ‘Higher Education: Note of a Meeting in Sir Thomas Padmore’s Room at the Treasury’, 5 August 1960; 1963 Institution of Mechanical Engineers: Obituaries, ‘Edward Herbert’, Grace’s Guide to British Industrial History [2015 [1963]] <https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Edward_Herbert> [Accessed 02 February 2021]; Carswell, Government and the Universities, p. 29. Ross was, according to Moser, a ‘brilliant secretary but a flawed individual’ who suffered from poor mental health and became ‘totally unreliable’, suffering the ire of Robbins after destroying the first drafts of the report. Ross was replaced in 1963 with his deputy Brian Gerrard, who was credited in the report as ‘assistant secretary’: CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 292; Parry, ‘Robbins and Advanced Further Education’, p. 190; Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 259-63; Claus Moser, cited in Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 881. Several observers present at the meetings of the Committee represented government bodies. These assessors included (in addition to murray) R. N. Heaton of the Ministry of Education, and his replacement early on in the Committee’s deliberations, A. A. Part; H. H. Donnelly of the Scottish Education Department; and Carswell, representing the Treasury. A. R. M. Maxwell-Hyslop also frequently attended earlier meetings as a representative of the Ministry of Education.

133 On the assumption of full-time residential students, see Carswell, ‘What Robbins Took for Granted’; on the masculinisation of not only science but the universities overall, see Whyte, ‘Learning from Redbrick’, p. 240.

family fled Nazi Germany and became a statistics lecturer at LSE.\textsuperscript{135} Moser in turn asked Richard Layard, a graduate student, to assist.\textsuperscript{136} Peter Mandler has described the pair as ‘left-leaning economists’, but his slight hesitancy to ascribe them to a political pigeonhole is telling; their understanding of economics and liberal principles were closely aligned to Robbins.\textsuperscript{137} To gather the necessary data in May 1961, an ‘Interdepartmental Group on Statistics of Higher Education’ was established under the Central Statistical Office (CSO). Moser and Ross sat on the CSO with representatives from across the civil service. The exercise clearly made an impression: Moser was made director of the CSO in 1967.\textsuperscript{138} The Report was ‘the first genuinely national collection of quantified information on higher education’, and demonstrated the commitment of Robbins to remedying what the Report called the severe ‘paucity of information on higher education’.\textsuperscript{139} Supplementary to these calculations, the Report recommended the establishment of a new programme of higher education governance which would be informed by a permanent statistical information gathering apparatus, by which plans could be modified on a rolling basis as new data was made available, such as demographic data of birth-rates after 1963-64.\textsuperscript{140}

Robbins and his statistical team were by far the most important element in eliminating any potential objections from some Committee members. They were part of what Jon Agar has described as a ‘wave’ of technocratic expert administrators entrusted in the early 1960s with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{135} Robert Armstrong, 'Moser, Claus Adolf, Baron Moser (1922–2015), Statistician, College Head, and Public Servant', ODNB. Robbins and Moser seem to have been some of the few to attend all 111 meetings and trips abroad: Moser, 'The Report', p. 24.
\item \textsuperscript{136} Moser and Layard were assisted by Miss E. White. In addition to the two secretaries, the Committee had at their service a thirteen-person staff, including three research assistants. These secretarial staff were frequently present at Committee meetings.
\item \textsuperscript{137} Further research would be illuminating. Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, p. 87.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Moser would succeed the then head of the office Harry Campion. This group coordinated the various government branches involved in higher education and its finance and collated disparate statistical information for the Robbins Committee: CHE, 'Higher Education Report', pp. 300-02; Armstrong, 'Moser, Claus Adolf, Baron Moser'; O’Hara Glen, 'Towards a New Bradshaw? Economic Statistics and the British State in the 1950s and 1960s', The Economic History Review, 60 (2007).
\item \textsuperscript{140} CHE, 'Higher Education Report', pp. 255-6, 92; see CHE, 'Appendix Four', pp. 65-69. On the actual method of calculation of the size and pattern of higher education, see below.
\end{itemize}
formulating public policy, complementing ‘the Cold War demand for technical expertise’ for nuclear missiles and artificial satellites.\footnote{Agar, 'What Happened in the Sixties?', p. 575; see the wider consequences of this trend and the reaction against it in the social sciences and history in, for example: Craig Calhoun, 'History and Sociology in Britain. A Review Article', \textit{Comparative Studies in Society and History}, 29 (1987); and Ortolano, \textit{The Two Cultures Controversy}, pp. 140-60.} Their statistical research made it possible to express the Report’s recommendations in this quantitative discourse. From existing secondary data and their own surveys, Moser and his team performed novel, ‘fresh’ statistical analysis.\footnote{CHE, 'Higher Education Report', p. 301.} They periodically presented the results of these analyses to Robbins personally, and subsequently to the rest of the Committee for deliberation throughout 1961-62.\footnote{TNA ED116/3; Howson, \textit{Lionel Robbins}, p. 868; CHE, 'Higher Education Report'; pp. iii, 292; Carswell, \textit{Government and the Universities}, p. 28.} The Committee’s calculations are a classic piece of the application of Robbins’ abstract deductive economic science to inform policy on the best allocation of resources to achieve agreed policy ends, and to develop a consensus.\footnote{Susan Howson noted this but did not expand or discuss the consequences of this for higher education policy. Howson, 'Lionel Robbins: Political Economist', p. 134.} From its data sources, the Report derived a practical programme of higher education growth and development achievable within the agreed limits of the resources available and their capacity to expand, whilst meeting the policy aims the Report established.\footnote{CHE, 'Higher Education Report', pp. 35-47.} Since the information on numerous variables concerning higher education the Report collected was quantitative numbers, concrete quantitative relationships could be deduced between different variables.\footnote{On mechanical objectivity see Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, \textit{Objectivity} (London: MIT Press, 2007), p. 121; and Theodore M. Porter, \textit{Trust in Numbers} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020 [1995]), pp. 5-6.} The most prominent relationship the Report established was linking the size of the pool of ability and the number of places in higher education needed.\footnote{As Appendix One put it: 'The general approach aimed at in projecting any variable is to isolate the main independent variable(s) on which it is known or thought to depend and, from projections of these independent variables, to derive the projection required. The problem is, of course, to determine which are the relevant independent variables, and to quantify the relationship(s) between them and the dependent variable(s) in such a way as to yield a better projection than would be obtained by a straight projection of the dependent variable': CHE, 'Appendix One', p. 247. Tackling this ‘problem’ was a political exercise.} As Appendix One admitted, ‘There is actually no logical necessity about this’.\footnote{Ibid.} Since Britain provided a policy of universal secondary schooling, the number of qualified school leavers could be \textit{assumed} by the
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Report to be dependent on the size of the age group. To maintain its ‘objectivity’, the Report was hesitant about its projections beyond known data, of a cohort yet to be born, and would only provide ‘illustrative’ recommendations after 1980 based on predicted birth-rates.\(^\text{149}\) But this does not eliminate the fact that to establish these relationships, ethical and political policy decisions were made. As Ian Hacking put it, ‘By covering opinion with a veneer of objectivity, we replace judgment by computation’.\(^\text{150}\) By describing the relationship between these values numerically, the Report obscured the moral, philosophical, and historical justifications for their association. This method gave the Committee’s recommendations an epistemic authority. It was so successful that the Report was described in the House of Lords as a victory not for expansionists but ‘for sober statistical science over emotionally motivated prejudice’.\(^\text{151}\) As we shall see this allowed the Report to bring in several of Robbins’ liberal economic assumptions about the behaviour of students.

Robbins was the primary force influencing the form and argument of the Report. His Committee lauded his contribution.\(^\text{152}\) During the Committee meetings Robbins commanded a penetrating but courteous direction of witness interviews.\(^\text{153}\) Robbins himself insisted that the Report was a collective effort and stressed ‘how much I detest hearing the Report [...] described as the Robbins Report. [...] I learned very much more than I gave’.\(^\text{154}\) Certainly, sections of the Report were initially drafted and redrafted by other Committee members, and some factual descriptions

\(^{149}\) CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 56. Once these values were known the calculation could be repeated and an adjusted target computed.


\(^{152}\) LSE ROBBINS/8/2/2, Reginald B. Southall to Lionel Robbins, 28 October 1963; Maurice Peston to Lionel Robbins, 24 October 1963; A. Chenevix-Trench to Lionel Robbins, 10 October 1963. See Moser’s continuous praise, especially in Moser, ‘The Robbins Report 25 Years after—and the Future of the Universities’.


were based on reports from the education departments.  The 300 page primary Report was, however, primarily authored by Robbins himself which he very likely ‘always intended’. Robbins wrote the first full draft by himself in the final third of 1962 in Lyme Regis, and presented to the committee over the winter of 1962-63 for criticism. Moser, who sat next to Robbins, noticed that during these meetings, Robbins ‘didn’t write anything down, but took it all in, went back for the weekend, and brought back a rewritten version’, the second draft, which was ‘more or less’ the same as the later fourth and final draft. Gardener proof-read the final draft, but the result was still very much dominated by Robbins’ characteristically readable and articulate prose. Upon publication, a close friend of Robbins’ in correspondence described the ‘structure-of-the-whole as being very much your work’.

Reflections by Carswell, Moser, and Layard identified Robbins’ ‘natural egalitarianism’ (really equalitarianism), which made his premiership attractive to the Committee. The Committee shared what Robbins’ biographer Denis O’Brien calls Robbins’ ‘romanticism about the role of education’, in

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155 Morris is credited with the Committee’s recommendations for teacher training in Chapter IX which were written up by Elvin. Elvin, Encounters with Education, pp. 184-85; Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 886. Observers contributed to the Report and were responsible for redrafting elements where their technical expertise and knowledge of details was relevant, particularly Part and Donnelly. The statistical appendices were for the main part credited to the secretarial staff, particularly Moser, Layard and Gerrard. Many sections of the appendices originated as draft Committee papers: see Blaug, The Economics of Education: A Selected Annotated Bibliography, pp. 88-89; Halsey and Trow, The British Academics, pp. 25-26; see also Lionel Robbins, ‘Mr. Brian Gerrard’, The Times (27 May 1965).

156 Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 878.


158 Elvin described the published report as ‘Robbins revised by Gardner’. Like Robbins, the Report is notably articulate, deploying ‘variegated’ (p. 36), ‘incontrovertible’ (p. 75), ‘vitiate’ (p. 205), referencing the Biblical ‘widow’s cruse’ (p. 54), and the Analects of Confucius (p. 6), quoting Napoleon (p. 95) and Milton (p. 198), in Latin and French, and authors turns of phrase such as ‘militate against efficiency’ (p. 243), and especially ‘a most felicitous conjunction’ (p. 250); see Lord Cottesloe, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), ‘House of Lords Official Report’, Vol. 253 (London, HMSO), 11 December 1963, p. 1293. Absent from the report is Robbins’ signature use of ‘desiratum’ however (though ‘desirous’ does appear twice), nor is there any direct mention of J. S. Mill. See Howson, ‘Economists as Diarists: An Editor’s and a User’s View’, p. 258.

159 Elvin (above) and Nathan Issacs quoted in Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 878, 80-81, 86.

160 Carswell, Government and the Universities, p. 28. Moser was great admirer of Robbins. They, along with Alan Peacock, shared a love of opera and arts and when Moser was invited to the BBC radio show ‘Desert Island Discs’ in 1988 he dedicated one of his eight tracks, Johan Sebastian Bach’s Concerto for Two Violins in D minor, to Robbins: Sue Lawley, ‘Desert Island Discs: Sir Claus Moser’ (BBC, 6 November 1988). On the egalitarianism/equalitarian distinction see Chapter Two.
achieving the good society.\textsuperscript{161} However as Chapter Two argued, O’Brien underappreciated the romantic view of economics and the ‘good society’ which informed Robbins’ optimism in education. As section 3.3 will demonstrate, the Report placed special emphasis on the private returns of higher education to the student, allied closely with his concern for human flourishing. The Committee’s shared sympathies for expansion of opportunity and national development meant his statistical programme found ready support.

3.3. CONSUMPTION, HUMAN CAPITAL, AND THE GOOD SOCIETY

3.3.1. Human Capital and Economic Growth

The Robbins Report clearly allied itself with expansionist calls for greater investment in education for national economic growth, increased productivity, and the fair, good society.\textsuperscript{162} Repeating what were almost universal sentiments, the Report argued that for modern societies to achieve their ‘aims of economic growth and higher cultural standards’, they needed to make the most of the talents of their citizens.\textsuperscript{163} By the early 1960s this did not require much special justification: it was promoted throughout evidence to the committee by figures from economist of education John Vaizey to Minister of Education David Eccles, and in government reports such as \textit{Technical Education} (1956) and the Newsom Report (1963).\textsuperscript{164} In January 1961 after lunching with Robbins (his former tutor) before the Committee was appointed, Eccles sent Robbins a copy of a UNESCO publication ‘The Economics of Education’ and noted its ‘interesting comments [on] the return to be obtained from investment on education’.\textsuperscript{165} Robbins himself was convinced that ‘a quick-witted population, able to keep ahead in adaptations as a result of scientific investigation, is of great importance

\textsuperscript{161} O’Brien, ‘Lionel Charles Robbins, 1898-1984’, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{163} Howson, \textit{Lionel Robbins}, p. 8.
particular for this country’. The Report further stressed that ‘there is a broad connection between the size of the stock of trained manpower in a community and its level of productivity per head’ – how efficiently a labour force might use the inputs in a production process to produce its outputs. This efficiency would decrease costs of other government services. The Report suggested that without the expansion of higher education on the scale the Report recommended, economic growth at the ambitious 4 percent per annum targets set by the new National Economic Development Council (1962) ‘is, in our view, unlikely to be attainable’. The Report’s statistical computation of the resources available for the expansion of higher education were in fact linked with these quantitative growth targets.

The Report however went beyond these general sentiments about the need to modernise Britain. It moved away from techno-nationalist preoccupations of the importance of highly specialised technological and scientific knowledge produced by Research and Development. Instead, the report divorced economic growth from science and technology and elevated the importance of individual initiative and skills. Like Robbins, the Report was critical of crude attempts to trace too obvious correlations between nebulous concepts like gross national product and higher education participation. Instead the Report was imbued with a supporting rhetoric derived from classical economics and the emerging American literature on the concept of ‘human capital’. Human capital theory distinguished between two conceptions of the return on investment

169 Ibid. p. 73; Astrid Ringe and Neil Rollings, 'Responding to Relative Decline: The Creation of the National Economic Development Council', Economic History Review, 53 (2000). Robbins seems to have been entirely happy to entirely defer to evidence from the Treasury of this growth rate, which was never achieved. The four percent target was the average rate of growth of the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. See Stedman Jones, 'The Radicalization of Neoliberalism', p. 51.
171 The importance of education to technological and industrial development had been evidence and influential in educational policy in Britain since at least the mid-nineteenth century; see Simmons, 'Science and Technology in England and Wales'; Brennan and Silver, A Liberal Vocationalism; Fisher and Simmons, 'Liberal Conservatism, Vocationalism and Further Education in England'.
172 Robbins, Higher Education Revisited, p. 10.
in human capital: the return on initial investment in training an individual obtained through received
wages from their increased productivity, and the returns on increases in human capital to national
prosperity. The Report drew on both.

3.3.2. Adam Smith and the ‘Broad View of History’

Chapter XIV of the Report, which is dominated by Robbins’ characteristic phraseology,
recommended the Report’s vast proposed public spending programme should be welcomed as an
investment, with substantial returns, to raise productivity:

The classical economists, great supporters of education, had precisely this
consideration in mind when they invented the phrase ‘human capital’. [...] provided
we always remember that the goal is not productivity as such but the good life that
productivity makes possible, this mode of approach is very helpful.

The Report went further than simply stating a relationship. It attempted to justify expenditure on
higher education by the state by appealing to liberal economic theory above any quantitative
calculation of national rates of return. This rhetorical justification was especially important as the
Report seemed to recognise that simple faith in a relationship would not be sufficient to justify the
huge increase in public spending it was recommending. It was in fact suspicious of too crude existing
quantitative measurements.

The Report’s main rhetorical support for this thesis was to gesture to ‘the broad view of
history’, that ‘The communities that have paid most attention to higher studies have in general been
the most obviously progressive in respect of income and wealth’. This was by no means
uncontested, and whether it was true of ‘higher’ studies as compared to primary and secondary

174 CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 204. Robbins was probably gesturing to Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill,
and Alfred Marshall (see below). This value of human skills was labelled ‘human capital’ in 1892 by American
economist Irving Fisher: see Robert W. Dimand and John Geanakoplos, ‘Celebrating Irving Fisher: The Legacy of
education was also questioned in evidence.\textsuperscript{176} Regardless of these doubts, the Report took this ‘broad view’ as foundational to its justification of its plans for expansion.\textsuperscript{177} In a specific turn of phrase overlooked in the historiography, the Report’s first (and most important?) objective for higher education was to prepare young people to play their part in the ‘general division of labour’ of society, explicitly referring to Adam Smith’s theory of economic growth.\textsuperscript{178} Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) economist Dennis Lees, then at University College North Staffordshire, in his written evidence to the Committee quoted Smith’s \textit{The Wealth of Nations}:

\textit{The improved dexterity of the workman may be considered in the same light as a machine or instrument of trade which facilitates and abridges labour, and which, though it costs a certain expense, repays that expense at a profit.}\textsuperscript{179}

The specialisation of workers in the skills of a specific tasks, methods and technologies increased their output.\textsuperscript{180} In the Report’s interpretation of Smith, the utility, or productivity, of any individual and their skills could be quantified or reduced to a monetary value, or their pecuniary wage received on the labour market. Human skills were a form of capital which could be obtained by purchasing an

\textsuperscript{176} As Treasury official Richard ‘Otto’ Clarke of the Treasury immediately pointed out to Robbins, the issue was not whether or not investment in human capital did provide returns to society but how far these externalities were realised through investment in primary, secondary, or higher education: CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. F’, p. 2003.


\textsuperscript{178} CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 6. Emphasis added. There have been some attempts to derive the degree of importance that the Report attached to each of its four objectives for higher education based on the order they are listed in the text. This may be a little speculative. The report stated that it did not believe that private returns for students were any more important than any of its other objectives for higher education, but that it was an objective that was ‘sometimes ignored or undervalued’, and by making it the first objective for higher education attempted to elevate its importance. This seems much more significant when considering the climate of discussion where it was still possible to deny there was any practical importance to universities and the importance of student choice. Scott, \textit{The Crisis of the University}, pp. 63-64; see, for example the puzzlement of, James Murphy, ‘A Degree of Waste: The Economic Benefits of Educational Expansion’, \textit{Oxford Review of Education}, 19 (1993).


education. In this framework, knowledge and learning obtained from higher education were reduced to the skills and versatilities required to execute a task. It was not until the late 1950s that this idea of ‘human capital’ began to rise out of relative economic unorthodoxy. It was promoted especially by American economist Theodore Schultz. Schultz argued that hitherto unexplainable ‘residual growth’ and the economic divergence of the West could be attributed to improvements in human skill.

From the appendices of the Robbins Report, it is evident that in making its historical claim the Committee was appealing to the emerging body of this unorthodox economics. Appendix 4 of the Report included a supporting paper by the young Princeton economist William G. Bowen, which argued there was evidence supporting ‘handsome returns’, of national investment in education in the United States; Moser would later describe his evidence as a ‘classic’. Bowen provided a comprehensive overview of the existing literature, including the work of American and British economists, and gave a favourable impression of what he called ‘return-on-investment’ calculations, represented by Schultz and fellow Chicago economist and future Mont Pèlerin Society president Gary Becker. Becker was drawing explicitly on Robbins’ definition of economics to expand the

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186 This included Seymour Harris, John Vaizey, Edward F. Denison, J. R. Walsh, W. Leontieff and Leonard Silk, Milton Friedman and S. S. Kunnets, and John Jewkes: CHE, ‘Appendix Four’, p. 73. Becker’s now famed monograph Human Capital would not be published until later in 1963. Prior to this his research was only available as a preliminary report: Gary S. Becker, ‘Underinvestment in College Education?’, The American Economic Review, 50 (1960); see Becker, Human Capital.
scope of economics to the non-material. Bowen cited Becker’s preliminary calculations of the comparative rate of return on education of nine percent per annum (even without accounting for external benefits and non-pecuniary returns), which compared extremely favourably to other commercial investment opportunities open for governments which averaged a return of around four percent. These American figures likely confirmed the Report’s belief on a strong rate of return for investment in education. Further arguments commenting favourably on human capital approaches appeared in the witness testimony to the Committee provided by British LSE economists Alan Peacock and Jack Wiseman (who would both take up positions at the University of York) and Quaker economist Charles F. Carter (later Vice-Chancellor of the new University of Lancaster) and Brian R. Williams.

Chapter XIV of the Report cannily did not directly utilise these specific statistical proofs. It cautioned that there was no way currently to demonstrate the relationship between higher education and national economic growth ‘exactly by recourse to detailed statistics of productivity and national income’. The importance of education went beyond rates of renumeration in ways that were critical to modern society. The Report argued, (modernising for the Cold War an aphorism of Alfred Marshall’s), that if nuclear war were to destroy all material equipment (physical capital) of society but spare the educated citizens:

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188 CHE, ‘Appendix Four’, p. 90.
It need not be long before former standards were reconstituted; but if it destroyed
the educated citizens, even though it left the buildings and machines intact, a period
longer than the Dark Ages might elapse before the former position was restored.\textsuperscript{191}

This caution generally seem to be the root of the assumption by many commentators that the
Robbins Report was suspicious of ‘human capital’.\textsuperscript{192} However, the Report did not doubt that the link
between individual specialisation, increased productivity, and economic prosperity of students and
wider society was concrete. Instead, it did not believe it could ‘produce detailed computations of
comparative yield’ which could \textit{fully} account for the benefits of higher education and would be
helpful for the allocation of public resources.\textsuperscript{193} It was not that existing return on investment
calculations were fundamentally flawed but that there was an inadequacy in the scope of \textit{current}
economic analysis based on pecuniary returns.\textsuperscript{194}

Bowen argued that while pecuniary calculations did indeed show a national return on
investment, they did not take into account ‘external economies’.\textsuperscript{195} The Report similarly argued
there were wider ‘external’ benefits to the productive ‘good society’ that were not currently
quantified.\textsuperscript{196} These included new knowledge and technologies developed and disseminated by
more productive workers, labour flexibility, and, importantly, the social benefits of being

\textsuperscript{192} See, for example, Tapper and Salter, \textit{Oxford, Cambridge and the Changing Idea of the University: The
Challenge to Donnish Domination}, p. 31. Particularly frequently cited and misunderstood has been the Report’s
argument that ‘It is just not true that the total return on investment in education is measured adequately by
the same yardstick as investment in coal or electricity’. The Report goes on to say that external return was of
‘overriding importance’, but that ‘All that we are contending here is that a solution of the problem of
allocating resources should not be sought on the basis of narrow notions of the nature of the economic return
and of measurements which, if they are comparatively easy to make, omit elements of fundamental value’. In
other words, for Robbins (for this without doubt who is talking) the choice to invest resources in higher
education or another public good could not be informed by existing objective economic science. The value of
these externalities could only be provided rhetorically.
\textsuperscript{193} CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 207.
\textsuperscript{194} See Gareth William’s offhanded acknowledgment of this in Williams, ‘Response’, pp. 214-16.
\textsuperscript{195} CHE, ‘Appendix Four’, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{196} CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 204-05.
educated. For the Report, this meant that confining ‘the conception of the return on educational investment to that which can be measured by earnings differentials is bound to be incomplete and runs the danger of being seriously misleading’, because it omitted ‘elements of fundamental value’. If the Report had made such calculations, it might cause governments and the public to undervalue higher education. The ‘immeasurable’ externalities would still need to be ‘added in’ to an assessment of the rate of returns so that the state might be able to make an informed decision of how to allocate the resources it had available. The Report went as far as to argue that it was ‘inclined to doubt’, that the return on its recommended expansion would fall below the general return on commercial investments even without adding in externalities. This evidence was enough, the Report argued, for Britain to make ‘a more serious estimate of the comparative value of higher education than ever before’. It was the most scientifically objective evidence Robbins was willing to provide, and it was up to democratic society to decide how far it justified any increase in public expenditure. Rather than simple romanticism for the value of liberal higher education, the report from this perspective appears as exercising due caution and restraint in the deployment of economic science.

3.3.3. Private Returns and ‘Student Demand’

The Robbins Report was also far more receptive to the personal returns on human capital investment than acknowledged in the secondary literature. Unlike the Report’s uncontroversial acceptance of the importance of qualified manpower to national prosperity, a wholesale acceptance of the personal returns on investment in human capital was unorthodox. Vaizey in an article in The Times on 12 June 1961 (copies of which were circulated to Robbins Committee members the same

week) argued that returns from the labour market probably reflected more complex social patterns such as class. However, the Report argued that ‘it is comparatively easy to apply commercial measurements of private investments’, citing Bowen’s paper. The Report understood that for students (indeed, parents of students too), obtaining better wages required greater skills, which could be obtained by engaging in an education requiring a real cost of forfeiting of several years of wage-earning employment. Young people would evaluate whether the benefits of attending higher education would outweigh these costs. If the value of skills was considered greater than the costs, young people would demand higher education opportunities. The Report emphasised the private return to the student: ‘We deceive ourselves if we claim that more than a small fraction of students in institutions of higher education would be where they are if there were no significance for their future careers’, and that it was a ‘mistake to suppose that there is anything discreditable’, in this. Students, it argued, had been making return-on-investment calculations frequently prior to 1939 and the widespread availability of student grants.

Defining higher education as something with a proven return on investment to students had an obvious relationship with Robbins’ economic thought (see Chapter Two). Freedom of individuals to reallocate available resources of time and money was a necessary precondition of prosperity and the good society. Importantly Robbins’ treatment of economic man and the Report’s imagined

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206 Ibid. p. 6. This sentiment was stressed in evidence too, see: CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. A’, p. 175. The benefit to the student to their career did not have to be a specific vocation. The Committee explored the relevance of future careers for students entering higher education in their survey of undergraduates. Students who had reported they had an occupation in mind when going to university were asked how far this influenced their decision to apply to university. The appendix found that ‘Their answers suggest that career intentions were often not the sole or even major influence on students’ decisions to apply for a university place or on their choice of course. Even among students with careers in mind when they came to university, a quarter said this had little or no influence on their decision to apply. [...] It is thus clear than many students (and a particularly high proportion of those at Oxford and Cambridge) do not regard their university education as preparation or qualification for a particular career’. CHE, ‘Appendix Two (B)’, pp. 175, 575. Emphasis added. This is an important distinction between preparation for a particular career and preparation for employment and citizenship in liberal society.
economic student included the assessment of both pecuniary returns and wider non-pecuniary benefits. Students, by making a subjective assessment of the return on investment in their human capital, would follow their best interests. In doing so they would raise their productivity, participate in the division of labour, and help to engender the ‘good society’. Section 3.4 proceeds to show how the Report imagined universities would cultivate this human flourishing.

3.4. BREADTH, SKILLS, AND NATIONAL PROSPERITY

3.4.1. A Broad Education, Social Returns, and Individual Benefit

The education provided by higher education institutions was, in the Report’s assessment, not currently actually entirely suited to satisfactorily providing these personal and societal benefits. This has not always been acknowledged by the secondary literature which accuses the Report, as we have seen, as protecting university hegemony and holding an ‘ambiguous’ stance on the importance of vocationalism. This literature has, rightly, recognised that the Report did little to address academic content or pedagogy. It broadly maintained levels of arts, sciences, and social science subjects, three-year degrees, a balance of research and teaching, and academic freedom. Indeed, the Report ignored any possible variability in the return on investment from study of different academic subjects, even technological and scientific studies. It pointedly noted that commentary on specific subjects went outside of its terms of reference. Its primary interventions were to recommend an increase in postgraduate studies, the establishment of two postgraduate schools of management and business studies, and some limited proposals to expand technological studies. From the perspectives of techno-nationalists preoccupied with increasing scientific and

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209 Scott, The Crisis of the University, pp. 71-72; but again, see contrasting later comments in Scott, ‘Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy’, p. 198.
211 Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 879; and Steele, Taylor, and Haynes, British Labour and Higher Education, p. 84.
212 This criticism was made immediately by Halsey in November 1963. Halsey assumed there was an asymmetry between its recommendations for the expansion of broad university education derived from the counsel of ‘wise men’, and the Report’s social scientific deduction of the scale of expansion: ‘Discussing Robbins’, Universities Quarterly, 18 (1964), pp. 158-9. See discussion in Silver, Higher Education and Opinion Making, pp. 183-84.
technological training, this certainly looked like a defence of the status quo and an abdication of responsibility to reform the elitist and disengaged universities.

In fact, the Report was far from neutral about the social returns from all forms of education. It clearly believed that there was greater societal and personal utility from a ‘liberal education’ which could ‘promote the general powers of the mind’. The Report predicated its recommendation of the proportionate increase in university places on the condition that ‘broader’ university courses were implemented. Howson, Craig Calhoun, and Robert Anderson, for example, have overstated the division between the Report’s objective that higher education should prepare students for their part in the ‘division of labour’ and its objective to improve ‘general powers of the mind’ and produce ‘not mere specialists but rather cultivated men and women’. For the Robbins Report, these values were intended to be complementary. It has been recognised that the Report sought to reform ‘liberal education’, for the post-war world. What has not been acknowledged is that this recommendation was clearly influenced by and was part of a response to declinist and technonationalist calls for greater investment in socially responsive and vocational training in science and technology. The ‘powers of the mind’ that liberal education bestowed became useful ‘skills’ for modern society.

3.4.1.1. Liberal Education

The antagonist of the promoters of greater scientific, technological, and vocational training as Chapter Two explored was the ‘liberal education’ most strongly associated with Oxbridge. The Robbins Report has been repeatedly accused of perpetuating this elite education. The conception of a ‘liberal education’ of ‘training the mind’ in the ‘basic disciplines’ (this included most

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214 See Ibid. pp. 41, 75-78, 89-97, and especially 93, 165, 207. See Chapter Two for Robbins stalwart commitment to this position.
characteristically the arts and classics but also the natural sciences and mathematics) was still promoted in evidence to the Robbins Committee by some university vice-chancellors and professors. They associated liberal education with a detachment from mundane concerns and the pursuit of truth in small personable communities covering all faculties of knowledge. Some in evidence to the Committee advocated two forms of higher education emphasising the distinctiveness between academic liberal education and vocational further education, even anticipating something like the binary system.

The Robbins Committee was not attracted to the idea of a detached liberal education. It foresaw students taking on increasingly vocational roles in modern society. But it was also not entirely dismissive of liberal education. This, importantly, was the Report’s argument even while it stressed the importance of ‘academic’ universities in the higher education system at the expense of the ‘vocational’ further education sector. By stressing this and the private benefit of a university education, the Report was redefining the social role of the university and its students.

3.4.1.2. Breadth and Flexibility

The Report argued that university syllabuses should be ‘liberal’. However, it believed that the values of liberal education were under threat from three directions. The first was the protectionist

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218 Vice-chancellor of Leeds, Charles Morris, brother of Phillip Morris, defended the right of universities to pursue ‘academic’ studies for their own sake’, CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. F’, p. 2060; see also Oxford historian Alan Bullock, CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 2’, p. 38; Vice-chancellor of the University of Wales Thomas Parry, Oral evidence given by Dr. T. A. Parry, Dr. R. Charles Evans, Dr. T. Steel, Dr. J. H. Parry, Dr. A. Trever Jones and Dr. Elwyn Davies on behalf of The Principals of Colleges of the University of Wales, 29 March 1962, CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. F’, p. 1764; see also Memorandum submitted by Dr. Thomas Parry, 5 August 1961, CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 2’; and Professor L. C. Sykes, CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. B’, p. 550. As evidence of the overlap between the different species of liberal education, Sykes would later sit on the Academic Planning Board of the University of Warwick; see Chapter Six.


defenders of an elitist liberal education. Secondly because of a related emphasis on the pursuit of academic truth detached from any societal purpose, university students were academically overly specialised. Thirdly, the Report was concerned techno-nationalistic calls for entirely vocational specialisation would actually harm students’ capacity to exercise their specialisation in the best interests of themselves or the good society.

The Report emphasised the importance of ‘training the mind’, which, as Chapter Two explored, included for Robbins an appreciation of the ‘creed of freedom’, skills of literacy, numeracy, versatility, and the capacity to learn. Training powers of the mind inculcated what was called ‘breadth’ and ‘flexibility’, to develop graduates whose skills were applicable to many vocations and who were adept at communicating and learning. Eric Ashby was again influential. Ashby, using typically gendered language, pointed to the Oxford Dictionary definition of liberal education as ‘an education fit for a gentleman’. That, Ashby argued, was still an acceptable definition, but ‘it is the idea of a gentleman which has changed’. It was no longer appropriate to conceptualise the gentleman as a person of the leisured class; the gentleman for the future of Britain was implicated in the business of democratic society, comprehending its direction and purpose. His masculinity was still assumed but by no means unquestioned. More explicitly the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions in evidence denounced the ‘false antithesis between liberal and vocational studies’. They argued:

221 Robbins, *University in the Modern World* p. 121. The word ‘numeracy’ was coined just five years earlier in the Crowther Report: Simmons, ‘The Historical Experience of Liberal Studies for Vocational Learners in Further Education’.


223 The 2015 Oxford Dictionary of English, third edition, does not have an entry for liberal education but defines liberal as ‘[attributive] (of education) concerned with broadening a person’s general knowledge and experience, rather than with technical or professional training’. But it does note the meaning derived from the original sense of liberal as “suitable for a free man”, hence, “suitable for a gentleman” (one not tried to a trade), surviving in *liberal arts*. See ‘liberal’, and ‘liberal arts’, *Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010).


225 On the relationship between the gentlemanly ideal, a general education, and specialisation, see Joyce, *The State of Freedom*, p. 231.
Much of what goes by the name of liberal education is in fact vocational, while much of what is taught for vocational reasons can be approached with that attitude of mind which is usually considered to be characteristic of a liberal education.\(^2\)

Throughout evidence to the Committee, and within the Report itself, it is evident that the label of a ‘liberal education’ was contested, too closely associated with detached ‘academic’ study, and falling out of favour.\(^3\) The Committee explicitly invited witnesses to consider liberal education ‘in relation to professional requirements and the needs of employers’, but while discussion of ‘liberal education’ frequently appears in evidence by witnesses, tellingly the phrase appears only once or twice in the main text of the Report.\(^4\) Liberal education was subject to a transformative rehabilitation. Its values were taken forwards through a concern for ‘breadth’.

The Committee, particularly Robbins, Elvin, and Linstead, followed Ashby’s new broad education.\(^5\) They especially denounced ‘overspecialisation’: the tendency for courses of higher education to concentrate on transmitting increasingly esoteric ‘academic’ knowledge with little to no relevance to wider learning and society. Evidence to the Committee indicated universities were excessively preoccupied with training the next generation of ‘hyperspecialised’ dons, had abandoned their responsibilities to wider society and had, ironically, become illiberal.\(^6\) Overspecialisation at the undergraduate level threatened both universities and schools. There was a place for

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hyperspecialisation, the Report and the Committee did acknowledge, but this lay in postgraduate studies, which it recommended expanding as a portion of student numbers.

The Report particularly argued overspecialisation was detrimental for employment, contrary to the demands of techno-nationalists. There were limited employment opportunities for highly trained and inflexible engineers and scientists, for example. Their specialised knowledge and skills would quickly obsolesce.231 As the Institution of Chemical Engineers summarised, universities should be trying to ‘forge a tool for the future’, and industry should ‘not be impatient if graduates are not produced to its particular and immediate order’; the Federation of British Industries enthusiastically accepted this.232 It was therefore a mistake to expect specifically educated manpower to be produced by the universities. It was the liberally educated ‘man’ with well-developed general powers of the mind who would be of the most use to industry (and by extension, productive society) as far ahead as the twenty-first century.233 It would arm students with the skills to advance in their careers, particularly for managerial roles. In other words, in recommending the expansion of universities the Report was advocating a programme of increasing the output of flexible labour.

3.4.2. Broadening the University

The new liberal education, described in section 3.4.1, could be taught through a much larger range of subjects and institutions that could be considered to provide liberal education. The title of a ‘university’ could now accommodate a wider range of institutions than it currently encompassed including its recommended twenty-six new universities.234 For the Report and many in evidence, institutions should be judged on their capacity to provide students with skills for participation in society, and not on their ability to adhere to any imagined categories of institution types. The Association of University Teachers and the Committee of Principals of Colleges of Advanced

231 See the evidence Advisory Council on Scientific Policy, Alexander Todd, ED116/7, 30 November 1962.
234 See Robbins’ later comments in Robbins, Higher Education Revisited, p. 98.
Technology were keen to divorce the idea of liberal education from any specific subject and particularly to expand its remit to include applied and technological sciences.\textsuperscript{235} The Report was committed to this, and while it has been criticised as being too hesitant, this was most clearly expressed in its second and lesser cited principle to honour ‘equal academic awards for equal performance’, rather than on the ‘adventitious grounds’ of artificial historical and social status of institutions or subjects.\textsuperscript{236} This would erase the ‘present irrational distinctions’ between institutions where the quality of skills provided was identical.\textsuperscript{237} Following this principle, the Report recommended upgrading the CATs to technological universities immediately and other further education institutions gradually by 1980, anticipating the polytechnics.\textsuperscript{238}

The Report also indicated a broader function for institutions under the titles of ‘universities’ in its recommendations for the expansion of scientific and technological studies. The Report was not entirely isolated from techno-nationalist demands for increases in scientific and technological manpower. It accepted UGC predictions that there were in 1963 hesitant but positive signs for the uptake of scientific subjects in schools. To further encourage this, the Report proposed that four existing universities and one new university should be designated Special Institutions for Scientific and Technological Education and Research (SISTERS), aiming to rival MIT and the Technical High Schools.\textsuperscript{239} Reportedly coined by Patrick Linstead, the gendering of these institutions is curious.


\textsuperscript{237} Ibid. p. 266.

\textsuperscript{238} Ibid. pp. 130-32, 54-55. There is no space to interrogate this further, but the Report similarly recommended ‘the deliberate development of other universities in such a way that the relative attraction of Oxford and Cambridge is no longer so great’. Importantly such an intervention was worded in the Report as an elevation of other institutions with ‘specially generous capital grants’, and by minimising income disparities: CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 78-80, 177-78.

\textsuperscript{239} This included Imperial College London, Manchester College of Science and Technology, and The Royal College of Science and Technology at Glasgow, which became Strathclyde in 1964, with one developed from a selected CAT, and the final SISTER would be a brand-new foundation: Simmons, ‘Science and Technology in England and Wales’.
Citizen and consumer of education: the ideal student in the Robbins Committee, 1960-1963

(perhaps an attempt to attract a higher proportion of young women?).\textsuperscript{240} The SISTERs were intended to teach around 4000 students with good staffing ratios, half of their students in technology, a quarter in science, but another quarter in related studies in social studies, operational research, and statistics. Half of all students would be specialised postgraduates. Such a programme would require special funding. However, these ‘innovative’ utopian institutions were never realised.\textsuperscript{241}

While the Committee’s commitment to further education was lesser than its treatment of universities, it did extend its principle of equal awards for \textit{individuals of equal merit} to the sector.\textsuperscript{242} Degrees offered by non-university institutions would be accredited by a national awards body, the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). The CNAA, like the academic planning boards for the new universities, would be staffed by recognised experts to assure the ‘quality’ (a euphemism for ensuring the replication of the desired common liberal culture) of the awards offered. Institutions awarding CNAA qualifications, like the CATs before them which had awarded similarly nationally accredited diplomas, would be able to award a recognised degree of equal merit.\textsuperscript{243} This would, the Report argued, prevent institutions from being frozen by policy to provide specific functions ‘into established hierarchies; on the contrary there should be recognition and encouragement of excellence wherever it exists’.\textsuperscript{244}

The Report had great confidence in the capacity of a university education to expand in size and in their duties to meet the growing and variable needs of society. Institutions also no longer needed to be small; they might be as large as 8000-10,000 students when it came to multifacility

\textsuperscript{240} Carswell, \textit{Government and the Universities}, p. 71. Robbins recalled the Committee initially proposed the moniker TIGERs à la the CATs: Robbins, \textit{University in the Modern World} p. 25. On the masculine gendering of science see below.

\textsuperscript{241} CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 128-29. Robbins expressed his disappointment that while the government agreed to \textit{de facto} special provision for technological universities they were not \textit{de jure} known as ‘special’ institutions. Robbins understood this move as a result of an unwillingness by the state to suggest a designated institution might be superior to research and teaching elsewhere. ‘The good society is not to be founded in green eye’, Robbins scorned: Robbins, \textit{University in the Modern World} pp. 102-03.

\textsuperscript{242} See Anderson, \textit{British Universities Past and Present}, p. 153.

\textsuperscript{243} The CNAA for the Report had a small role and was more like a formalisation of the Academic Planning Boards which had been appointed \textit{ad hoc} for each of the New Universities. On the CNAA see: Silver, \textit{Higher Education and Opinion Making}, p. 195. The CNAA was turned into the national accreditation body for the polytechnics by the DES after 1964.

\textsuperscript{244} CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 9.
institutions, though given that they conformed to the liberal pattern of residence for a target of two thirds of their students and social facilities were provided.\textsuperscript{245} While the Report still maintained the importance of community, particularly residence, it favoured plurality, diversity, and mobility, recognising the importance of broadening the general powers of the mind for a larger proportion of young people.\textsuperscript{246} It was of great importance to national prosperity that as large a proportion the reserves of natural ability should not be trained in specific manpower techniques but with liberal education equipping them for their vocation, for full participation in society, and to allow them to ascertain their best selves.\textsuperscript{247} Section 3.5 explores how the report proposed practically this broad education might be provided to as many young people as possible.

3.5. CHOICE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

3.5.1. Responding to Student Demand

Given the importance that Robbins attached to student choice, unsurprisingly the report made ‘student demand’ the dependent variable upon which its practical plan for the expansion of higher education was based. ‘Student demand’ is prominently embedded in the Robbins Principle itself, that higher education ‘should be available for all those who are qualified by ability and attainment [...] and who wish to do so’.\textsuperscript{248} Shattock rightly identifies that this democratic concern with

\textsuperscript{245} Ibid. pp. 153-54, 94-97, 284. This was a far cry from a time just five years prior when 3000 might be considered a large university and the prevailing view that the broadening influences of a small community was necessary to achieve a genuine liberal education. 3000 students was the minimum viable size required of the new universities by the UGC in 1959. Tony Birks, \textit{Building the New Universities} (Devon: David and Charles, 1972), p. 11; Silver, \textit{Higher Education and Opinion Making}, pp. 127-28. CATs were denied the right to award degrees because of this. See Simmons, ‘Science and Technology in England and Wales’, 8. On the size of institutions appropriate for providing liberal education and Linstead’s preference in 1958 for universities of a maximum of 4,500 students, see Shattock, \textit{Making Policy}, pp. 20, 48; see also Anderson, \textit{British Universities Past and Present}, pp. 133-34.

\textsuperscript{246} Because of this, for example, the report rejected any new types of institutions, such as university colleges, beneath university level, akin to the American liberal arts colleges: CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 147; see Silver, \textit{Higher Education and Opinion Making}, p. 185.

\textsuperscript{247} See, for example, this sentiment in Memorandum submitted by The Church of Scotland Education Committee, 28 November 1961, CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 2’, p. 17; TNA ED117/11, February 1962, National Union of Teachers, ‘Investment for National Survival’.

maximising the returns from national resources of ability was the ‘tacit’ policy of the British
government towards higher education since the end of the Second World War. Indeed the
principle was articulated numerous times throughout evidence to the Committee. This was partly
because student numbers were a convenient and obvious variable to make a calculation, partly
because this was roughly the existing meritocratic policy, and partly because it was morally
attractive. It was also, however, ideological, and formalising the relationship through deductive
statistics (see section 3.1) involved a degree of sophistication above the sort of planning attempted
before.

It has not hitherto been appreciated that the planning exercised by the Robbins Report
differs importantly in its unusual and, in the context of Robbins’ liberalism, significant, stress on the
student’s ‘wish’. The Report advocated the right to choose whether or not to undertake any specific
education. This was different to a social right to any education. Neither did the Report, for
example, base the programme of expansion on the national need for manpower, or in comparison to

\[ \text{(References and footnotes)} \]

\[ ^{249} \text{Shattock, } UGC \text{ and the Management of British Universities, p. 4; Troschitz, Higher Education and the Student, pp. 57-60. Gareth Williams calls it the R. H. ‘Tawney principle’ and locates its origins in his writings from the 1920s: Williams, ‘Some Thoughts on Higher Education, Browne and Coalition Policy’}. \]

\[ ^{250} \text{See evidence in Part 1 from NUS (p. 216), Professor R. S. Nyholm (p. 496), near verbatim in the Scottish Union of Students including a concern for students ‘wishes’ (‘We believe that every individual who is qualified and who wishes to follow a course of higher education should be able to do so’) (p. 877), The Counties of Cities Association (which claimed that it was a ‘very good Scottish Tradition’) (p. 989), The Trades Union Congress (p. 1445), the Scottish Education Department (p. 1832); and in Part 2, The Church of Scotland Education Committee (p. 17); and in the Committee papers, see TNA ED117/10 Committee on Higher Education, November 1961, Rt. Hon. Viscount Hailsham, Q.C; Lord President of the Council and Minister for Science to the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Mordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, 27 September 1961. Labour’s Taylor Report, ‘The Years of Crisis’ on higher education expansion which made similar recommendatons to the Robbins Report and was published in September prior to the report. It made a similar statement and used almost precisely the same phrasing: Labour Party, ‘The Years of Crisis: Report of the Labour Party’s Study Group on Higher Education’ (London: Labour Party, 1963). Due to the pandemic, I was not able to view a copy of the report myself. See Silver, Higher Education and Opinion Making, pp. 179-80; Lord Taylor, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), ‘House of Lords Official Report’, Vol. 253 (London, HMSO), 11 December 1963, p. 1211; and Lowe, Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History, p. 154.} \]

\[ ^{251} \text{Taking into account the consequences of the demographic bulge was, for example, clearly a major consideration. TNA ED116/2, 12th July 1961.} \]

\[ ^{252} \text{This point was made explicitly by Richard Layard later, see Jack Butterworth, 'I. Towards Excellence', Universities Quarterly, 23 (1969), p. 262. Richard Troschitz is the only instance I have found which recognises that ‘freedom of choice’ for students was introduced as an important concept in the Anderson Report and the Robbins Report, but Troschitz does not investigate the changing importance of choice and community in the Report, and sees the Report as fundamentally conservative: Troschitz, Higher Education and the Student: From Welfare State to Neoliberalism, pp. 65-69.} \]
the USA or the USSR, or a fixed proportion of national output.253 This is all the more remarkable as the Report’s programme was published at a time of high confidence in economic ‘planning’ up to as long as twenty years.254 The principle assumed all individuals in the ‘pool of ability’ possessed the equal capacity to judge for themselves whether or not higher education in any chosen discipline was ‘worth’ entering, irrespective of their class or gender. Making the most of this capacity meant using state interventions to remove ‘present irrational distinctions’, such as class or gender barriers.255

The decision to base expansion on student choice did not initially receive unanimous support from the Committee. This section explores how the Committee discussed two possible methodologies: a calculation of the student desire (‘wish’) to obtain a higher education (how many qualified young people might want or demand higher education and should be provided for); secondly, a calculation of the manpower needs of society (how many qualified graduates of any specific type Britain ought to have).256 The first method, estimating student’s desire for higher education, was based on predicted and expected behaviours of young people. This approach was for the Report ‘the sounder basis for estimates’.257 This methodological choice was not value-neutral but an ideological decision. Only a calculation of student demand could account for student’s subjective assessments. Any other methodology was liable to distribute resources inefficiently. This ideology was curtailed by a number of practical restraints and an evaluation of the benefits that interventionist policies might make to the realisation of future freedoms.

3.5.1.1. Student Demand Calculations

To explain the significance of this liberal ideology, the two rival methodologies need to be explained. Firstly, ‘student demand’, while it aimed to support subjective freedoms, did not use the price
mechanism. Instead it attempted to an estimation of student demand based on available data in order to expand freedom of choice.258 This choice was also not expanded to all young people; meritocratic selection was retained.259

To begin calculating ‘student demand’, the Report used demographic data to calculate the size of the population of children leaving school for the years 1962-80. Then, extrapolating from data from GCE attainment records, the Report estimated the growing proportion of this school-leaving population likely to obtain the necessary minimum qualifications required for entry to higher education.260 The expansion of choice was limited to those who ‘qualified’. These restrictions were seen as necessary to preserve existing ‘quality’ of liberal education provided and efficiency of higher education institutions based on available educational resources.261 The Report then estimated the number of these qualified school leavers who might choose to apply.262 Following Robbins’ intense wariness of assessments of subjective wants, the Report was extremely cautious, citing unknowable variables determining a student’s wish such as: changing attitudes to higher education whether positive or negative, whether or not the ‘relative rewards for the skills resulting from higher education might fall perceptibly’, or whether the demand for graduates might rise.263 In making its assumption, the Report assumed that the existing generous policy of student finance would be maintained and the relative attraction to students would remain constant.264 The Report concluded, with reference to consultation with the Education Departments rather than recourse to statistical data, that it was ‘reasonable to assume that, by 1980/1, the application rate will be 10 per cent

258 This aligns with Ben Jackson’s characterisation of neoliberal anti-paternalism: see Jackson, ‘Richard Titmuss Versus the IEA’.
260 CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 51; CHE, ‘Appendix One’, p. 247. The minimum entry requirements were 4 or more O levels GCEs, but in practice over 60% of the entrants had A level qualifications. CHE, ‘Appendix One’, p. 12. This variable actually consisted of two variables – the existing attainment, and extrapolating from data from 1954-1961, the report estimated an average annual growth rate of around 0.37 percent of the age group achieving the attainment required to become qualified school leavers. Layard, King, and Moser, The Impact of Robbins.
261 See Robbins’ comments in Robbins, Higher Education Revisited, p. 25; and footnote 265 below.
higher’ than 1963. This figure was, it admitted, ‘to some extent a matter of conjecture’. Compiling all these variables gave the Committee their figures for student demand.

3.5.1.2. Objections to Manpower Planning

The second method the Committee discussed was calculating national ‘needs’. The pressure from figures such as C. P. Snow and other techno-nationalists to set targets for the output of scientific manpower capacity through state intervention was intense. Such ‘Manpower quotas’ were frequently used by government. Manpower quotas were calculated generally by collating the opinions and predictions of employers to indicate the need for particular categories of labour a given number of years in advance, particularly for numbers of scientists and technologists. A roughly analogous calculation was assumed to be the system used by the USSR. There was no precedent for the Robbins Committee to have decided against manpower planning.

The balance of the Committee, even university core allies such as Elvin, seems to have initially been ‘impatient to bring about expansion [...] in terms of manpower needs’, but this concern

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265 CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 63, 69, 265. This is a simplification due to constraints of space. There were a few further considerations. Firstly, the report accounted for the average length of a degree course of three years which of course necessarily influenced the number of places needed in any given year. Secondly, the Report was even more restrictive than just limiting choice to qualified individuals, as it took into consideration the number of applications it was practical for the institutions of higher education to admit, a variable referred to as the ‘competitiveness’ of entry to higher education. Due to the pressures of increasing demand on higher education particularly to universities, competitiveness had been rising since the 1930s and 1950s. The Report recognised this was undesirable and a barrier to achieving the ‘Robbins Principle’ and maximising the returns of higher education to society. However, the Report did not believe that institutions would be able to practically expand immediately to accommodate all qualified school leavers who desired entry to higher education. The policy objectives of higher education needed to be balanced with the freedom of the state and institutions to deploy their educational resources in any given year and maintain the standard of education provided. This included accommodation and staff numbers and quality. The Report did admit it would have preferred to recommend a rate of expansion where the competitiveness of entry into higher education would decrease. It recognised however that this would put a heavy strain on resources and standards. Instead, the Robbins programme of expansion intended to maintain the level of competition (pp. 59-61, 65, 159-60). As mentioned, the Report assumed that the proportion of overseas students in higher education in 1961/2 would be maintained at ten percent, which were added to these totals. Again this was a more or less arbitrary estimation made ‘in line with the suggestions made to us by the Foreign Office, the Department of Technical Co-operation, the British Council and the Education Departments’, as any estimation would be even more than a calculation of national demand a ‘more than usually hazardous process’ (pp. 66-7).


267 See Robbins, Higher Education Revisited, p. 27.

268 Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, pp. 89-90.
was almost completely overridden by Robbins. Both Moser and Layard agreed that the Report’s dismissal of an approach based on estimations of national manpower needs reflected Robbins’ personal rejection; Robbins ‘had no time for manpower forecasts’. His caustic doubt is apparent in the records of the Committee as early as October 1961. Committee minutes early in the Committee’s deliberations in late June and early July 1961 stressed the importance of student demand. Manpower estimations were by contrast, in Moser’s words in 1961, probably entirely ‘meaningless’, for imprecise categories such as ‘technicians’, and witnesses to the Committee made similar criticisms. They had some surprising allies: techno-nationalists often criticised manpower planning as underestimating the need for technologists as they derived from employers who apparently had little appreciation of their own needs. For example, the evidence from the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy who published manpower plans from its Committee on Scientific Man-Power is especially revealing. Under attack from Robbins and Moser, the Chief Scientific Advisor to the government, Solly Zuckerman, admitted he was ‘not prepared to die in the ditch’ for the Manpower Committee’s estimations but he did defend them on the grounds they were the best figures available. More damning was the Committee’s visit to the USSR and a

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271 ‘I know of no period in economic history where extrapolation based on what industry had to say had any probability of being right’, Robbins is recorded as saying: CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. A’, p. 281.
274 Ortolano, *The Two Cultures Controversy*, pp. 174-75.
276 Robbins was concerned by the Manpower Committee’s inability to ‘test backwards’ and use historical data to predict hypothetical historical demand for any given year and to check this against known manpower numbers, or to take into account the rates of pay of scientists; Moser was concerned with the lack of margins of error. The criticism of techno-nationalists was more on the basis that reported needs for manpower by industrialists did not fully appreciate their own need for technologists. CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. B’, p. 430; see also Blaug and Gannicott, ‘Manpower Forecasting since Robbins’, pp. 56-57.
conversation with the Soviet Minister of Higher and Special Secondary Education recalled by Robbins and Drever. The minister admitted that even Soviet manpower planning was increasingly flexible after five years to account for technological and economic developments.\textsuperscript{277}

From the proceedings of the Committee and secretariat it is evident that manpower planning was never considered as a serious alternative to a student demand calculation. By May 1962 a student demand approach had clearly been settled on, even if manpower calculations still held appeal as late as February 1963.\textsuperscript{278} Manpower planning was dismissed by the Robbins Report in just two pages as ‘impracticable’ and inaccurate.\textsuperscript{279} Manpower calculations involved knowledge of ‘the inter-relationships of the different variables’ of a ‘degree of complexity that so far has defied practical solution’.\textsuperscript{280} Firstly, these estimations were susceptible to unforeseeable changes in business practices due to new technologies over more than a few years. Secondly, the qualification received by a graduate had little bearing on the job graduates would take.\textsuperscript{281} Thirdly, the rates of pay, or, the price of graduate labour in the labour market, could not be accurately calculated.\textsuperscript{282} There were simply too many variables for mechanically objective calculations to be made, especially

\textsuperscript{277} James Drever, 'The University and Manpower Needs', in The European University 1975-1985, The Standing Conference of Rectors and Vice-Chancellors of the European Universities (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1975), pp. 39-40; Robbins also recalled asking a Russian minister what would happen if a manpower quota was filled but a candidate still wanted to apply, and was told that the minister had at least once ignored the quota to admit a student: Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 1075


\textsuperscript{279} CHE, 'Higher Education Report', p. 48.

\textsuperscript{280} Ibid. pp. 71-73.

\textsuperscript{281} As the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy admitted, a scientific and broad university education was as ‘good an education for a managerial job in, say, transport and communications or insurance, banking and finance as is, let us say, history’: CHE, 'Evidence, Part 1 Vol. B', p. 447.

\textsuperscript{282} Because the supply of graduates of a certain type entering the labour market would influence the price of graduate labour (for example, falling with decreased scarcity of labour) this would in turn influence industry demand in unpredictable ways: CHE, 'Higher Education Report', pp. 71-73.
for the kind of twenty-year planning the Report was attempting.\textsuperscript{283} A student demand calculation by contrast as we have seen only required two primary and simpler calculations: a survey of the ‘nation’s resources of ability’, of its young people from 1963 to 1980 and their degree of attainment, and then, secondly, ‘assumptions about the standards of attainment appropriate for future entrants’ to higher education.\textsuperscript{284}

3.5.2. Prosperity, Freedom, and the Rejection of Manpower Planning

These matter-of-fact justifications, however, disguise some of the reasoning for why a student demand calculation was preferable and justifiable.\textsuperscript{285} In 1964 Moser and Layard argued this was a consequence of a lack of data.\textsuperscript{286} But Moser later admitted that the Committee gave little weight to manpower planning at least in part because ‘ideologically, the Committee wanted to base its plans on student demand’.\textsuperscript{287} This in a meaningful way referred to the desire to provide places in higher education as a social right and moral good. It also, however, was supported by the liberal theory of economic growth that the Robbins Report subscribed to. This required students to be empowered to take spontaneous decisions about whether to attend higher education based on the private returns they would receive. Manpower planning did not take into account this subjective assessment. It would suppress initiative and opportunity to a degree that a calculation of student demand supposedly did not.

The importance of responding to student demand for enabling choice was stressed in the evidence of economists to the Robbins Committee. Peacock and Wiseman equated student choice with consumer choice. They argued:

\textsuperscript{284} CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 49; see also Robbins’ narrative in Robbins, University in the Modern World pp. 20-21.
\textsuperscript{285} O’Brien briefly hinted that it was ‘not insignificant that […] the Robbins Report, believed that manpower planning was only possible within a few limited categories of labour’: O’Brien, Lionel Robbins, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{287} Moser, ‘The Robbins Report 25 Years after—and the Future of the Universities’, p. 11.
Individual consumers, when confronted with the relevant issues, are good judges of their own welfare in the broadest sense and will be concerned with that of future generations. [...] [we] are sceptical of a view of higher education which takes it as axiomatic that consumers are not fit to choose for themselves.\textsuperscript{288}

Similarly attacking centralised, wasteful determination of ‘adequate’ numbers in higher education, Carter and Williams called for a higher education system where ‘in the long run places in higher education should be available to those who wish to occupy them’ (anticipating the Robbins Principle). They described such a policy as an ‘open door’ policy which recaptured ‘some of the virtues of the free market in education’.\textsuperscript{289} As Robbins later put it, ‘the idea of spontaneous choice and movement is quite foreign to the fundamental principle underlying this practice [of manpower planning]’, which implied a total direction of labour by the state. As he explained:

\begin{quote}
The difference in this respect between free societies and Communism is [...] that, in the one, dispersed initiatives have some opportunity of circumnavigating undesirable obstacles while, in the other, because of the nature of totally centralised control, it is less likely.\textsuperscript{290}
\end{quote}

With this initiative repressed, the personal benefit derived from higher education would be limited, resources of ability wasted, and prosperity diminished. These concerns were, as Chapter Two explored, clearly linked to the Socialist Calculation Debates seminal for the formation of Robbins’ political economy. Adequate data about the world could never be assembled by the state to ensure that all satisfactions of its citizens were adequately met. A method of centralised determination of the ‘need’ of higher education places of certain types for liberals was inefficient \textit{because} it repressed freedoms of the individual.\textsuperscript{291}

\textsuperscript{288} CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 2’, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{291} This connection was gestured to by Denis O’Brien but not developed: O’Brien, \textit{Lionel Robbins}, p. 74.
3.5.3. The Supply of Teachers and Technologists (and Doctors)

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Table 2. Data from Table 44, CHE, 'Higher Education Report', p. 160

Figure 7. Data from Tables 47 and 53, CHE, 'Appendix One', pp. 164, 153.
There was an exception to the Report’s veto of manpower planning, however. Manpower planning was used to help determine the pattern of higher education. But the decision to incorporate this manpower planning into the recommendations of the Robbins Report was enabled on the basis that manpower planning was acceptable when the calculation required minimal information about market conditions. In such circumstances, calculations could rest instead on democratically agreed and state-assured policy. These interventions were accepted by the Report on an assessment of the balance of future freedoms.

The Committee did not decide until the middle of 1962 how the demand for higher education might be apportioned between the three primary sectors (Table 2). Both the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Ministry of Education advocated using manpower planning to decide. In May 1961 the Committee had already decided it would not be sensible to project demand for arts graduates. But by July 1961 it was agreed it would be possible to estimate the demand for teachers. As Moser and Layard accepted in 1962, ‘Projections are necessary in order to avoid serious shortages or surpluses of doctors, teachers, scientists, etc’. The Report believed that manpower planning was the ‘least troublesome’ (most ‘objective’) where graduate demand was based on ‘the result of particular policies’. This allowed the Report to use demographic data to calculate the number of trained teachers required to provide universal primary and secondary...
schooling at the student-staff ratio desired by the Ministry of Education. From these concrete figures, the number of students who were required by the state to attend places in teacher training colleges every year could be calculated. It is possible that this was justified on the grounds that providing teacher training with such an allocation was necessary so the educational system and higher education system as a whole would be able to sustain its own expansion and standards. This balanced the restrictions on young people to freely choose where to attend higher education with the freedoms of young people born after them. A similar calculation and judgment was accepted to determine the level of medical education.

No parallel concession was made to demands from the techno-nationalist lobby to stipulate a greater output of scientific and technological manpower. The Report made one lazy note of deference unsupported by any substantive recommendation when it ‘half-recommended, half predicted’ that the proportion of students in scientific and especially technical subjects would rise from 45 percent in 1962 to 56 percent by 1980/81. This did not come to pass and, as Carswell retrospectively identified, would have required a completely unfeasible swing in the number of women pursuing gendered male science subjects. The Committee was clearly unwilling to direct

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299 The Report, following this methodology, recommended the rapid expansion of teacher training places until 1974 when demand for teachers would fall, and provide ‘margins for reforms’ in policy: Ibid. pp. 156-57.
300 See ibid. p. 63.
301 Medical education was not excluded from the Robbins Committee’s terms of reference, but as Carswell has explained, the Committee was established without a representative of medical education because the Treasury’s Willink Report (1957) had recommended no expansion of medical manpower was necessary. The Treasury in association with the Health Departments in 1962 seperately recommended an increase of 10 percent in medical student numbers and the Robbins Report took on this limited assumption. A separate Royal Commission under Lord Todd later revised these recommendations significantly and advocated a much greater expansion: Carswell, Government and the Universities, pp. 47-48.
302 See Tables 45 and 46, CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 163-64, 66. This growth was at the expense of medical subjects, following the trend towards maths or science subjects in A-levels from 1952-1959. See the discussion in Scott, The Crisis of the University, p. 127; and Mandler, ‘Educating the Nation: IV. Subject Choice’, pp. 7-8.
303 Carswell calculated that this rise in scientific subjects would have required trebling in five years the number of women taking science subjects, from 12,000 to 30,000 and then increasing eightfold to 99,000 in less than twenty years: Carswell, Government and the Universities, pp. 43-45. Carswell himself here is likely reflecting this lingering masculinisation of science. See Ortolano, The Two Cultures Controversy, pp. 46-47; Edgerton, Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970 pp. 46-47.
student choice except towards the broad skills provided by university education, which took up the majority of higher education places.\footnote{In fact, the number of higher education places apportioned to the universities was also constrained by the practical availability of university resources (again, quantitatively calculated, using normative value judgements to establish relationships between, for example, the possible and desirable rate of growth of institutions and their optimum size balanced with competing demands for available resources). The Committee’s policy of not allowing the standards of entry to universities to rise any higher than in 1962 meant expanding universities at the expense of technical colleges. The further education colleges were provided with a sustained level portion of higher education places. But this was, ironically, probably a larger proportion of higher education that the Robbins Committee would have recommended if it had been possible for universities to have expanded more rapidly whilst maintaining their quality. Using student-staff ratios, the report additionally calculated what proportion of graduates would be required to maintain the current level of teaching staff in higher education, to pacify fears that the expansion of higher education would use too great a proportion of the best graduates and that standards would necessarily suffer, which Robbins called ‘Layard’s Law’: CHE, ‘Appendix Two (B)’, pp. 349-50; CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 59-61, 65, 158-60; Robbins, \textit{University in the Modern World} p. 45.}

3.5.4. Grants and Loans

With the numbers of higher education places calculated, the Report moved to consider how public finance might fund this expansion. Its discussion was shaped by a fierce debate over the role of state interventions into free society. While the Robbins Report recommended the continuation of the Anderson Report’s system of grants (which had only begun in 1962), it also recommended that a loans system should be introduced in the future. That the Robbins Report would include a statement diametrically opposed to its recommendations is evidence of how important it clearly believed a loans system was.

In one sense the debate whether to provide loans or grants was an argument in terms of social justice, welfare, and morality. It is also clear there were elements of the argument that were concerned with inculcating in the public an appreciation of the private and societal value of higher education. The Report believed that state intervention was required to free the public from societal and even psychosocial barriers that prevented their exercising of subjective choices and performing consumer behaviours.\footnote{Moser, ‘The Report’, p. 26.} These were balanced against concerns for minimising public expenditure derived from taxpayer money. Here, an easy designation of the Report’s recommendations as social democratic or neoliberal is especially hazardous.
Citizen and consumer of education: the ideal student in the Robbins Committee, 1960-1963

If young people were to be the primary beneficiaries from higher education as the Report argued, the question of how far the student should be under obligation to bear the burden for the costs of the advantages they were receiving was pertinent. Economists in evidence to the Committee were rarely sympathetic to grants. Lees lamented that the Anderson Committee dismissed loans in a single paragraph and even in the economic literature loans had ‘not been rejected but simply not been discussed’.\(^{306}\) Bowen, Carter and Williams, Wiseman and Peacock, and his fellow IEA economist A. R. Prest, and the Treasury, all favourably discussed the idea of loan repayments with various means-tested and repayment schemes.\(^{307}\) As the Report summarised, this was primarily on the grounds that ‘the recipient of the subsidy is being put in a position to command a higher income in virtue of taxes paid, in part at least, by those whose incomes are smaller’.\(^{308}\) As Lees protested more vigorously, grants were economically unsound and ‘socially unjust, in that it redistributes income from the poor and the stupid in favour of the rich and the intelligent’.\(^{309}\) The Treasury, with a cautious eye on expenditure, provided evidence that no other Western European country provided the same degree of public financing of students as Britain.\(^{310}\)

The Committee was still deliberating the questions of loans in early 1963. Interestingly two memoranda of evidence, from Peacock and Wiseman and Prest, are dated from the summer of

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\(^{308}\) CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 211.


1962, later than most other evidence, suggesting that they were sought by the Committee to inform their debate. Shearman explicitly registered that he was worried that a means-tested loan system might inhibit poorer students. Gardner was suspicious of the impact of loans on middle-class girls whose parents were not prepared to support them. Robbins however defended proposals for loans on the grounds that there had been a misunderstanding of the operation of a well-designed means-test and loans system. In such a scheme, poor children would not pay any loan charges. Robbins recalled that many of the Committee were ‘greatly impressed’ by arguments for loans and as Chapter Two explored Robbins later became a strong advocate for Prest’s student loan scheme. Robbins also recalled that the Committee never came to a final decision on loans. From this perspective the Report’s support for grants looks like a default to the only recently established system of grants of the Anderson Report, rather than an agreed policy recommendation.

The Report concluded that it was not yet appropriate to implement a programme of loans. It was firstly especially concerned that a loans system, which would increase risk and depreciate the subjective value of higher education, would disproportionately act as a disincentive to less well-informed members of the community. It particularly worried about girls and parents with little experience of higher education. The case against loans was acute at a time when drastic expansion was required in higher education and when there was a high demand for teachers. Secondly, the Report acknowledged that the earning power of higher education could be overstated and was inequivalent between degrees. In many cases it would be unjust to force repayment of a

314 LSE ROBBINS/8/2/3, Lord Robbins, ‘Recent Discussion of the Problems of Higher Education in Great Britain’, Pollak Lecture, 18 March 1964 at GSPA.
316 Ibid. p. 212.
317 TNA ED116/7, 13 January 1963.
qualification which did not provide significant remunerative benefit when the unquantifiable social advantages outweighed any sense of individual commercial return. Loans might ‘lead to a social loss out-balancing any gain in apparent justice’. In one of its most social-democratic looking judgements the Report valued the establishment of equality of opportunity subsidised by the entire community through interventionist taxation as outweighing any distributive justice. Robbins later recalled that he had at the time assumed that existing student grants arrangement would remain in place until the 1980s.

But this outcome on the loans issue risks obscuring the considerable support that loans attracted in the Committee’s deliberations. The Report acknowledged that the arguments for and against were ‘very evenly balanced’ and that the arguments for loans had ‘strong appeal’. The Report accepted the economists’ objection on redistribution and argued that grants would create a new and undesirable ‘position of privilege’. There was also concern about the efficiency of a grants system which lacked the incentives of repayment. Following Peacock and Wiseman Linstead argued that ‘a great many students have no conception of their responsibilities’, and the wider social returns their output was expected to generate. They warned that without this understanding there were fewer incentives on the student to endeavour to work and that students would be liable to take the subsidy ‘for granted’. Loans, according to the Report’s logic, by making clear the scale of financial investment in students, would incentivise students to work to increase their productivity, and maximise their personal and consequently social returns.

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321 Ibid. p. 211.
323 The Committee also considered that if the government implemented a rise in university fees (which were in 1962 far from representative of the true economic cost of student’s place in higher education) this would further communicate the scale of the investment, even through grants. This might produce similarly incentivising outcomes. The Report recommended increasing fees to a level where they rose from providing 11 percent of institutional expenditure to 20 percent. Issues of fees will be briefly examined in Chapter Four; CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 213.
The Report therefore recommended that a loans system should be introduced once grants had satisfactorily engendered the habit of consumerist behaviours and attendance in higher education. This argument was phrased nearly identically to some of Robbins’ own writings on liberal politics prior to his chairmanship of the Committee.\(^{324}\) The Committee received frequent evidence that the working classes especially did not know or expect they could take advantage of higher education opportunities.\(^{325}\) As time progressed grants as a tax-funded state interventionist subsidy to students (assisted by increased communication between higher education, young people, and schools) would combat this lack of knowledge and the detrimental exclusivity of universities.\(^{326}\) It was effectively arguing that grants were a necessary measure to help teach students and parents to properly value higher education, both in terms of private returns and wider societal benefits. They would be helped to make ‘good’ choices. The Report aimed to inculcate an aspirational and consumerist rationality in the population. Married women in particular had an important role to play. As has been cited widely but not interrogated, the Report considered a student loan for women (who increasingly married early) a ‘negative dowry’ that the working husband would have to be prepared to take on.\(^{327}\) The Report’s surveys found that the best predictor of the likelihood that a child would attend higher education was the educational history of a child’s parents. Mothers therefore had a role in inculcating economic agency in the population.\(^{328}\) Losing these women and their children would undermine the entire expansionist programme and diminish the capacity of Britain as a free society to make the best use of its reserves of ability.

\(^{324}\) Robbins made precisely the same argument as this applied to the entire welfare state. As Chapter Two stressed, see the much overlooked but extremely important: Robbins, ‘Freedom and Order’, p. 152.


\(^{326}\) Robbins, University in the Modern World p. 30.


As this consumerist citizen student became more dispersed in the population, attendance in higher education would become more habitual. An interventionist grants programme would justify itself by providing this freedom in the medium term and in the long term render itself obsolete. Robbins, just eight years after the publication of the Report, was arguing that it was now appropriate to introduce a loans scheme. In 1974 he recommended the Prest scheme to future Secretary of State for Education and Science Keith Joseph. Despite the short-term support of Robbins for the grant system, its underlying rationale and longer-term vision was very different.

3.6. CONCLUSIONS

For Robbins, if students could be free to make judgments to invest in developing their natural ability this would maximise the returns for society. This made a calculation based on student demand the only acceptable recommendation the Robbins’ Committee could make. It was efficient and morally right to expand higher education opportunities as fast as the available higher education resources could permit. It is difficult to unequivocally call this either simply social democratic or neoliberal. It is equally difficult to dismiss it as complacent.

It would of course be unhelpful to say that the Robbins Report advocated a market-based system of higher education. There is, for example, no hint in the Report of a system of higher education providers in competition with each other. It was unthinkable that institutions should be allowed to fail. Funding per student was protected and intended to remain constant as higher education expanded to preserve the quality of liberal education. It was highly interventionist.

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329 For the importance of the family to Robbins, see Robbins, *Theory of Economic Development* p. 73; and Robbins, ‘Equality as an Objective’; and how it might be mitigation of inequality due to family situations, see Robbins, ‘Freedom and Order’, p. 151.

330 LSE ROBBINS/8/1/3, Lionel Robbins, ‘Reflections on eight years of expansion in higher education’, *Financial Times*, 21 August 1971. Robbins sent Joseph a note on 19 November 1974 to draw his attention ‘to the proposals of Professor Prest of this institution regarding the possibility of financing university attendance by way of a modified form of loan rather than outright grants which I think deserve a good deal more attention that it has at present received’. This may have influenced some of the views Joseph put ‘in an article [he had] written for the Times Higher Educational Supplement’: ROBBINS/8/2/1, Lord Robbins to Keith Joseph, 19 November 1974; Keith Joseph to Lionel Robbins, 8 November 1974.

What the Report did achieve, however, was to make choosing to attend higher education foundational to the architecture of the system. The skills that students obtained from study were primarily for their own benefit. Through a higher education that involved induction (through their broad education) into the ‘common culture’ of the West and the ‘creed of freedom’, students would be ordained as consumer citizens. By pursuing their self-interest, society would prosper. Relying on its citizens’ subjectivity and initiative would eliminate the need for any wasteful and potentially dangerous manpower planning or other interventions. Instead, state interventions had a vital role to play in securing and perpetuating these freedoms. On balance, these freedoms were valuable enough to sacrifice freedoms in the present to achieve greater freedoms in the future. The expansion of this economic rationality to the rest of the British population through schools and families, and to the rest of the world through overseas students returning home, would reinforce the good society. This then, is what the Robbins meant when he argued that his economic science could not capture the true value of higher education and that ‘the good society desires equality of opportunity for its citizens to become not merely good producers but also good men and women’.

This vision of the good society was, however, not attractive to many in the Ministry of Education or LEAs, as Chapter Four will explore. The Report made no pedagogic interventions requiring universities to teach broadly. Government and LEAs were much less optimistic of the autonomous and dangerously unaccountable universities’ capacity to respond to national needs. The Report’s emphasis on ‘breadth’ was, to these critics, further evidence that elitist universities still failed to fully appreciate the importance of science and technology to national prosperity. Institutions under the more direct control of the state could be far more responsive to these needs and were a better national investment. The importance of the capacity of the university to imbue ‘goodness’ in the future citizens of the West through the cultivation of their character and their

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understanding of ‘common culture’ became a key element of the defence of the value of universities to society in the years following the Report’s publication.
4. THE CVCP, THE BINARY POLICY, AND REFORMING LIBERAL EDUCATION

4.1. DINING CLUB OR DYNAMO?

Not eighteen months after the publication of the Robbins Report it was clear the British government had ignored most of the report’s recommendations in favour of a different idea of higher education.¹ Robbins’ proposed ‘unitary system’, which envisaged most higher education under a separate ministry and within the expanded auspices of university institutions, was rejected. A new Department of Education and Science (DES) took on responsibility for all higher education and schools. After the election of the new Labour Government under Harold Wilson in October 1964, Secretary of State for Education and Science Anthony Crosland implemented a ‘binary system’ of higher education, dividing higher education into the autonomous universities and the ‘public’ further education sector. The DES was concerned that the liberal education provided by the unaccountable universities was elitist, classist, expensive, ill-suited to make use of the precious reserves of natural ability particularly in the working classes, and unable to meet the scientific and technological manpower needs of the nation.² Crosland favoured expansion of the further education sector and new public institutions of university standard, the polytechnics.³ These institutions were promoted as specialising in the provision of vocational education and training in skills for work. Through their proximity to centralised government control, the polytechnics would be more responsive to

² Nuttall, Psychological Socialism p. 91; Anthony Crosland and Nick Hillman, ‘Woolwich Polytechnic Speech’ (Higher Education Policy Institute, 15 August 2016 [27 April 1965]).
³ Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, p. 155; Salter and Tapper, somewhat unhelpfully, call this the ‘economic ideology of higher education’ which was inherently oppositional to the liberal university ideal. One of the primary arguments of this thesis is that there was an equally strong ‘economic’ dimension to advocates of the liberal education. Salter and Tapper, The State and Higher Education, pp. 81, 118.
democracy and the needs of society. It was no longer justifiable for the universities to educate a large proportion of young people in a manner with no or limited appreciable benefit to wider society, and the DES threatened to divert public funding away from the universities and to its own institutions.

This chapter explores the interventions of one protagonist in the debate over how to best educate reserves of ability: the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP), the national association of university chief administrators and the primary body claiming to represent and facilitate the collective work of the universities. Under pressure from techno-nationalist preoccupations and the DES, the CVCP found its members’ grants were barely sufficient to achieve agreed university growth targets and DES policy appeared to favour other institutions. Threatened by this new policy direction and to protest this new regime, one commentator described how the CVCP in the 1960s (‘that august body’) was forced to transform ‘virtually overnight from a dining-club into a dynamo’. The impression from current accounts of its history, however, is that the CVCP seems to have taken on this lobbying role on behalf of the universities extremely slowly and reluctantly. Its detractors have, ever since, given no indication that any transformation ever took place at all. This characterisation of the CVCP is typical of narratives which presented academics and vice-chancellors at best benign, at worst complacent, reactionary, elitist, defensive, and unwilling to recognise the importance of the impending technological revolution. In this narrative, the CVCP was completely overwhelmed by the flood of new national demands made on higher education.

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4 Shattock, Making Policy, p. 232.
5 Ibid. p. 122.
6 Not uncoincidentally, ‘dynamo’ of course comes from the semantic field of technology, but perhaps not unironically, dynamos had long since been obsolete. MRC MSS.399/3/CON/3, J. T. Boulton, ‘The next steps’, in University of Nottingham, ‘Report of Conference on University Co-ordination’ (September 1967). See also Charles Wilson’s comments in MRC MSS.399/4/1/1, CVCP, ‘Deputation Received by the Secretary of State for Education and Science’, 24 February 1967, p. 7.
8 See, for example, Blaxland, Swansea University, pp. 191, 51; Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, pp. 169-70.
Members of the CVCP did indeed defend a system of autonomous (sometimes elite) universities exercising ‘academic freedom’ to continue providing a liberal education. The CVCP strongly objected to what they saw as the arbitrary and centralised government exercised by the DES.\(^9\) It argued that it should be the unassailable right of universities rather than the state to decide whether and how to respond to student demand. Universities were in fact, the CVCP argued, already able to meet ‘national demand’ without the need for radical reform of the system.\(^10\) In many prominent ways, this entailed a defence of the status quo. Some academics, including from inside the University Grants Committee (UGC), seeking to preserve the traditional elite functions of small and detached universities even supported the binary system.\(^11\) This made for some strange bedfellows: the binary system found support from opponents of university expansion, whilst being the policy of a Labour government and the DES with egalitarian aspirations. This has led to the assumption that the universities welcomed the binary system as it allowed them to preserve the academic functions of the insular liberal university.\(^12\)

However, the CVCP and its members were not solely protectionist defenders of a static liberal education. Close interrogation of the archival records and publications of the Committee reveal some diversity and a hitherto obscured third way for higher education articulated at the CVCP. Within the membership of the CVCP was a reformist vanguard of vice-chancellors who might have laid claim to being described as ‘dynamos’ and who pursued reform of universities. A. H. Halsey identified some of these reformists as what he called the ‘enlightened and judicious elements in university senior common rooms’ but which he clearly thought of as peripheral opinion within his

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\(^9\) Margret Thatcher, Secretary of State in 1971, later characterised the Department’s ethos as ‘self righteously socialist’: quoted in Shattock, *Making Policy*, p. 94; see also Shattock, ‘Private to Public Governance’, pp. 189-91. On the suddenness of this change from the system of governance the universities had been used to under the Treasury see Kogan, *Educational Policy-Making: A Study of Interest Groups and Parliament*, pp. 166-67.

\(^10\) These arguments were, as we have seen from Chapter Two, were often circular, arguing that because universities themselves were the conscience of society they alone were capable of assessing the contribution they might make to society.


broader characterisation of universities as undermined by reactionary Oxbridge norms.\(^{13}\) As this chapter shows however, these reformists were an influential faction of the CVCP. They navigated techno-nationalist pressures and allayed their colleagues’ suspicions by reframing and reimagining liberal academic values. This uncovers some of the societal and ideological forces that moved the universities from the ‘liberal university’ to the ‘modern university’.\(^{14}\) Elements of the CVCP were more than capable of reimagining the role of the university in society.

The reformers promoted a role of the universities in providing ‘breadth’: to develop the ‘characters’, general powers of the mind, and individual ingenuity of young people as part of their skills to participate in modern technological society.\(^{15}\) Other non-university institutions could not provide this breadth adequately. As a result, this reformist vanguard opposed a strict interpretation of the binary system.\(^{16}\) These ideas were derived in significant ways from the same optimism that informed the Robbins Report and hope of the possibility of reform of the liberal university that Chapters Two and Three described.\(^{17}\) In its more reformist moments this enthusiasm was shared by the CVCP, but these moments have often been obscured in current histories, as section 4.2 of this chapter demonstrates.\(^{18}\) Sections 4.3 and 4.4 show how the CVCP underwent a series of structural reorganisations in an attempt to promote and defend the capabilities of the broad university, particularly in 1966, 1968, and 1972. Sections 4.5 and 4.6 then show how it began to argue more


\(^{14}\) On the narrative of this development see Scott, *The Crisis of the University*.


\(^{16}\) The Report conceived of a spectrum of educational institutions, with no sharp divide between the vocational and academic institutions. See for example, Steele, Taylor, and Haynes, *British Labour and Higher Education*, p. 82. See Brennan and Silver, *A Liberal Vocationalism*. especially pp. 84-87, 234.


explicitly using a variety of strategies to maintain the autonomy of universities and champion the importance of the broad education.

4.2. REFORMISTS IN THE CVCP

4.2.1. Characterising the Committee

As we have seen in this thesis so far, the historical literature on higher education policy has tended to obscure the development of the liberal education and ideas of its changing purpose in society over the 1960s. Similarly, there has been surprisingly (given the focus on vice-chancellors as instrumental leaders in university histories) limited historical focus on the CVCP itself even during the important period of the 1960s. This invisibility is, speculatively, a consequence of widespread criticism of the effectiveness of the CVCP as an institution, both in terms of its influence on policy and its legitimacy. The charge of academic complacency is never too far below the surface.

In these narratives, the CVCP has become a quintessential academic body, and representative of the static, protectionist amateurism detested by techno-nationalists. Initially the CVCP, constituted in 1930, assembled a distinguished body of academic elites to facilitate the

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20 Vernon, ‘The CVCP and the Organisation of British Universities’.

21 See, for example, Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, p. 127.
exchange of views and information, not necessarily for common action. This characterisation of the Committee persisted. After the Second World War, vice-chancellors remained reluctant to prescribe policy to universities and, mirroring the apparently sluggish development of the liberal education, were slow and reluctant to respond to demands for university expansion in the 1950s. The characterisation of the CVCP shifted from the warm support of insiders to increasing disdain from the 1970s. Insider accounts from the 1960s all applauded the Committee’s efforts to balance the maintenance of academic freedom with increasing societal and national demands which might distort the university’s function. Eric Ashby, for example, in 1963 characterised the Committee as growing from ‘diffident’ to ‘magisterial’ from 1945-63 and while it remained ‘informal and devoid of power as ever’, when it made pronouncements these carried ‘great weight’. By contrast observers in 1982 disparaged the CVCP as incompetent and illegitimate. In 2000, as the CVCP prepared for a rebranding, one vice-chancellor of a former polytechnic described it as a whimpering, ‘middle-aged, male-dominated […] rather ineffectual club’.

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22 British universities leaders had been gathering ad hoc since the 1880s, and the predecessor body of the CVCP, the permanent Standing Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, was established in 1918. Eric Ashby, *Community of Universities: An Informal Portrait of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth, 1913-1963* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 61, 70-72; MRC MSS.399/4/1/1, CVCP, ‘Deputation received by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on 24 February 1967’. For one problematisation of the narrative that the committee was not intended to facilitate collective action, see CVCP, ‘A Note on University Policy and Finance in the Decennium 1947-56’ (1946) discussed in Ashby, *Community of Universities: An Informal Portrait of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth, 1913-1963*, pp. 75-76; and Silver, *Higher Education and Opinion Making*, p. 24.

23 See, for example, the charge that the CVCP opposed the experiments at the new University College of North Staffordshire. See Steele, Taylor, and Haynes, *British Labour and Higher Education*, pp. 52-54; and Shattock, *The Impact of a University on Its Environment*, p. 18.


Historians have largely followed this reassessment of the Committee. Keith Vernon describes the CVCP in the inter-war period as an ineffective, ‘constitutionally weak’ lobbying body which made little attempt to formulate policy. The Committee’s main concern was to protect university autonomy against outside threats.\textsuperscript{27} Michael Shattock’s sustained and helpful attention on the CVCP as part of his broader study of the historical forces determining government policy in higher education nonetheless also depicts the Committee as amateur. Shattock’s first major characterisation is that from 1946 to 1981 the CVCP was part of an elite and therefore exclusive and stultifying decision-making network.\textsuperscript{28} The ‘organs of policy making, except in respect to the overall financing of the system, lay for the universities in the hands of the UGC, working in close partnership with the CVCP’.\textsuperscript{29} This was predominantly achieved through personal contact between the chairman of the CVCP and the chairman of the UGC, who for the majority of this period was John Wolfenden (1963-69).\textsuperscript{30} Representatives of the CVCP met with state officials and ministers formally and informally multiple times a year (on several occasions with the Prime Minister).\textsuperscript{31} Here the CVCP is characterised as a body engaged more in governance through personal contacts and shared heritage and less on democratic public accountability. Shattock’s second characterisation of the CVCP is of its ineffectiveness and protectionism. The prevalence of the CVCP as an actor in higher education policy starts to decline towards the 1970s as higher education policy became more top down, more impersonal, and more accountable.\textsuperscript{32} Shattock notes that ‘on any readings of its minutes, the CVCP

\textsuperscript{27} Vernon, ‘The CVCP and the Organisation of British Universities’, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{28} This also included the British universities, bodies such as the Association of University Teachers (AUT), the National Union of Students (NUS), and commonwealth and foreign universities.
\textsuperscript{29} Shattock, \textit{Making Policy}, pp. 1-2, 6-7, 15-16, 30. In William Whyte’s words, in 1962, when the CVCP sent a deputation to the Treasury they were greeted by a Treasury official ‘as old friends because that was precisely what they were: “One of the Vice-Chancellors present was my tutor at Oxford,” he observed. “Another Vice Chancellor present was the most dangerous hockey-player I ever associated with.”’ Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom, ‘Deputation received by The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (London) 26 January 1962, p. 7; Whyte, \textit{Redbrick}, p. 234.
\textsuperscript{32} See also the declining influence of the CVCP in Salter and Tapper, \textit{The State and Higher Education}, pp. 124-25. The CVCP reappears in Shattock’s narrative in the 1980s and in the 1990s after its merger with the CDP, and its decay into the ‘Russell Group’ and the ‘1994 Group’ as a consequence of the breakdown of the binary
seems always to be on the back foot with the Government, trying to defend the university system and preserve its position and funding’. Shattock highlights three ‘chronic weaknesses’ of this CVCP. Firstly, it only sluggishly formed representative views due to the heterogeneity of its membership; secondly, it over-estimated its influence, as; thirdly, when the chair of the UGC was unsympathetic to vice-chancellor’s claims, such as under Wolfenden, the ‘real influence’ of the CVCP on government policy faltered. Shattock presents the CVCP as a slightly archaic deliberative body incapable of delivering and making executive action necessary for universities to implement the kind of reforms required for higher education to respond to the needs of modern society.

4.2.2. The Dining Club Reformed?

This characterisation of the Committee as ineffective is certainly a valid assessment of its impact on policy. But, as this chapter will show, while the CVCP maintained persistent hesitancy throughout the 1960s to ‘speak for the universities’, it harboured a variety of understandings of the purpose of higher education, which existing histories have generally overlooked. Shattock, for example, undercut his description somewhat when he briefly noted that ‘elements in the CVCP […] were willing to at least contemplate radical change’. Throughout the period 1963-72 the pressure on the Committee to take on more executive roles increased dramatically, and it attempted to undertake reform in order to champion the national contribution universities could make to society. In the early 1960s, the Committee met in London every month for two or three hours in the morning divide and the dissolution of the UGC. This left the CVCP as the sole voice representing the universities. See Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 97-100. Similarly, another article with an explicit focus on the CVCP, Ted Tapper and Brian Salter’s article in Higher Education Quarterly from 1997, was more interested in the position of the CVCP in the rapidly changing university situation in the end of the twentieth century. It briefly described the historical role of the CVCP as a coy ‘elite negotiating network’ with its strength lying in its institutional links with the UGC and its role in informal bargaining. Tapper and Salter, ‘Who Will Speak for The Universities?’, pp. 121-22. See also Tight, Development of HE in the UK, p. 131.

33 Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 69-70.
36 Shattock, Making Policy, p. 142.
before a seated lunch. These leisurely arrangements did not persist much longer than 1963. The main duties of the Committee remained relatively constant: quinquennial finance and recurrent grant negotiation, salary scales, superannuation, senior-junior staffing ratios, and the new Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA) (recommended in 1961 and handling admissions from 1964). However, the membership of the CVCP in 1962 numbered twenty-seven; by 1966, with the proliferation of university institutions, membership swelled to fifty-two. After 1965 gradually the work which had been the responsibility of the chairman as part of a network of elite personal relationships was delegated to new Divisions, labelled A-E, expert sub-committees, the expanded secretariat, and a vice-chairmanship was introduced (and in 1968 arrangements were put in place for meetings of the Committee to continue after a buffet lunch and up to 4pm if necessary). These allowed the Committee to keep major areas of interest under constant review and was intended to enable it not just respond to developments but initiate proposals. The CVCP subcommittees

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38 MRC MSS.399/4/1/1, CVCP, ‘Deputation received by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on 24 February 1967’
40 Added to this total were the New Universities were Sussex, East Anglia, York, Essex, Lancaster, Kent, Warwick, Stirling, and Ulster, and the ex-CATs, Aston, Loughborough, City University, Chelsea, Surrey, Brunel, Bath, University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology (UWIST), Salford, and Bradford. Four heads of London colleges and two principals of Welsh colleges, and the Principal of the Manchester Institute of Science and Technology were invited to become members. Keele and Newcastle were promoted from university colleges to full university status (though they were already represented on the CVCP). The Scottish universities of Strathclyde, Heriot-Watt, and Dundee were also promoted to university status during this time. The vice-chancellor of the Open University was also later invited to join the CVCP: CVCP, ‘Report on the Quinquennium 1962-1967’, p. 61.
41 There were five chairmen (they were all men) of the CVCP from 1963-1972: Manchester Vice-Chancellor Sir William Mansfield-Cooper (1961-64), Sir Charles H. Wilson, Principal of Glasgow (1964-67), and Sir Derman Christopherson of Durham (1967-69), Sir T. A. ‘Fraser’ Noble of Leicester (1970-72), and Sir Hugh Robson of Sheffield (1972-74). Vice-Chairmanship, introduced in 1966, was held by Sir Peter Venables of Aston (1967), Mansfield Cooper (1968-9), Robson (1970), Sir Brain Windyey (1971), and Baron Noel Annan (1972). MRC MSS.399/3/CVCP/8, A. A. Bath, ‘Note from the Secretary’, 15 March 1968.
42 The divisions were organised so that while vice-chancellors were members of only one division, they might also be part of a sub-committee under a different division. Of the five Divisions: A, chaired by Vice-Chancellor of Leeds Roger Stevens reviewed ‘university development (including student numbers, buildings, equipment and capital grants);’ B, chaired by Aitken considered ‘university recurrent income and expenditure’, and into which the sub-committee’s on cost-efficiency were placed; C, chaired by Robson, dealt with ‘staff and student matters’ which included some of the biggest issues the CVCP considered including superannuation, wages, and student unrest; D, chaired by Vice-Chancellor of East Anglia Frank Thistlethwaite considered ‘academic matters’, which in time came to incorporate liaison, including with schools and industry (the sub-committee highlighted liaison with the CBI was particularly important, see Chapter Five); and E, constitutionally and in
discussed a range of activities from university rates to radiation hazards, and by 1966, the Committee provided centralised services for staffing, salaries, superannuation, norms and rules of capital expenditure, and a host of other common regulations.\(^{43}\) Demands on the Committee to become more professional and political intensified after 1966, including for example the unilateral increase in overseas student fees. This resulted in an unprecedented joint declaration between the CVCP and National Union of Students in support of student consultation in academic governance.\(^{44}\) Increasingly after 1968, the CVCP held extraordinary meetings on issues such as the constitution of the Committee, student affairs and discipline, the comptroller and auditor general, and Student Union financing.\(^{45}\) It arranged a number of well attended conferences in addition to their annual Home Universities Conference to make policy interventions.\(^{46}\) In 1971 the CVCP, approaching a staff of twenty administrators, debated whether it would continue to provide central services, or spin them off and become a professional pressure group on behalf of the universities.\(^{47}\) The expansion of Committee activities, the formalisation of its records, and its secretariat, continued into the 1970s.\(^{48}\) These new structures allowed certain members to articulate reformist views of the university.

All heads of British universities were members of the CVCP; its registers were effectively directories of the educational establishment.\(^ {49}\) Within this venerable group were a reformist vanguard who were especially concerned with reconsidering the educational philosophy of the

\(^{43}\) MRC MSS.399/1/1/24, Charles Wilson, ‘Note by the Chairman’, 23-25 September 1966.


\(^{45}\) MRC MSS.399/3/CVCP/8, A. A. Bath, Note from the Secretary, 15 March 1968.

\(^{46}\) On ‘University Co-ordination’ (1967); ‘Universities and Productivity’ (1968) featuring papers from Carter, and economist Mark Blaug; ‘Assessment of Undergraduate Performance’ (1969); and teaching and research (1972).


\(^{48}\) MRC MSS.399/4/1/3, 9 August 1972. Attempts were made to professionalise secretarial papers from 1965 onwards, including new agenda systems, new minute formatting and books, even a proposed bulletin of CVCP activities, and the introduction of confidentiality classifications (with blue and red banners for confidential items).

universities and the future of the Committee. Unsurprisingly, the core of ‘university-men’ at the centre of the Robbins Committee all frequented the meetings of the CVCP (bar Robbins himself).

Sir Philip Morris (Bristol, 1946-66, chairman of the CVCP 1955-58) remained an active member until his retirement; rector of Imperial College London Sir Patrick Linstead was appointed to the CVCP from 1964 until his death in 1966; James Drever was appointed to the Committee in 1967 (Dundee). Through its various sub-committees, the CVCP utilised expert advice, including the statistical team from the Robbins Committee. Firm reformist sentiments were championed by other prominent vice-chancellors including the physician Sir Robert Aitken (Birmingham, 1953-68, CVCP Chairman 1958-61); chemist Sir Frederick Dainton (Nottingham, 1965-70); botanist Sir Eric Ashby, (Queen’s Belfast, 1950-59, and Cambridge, 1967-69); and one of his successors at Queens, physicist Francis Arthur Vick (1966-76). Other less established Vice-Chancellors especially from the New Universities despite their (supposed) junior status were nonetheless often some of the most prolific and vocal contributors. They were part of a new generation of university leaders: two-thirds of those in post in 1970 were not in university work at the beginning of the 1960s. Unlike the

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50 This chapter necessarily then obscures stories of other Vice-Chancellors. Geoffrey Templeman Vice-Chancellor of Kent (1963-80), for example, was chairman of the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA) from 1964 but hardly features in this portrait of the CVCP; Principal of the University of London Sir Douglas Logan (1948-75) contributions to universities’ superannuation are similarly omitted. I have also underplayed the committee’s role and development in responding to student protest which in part contributed to the professionalization and politicisation of the committee, see Kogan, Educational Policy-Making: A Study of Interest Groups and Parliament, p. 207. I have omitted any comment on the relationship of the CVCP and its parent body, the Association of Commonwealth Universities and nearly all of the committee’s considerable international liaison activities. H. F. Oxbury, ‘Logan, Sir Douglas William (1910–1987), University Administrator’, ODNB.


52 Drever had been involved in a CVCP subcommittee on scholastic aptitude tests since 1964. Other members of the Robbins Committee, such as Lionel Elvin and Harold Shearman, appeared in CVCP liaison and consultation activities with teacher training and schools.

53 Claus Moser was repeatedly deferred to on matters of the prediction of student numbers and statistical methodology. Through the LSE’s Higher Education Research Unit, Richard Layard liaised with the CVCP on cost-efficiency studies. MRC MSS.399/1/1/28, Division B, 15 November 1968. In addition, in 1967 the CVCP employed Miss Betie S. Knott, who had been part of the Robbins Committee secretariat: MRC MSS.399/1/1/24, CVCP, Minutes, 27 January 1967.


55 Shattock very briefly implies that there was a hierarchy of seniority within the CVCP: Shattock, Making Policy, p. 93. See Perkin, New Universities in the United Kingdom, p. 32.
‘craggy great men’ and old guard off the CVCP of the 1930s these ‘new men’ particularly championed the new broad university and were ‘more prone to accept arguments of public purpose’.  

56 John ‘Jack’ Butterworth (Warwick, 1963-85) was a frequent agitator in the defence of universities’ social responsivity, a champion of industry needs, and for a more executive role for the CVCP. Economist Charles F. Carter (Lancaster, 1963-79) headed numerous studies into cost-efficiencies at universities. Lord Eric James (York, 1962-73) frequently dissented from the majority voice in the CVCP yet had been an active member of its subcommittees since 1955.  

57 Even chemist Tom Cottrell of Stirling (1965-73), one of the very newest universities, made several high-profile contributions at conferences and in consultation.  

58 As this reformist group grew in confidence and strength, the purpose of a university in the CVCP gradually moved away from the unreformed liberal education and towards a defence of technological education and by the 1970s had fully accepted the importance of breadth. For example, Ashby noted the CVCP was ‘less than generous’ in 1956 when it vetoed the right of new Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs) to award degrees. It did so on the grounds that a technological education in specialised, non-multi-faculty institutions were insufficiently capable of allowing their students to learn from other non-technological disciplines and were therefore unable to contextualise the importance of their specialisms in modern society. The CATs could therefore could not be said to be universities providing a liberal education and should not award degrees. The CATs instead awarded Diplomas of Technology (Dip.Techs). The CVCP’s evidence to the Robbins Committee in 1961 however reversed its opposition, recognising that a liberal education did not have to be provided in a particular pattern of community but through how a specialism was taught.  

59 When challenged by Lionel Robbins while giving evidence in 1961, vice-chancellor of the University of Wales Thomas Parry recognised the prevailing winds were against his jealous defence of the right


57 James will be a protagonist in Chapter Six where his unorthodox views as a vice-chancellor, such as welcoming the incorporation of the universities and UGC under the DES, will be more closely examined.  

58 MSS.399/1/1/28, CVCP, Minutes, 13 December 1968.  

59 Shattock, Making Policy, p. 20.
of universities to award degrees. He admitted his opposition to the CATs was inconsistent and difficult to defend: ‘it may be based on conservatism and traditionalism [...] I would not want you to lay too much stress on my view’. The National Council for Technological Awards (NCTA) noted that the widespread acceptance of the Robbins Report’s recognition that Dip.Techs were of equal performance level to degrees was a ‘major change in the climate of opinion’. The CVCP’s acceptance of breadth and technological studies at universities was, by 1965, fully established. The principals of the CATs were welcomed, without substantial objection, as members of the CVCP that year. In this spirit, the CVCP lent its full support to the establishment of the NCTA’s successor body, the National Council of Academic Awards, and welcomed plans to award retrospective degrees to Dip.Tech holders. In 1967 the secretary of the CVCP acknowledged, with disappointment, that no chairman of the CVCP had been an engineer until the Vice-Chancellor of Durham Derman Christopherson took up the chairmanship that year. By 1972, the role of the university in society for the CVCP had shifted decisively towards vocational purposes.

However, as we shall see, chances for the reformist vanguard of the CVCP to act on their concerns for broad education through the CVCP arose intermittently, and it was not until after 1965 that their voice became louder as they struggled against the antiquated structure of the Committee. And while the idea of a reformist vanguard of the CVCP suggests a coherent group of individuals, enthusiasm for reform of universities ebbed and flowed through the membership of the CVCP over this period with the waxing and waning of the looming threat of the binary policy, as sections 4.3 and 4.4 explore.

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60 Oral evidence given by Dr. T. A. Parry, Dr. R. Charles Evans, Dr. T. Steel, Dr. J. H. Parry, Dr. A. Trever Jones and Dr. Elwyn Davies on behalf of The Principles of Colleges of the University of Wales, 29 March 1962, CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. F’, p. 1764; see also Memorandum submitted by Dr. Thomas Parry, 5 August 1961, CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 2’. On Parry see R. Geraint Gruffydd, ‘Parry, Sir Thomas (1904–1985), Scholar of Welsh and Academic Administrator’, ODNB.
62 MRC MSS.399/1/1/20, CVCP, Minutes, 24 January 1964.
63 MRC MSS.399/3/CVCP/8, A. A. Bath to Peter Venables, 14 June 1967.
4.3. REACTIONARIES IN THE CVCP

4.3.1. Robbins’ Reforms

The relationship between the CVCP and the Chancellor of the Exchequer through the 1950s had been underlined by a tacit agreement that liberal universities were best left to their own devices to provide the meritocratic ‘intellectual leadership’ upon which ‘the prosperity, even the viability, of our adventure into democracy so greatly depends’. There was also the recognition that they provided the required manpower for public service, business, the professions, and increasingly scientific and technological roles, even if as during the 1960s it began to be felt that resources were increasingly inadequate to allow the universities to continue to provide for such demand. With the acceptance by government of the Robbins Report, the CVCP initially appears to have been satisfied that the liberal university’s position as the apex of a unitary British higher education system remained sacrosanct.

The Robbins Report had praised the work of the CVCP. It, however, also cautioned that its arrangements would be unsuitable to ‘speak, and listen, on behalf of the universities’ in the Report’s proposed unitary system. It seems likely Morris would have had a strong voice in drafting these comments. The Robbins Report warned that as the national importance of higher education grew it was likely there would be a more direct state formulation of national demands through higher education policy in future. As we have seen in the previous chapters, this was a consequence of concerns that this pressure might impose an orthodoxy on universities and necessitate certain forms of training or culture promoting collectivist or illiberal interests. Such pressure could disrupt the broad education students needed to ensure they understood their specialisms and their role in

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64 MRC MSS.399/4/1/1, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom, ‘Deputation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer’, 22 November 1951; Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom, ‘Deputation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer’, 22 November 1956; Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom, ‘Deputation received by The Chief Secretary to the Treasury, on 26 January, 1962 (London); see also Silver, Higher Education and Opinion Making, pp. 24, pp. 86-89.
achieving the liberal good society.\footnote{CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 226-27.} The Robbins Report identified two weaknesses in the existing CVCP which prevented it from defending broad universities. Firstly, with the report’s recommendations for the foundation of many more and potentially divergent species of university, membership of the CVCP could reach ‘almost fifty’ which would be too large and variable to deliver ‘effective action’. Secondly, as members of the CVCP were exclusively vice-chancellors, the Committee would be unrepresentative of wider communities broad universities would comprise.\footnote{Ibid.}

The report recommended that the CVCP should be reconstituted as a ‘Universities’ Council’ to enable the universities to take on the larger role in society Robbins envisaged, and effectively defend the diversity and autonomy of universities.\footnote{Each university would send two delegates (a ‘chief administrator’, and another elected member). The work of the council would mainly be performed through an executive standing committee, itself representative of the heterogeneous institutions of the Universities’ Council, and further sub-committees to consider recurring, technical, and uncontroversial topics such as university rating and admissions procedure. Calls for a ‘universities council’ had been made as early as 1944 and were never realised. See Silver, \textit{Higher Education and Opinion Making}, p. 35.} To do this, it recommended enlarging the Committee so it became more representative but also reformed to become more executive. Such machinery, Robbins hoped, would inspire confidence in the capacity of universities to respond to national needs.\footnote{CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 226-27. See also Robbins’ comments in LSE ROBBINS/8/1/3, Conference of the Universities of the United Kingdom 1963, ‘Report of Proceedings: Universities and the Future Pattern of Higher Education – University Expansion in the Short Term, being discussions on The Report of the Committee on Higher Education under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins’, Report, 13-14 December 1963; Howson, \textit{Lionel Robbins}, p. 892.}

4.3.2. Rejecting Reform

In November 1963, vice-chancellors welcomed the spirit of the ‘new opportunities’ offered by the Robbins Report, accepting the CATs should join the ranks of the universities and, more cautiously, the possibility of embracing the teacher training colleges.\footnote{MSS.399/1/1/20, [CVCP], ‘Statements by members of the [CVCP] at a meeting with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Lord President of the Council held at the Treasury on 22 November, 1963, to discuss the Report of the Robbins Committee on Higher Education’, p. 1; Shattock, \textit{Making Policy}, pp. 37-38; see also LSE, ROBBINS/8/1/3, Conference of the Universities of the United Kingdom 1963, ‘Report of Proceedings’.}

But how far the CVCP shared Robbins’ proposals for broad universities is variable. For the year or so following the publication of the report,
particularly the old guard of the CVCP appear to have been primarily happy to ignore the report’s reformist thrust. Instead, they accepted the Robbins Report’s recommendations as a justification of the status quo and the supremacy of the, albeit diversified, liberal university.\(^{70}\)

A month after the publication of the Robbins Report a CVCP subcommittee, established to consider the form and constitution of the then still small CVCP, chaired by Robert Aitken, concluded that the Robbins’ recommendations should be accepted in ‘substance’. Astutely anticipating the forthcoming reaction against the universities, the subcommittee concluded that reform would be required to convince outsiders that a liberal education at a university was the best use of national resources of ability.\(^{71}\) The report was signed by all members of the subcommittee bar one dissenter from the old guard Sir Malcolm Knox (St. Andrews, 1953-66). Knox, proud of his description by another CVCP member as ‘an academic dinosaur’, opposed the Robbins’ proposals.\(^{72}\) Knox argued that vice-chancellors had a privileged understanding and responsibility of the ‘whole’ of their universities, and were exclusively able to participate in effective discussion of the financial and administrative matters which were the primary concern of the CVCP.\(^{73}\) Expansionism, Knox claimed, was already damaging ‘standards’; a proxy for the integrity of liberal education (see Chapter Two). His arguments betrayed a highly conservative ideal of universities as small academic institutions quite unlike the range of possibilities suggested by the more comprehensive broad proposals of the Robbins Report.\(^{74}\) This is especially clear in Knox’s insistence that the CATs were not universities. In


\(^{72}\) MRC MSS.399/1/1/20, Malcolm Knox, ‘Memorandum’, 13 December 1963; Edward Ullendorff and Michael John Petry, ‘Knox, Sir (Thomas) Malcolm (1900–1980), Academic Administrator and Philosopher’, *ODNB*. Knox apparently ‘enjoined his closest friends to see to it that any future memoir written about him should contain [these] words of opprobrium [considered by him as praise]’. I quote them here in a small contribution to fulfilling that request. Knox resigned from his position at St Andrews when its constituent college at Dundee was established as an independent university.


Knox imagined CVCP, institutions should be free to pursue their own liberal scholarly interests without needing a centralised voice to articulate an educational philosophy.\textsuperscript{75}

When Knox’s memorandum was discussed at the next meeting of the Committee in December, it found widespread support, except on his reactionary position on the CATs.\textsuperscript{76} It is clear the CVCP still saw itself as primarily a body coordinating administrative action for autonomous liberal universities and not as a tool for the reform. Aitken’s sub-committee returned with its final report in January 1964. It now rejected the Robbins recommendations and argued that the current work of the CVCP could and should continue up to a membership of around sixty. The CVCP favoured a continuation of the practices and governance of the liberal education rather than Robbins’ vision of broad reformed universities, and the Universities’ Council never materialised.\textsuperscript{77} Some gestures towards reformist ideas were permitted. Principals of the CATs were invited to join the CVCP which was, as we have seen, a major shift in policy from the mid-1950s. To facilitate expedient discussion of higher education policy the Committee expanded the remit of subcommittees and enlarged the secretariat, at a cost of an extra £9,000 per year, and a steering committee was established from 1964.\textsuperscript{78} But for the main part, the CVCP seemed convinced that liberal universities would continue to exercise academic freedom and pursue their own teaching and research agendas as they always had done. The idea that universities should continue to educate students in the liberal common culture and prepare this elite to lead democratic society was sustained. They shied away from actively pursuing the reformist agenda Robbins had recommended and from taking on a more active role in championing the virtues of the liberal university in modern society.

\textsuperscript{76} MSS.399/1/1/20, CVCP, Minutes, 13 December 1963.
\textsuperscript{77} The subcommittee also endorsed founding a much larger but weak Universities Council as a representative body independent of the CVCP. Universities would send four representatives to the Council to exchange ideas but not to decide a comprehensive ‘University view’. The vice-chancellors feared that too strong a Universities’ Council might damage institutional freedom and diversity by requiring universities to follow in the name of meeting ‘national needs’ specific or homogenising procedures.
\textsuperscript{78} MSS.399/1/1/20, CVCP, Minutes, 21 February 1964; MRC MSS.399/1/1/21, CVCP, Minutes, 17 July 1964.
4.4. THE BINARY CHALLENGE

4.4.1. Meetings with Minsters and Techno-Nationalist Alternatives

The self-assurance of the CVCP in liberal universities slowly evaporated over the next year. The Conservative government transferred the universities and the UGC into the new DES on 1 April 1964.\textsuperscript{79} Despite these developments provoking ‘considerable uneasiness’, puzzlingly little discussion was recorded in the minutes of the CVCP, and the Committee did nothing to protest the move.\textsuperscript{80} The CVCP later claimed it was preoccupied with the task of expanding to meet the short-term crisis in the availability of student numbers Robbins had identified.\textsuperscript{81} It is hard to shake the impression that the Committee was complacent. After the election of the new Labour government after October 1964, the new Steering Committee of the CVCP (with the Principal of the Birmingham CAT) were invited for informal discussions over dinner at Downing Street with the Prime Minister and Crosland in January, and then with Crosland in February, and early April 1965. These meetings exacerbated the discomfort of the CVCP as it became clear that the DES and Crosland were pursuing a ‘binary policy’.

Intense historical attention over this seismic intervention has shown that the universities were well out of step with other rival interests determining higher education policy and ‘national needs’, which were already exercising influence over the previous Conservative government prior to 1960.\textsuperscript{83} Firstly, both the Ministry of Education and local education authorities (LEAs) feared the lack of accountability of the universities and were concerned to retain practical control over teacher training as demand for teachers soared with the continued expansion of schools.\textsuperscript{84} Secondly, the Treasury was concerned with retaining centralised control over costs; universities were expensive

\textsuperscript{79} Like Shearman local authorities were especially concerned that divorcing teacher training from schools would break a vital ink. Stewart, \textit{Higher Education in Postwar Britian}, pp. 127-28; CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 293-96; see also Boyle, Crosland, and Kogan, \textit{The Politics of Education}.

\textsuperscript{80} One prominent supporter of the DES was Eric James. See Shattock, \textit{Making Policy}, pp. 92-93.


\textsuperscript{82} MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, Butterworth, ‘Note on student targets’, 23 April 1965; Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), ‘Commons Chamber’, Vol. 709 (London, HMSO), 25 March 1965.


\textsuperscript{84} See Steele, Taylor, and Haynes, \textit{British Labour and Higher Education}, p. 84.
The CVCP, the Binary Policy, and reforming liberal education

...and (even extravagant).\(^{85}\) Thirdly, Crosland was generally predisposed against the universities.\(^{86}\) Reinforced by deputy secretary Toby Weaver, Crosland identified in universities the same inability to deliver equality of opportunity and social mobility that he saw in meritocratic selection for grammar schools.\(^{87}\) While CVCP minutes indicate their meetings with Crosland were valuable, Crosland found the vice-chancellors conceited and insufferable: as he is supposed to have said in an often-quoted phrase, ‘Tomorrow I shall tell the Vice-Chancellors they can stuff themselves’.\(^{88}\)

These factors identified in the historiography were all certainly relevant, but fundamentally throughout Crosland’s dealings with the universities was a strong current of a techno-nationalist vision for higher education that the universities underestimated.\(^{89}\) Crosland proposed deploying centralised state apparatus to align the output of the universities and higher education with the perceived needs of society.\(^{90}\) Crosland’s frustration with the universities appears very much as a reaction against the complacency the CVCP flaunted. The meeting of a larger group of vice-chancellors and Crosland on the 13 April appears to have been significantly more formal than the previous meetings, with topics of discussion suggested in advance by Crosland. The CVCP minutes


\(^{89}\) On the wider context of Labour’s higher education policy, see Salter and Tapper, *The State and Higher Education*, pp. 20-25, 95.

\(^{90}\) See for example Peter Mandler’s identification of Crosland’s desire to use manpower planning to counteract the swing from science: Mandler, ‘Educating the Nation: IV. Subject Choice’, pp. 13-14.
portray the secretary of state as placing austere demands on the universities and appear to have come as a shock.\textsuperscript{91} Crosland was concerned with the universities’ capacity to respond to national needs; evidence of ‘value for money’; the role of postgraduate courses; collaboration with industry, government research establishments, and schools; and ‘the need for lines to be drawn between the field of the universities and that of the technical colleges’.\textsuperscript{92} Crosland even threatened the use of the tools of a statist, command economy to measure this contribution. Crosland stressed manpower planning, while not necessarily providing demand figures for particular occupations, might nonetheless ‘provide useful guidance as to the course content and nature of training which would be useful to industry’.\textsuperscript{93} This techno-nationalist impression and assessment of ‘national need’ worried the CVCP, which they feared overemphasised industry’s current needs over unknowable future needs to which the broad education of the universities provided. More worrying for the Committee was Crosland’s veiled threat that greater overall economic benefit might be found through the expansion of the centrally planned and therefore supposedly cheaper further education sector, over and at the expense of the universities.

4.4.2. Butterworth and Morris

While historians have emphasised these external forces acting on the universities, internally, the new techno-nationalist national policy direction proved to many CVCP members the Committee was not doing enough to promote the national utility of universities. Butterworth, one of the vice-chancellors’ present at the 13 April meeting and whose university was yet to open, was particularly concerned. Butterworth presented a paper at the next meeting of the CVCP on 23 April 1965. The paper was nominally concerned with a reassessment of Robbins’ student demand figures (even in


\textsuperscript{92} MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, CVCP, Minutes, 23 April 1965.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
1965 estimated to be between 12 and 15 percent too low).\textsuperscript{94} However, as Butterworth indicated, achieving an increase in the students allocated to universities was part of ‘wider issues’ of the role of the universities. Butterworth was particularly concerned given the direct consequences of Crosland’s new policy direction for his university’s attempts to broaden through merger with a local college of technology, publicly announced in March 1965.\textsuperscript{95} ‘The situation is rapidly changing month by month’, Butterworth warned, and with the CVCP reticent to represent universities, ‘there is some danger that Universities will be unprepared for the new situations as they emerge and that the case of Universities generally will not be put forward at all’.\textsuperscript{96} The universities were vulnerable to ‘being restricted or outflanked at will’.\textsuperscript{97} Without this voice the universities would not be provided by the state with adequate resources to satisfactorily take in as great a proportion of the student demand for higher education as they believed would be in the best interests of the nation. Butterworth’s paper was well received by the Committee, and his concern was reiterated by Philip Morris speaking in his capacity as a former member of the Robbins Committee.\textsuperscript{98} The necessity of the CVCP to promote the virtues of the broad university was in Morris’ view, ‘one of the utmost importance to the whole future of higher education in this country for a long period ahead’.\textsuperscript{99} As the possibility of a techno-nationalist state directed alternative higher education system became more real, the ebb of reformist concerns began to rise.

4.4.3. The Woolwich Speech and the CVCP

Just five days later, however, the fears of Butterworth and Morris were confirmed when Crosland gave his Woolwich speech on 27 April 1965. In it, Crosland codified his vision of the ‘Binary

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{94} Butterworth had hoped Moser might have been available to assist in the preparation of the paper, but Moser was away in India for the whole of April. MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, Butterworth, ‘Note on student targets’, 23 April 1965.
  \item \textsuperscript{95} In 1972 Butterworth reflected that these plans may have been the catalyst that prompted the urgency of DES to announce the binary system within the first six months of Crosland’s ministry: MRC UWA/PUB/1/8/1 Report of the Vice Chancellor. Part I, 1971-1972; see Shattock, \textit{UGC and the Management of British Universities}, pp. 93-96. See below and Chapter Six.
  \item \textsuperscript{96} MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, Butterworth, ‘Note on student targets’, 23 April 1965; Shattock, \textit{Making Policy}, p. 60.
  \item \textsuperscript{97} MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, Butterworth, ‘Note on student targets’, 23 April 1965.
  \item \textsuperscript{98} MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, CVCP, Minutes, 23 April 1965.
  \item \textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
It rejected a unitary university system, which would enable the universities to continue to irredeemably serve exclusively middle-class educational interests, irreversibly condemn vocational training as hierarchically inferior to academic study and would not provide satisfactory equality of opportunity for the children of the working classes. For the CVCP, the Woolwich speech had worrying connotations for the universities. Crosland’s binary divide seemed to propose cementing vocational education for working classes in the public sector and liberal educations for middle classes at the universities. This was ‘undesirable’ and opposed to both meritocratic concerns for the elevation of ability and democratic concerns for student choice. The aim appeared to be to build a rival ‘publicly controlled’ sector of higher education as rapidly as possible. A month after the speech at the CVCP’s next and well-attended meeting on 21 May, members expressed their concern at the ‘misconceptions’ in the speech, marking a new high watermark of reformist concerns in the Committee. There were good cases for colleges of education and technical colleges to be closely associated with the liberal education of the universities. Members were particularly aggrieved reference had been made to the development of a non-university sector of higher education which would be ‘directly responsive to social needs’, and sought clarification from the DES that Crosland was not intending to imply that ‘the universities were not responsive to such needs’.

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103 On this debate see Robinson, The New Polytechnics, pp. 46-54; and Robbins, University in the Modern World pp. 138-57; Robbins, Higher Education Revisited, pp. 97-100.
104 MSS.299/1/1/22, CVCP, Minutes, 21 May 1965.
105 Ibid. This is in stark contrast to the ‘muddled’ and disinterested response that Scott in 1978 claimed the universities had given to the binary policy: Scott, ‘British Universities 1968 - 1978’.
The feeling of siege was intensified when a UGC memorandum from UGC chairman John Wolfenden was received which indicated the UGC supported the binary system. Wolfenden (an old member of the CVCP from 1950-63 as vice-chancellor of Reading) seems to have held a conservative view of the function of the university and was unresponsive to reformist ideas. He had been leaned on by the DES to delay and eventually block mergers under negotiation by several universities with local colleges, including Sussex and Butterworth’s Warwick. Wolfenden was concerned that taking responsibility for teacher training especially would subordinate the universities to the needs of the state and allow it to scrutinise and exercise control over their finances. The UGC memorandum therefore argued that the universities should work in partnership with local non-university institutions and divide between them responsibility for, effectively, ‘academic’ education in the universities, and ‘vocational’ education elsewhere. The non-university institutions would be more flexible in their resources ‘in the light of changing national needs or of local industrial and other requirements’. This included meeting the immediate short-term demands (presumably through manpower planning calculations) for teachers (certainly) and technologists (probably).

Faced with this threat, the CVCP appealed to a more reformist conception of the role of the university in society. The minutes of the CVCP reported that ‘much misgiving was expressed by members regarding the terms of the [UGC] memorandum and the policy which it adumbrated’, and a reformist statement in defence of the capacity of universities to respond to national needs was prepared. Firstly, the CVCP argued, the binary policy distorted the abilities of universities ‘to meet

106 MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, UGC, ‘The Binary System of Higher Education’, 30 June 1965; Godwin indicates that a UGC paper on the rationale for its support for the binary system was ‘never issued’ but some sort of paper made its way to the CVCP: Godwin, ‘The Origin of the Binary System’, pp. 174, 85.
107 See for instance his comments in MRC MSS.200/F/4/65/7, FBI, Report of the conference on industry, the universities and the technical colleges, October 1950. He was also chairman of the Wolfenden Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution; see p. 122.
110 MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, CVCP, Minutes, 21 May 1965.
the needs of the complex professional and occupational structure of the country’ which could not be
determined through manpower calculations. Secondly, the divide completely overlooked the
diversity of universities, especially the ex-CATs, and their contribution to manpower numbers.
Thirdly, it prevented the country from allowing the universities to make the ‘best use of the pool of
scarce high-level ability in the country and distribute that ability in the most effective way over the
country’s professional and other services’.\textsuperscript{111} Implicit in these objections was the importance of a
broad education for national manpower. Their fears were confirmed when in a further meeting with
the UGC, Wolfenden confirmed that there would be no more new universities for ten years.\textsuperscript{112} For
the reformist elements of the CVCP, the UGC was now apparently no longer operating as a buffer to
protect the proper function of universities but acting as an instrument of government over the
universities, and ironically ossifying their capacities to best educate the nation’s young people. The
idea that the new non-university institutions might be responsible for the training of teachers was of
particular concern for some in the CVCP.\textsuperscript{113} The binary policy would prevent fruitful associations of
the Colleges of Education and the universities and damage their capacity to produce liberally
educated teachers of high quality and meet national needs.\textsuperscript{114}

The CVCP also went on the offensive. The assumptions of the DES of the benefits of a
separate sector of higher education were suspect. Firstly, there was no evidence that centralised
control would enable the effective rationalisation of resources across both sectors and might lead to
damaging replication of facilities or unwanted interventions into university activities. This was
particularly concerning for the new universities whose plans for growth in economies of scale
achieved through expansion of student numbers and into new areas of study in breadth would be
severely curtailed by a binary policy.\textsuperscript{115} Secondly, there was considerable doubt whether the further

\textsuperscript{111} MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, 16 July 1965.
\textsuperscript{112} MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, CVCP, Minutes, 23 September 1965. This had been announced by the government in
February the same year.
\textsuperscript{114} MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, 16 July 1965.
education sector without the CATs, and with lower pay for their staff, would ever be able to match the prestige of the universities in the eyes of students or the public. These debates were internal to the CVCP and seem to have not been effectively used to bring pressure on policy. But they do indicate that at least some vice-chancellors were not as aloof from the new policy rhetoric as has been assumed.

4.5. DEFENDING THE BROAD UNIVERSITY

4.5.1. Butterworth and Robbins

Despite these worried ruminations, the reformist surge diminished and yet again the CVCP failed to take any decisive action. But as this next section explores, further entrenchment of the binary policy following the publication of the DES White Paper ‘A Plan for Polytechnics’ on 17 May 1966 triggered another high watermark of reformist agitation at the CVCP.

The CVCP had taken something of the initiative to arrange another meeting with Crosland (over a year after their previous meeting) on 20 May 1966. Defending DES plans at the meeting, Crosland argued that the Robbins Report had overestimated the rate of national growth. Without an improvement in the national economy there would be no possibility of an upwards revision of the Robbins’ forecasts for university student numbers. Any further provision would go to the cheaper further education sector, as Crosland claimed that Robbins had not made any guidance on how such a division of candidates above its recommendations should be divided between the two sectors. Crosland further implied that a lack of publicity and communication on behalf of the universities was harming their case for an increased share of student numbers. He effectively made an invitation to

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118 MRC MSS.399/1/1/23, CVCP, Minutes, 17 June 1966. This was not the case (see below).
reformist auxiliaries in the CVCP to make a public case as to what universities were doing to increase university efficiency and productivity.\textsuperscript{119}

In response, the CVCP established a small reformist sub-committee, chaired by Aitken, with two other vice-chancellors and Butterworth, to draft a paper on the ‘philosophy of university development over the next quinquennium and beyond’. In their haste to assemble a rebuttal to Crosland, the subcommittee met entirely by correspondence and produced their papers in just a single month the minutes of the CVCP record, betraying their amazement at such a display of vitality.\textsuperscript{120} Aitken’s paper imaged two paths of development for higher education: the first, an ‘elitist’ solution was a retreat from expansion and protect university student-staff ratios, the second was to be willing to compromise on the grounds that ‘a full and rounded university education is to their own and the country’s advantage’\textsuperscript{121}. Butterworth’s contribution, like his 1965 paper, was galvanizing. It was augmented by reference to Lionel Robbins’ own personal thoughts on the development of higher education.

Making the strongest statement yet from the CVCP in support Aitken’s second option of reformed broad universities, and restating his arguments from his 1965 paper, Butterworth called ‘for the expression of a university view about national needs’ without which ‘that view will go largely unrepresented’. For instance, it was not true, as Crosland had claimed, that the Robbins Report had provided no guidance on the division of additional higher education places: it had insisted the share of qualified school leavers entering universities should increase to sixty percent of all higher education places by 1980. The DES proposals to expand the further education sector would ensure a proportionate decrease in the universities’ share of higher education places, at a time when the CVCP had data that unsatisfied student demand for university places was increasing.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{119} MRC MSS.399/1/1/23, CVCP, Minutes, 17 June 1966.  
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{121} MRC MSS/399/1/1/23, Aitkens, ‘The Role of the Universities in the Higher Education System’, 15 July 1966; Shattock, Making Policy, p. 142.  
\textsuperscript{122} This data was taken from the UCCA. MRC MSS.399/1/1/23, Butterworth, ‘Long Term Planning for Universities’, 15 July 1966.
fundamentally the binary policy was, Butterworth argued, extensively quoting Lionel Robbins speaking at interview in December 1965, an attempt to obliquely acquire ‘state universities’. This was, Robbins had argued, ‘a product partly of the desire for power both at the centre and among the LEAs and partly of mistaken conceptions of what is appropriate for universities to do in the modern age’ – that they were exclusively for disinterested learning. Robbins repeated his reformist argument that universities needed to provide broad educations for ‘graduate training as well as graduate research’. Refuting Crosland’s implication ‘that the universities are less or even not at all responsive to social needs’, Butterworth again quoted Robbins, who had argued that “universities have never failed to respond to a clearly articulated statement of national need”. It was finally time, Butterworth concluded, ‘for the Universities to speak out loudly to dispel such misconceptions about their social responsiveness’. What ‘national needs’ were had been decided without university consultation, and the CVCP needed to be the body that could argue that the universities made a unique contribution to national prosperity.

4.5.2. CVCP Special Weekend, September 1966

These were, however, still internal arguments and there was little concrete action. An anonymous opinion piece in the journal *Nature* published in September 1966, and seen by vice-chancellors, continued to lament the inability of arguments for breadth to make any sort of impact on policy direction. The article argued that since Woolwich the government was becoming ‘hostile’ to academic institutions, yet claimed there was still no sign that universities would do more than lift a ‘gentle little finger in their own defence’. Universities needed to state their unique contribution

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124 Ibid. p. 11.
127 Ibid.
128 MRC MSS.399/1/1/24, ‘Note by the Director of the London School of Economics on University Development’, 23-25 September 1966.
and justify their reception of greater public funding and student numbers. This would include showing, for example, how research fertilized teaching.

Doing this would help to solve some of the pedagogical problems facing the universities. For another, it would help to bring some sense of realism to those who think the second-tier polytechnics will solve all the problems of higher education at a fraction of the cost.  

The CVCP did begin to make such a statement in support of university education, exercising a hitherto unprecedented tenacity by planning its first special weekend meeting (albeit three months later from 23-25 September) which saw extended discussion on the purpose of universities and the CVCP, and a wealth of papers from vice-chancellors.  

A CVCP subcommittee on the form and constitution of the Committee identified that even academic matters ‘such as the range of studies and courses in individual institutions at undergraduate and postgraduate level might become subject to changing public and political interest’, and that the CVCP could not afford to be left out of any discussion. The now much enlarged CVCP with the proliferating new university institutions would need to finally accept it could no longer act only as a consultative body and needed to become, to some extent, executive, to defend (interestingly, not yet promote) academic university values. The subcommittee made several recommendations at the September meeting, but despite the immediacy of reformist concerns, the subcommittee still did not report until February 1967. The consequence was that the committee, rather than making a decisive contribution to the national

130 Ibid.
131 Moser was again invited to examine the statistical foundations of the student number expansion proposals. MRC MSS.399/1/1/23, CVCP Minutes, 17 June 1966
132 The subcommittee did not believe that the CVCP needed to become any more representative, repeating the same argument of Knox in 1964 that a representative committee would be too large to be effective, and many of the matters of discussion at the CVCP (fees, structure of quinquennial finance, cost analysis, pensions, rating, organisation and methods) were mainly for those with ultimate executive responsibility at their universities. MRC MSS.399/1/1/24, CVCP, ‘Report of the sub-committee’, 23-25 September 1966.
debate, became bogged down in discussions of constitutional reform to improve its effectiveness as an instrument of delivering its arguments.

4.5.3. A Pluralist System

The CVCP took its arguments in defence of broad universities to a further meeting with Crosland on the 11 November 1966.\(^\text{135}\) Crosland remained firm that there was no political possibility of a unitary system composed wholly of autonomous institutions but that the binary divide would be mutually advantageous.\(^\text{136}\) There was a strong (techno-nationalist) case ‘from the national economic point of view’, for the development of institutions of vocational and industrial orientation, Crosland argued, which would ‘meet the genuine social demand for vocationally directed training’ (again, it was unclear whether this would be calculated centrally). He continued to insist that technical colleges, ‘under more immediate public control’, of the courses offered and their class sizes, would empower government and local authority to ‘rationalise resources in this sector’.\(^\text{137}\)

However, the reformist arguments clearly had made some impression. Crosland was now more deferential, and now claimed he had ‘not wished to imply in his Woolwich speech that the universities were not responsive to social needs’. This was a qualified retraction however: universities might well respond to the needs of society, but they were not as economically efficient as a local authority and centrally directed sector. Crosland accepted that while the binary divide had been deliberately rigid in the Woolwich speech some relaxation was desirable and ‘he would now prefer to describe the system as a “pluralist” system’.\(^\text{138}\) There should be overlap, mutual co-operation, the sharing of staff and equipment, and that flexible arrangements might be developed. Crosland wrote a more conciliatory speech for an address at the new (and economically-minded) University of Lancaster in February 1967 which he considered a ‘most careful’ articulation of the real

\(^{135}\) See also Shattock, *Making Policy*, p. 63.
\(^{137}\) MRC MSS.399/1/1/24, CVCP, ‘Note of a meeting with the Secretary of State for Education and Science held at Lancaster House on 11 November 1966’, 9 December 1964.
\(^{138}\) Ibid. Crosland also later, as has been frequently cited, regretted the belligerence of the Woolwich speech. Boyle, Crosland, and Kogan, *The Politics of Education*. 

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arguments for the binary policy. He again rescinded in part his criticism of the universities as unresponsive to societal need, but restated the need for provision outside the universities for sub-degree standard vocational provision; part-time study; sandwich courses; other flexible course forms; non-traditional subjects at degree level; to maintain close links with schools and LEAs; and stressed the role of further education in providing social mobility. The rhetoric of the DES continued to soften after Crosland’s departure in 1967 and in May 1969 one of Crosland’s successors Edward Short gave a speech again at Woolwich Polytechnic, which envisaged a time ‘when the two halves of the so-called binary system may be far less distinguishable than they are at present’.

With this promise of a less divisive binary policy, the reformist tide settled. The universities settled into an academic niche which leaned more towards the academic liberal education with concessions towards reformist broad ideas. By 1968, some in the CVCP including Butterworth had accepted a role for the polytechnics in higher education. A CVCP division paper titled ‘A Policy for Polytechnics’ agreed that the strength of the polytechnics lay in the possibility of upwards mobility of students from different social, economic, and class backgrounds to higher-level work. Research was permissible at the polytechnics, and was to ‘be directly related to the practical working conditions of industry and commerce and to the immediate effective improvement of productivity’, through the utilisation of ‘what is already known and of techniques now available’. By contrast the

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139 Godwin implies that Crosland’s Lancaster speech was written but did not take place, Shattock writing later seems to assume it does. Godwin, ‘The Origin of the Binary System’, p. 191; Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 63-64. Sharp, The Creation of the Local Authority Sector of Higher Education, pp. 47-48; on Crosland’s opinion of the speech, see Boyle, Crosland, and Kogan, The Politics of Education; for a comparison between the Woolwich and Lancaster speeches, see Scott, The Crisis of the University, pp. 160-71.

140 The choice of Lancaster was clearly a deliberate statement; it was one of the New Universities, founded in 1964, and Carter had made concerted efforts to improving industry and university relations, financing new student residences through loans, and to university efficiency in his work in cost-efficiency studies at the CVCP (discussed below; see also Chapter Five). Anthony Crosland, ‘Pluralism in Higher Education’, in Dick Leonard (ed.), Socialism Now and Other Essays (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974); Stewart, Higher Education in Postwar Britain, p. 138.


142 MRC MSS.399/1/1/27, Division D, ‘A Policy for Polytechnics’, 17 May 1968. The paper was a topic of considerable discussion amongst vice-chancellors of industry-oriented universities, including Butterworth. MRC MSS.399B/3/POL/2, Butterworth to Christopherson, 9 May 1968; MRC MSS.399/1/1/27, CVCP, Minutes, 17 May 1968.
universities and their students worked at expanding knowledge and across disciplines, though importantly this did not exclude consideration of the practical deployment of that knowledge. Elsewhere the CVCP continued to argue that the division between the liberal education of the universities and vocationalism of further education was entirely arbitrary. It was still in 1969 proposing a unitary system, recommending in place of the binary system ‘a continuous range of higher education institutions differentiated not by status but by function’, including the polytechnics, and hoped that the moratorium on new universities might be lifted in the name of ‘innovation’ to help fill out this spectrum. From the beginning of the 1970s, attempts were made by the CVCP to collaborate with the polytechnics, beginning with an ‘informal dinner’ on 12 November 1970, and the eventual implementation of liaison activities. This led to the acceptance of a higher education system imagined to encompass the range of vocational and academic studies but in dedicated institutions with politically restricted capacities for development across the divide. The vision of a binary policy had won out, but initial antagonism towards the universities had softened as the reformist vanguard of the CVCP made attempts to demonstrate the importance of a broad education.

4.6. ARGUING FOR THE SOCIAL RESPONSIVITY OF UNIVERSITIES

4.6.1. Differing Understandings of National Need

The following section examines how the CVCP made several attempts to argue that the universities were responsive to national needs. The CVCP, firstly, attempted to suggest reforms for tuition fee levels, which universities promoted to enhance their autonomy and responsibility to student demand. Secondly it continued to gesture to the idea that there was pedagogical value to a liberal or

144 MRC MSS.399/1/1/30, CVCP, ‘University Development in the 1970s: Summary of responses from universities to the Committee’s paper circulated’, 5 November 1969.
145 MRC MSS.399/1/1/32, CVCP, Minutes, 16 October 1970. The equivalent of the CVCP for the polytechnics, the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics (CDP), was established in 1970 and by 1975 was meeting informally with the CVCP twice a year. Kogan, Educational Policy-Making: A Study of Interest Groups and Parliament, pp. 191-2. The functions of the CDP were incorporated into the CVCP in 1993 after the fall of the binary divide. Shatton, Making Policy, p. 69.
multidisciplinary university education that vocational training could not provide, and manpower planning could not capture. The CVCP continued the Robbins Report’s argument that university students were not directly equitable with manpower planning techniques and that particularly arts students were capable of contributing productively to the labour market. Thirdly, the CVCP accepted that reformed universities needed to demonstrate ‘value for money’ (after a protracted debate, the universities’ financial books were opened to the Public Accounts Committee) and embarked on a number of cost-efficiency assessment exercises but maintained that universities required proportionately greater investment.\footnote{Maureen Spencer, ‘From Practical Idealism to the Ideology of the Market: Whitehall, Westminster and Higher Education 1963–1983’, \textit{International Journal of the Legal Profession}, 22 (2015); Shatlock and Berdahl, ‘The British University Grants Committee 1919-83: Changing Relationships with Government and the Universities’, pp. 487-88; Kogan, \textit{Educational Policy-Making: A Study of Interest Groups and Parliament}, pp. 197-98.} Some of their arguments anticipate later developments in higher education. However, the DES and the CVCP were working with incompatible conceptions of ‘national need’. The DES continued to expect the universities to demonstrate their contribution to centralised plans and techno-nationalist understandings of the importance of technological training. Given the changes to the Committee and its efforts to respond to national demands whilst advocating its own strengths, the persistence of the image of complacency needs further reconsideration.

4.6.2. The Failure of Fee Reform

Fee reform saw a clash in conceptions of national interest between the DES, which attempted to exercise centralised control over spending, and the CVCP who advocated \textit{per capita} funding and investment in and by individual students.\footnote{Whyte has identified a series of unintended consequences led to an unexpected rise in expenditure on higher education when the proportion of fee income rose over the 1970s and beyond, but the CVCP lobbying to increase fees fully suggests that universities were strategically aware of the consequences of increasing fee income in the 1960s. Whyte, \textit{Redbrick}, p. 300.} The CVCP advocated for a movement away from the centrally determined quinquennial grants funding regime which had ‘virtually broken down’ as a result of inflation.\footnote{MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, Butterworth, ‘Note on student targets’, 23 April 1965.} Instead, to empower planning, vice-chancellors advocated more efficient, diversified, and decentralised allocation of resources so universities could efficiently plan to increase
their student numbers. They were not successful, as the DES made the decision to retain control over expenditure.\textsuperscript{149}

The Robbins Report had argued that a stronger relationship between student demand and funding would secure academic freedom and reduce discrepancies in central allocation due to political preference or social prestige.\textsuperscript{150} This would ensure university development responded explicitly to student demand and investment in or by individual students and their initiative rather than state determinations of national need. One way of doing this was by raising annual tuition fees charged to students, which had depreciated dramatically from over 30 percent of university income to barely 10 percent from 1930-60 as direct government grant rose (see Figure 3, Introduction).\textsuperscript{151}

With the implementation of the mandatory grant in 1962, charging students fees had become something of an anachronism as in England, the state, through Local Authorities as redistribution agents, covered these costs entirely. As they were still directly proportionate to student numbers, however, they remained dependent on subjective determinations of need. The Robbins Committee, cautious of raising fees to the full economic cost of courses believing it would overly politicise state support for students, compromised and recommended an increase to around 20 percent at minimum.\textsuperscript{152} The Report noted pointedly ‘some of us would prefer to see the proportion greater’;

\begin{itemize}
\item The CVCP had also recommended raising fees as early as 1955. See MRC MSS.399/4/2/1, ‘Review of Fees’, 16 November 1955, and jointly with the UGC in 1961. MRC MSS.399/4/2/1, ‘Review of Fees’, 16 August 1962. See also the evidence of Economist Ely Devons to the Robbins Committee, CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. F’, pp. 1772-73. The issue of differential fees between subjects was put aside, given that science subjects due to their facilities were more expensive to produce per place than arts subjects. Sir Thomas Padmore of the Treasury in evidence to the committee saw no reason why differential fees between faculties would be desirable or undesirable. CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. F’, pp. 2011-12. In comments on the first drafts of the report, the committee agreed that the percentage of income from fees to universities should not be raised to the point where the ‘relative profitability of one type of student as compared with another could become a factor in academic planning’, TNA ED116/7, 13 January 1963. See Chapter Three for speculation as to how this relates to Robbins’ preference for a liberal education and general skills over discipline-specific (over)specialised education.
\item Halsey and Trow, \textit{The British Academics}, p. 63.
\item Citing issues including difficulties with differential fees for different courses, and untoward public criticism of high levels of expenditure exclusively on students. CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 213. CVCP, ‘Report on the Quinquennium 1962-1967’, p. 27. Cf. the Treasury evidence to the committee which believed, as it turned out incorrectly (see below), that LEA interest would be mooted by the role of LEAs as exclusively distributive agents and indeed the heightened public interest in payments to student fees was a positive development. CHE, ‘Evidence, Part 1 Vol. F’, pp. 2011-12.
\end{itemize}
unsurprisingly this included Robbins.\textsuperscript{153} By 1965 however, no action had been taken and inflation continued to depreciate the value of fee income.\textsuperscript{154} A CVCP subcommittee reporting in December 1965 argued for a stronger link between student demand and funding, arguing that it would incentivise universities to accommodate more students.\textsuperscript{155} In the subcommittee’s calculations, in order to sustain fees at 11 percent of institutional income, fees would need to increase by 90 percent; to reach 20 percent of institutional income, fees would have to increase by 245 percent. This would mean a fee rise to at least to £150 for 1969/70.\textsuperscript{156} The subcommittee’s report was sent to the UGC, where it was ignored and unacknowledged for a full year.\textsuperscript{157}

In December 1966 as a cost saving manoeuvre, which Crosland later described as ‘totally mishandled’ and inflamed the university community, the DES raised fees for overseas students to £250.\textsuperscript{158} The CVCP immediately expressed its regret at the DES announcement and its lack of university or CVCP consultation.\textsuperscript{159} The proposed fees for overseas students were much higher than the Committee’s 1965 fee proposals and lacked its ‘non-discriminatory’ character.\textsuperscript{160} Vice-chancellors accepted the implementation of the new fees on the understanding there would be further consideration of long-term fees policy.\textsuperscript{161} In September 1967 Division B under Carter, after consultation with the UGC, drafted a memorandum proposing to eliminate the fee differential to

\textsuperscript{153} CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 212-14. Robbins was not coy about revealing this either: ‘I was one of the ‘some’. I would like to see the proportion much higher’: Robbins, \textit{University in the Modern World} pp. 31-32.

\textsuperscript{154} MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, CVCP, Minutes, 16 July April 1965

\textsuperscript{155} MRC MSS.399/1/1/22, CVCP, Minutes, 24 September 1965.

\textsuperscript{156} MRC MSS.399/1/1/31, CVCP, ‘Fees: Draft letter from the Chairman to the Chairman of the UGC in reply to his letter of the 2 January 1970’, 10 March 1970.


\textsuperscript{160} MRC MSS.399/1/1/23, CVCP, Minutes, 27 January 1967.

\textsuperscript{161} MRC MSS.399/1/1/28, Division B, ‘Tuition Fees – Long Term Fees Policy: Note by the Divisional Officer’, 18 October 1968.
ameliorate any ‘racial (or national) discrimination’. Raising fees was also explicitly presented as ‘an incentive to universities to increase their ‘productivity’’. It might also increase the proportion of fees recovered from wealthy students.

The CVCP proposals were shot down in flames by discussions in July 1968, a delay of nine months ‘despite continuous pressure from the Committee’. LEA representatives considered an increase of fees to be an impossible burden on their finances. Instead, the LEAs argued that it would be better to abolish the fees or for them to be paid centrally through the DES. Centralised payment of fees was, reluctantly, accepted by the CVCP as the ‘best prospect for retaining fees as a separate element of recurrent income’.

But the DES, after further negotiations, rejected any rise in centrally paid fees. It argued that encouraging universities to accommodate more students than centrally determined constituted an ‘open-ended’ funding commitment to unplanned expenditure. This reopened debates about who should pay for their education. Given the increasing competition for limited national resources expected over the 1970s, the UGC ‘would feel unable to dismiss the idea of student loans’, to replace the mandatory grant. Centralised payments of fees should be organised to make the implementation of a loans system possible, the UGC argued.

Division B of the CVCP resolved to keep the issue of the continued payment of fees by the state separate from the issues of the proportion of university income that should be paid by fees, and the CVCP at least twice rejected proposals to introduce loans as cost saving measures, in 1969

163 MRC MSS.399/1/1/28, CVCP, Minutes, 18 October 1968.
164 The discussions included the Minister of State, Shirley Williams, representatives of the DES and Scottish Education Department, the CVCP (represented by Carter, CVCP Chairman Wilson and future chairman H. N. Robson), the UGC, and Local Education Associations and the Local Authorities. MRC MSS.339/1/1/28, Division B, ‘Tuition Fees – Long Term Fees Policy: Note by the Divisional Officer’, 18 October 1968. MRC MSS.399/1/1/27, ‘Note of a meeting on long-term fee policy’, 12 July 1968.
165 This was the existing Scottish pattern of the payment of fees. MRC MSS.399/1/1/27, ‘Note of a meeting on long-term fee policy’, 12 July 1968.
166 MRC MSS.399/1/1/28, CVCP, Minutes, 13 December 1968.
167 MRC MSS.399/1/1/29, Draft letter from the Chairman, UGC, to the permanent secretary, Department of Education & Science, 12 January 1969.
168 MRC MSS.399/1/1/31, ‘Fees: copy of a letter from the Chairman of the UGC to the Chairman’, 2 January 1970.
169 MRC MSS.399/1/1/28, Copy of a letter, dated 28 November 1968 from the Chairman of the UGC to the Chairman, 29 November 1968.
The CVCP, however, continued into the 1970s to campaign for a greater alignment of fees with undergraduate students numbers and therefore elevated the importance of individual choice.

4.6.3. Negotiating the Pattern of Higher Education

Unsurprisingly the CVCP was still battling a conception of the universities as narrow, academic institutions whose graduates the DES did not believe were suited to meet the national need for scientific and technological manpower. The DES Planning Branch, established by Crosland in 1966, produced future projections of student numbers in 1969. Despite predicting more qualified school leavers than Robbins, the planning branch anticipated 17,000 fewer students at universities in 1980 than Robbins, or 58 percent of qualified school leavers versus Robbins’ 75 percent. The rest would attend institutions of further education.

The UGC reported that the planning board had considered that, rather than just looking at the student demand for higher education, as Robbins had done, it had anticipated ‘the needs of the economy and of society’ in terms of ‘national needs for graduate output of various types where these could be reasonably precisely stated by the Government’. The planning branch considered its manpower calculations representative of the needs of the economy and society. ‘Leaving aside the pressure of [student] demand’, the planning board argued that there was no ‘shortage’ of arts students, and indeed that there was no ‘quantifiable output needs for Arts-based graduates’. Instead, science-based undergraduates were determined to be paramount to national needs.

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174 Ibid.

175 Ibid.
By contrast the CVCP continued to argue that reformed universities provided students with greater skills than manpower planning could capture and became far more direct in contending this. Division A argued, repeating precisely the same criticisms of manpower planning of the Robbins Report, that such manpower calculations were unreliable. The division considered the DES manpower estimations as involving ‘too great an element of conjecture, especially in relation to the career of arts’ graduates’. The DES also ignored the fact that ‘graduates in for example, economics, law and English seem currently to get jobs almost if not quite as easily as scientists or technologists’, particularly in the civil service. In any case, the division continued, ‘a great deal of university education is not designed to fit persons for specific vocations’. Universities had a wider purpose they were undertaking reform to deliver: not only to provide a highly specialised professional education which manpower planning was most concerned ‘but also education suitable for those whose careers require general ability rather than technical expertise’. This flexibility of a broad education, not accommodated for in systems with high centralised control, was desirable and should continue. The centralised adjustment of university graduates for short-term fluctuations predicted by manpower planning would prevent such a beneficial distribution. Division A believed that the DES and UGC backed estimations therefore represented ‘an extremely “elitist” view of the role of universities’, as exclusively specialist liberal academic institutions. Division D would go on to argue that the student places provided in the plan would fail to satisfy the student demand of many high-achieving candidates. These arguments were ignored by the DES. A second paper was published by the DES Planning Branch in 1970 without consultation with the UGC or the CVCP, which

176 MRC MSS.399/1/1/29, Division A, Minutes, 28 February 1969.
177 MRC MSS.399/1/1/29, CVCP, A note of University Development to 1981/82, 24 June 1969; see also MRC MSS.399/4/1/1, CVCP, ‘University Development in the 1970s: A statement of views by the Committee’, April 1970.
180 MRC MSS.399/1/1/29, Division A, Minutes, 27 March 1969.
181 MRC MSS.399/1/1/29, CVCP, A note of University Development to 1981/82, 24 June 1969.
Division B described as similarly ‘misconceived’.\textsuperscript{182} From this perspective the failure of the CVCP to instigate any substantial effect on policy seems to have had as much to do with the prevailing techno-nationalist discourse as it did with the institutional inefficiency of the CVCP.

4.6.4. Cost-Efficiency Studies

After 1966 the CVCP put considerable energy into investigating and evidencing universities’ economic use of public funds. The CVCP responded to Crosland’s request for information on efforts to raise the productivity of the universities through a number of subcommittees.\textsuperscript{183} This included the ‘Cost Analysis’ subcommittee, and the ‘Use of Capacity’ subcommittee under Carter, which reported a ‘dangerous’ situation in variable and often low utilisation of university spaces. The findings of his subcommittee were leaked to the press where they were presented as further evidence of universities’ inefficiency rather than a sign of the universities’ willingness to police their efficiency.\textsuperscript{184}

Even with these analyses, it was necessary for the CVCP to justify the remaining extra expenditure that universities required over the polytechnics. In their discussion from 1969 of Shirley Williams’ ‘thirteen points’ for making cost-efficiency savings on university expenditure, the CVCP bluntly rejected all these suggestions and argued that it was well justified that national investment in higher education should remain high.\textsuperscript{185} While this attracted the ‘irritation’ of politicians and the DES, the CVCP insisted that universities, by contrast to the polytechnics, were broader institutions.

\textsuperscript{182} MRC MSS.399/1/1/31, Division B, ‘Report’, 21 May 1970.

\textsuperscript{183} This was probably a more effective strategy than the sassy remarks made in evidence to the Committee of Public Accounts that as public contributions to the universities were insufficient, the universities would be ‘the first to suffer if they did not derive the maximum value from the funds made available to them’: MRC MSS.399/1/1/24, CVCP, Memorandum to the Committee of Public Accounts, 18 October 1966. On the universities and the PAC see Salter and Tapper, \textit{The State and Higher Education}, pp. 38-43.

\textsuperscript{184} MRC MSS.399/1/1/24, CVCP, Minutes, 21 October 1966; MRC MSS.399/1/1/25, CVCP, Minutes, 17 November 1967. The \textit{Sunday Times} ran a leader stating that the subcommittee was about to publish a ‘dramatic indication of current waste of university capacity’ (an ‘unfair’ summary of views, Carter argued) prompting Carter to issue a reminder to the main committee of the importance of confidentiality: MRC MSS.399/1/1/25, CVCP, Minutes, 17 July 1967; Nicholas Llyod, ‘University team hits at waste’, \textit{The Sunday Times}, 11 June 1967.

which fostered cross-disciplinary study.\textsuperscript{186} The most useful vocational role of a university was to give a student a ‘good general education so that he [sic] is well equipped to use his own judgement in dealing with problems when they arise’.\textsuperscript{187} This might only be achieved by autonomous institutions’ expensive, but unique and valuable, link between teaching and research.\textsuperscript{188} The growing output of graduates from universities meant that they entered jobs they had not traditionally filled, spreading the benefits of educated graduates to a wider section of society. The CVCP was certainly insensitively arrogant in their demands for funding in a manner that won them no favours when universities were already publicly perceived as imperious. But their demands were justified by reference to concerns for the importance of a broad education to national prosperity, rather than a retreat from such concerns.

\textbf{4.7. CONCLUSIONS}

Instead of than appearing as completely ineffective, in this study there are hints of a more dynamic understanding of the role of the university at the CVCP through the 1960s. The old guard of the CVCP do seem to exhibit this sluggishness in their refusal to respond to calls for reform of higher education. However, throughout the early to late 1960s the CVCP and new wave of vice-chancellors was promoting and reimagining the importance of a university education in the light of new national policy demands. For these elements of the CVCP, the DES and techno-nationalists underestimated the contribution that universities could make to society. A system in which the needs of society were centrally determined by manpower plans and by favouring vocational and technological studies suffocated the contribution of a liberal education and individual initiative.

Despite this vitality the Committee was particularly unsuccessful in influencing any change. In the domain of policy techno-nationalist preoccupations with science and technology and their

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{186} Kogan, \textit{Educational Policy-Making: A Study of Interest Groups and Parliment}, p. 197.  
\textsuperscript{188} MRC MSS.399/4/1/1, CVCP, ‘University Development in the 1970s: A Statement of Views by the Committee’, April 1970, pp. 5-6; MRC MSS.399/4/1/2, CVCP, ‘Memorandum to the Secretary of State for Education and Science on Policy and Finance for the Quinquennium 1972-77’, 4 February 1972, p. 1.}
importance for national prosperity prevailed. DES officials, such as William Pile in 1972, still questioned the responsiveness of universities to changing national needs. Pile recognised that universities were changing, but while there were more vocational courses at universities, ‘this did not necessarily mean that they understood or inculcated the cast of mind best suited to many careers in industry, commerce or public administration’. Later that same year the CVCP noted with regret that the White Paper, ‘Education: a framework for expansion’, failed to recognise the unique role of universities. Even after reforms in 1971 and a new general purposes committee, in 1973 the CVCP still felt the need to consider further systematic extension to arrangements to communicate an understanding of universities to Ministers, opposition officials, back-benchers, the press, and the public including parents and schools. The ongoing revision by the CVCP of its organisation and structure after 1966 demonstrates an awareness of its inefficiency and chronic inability to combat techno-nationalist critiques.

Maurice Kogan in 1975 could triumphantly argue that the CVCP during the 1960s had retreated from a position of arrogance and ignorance of manpower demands and schools and had come to accept the necessity of a binary policy for national prosperity. It would be true to say that the CVCP began to more precisely proclaim the importance of universities to meet the needs of a modern society. It would not be helpful to say that this was an entirely new acceptance that the universities needed to contribute to national prosperity. Even in 1962 the universities believed they were making a substantial and important contribution. It might even be possible to say, in an ironic development, that the success of techno-nationalist forces ossified the liberal university. It suppressed reformist elements of the Committee in the medium term who were most interested in demonstrating the social returns of a university education. Instead, universities were boxed in by the

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189 MRC MSS.399/1/1/32, CVCP, Minutes, 29 September 1972; CVCP, Minutes, 10 November 1972.
190 MRC MSS.399/1/1/32, CVCP, Minutes, 8 December 1972.
expanding further education sector, which solidified the idea that universities were entirely for the disinterested pursuit of truth and neglected national needs.\textsuperscript{193}

Whether the CVCP fully deserves its hardened reputation for complacency in the 1960s from this perspective becomes a less straight-forward question. In exploring the relationship that the CVCP fostered with industry, the question becomes even more interesting. The CVCP came to argue after 1965 that university graduates were as suited to productive and socially responsible careers in industry as those of the polytechnics, if not more so. It did this by opening up channels of communication with industry in the form of conferences, and in a joint committee with the Confederation of British Industries.

\textsuperscript{193} On the criticism that the universities and the CVCP had failed to adequately respond to Robbins, see Moser, 'The Robbins Report 25 Years after—and the Future of the Universities'; Silver, \textit{Higher Education and Opinion Making}, pp. 242-43.
5. MAKING THE GRADUATE WORK FOR INDUSTRY, 1952-1972

5.1. UNIVERSITIES AND INDUSTRY

5.1.1. Aspects of Interdependence

On 21 April 1965, following informal discussions, the president of the Federation of British Industries (FBI) wrote to the Chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP), proposing to establish ‘means of joint consultation on common interests with the universities’. The letter was especially pertinent: Anthony Crosland gave his Woolwich speech condemning the capacity of universities to respond to the needs of society just days later. A joint conference between the FBI and the CVCP, titled ‘Industry and the Universities: Aspects of Interdependence’, was held later that year in December at University of London Senate House. The FBI reported the idea of the conference was ‘very popular’ and sent over 130 delegates; most universities and Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs) sent four to five representatives including all vice-chancellors. In total many as 250 representatives attended including prominent government officials, but of all these delegates, only one was a woman. At the conference’s formal dinner, Prime Minister Harold Wilson addressed the attendees, and encouraged them to ‘have a get-together’, and establish machinery to keep them committed to application of the themes of the conference. A sense that urgent purposeful action was necessary to remedy uncompetitive British industry pervaded the conference.

As the previous chapters have explored, pressure had been building on university leaders to make a concrete statement of how they contributed to society and national needs. They responded

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1 MSS.399/3/UIJC/1/1, CVCP, ‘FBI: Proposed Joint Committee: Copy of letter, dated 21 April 1965’, 23 April 1965. The FBI's proposed joint committee was intended to complement the existing joint committees of the FBI, including with the technical and commercial colleges.
2 Delegates from the FBI included notable names such as Maurice Laing (President), and Lord Beeching (ICI). Over fifty other representatives attended including ten representatives of the Association of University Teachers (AUT), Wolfenden and E. R. Copleston of the UGC, Harry Melville (Chairman of the Science Research Council), and J. P. Carswell (Universities Branch, DES, and observer to the Robbins Committee). On women in industry, see below.
by rethinking the values of liberal education offered by the universities. As Chapter Four explored, the CVCP did champion these concerns, but often falteringly. They were habitually out of step with the perception of the universities at a policy level and how the needs of society were envisaged by the Department of Education and Science (DES) and by techno-nationalists. The DES favoured the dissemination of technological and scientific knowledge over liberal education of the universities. For these techno-nationalists, it was clear that industry needed more of this technological manpower to arrest British decline.

One of the primary arguments of this thesis has been that the predominance of this declinist narrative has obscured the development and diversification of the universities’ liberal education. This chapter continues this line of argument to demonstrate that, since the end of the Second World War, industrialists and university leaders believed that liberal education was of critical relevance to the practical affairs of industry. This subtly shifted by the late 1960s to the idea that a university education should in itself reinforce the values of industry. The universities provided students with, firstly, a wider appreciation and an understanding of the societal context of their specialisms (often scientific and technological) and, secondly, the initiative to apply that knowledge in the complicated interdisciplinary world of industry for the practical good of society. This increasingly meant appreciating liberal capitalism. Such an education was necessary to meet the national need, beyond narrow specialist technological manpower. In taking these arguments forwards, the universities could demonstrate they were responding to and in many ways anticipating societal demand. Tracking the development of the different guises of liberal education through publications, conferences, and reports, sheds light on what Robert Anderson has identified as the underexplored general relationship between ‘the universities, technology and industry in the twentieth century’.5

5 Anderson, ‘Writing University History in Great Britain, from the 1960s to the Present’, p. 38.
5.1.2. British Industry and Character

As this thesis has explored, from 1945 to the early 1960s universities continued to hold a not entirely warranted reputation as the premier sites of a liberal education: an education in sciences or arts in abstract or ‘pure’ principles fit for a leisured, normally male governing class who had no need for ‘applied knowledge’ or to perform technical or manual labour. To promote their ‘character’, a student was educated in an entirely ‘academic’ subject (classically, Greek and Latin) and trained in the powers of the mind. The complete ‘man’ would, upon completion of his education, be inherently capable of excellence in any capacity. Vocational training and liberal educations had coexisted in the first half of the twentieth century. Meritocrats from across the political spectrum believed that different educations were suited to different people with different inherent mental capacities. Those with a predisposition for rationality and intelligence were best suited to liberal education and leadership and study in the arts, and those without this disposition were best suited to subservience and practical studies often associated with technological studies and vocations. The historiography has tended to follow the assumption that prior to the 1950s, a degree was not widely seen as preparation for a vocational career. Frequently reported was a lingering sense that at Oxbridge in particular, as one commentator reported, an emphasis on careers and training was considered ‘faintly vulgar’. In 1957, there was still a sense that resident scientists were considered ‘peripheral interlopers in the real business of the University’ due to the scientific ‘training’ they provided. Societal enthusiasm for scientific and technological manpower provoked public reactions and

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7 For a particularly clear distinction between the forms of liberal education that emerged in this period, see MRC MSS.399/3/UUC/1, Foundation for Management Education, ‘Note on First Degrees in Management Studies’, June 1970.
8 Wooldridge, Measuring the Mind.
9 Joyce, The State of Freedom.
defences of a liberal education: for instance the Swansea University College philosopher Peter Winch gave a series of lectures on BBC radio titled ‘The University has no Purpose’ in 1956.\(^\text{13}\)

Following this general sense of detachment of the values of modern industry and the universities, the existing historical literature evaluating their relationship has been quite critical. This argument that a university education was overly concerned with elite character and arts at the expense of the scientific and technological studies needed for industrial development was a major component of the declinist narratives of the period. Such narratives are typified by C. P. Snow, and were later restated by Martin Wiener, Corelli Barnett, and Keith Joseph in the 1980s.\(^\text{14}\) Industry too has come under attack as protectionist, concerned that new machinery and increases in productivity would depreciate wages and lead to unemployment.\(^\text{15}\) Michael Sanderson’s prescient anti-declinist monograph, *The Universities and British Industry 1850-1970* (1972), still today identified as the seminal work on the topic, actually makes a similar criticism of industry from 1946-72. He blamed complacent industry for failing to utilise the innovations of the universities.\(^\text{16}\) In his analysis of a series of national conferences and liaison activities between universities and employers, Sanderson roundly criticised of the expectations industrialists had of universities. They shunned trained manpower in favour of the ‘right sort of chap’ and men of ‘character’.\(^\text{17}\) This was, Sanderson charges, almost an ‘anti-intellectualism’ which ‘denigrated academic excellence and specific qualifications’.

\(^{13}\) Peter Winch, ‘A defence of academic values against utilitarianism’, Third Programme, BBC, 1956. See Hanson, ‘The Education of the Technologist’, p. 117.


\(^{17}\) See also Tiratsoo and Tomlinson, *The Conservatives and Industrial Efficiency, 1951-64*, pp. 129-30.
and instead stressed sporting ability. Sanderson derided industrialist Sir Ronald Weeks’ suggestions through the 1950s that “studiousness” was the “real danger which faces the universities,” (Weeks had ‘obtained a third-class honours at Caius College Cambridge in part one of the natural sciences tripos in 1911 and captained the university association football team’).18

The relationship between the FBI and higher education has been similarly criticised. In 1994 Michael Shattock described the evidence of the FBI to the UGC New Universities Sub-Committee in the early 1960s as ‘extraordinarily conservative’. The FBI preferred new universities to be away from industrial centres and of a size of 2000 students, such as that proposed by Norwich and York. They favoured expansion centred on science and technology, not on the arts, but these graduates should still be ‘rounded and balanced men’ in contrast to the technically trained graduates of the CATs.19

5.1.3. Reassessing Conservatism

This historiography continues to overstate the conservatism of industry and the universities.20 The emphasis on a broad education providing character was believed by university leaders and industrialists to have wider dimensions than whether or not a graduate had been a member of the ‘rugger club’ at Oxford. The FBI has been shown to have valued grammar school liberal science education not because industrialists disdained technological and vocational education but because they were more confident in the capacity of liberal education to transmit and raise the status of

18 Sanderson, The Universities and British Industry, p. 356; see also his continued criticism later in 1987 in Michael Sanderson, Educational Opportunity and Social Change in England (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 14. Sanderson’s interest is mainly pre-1945, and the two chapters he dedicates to post-war relationships are clearly coloured by his context. See also Anderson, ‘Writing University History in Great Britain, from the 1960s to the Present’, p. 29; H. O. Hooper, ‘Weeks, Ronald Morce, Baron Weeks’, ODNB.


industrial and practical values.\textsuperscript{21} Indeed, Stefan Collini has shown how the educated ‘gentleman’ had been subjected to a transformation since the nineteenth century. His conduct moved from a celebrating ‘virtue’ to displaying ‘character’ wherein the private (gendered male) individual was a ‘moral agent whose mastering of his circumstances is indirectly a contribution to the vitality and prosperity of his society’, including the pursuit of wealth.\textsuperscript{22} A. A. Part, under-secretary to the Ministry of Education, in a pamphlet published by the FBI in 1957 was struck by the importance industrialists placed on the values of liberal education for technologists.\textsuperscript{23} Surveys from the post-war period similarly indicate employers were coming to appreciate the degree as preparation for a career in industry by the 1950s. British policy thinktank Politics and Economic Planning provided evidence in the 1950s that ‘industry has become, and that only recently, the largest single user of university men’, and ‘the universities now send more men into industry than into any other walk of life’. Of a sample of 7000 graduates in 1950s, 37.8 percent went into industrial occupations.\textsuperscript{24} Further data indicated that the appeal of industrial careers for students also rose across the 1960s and there is convincing evidence that most students entered higher education foremost with vocational purposes – if not with a specific career in mind.\textsuperscript{25} Peter Mandler has argued that as increasing numbers of young people chose to pursue university education rather than entering into employment upon leaving school, employers had to learn to employ and appreciate degree holders.\textsuperscript{26} This chapter, however, shows that rather than industrialists and employers being entirely reactive to the increasing demand for university education, industrialists themselves, many of them graduates, and parents or grandparents, simultaneously valued a university education. Industrialists

\textsuperscript{26} Mandler, \textit{Crisis of Meritocracy}. 
alongside university leaders came to reimagine the universities’ role. It came to include the transmission of an appreciation of the function and operation of liberal industrial capitalism, such as understanding the role of the profit motive and exercising individual initiative.

This chapter’s analysis of these industrialists’ networks contributes to a wider historiography that has explored the role of liberal ideas in British society. The incorporation of an appreciation of liberal capitalism into an education for character was happening at precisely the same time, as John Davis has identified, as the development of a jealousy in the Conservative party of the links formed between Labour party and ‘socialist’ academics. There are similar signs of a burgeoning appreciation in British conservative networks for the education of ‘professional secondhand dealers in ideas’, in Friedrich Hayek’s coining. The successor body to the FBI from 1965, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has been the subject of historical focus by Neil Rollings, who has uncovered the role of ‘neoliberal’ thought in the activities of business leaders and their organisations in the 1960s. On the left, a concern with self-interest was shared with revisionist Labour that private interest was no vice in the service of the pursuit of prosperity. James Vernon has invited historians to consider a wider diversity of actors in our narratives of the development and speciation of

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neoliberalism. The plans and thoughts of industrialists examined in this chapter provide further evidence of the dynamism of social democracy and higher education expansionism. It might also shed some light on the contradictions between the innate conservatism and industrial orientation identified by Sam Blaxland at, for example, the University College of Swansea and other developing institutions.

5.2. UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY CONFERENCES

5.2.1. Ashorne Hill

Analysis of a series of national conferences mainly organised by the FBI in the post-war period demonstrates the changing importance of ‘breadth’ as preparation for the graduate to enter industry. Like early post-war university leaders, industrialists at these conferences generally imagined the students they would recruit were a small elite male (the use of male pronouns by industry to refer to graduates persisted unchallenged throughout the 1950s and early 1960s) clerisy who would excel in any position. There were at least six national conferences between 1948-55, with a number held at Ashorne Hill at Leamington Spa, and the FBI published reports of many more regional conferences until its reconstitution. The 1952 conference, for example, was attended by 150 delegates including prominent university representatives: John Fulton (associated with Keele but head of Swansea and later Sussex), Malcolm Knox (St. Andrews), Douglas Logan (London), Philip Morris (Bristol), Eric Ashby (Queen’s Belfast), and included FBI dignitaries from companies such as Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), Shell, and the Rowntrees (represented by William Wallace, who played a foundational role in the early plans for a University of York where the themes of the conferences clearly resonated as Chapter Six explores). Speakers at the 1952 conference stressed

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31 Vernon, ‘Heathrow and the Making of Neoliberal Britain’.
32 Blaxland, Swansea University: Campus and Community in a Post-War World, 1945-2020, especially p. 83.
34 Sanderson, The Universities and British Industry, p. 356. These conferences are mentioned but not interrogated in Halsey and Trow, The British Academics, p. 166.
35 On Fulton’s contribution to these conferences see Blaxland, Swansea University, pp. 52-53. For the Rowntrees’ contribution to the study of management see Maclean and others, ‘Seebohm Rowntree and the
what would soon become a persistent concern right up to the 1970s that industry needed to attract a greater share of the output of university graduates. This was expressed as a concern for securing a larger proportion of the ‘strictly limited’ population of the ‘men [sic] obtaining first class honours degrees’ (Ashby gave a paper using IQ scores to argue that the ‘barrier to university education today is largely an intellectual one, not a financial one’). There was a strong association of these male students with meritocratic elite leadership.

Much of the discussion at the conference was concerned with broadening the education of the university graduate and this already included an appreciation of the importance of productive industry to Britain.\textsuperscript{36} One speaker from ICI detailed what was meant by ‘breadth’. Industry needed ‘men who have been trained to think, to understand, to be critical and to have initiative, rather than those who have been crammed with knowledge’ or specific training which would soon be obsolete due to the pace of technological change. Such a broad education was to provide ‘character’, and part of this character was the capacity for men to understand the social philosophy of industry and its benefits.\textsuperscript{37} They needed to appreciate the objective of industry was not the blind pursuit of profits without social conscience. Industry’s true purpose should be understood as providing, ‘with the minimum consumption of real resources, the goods and services which the community required’.\textsuperscript{38} As a subsequent conference noted, breadth was needed not just by specialised technologists but also arts graduates for administration and management who needed ‘personality and character, an ability to assess evidence, to think clearly and express conclusions, qualities which are developed at

\textsuperscript{36} MRC MSS.399/3/CON/2, Federation of British Industry, ‘Report of the Universities and Industry Conference’ (FBI, London, 1952), pp. 1-2; Eric Ashby, ‘Can the universities consistently with their other obligations, turn out men with the qualities required by industry?’ in ibid, p. 27.


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, pp. 74-75.
attendees at these conferences were keen to secure such men, as without them, British prosperity would falter.

5.2.2. Liberal and Technical Education

Broad social pressures for scientific and technological knowledge and skilled personnel were sustained. Through this impetus, technological studies such as engineering (studied within a liberal milieu which developed a mode of thought but still assumed to be vocational training) had gained further currency at universities on top of growth in earlier decades by the 1950s. Ashby, for example, in his widely discussed Technology and the Academics (1958), followed broader trends in arguing that the subject content of university education was not what constituted a liberal education but the habits of character and mind that it promoted. Similar arguments were made to stress the need of liberalising the training of technologists. Peter Venables, then Principal of Birmingham CAT (and the institution’s first Vice-Chancellor from 1966-69 when it became Aston University), argued for a ‘liberal technical education’ in a pamphlet published by the FBI in 1957, which C. P. Snow called a ‘challenging paper’. Vocational training, Venables argued, should not make men into specialised machines but needed also to be an education of ‘the will and emotions upon which the happiness of the individual, the well-being of society at large and of industry in particular, so largely depend’. Society, Venables warned, neglected the character of its technicians at its peril. He advocated a broad understanding of the context of technological learning, arguing a technological student should understand the ‘evolution of democratic government and society’, and national and international economics with special reference to industry, delivered not through lectures but in small discussion

41 For an exploration of the historical importance of liberalising the education of technologists in further education generally focusing after the 1960s, see Simmons, ‘The Historical Experience of Liberal Studies for Vocational Learners in Further Education’; Simmons, ‘Civilising the Natives? Liberal Studies in Further Education Revisited’; Simmons, ‘It Wasn’t the Wilt Experience’ (at Least for Some)’; Simmons, ‘Liberal Studies and Critical Pedagogy in Further Education Colleges: ‘Where Their Eyes Would Be Opened’ (Sometimes)’.
groups. Vernon’s recommendations were adopted by technical colleges and similar recommendations appeared in government white papers. The continuity of post-war concerns of R. H. Tawney and Lord Lindsay (see Chapter Two) to bolster the democratic values of working young people and to mitigate against their political radicalisation are evident.

Even where the details of the sort of liberal education provided were disputed there was a general agreement that there was a useful societal role for liberally educated graduates. Norwood Russell Hanson, lecturer in philosophy of science at Cambridge, in a *Universities Quarterly* symposium on the education of technologists argued that:

> A liberal education in a technical age is no different in principle from a liberal education in an agricultural age, or an artistic age or a classical age [...] the well-educated man is always the one whose special interests are the lens through which he can view a large area of the world around him.

This would arm students with the skills needed to tackle unsolved problems in modern society. Hanson then sketched out a fascinating imaginary course of breadth for the educated aeronautical engineer titled ‘History and Philosophy of Aviation’ ranging from *archaeopteryx* to the Convair B-58. In their responses, two other contributors doubted that the cultivation of breadth and curiosity outside immediate specialisms was enough of a dose of ‘common culture’ to act as a civilising influence. One raised the spectre of ‘Nazi doctors who experimented on the victims of Belsen, and who were no doubt men of interest, curiosity, and even imagination (of a sort)’, and another recommended a pedestrian liberal arts course centred on classic books. While their proposed

43 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
course content and teaching methods differed, their disagreements are overstated: none disagreed that graduates with a fuller appreciation of civilised values were essential to secure the good society and might make contributions beyond trained and directed manpower.

The post-war commitment to overcoming disciplinary boundaries was pursued in this context and is particularly evident in the development of new universities. This includes the broad foundation year at University College North Staffordshire (Keele) from 1949, and later the new ‘maps of learning’ at Sussex in 1961, for example. The attraction of other New Universities to joint courses and the social sciences have long been identified as a defining characteristic of these universities’ early years. Keele’s foundation year was not a straightforward classic liberal arts education as some commentators believed and was envisaged to supply personnel not just for the welfare state but industry through a radical curriculum. Professor of Physics at North Staffordshire Francis Arthur Vick, former Vice-Principal and Acting Principal (1950-54), in his response to the Universities Quarterly symposium, reported his broad teaching of the scientific method and principles to arts students meant that employers found his students ‘much more immediately valuable’. Sussex under Fulton took forwards the concern for overcoming divisions between arts and sciences and argued for interdisciplinary and holistic approaches better suited to problem solving than disciplinary rigidity, and to harness the productive power of the individual versus the collective in the face of Cold War competition. Chapter Six will continue to explore the significance of these factors on the other New Universities of the 1950s and 1960s; this chapter will remain at the level of national policy discussion. Situating these developments in the rhetoric of industrialists

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References:

Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History, pp. 159, 65, 71. See the discussion in Silver, 'Higher Technological Education in England: The Crucial Quarter Century', pp. 303-04.

49 See Chapter Six.

50 See also Taylor’s discussion of Alec Lindsay in Taylor, 'Keele: Post-War Pioneer'.


suggests these types of innovation were much more closely attuned to national needs than the historiography has tended to assume.

5.2.3. Robbins, Acceptance of Breadth, and Gender

As Chapter Three discussed the label of a ‘liberal education’ appears to disappear in university parlance as the 1960s progressed, eclipsed primarily with an emphasis on education in breadth or avoiding ‘overspecialisation’. As Venables argued the term ‘liberal education’ carried with it ‘illiberal implications as to the nature of vocational and specialist studies’. 53 Once again, evidence to the Robbins Committee (1961-63) is a useful barometer of university opinion. While the Robbins committee explicitly invited witnesses to consider liberal education ‘in relation to professional requirements and the needs of employers’ and the idea was frequently discussed in evidence by witnesses, the phrase itself appears only once or twice in the main text of the report. 54 By contrast to Shattock’s reading of the FBI position on higher education as conservative, the evidence the federation gave to the Robbins Committee maintained the arguments made in its earlier conferences: that industry was increasingly recruiting graduates who had received a broad education and wanted greater responsibility within higher education to help secure it. 55 The FBI wanted men ‘who have learned how to think and who could use their knowledge with confidence and ability’, and this particularly included ‘arts men’ with an insight into technology, capable of exercising ‘relative judgements’, critical for industry and life. 56 The specialised scientist, by contrast ‘appears rather uncommunicative and he is handicapped by his inability to deal with relative judgements’. 57

The sociological research of the Robbins Report formalised a radical change in how industry and universities understood the pool of ability and what liberal education was for. Repudiating the limited pool of ability imagined by earlier conferences, the pool of ability was now considered to be essentially unlimited. The idea of competition to attract members of a limited elite remained. Blaxland reported that engineering students often tallied up the number of jobs they rejected, and fears of the ‘Brain Drain’ of British university educated talent especially to the United States led to the Jones Report in 1967.\(^58\) However, now a wider proportion of young people were deemed of high enough ‘quality’ to attend higher education it was more important than ever that their education would permit them to best contribute to industry.\(^59\) There was also a hint of a gendered dimension to this expansion. While the use of masculine pronouns remained overwhelming in the discourse, graduates entering industry were no longer entirely unquestioningly assumed to be male by 1965.\(^60\) Maurice Hookham, president of the Association of University Teachers, noted at the ‘Aspects of Interdependence’ conference that:

The audience this morning is essentially a monastic one. There is a complete absence of ladies from the industrial block of people at this conference and only one from the staff of the universities. [...] we are ignoring one half of the population.

He hoped that if the conference were reconvened in 1980 ‘it would be possible, without blushing, for the chairman to open the proceedings by saying “Ladies and Gentlemen”’.\(^61\) For university leaders, industrialists’ concerns resonated with the Robbins Report’s objectives for higher education: to prepare increasing numbers and types of young people for life in productive society, it was necessary to arm them with ‘skills suitable to play a part in the general division of labour’, which was not so distinct from improving ‘general powers of the mind’, or appreciating the ‘common culture’ of

\(^{58}\) Blaxland, *Swansea University*, p. 146; CBI, British Institute of Management, ‘Stemming the Brain Drain’ (Churchill College, Cambridge, 22-23 March 1968).


\(^{60}\) See for example, Miss Harvie Anderson (Renfrew, East), Hansard, ‘Commons Chamber’, Vol. 709 (London, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office), Thursday 25 March 1965, clm 782.

western industrial capitalism. Industry was even an ally in the pursuit of the advancement of learning and its application to new industrial processes.62

This new characterisation of the university education as less elite and concerned with increasing the ingenuity, communicative practice, and productivity of young people became definitive in the historical understanding of the function of the university. Current university performance was measured against this definition. In his narrative of university history, Sanderson depicted liberal education of the Victorian elite and their contemporary disciples as an aberration of the proper function of the university. Here Sanderson followed historian of medieval universities Hastings Rashdall, writing in the early 1900s, and his argument that universities had nearly always been a form of practical training including for Anglican clergy, and as preparation for public service careers, especially in India.63 The constant internal and external pressure on the universities to assess their contribution to society and engagement with industry led to a reinforcing of the narrative that universities were failing to live up to their true vocational function.

5.2.4. ‘Aspects of Interdependence’

By the time of the CVCP and FBI ‘Aspects of Interdependence’ conference in 1965, the stress on ‘breadth’ was shared by industrialists as well as academics. In many instances, much discussion was simply restating shared values from the FBI conferences from the 1950s. One prominent vice-chancellor directly compared the discussion to that at the Ashorne conferences and suggested that the delegates were perhaps ‘shadow-boxing, that is to say, there was a certain amount of knocking down of rather old giants who no longer are really in the path’, indicating universities were much more receptive to reform and restatement than acknowledged.64 By 1965, it was also more explicitly expected that not only would graduates of liberal character contribute to industry, but that appreciating industry, technology, and capitalism was part of possessing a liberal character. Joseph

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63 Sanderson, The Universities and British Industry, pp. 6, 8.
A. Pope, in his capacity of research director at engine manufacturer Mirrlees National and Chairman of the CBI’s Education Committee, argued the profit-motive of industry was needed to be understood as the method by which resources were distributed to meet demand. Profit was, the ‘feedback’ in the economy to show that the industry is viable and meeting a public need. But profit is not its basic function. [Industry’s] basic function is to ensure that the people of this country can earn their living.

From the profits of manufacturing industry flowed new wealth, employment, and increases in the standard of living. For Pope, who also taught at Nottingham and later became vice-chancellor of Aston (1969-79), it was central to prosperity: education, commerce, and even government administration were all just ‘national overheads’ to industry’s work in generating national wealth.

To achieve such an understanding, delegates again pointed towards broad, interdisciplinary courses. For example, ICI representative M. J. S. Clapham argued there was a need to provide students with training in more than one academic discipline. This might include ‘engineer economists and mathematician sociologists’, the ‘operational researcher, the systems analyst, or the industrial or technological economist and less that of the specialism in which he was trained’. For Clapham, it was irrelevant whether this interdisciplinarity, ‘breadth of interest’, and flexible skills were obtained through one course or multiple, or after experience in industry. Clapham argued that, whatever part of industry graduates entered,

they should be literate, numerate, and mundane [practical, from the Latin mundus, ‘world’, as opposed to ethereal or detached]; they should be prepared to start learning again at once, and to recognise that this education, formal or self-

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administered, won’t end before their retirement; they should be intellectually enterprising, critical, and constructive. For such men 1980 will continue to bring challenge and excitement.  

The newly appointed principal of the University of Stirling Tom Cottrell, himself an ex-ICI research chemist, detailed plans for using technologically oriented postgraduate courses to provide specialised arts and social sciences graduates with the necessary familiarity to work with rapidly changing technical and scientific aspects of production in industry.  

What was especially new, however, was the emphasis brought on by the implementation of the binary system. Throughout the well-attended conference, there was a sense of disappointment in the binary system’s division between ‘learning for its own sake’ and ‘learning for earning’, as both had relevance for industry and were characteristics desired in graduates. As one later report put it, universities produced not just generalist arts graduates who were nonetheless essential to the work of industry in management. They also produced the kind of specialist qualified scientists and engineers beloved by techno-nationalists. But both these groups of graduates needed breadth to be most effective in their contribution to society. Universities armed students with the flexible skills needed to acquire such knowledge and to adapt to future changes on the labour market, wrought by technological change. Students would not be necessarily explicitly trained in the specific manpower needs of industry. This, to techno-nationalist critics, looked like a retrenchment of the complacency and protectionism of the universities, but to its defenders a broad education was integral to the foundations of Western prosperity.

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5.3. UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY JOINT COMMITTEE

Analysis of FBI conference reports certainly provides a clear message about explicitly stated ambition, but this is not the same as action. A better test, but also a better insight into the challenges encountered in such a strategy, comes from analysis of new and more confident initiatives of the universities and industry hoping to turning such aspiration into effective policy.

With the Prime Minister’s blessing, the 1965 conference led directly to the establishment of the University and Industry Joint Committee (UIJC) in July 1966. The UIJC met just over fifteen times before its reconstitution as the Universities, Polytechnics and Industry Committee in 1972. Unlike the rest of the CVCP, together with a series of auxiliary conferences, the UIJC was not as hesitant to address questions of academic tuition and content. Its terms of reference invited it to discuss ‘matters of common concern to the universities and industry and to make recommendations in cases where a central initiative by the Committee or the Confederation appeared to be appropriate’. The UIJC spent much of its time on supporting university-industry administrative matters, including the consequences of the Industrial Training Act (1964); UGC financial ‘pump priming assistance’ to universities promoting closer links between themselves and industry like Lancaster’s ‘bridging courses’, Bath’s ‘Fluid Power Centre’, and Stirling’s technological economics; the proposed Central Services Unit for University Appointments; and liaising with research councils. But more than the CVCP, it actively made academic recommendations for how students should be taught and what the social purpose of such an education should be. This was a departure from the refusal of the CVCP to speak for the universities and perhaps more aligned with the communications strategy of the CBI (as the FBI was reconstituted from 1965). In that sense, it also offers an indication of how the strategies of business organisation now seeped into higher education and showed the way to mobilising higher

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73 The terms of reference of the UIJC included considering items such as increasing undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships, the provision of refresher and post-experience courses, and the question of general liaison: MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, 17 February 1966.
74 MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, CVCP, ‘Liaison between the universities and industry’, 22 April 1966.
75 MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, ‘Subject areas covered by the Universities and Industry Joint Committee and of Continuing Interest to the UIJC, 27 November 1972; MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Minutes, 22 July 1966; Sanderson, The Universities and British Industry, p. 378.
education as a sector. The activities of the UIJC have, however, attracted limited historical
attention. Analysis of its evolution towards the end of the 1960s, its activities and reports, and
their reception by institutions, indicates that the universities had been far more proactive than is
generally recognised.

5.3.1. A New Platform for Promoting Breadth
The most striking feature of the UIJC is its elevation of some familiar reformists making some
familiar arguments. The UIJC consisted of ten members, five from each of the CVCP and the CBI,
though in reality membership often overlapped. It particularly included representatives of large
national companies such as Unilever and ICI, reformist auxiliaries of the CVCP from Warwick, Aston,
Queen’s Belfast, Stirling, and some core Robbins Committee members. Its chairs included the
president-elect of the CBI A. J. Stephen Brown, prolific professor of physical chemistry Frederick
Dainton, vice-chancellor of Nottingham (1965-70), and former CVCP chairman engineer
Christopherson (1971-72). One of the first CBI representatives in 1966 was, remarkably, the
revered former UGC chairman Keith Murray representing the Bristol Aeroplane Company; even after
his departure, Murray continued to promote university and industry connections. Murray’s fellow

77 See Warwick, and a host of neoliberal institutions including the IEA, the Chicago School, and the Mont
78 Richards, ‘Dainton, Frederick Sydney, Baron Dainton’. MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, ‘Note of meeting’, 10
January 1967, 27 January 1967, p. 2. Dainton was a frequent contributor to the CVCP and prolific advisor to
national scientific and university policy. He was a member of the Central Advisory Council for Science and
Technology; from 1965-80 he sat the council’s parent body, the Council for Scientific Policy (CSP), from 1972
the Advisory Board for the Research Councils (including a period as the CSP and the ABRC’s chairman from
1969-73). Between 1973-78 Dainton was chairman of the UGC at the onset of the severe financial stringencies
of the 1970s. Shattock, UGC and the Management of British Universities, p. 20. Concurrently to his UIJC
working party, Dainton also chaired a Council for Scientific Policy working party and its famous report, ‘Flow of
Candidates in Science and Technology into Higher Education’ from the schools (also known as ‘The Swing away
from Science’, or simply the Dainton Report). Timothy E. Powell, Peter Harper, and Caroline Thibeaud,
‘Catalogue of the Papers and Correspondence of Frederick Sydney Dainton, Baron Dainton of Hallam Moors
FRS’ (National Cataloguing Unit for the Archives of Contemporary Scientists, University of Bath; 2002)
This chapter will refer to the UIJC report titled, ‘Report of Working Party on Postgraduate Courses under
Chairmanship of Dr. F. S. Dainton’ (1968) as the Dainton Report, and the CSP report titled ‘Flow of Candidates
in Science and Technology into Higher Education’ (1968) as ‘The Swing away from Science’.
79 Murray became a member of the UIJC through his position on the CBI Training and Education Committee.
Murray resigned from both this committee and the UIJC in September 1967 ‘for reasons of health’. MRC
MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, ‘Note of meeting’, 18 September 1967, 22 September 1967; MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1,
Robbins Committee colleague Patrick Linstead of Imperial College briefly led the UIJC before his death. His place on the committee was given to Vick, who by 1966 had become vice-chancellor of Queen’s Belfast (after which he moved to Warwick as Pro-Chancellor from 1977-92). Other members included John ‘Jack’ Butterworth of Warwick, Venables, and economist R. C. Tress of the University of Bristol (who had sat on Warwick’s Academic Planning Board).

This composition meant UIJC working parties were often self-pollinating, and often repeated much of the thinking prevalent at earlier conferences. The first UIJC working party (1966-67), was chaired by the director of the textiles company Courtaulds, Ronald John Kerr-Muir (much of Courtaulds research was based in Coventry and Kerr-Muir was Honorary Treasurer of Warwick, 1965-74); Butterworth was also a member of Kerr-Muir’s working party. A second parallel working party (1966-68), with some overlap with the Kerr-Muir working party through Venables, was chaired by Dainton. A third more formal working party (1967-70) under Patrick Docksey of British Petroleum included Vick, Pope, and two Stirling and ICI men: Cottrell, and A. A. L. Challis, director of the ICI

UIJC, 22 July 1966. Despite Murray’s short membership, the joint-committee paid tribute to his ‘invaluable aid’ during the joint-committee’s first year. MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, ‘Report Prepared by the Confederation of British Industry on the activities of the Joint Committee in the period July 1966 to August 1967’, pp. 17 November 1967. I have found only a handful of other reference to Keith Murray’s connections with industry. He was, along with Keith Joseph, a founding member of the Foundation for Management Education, though, reportedly ‘though the private sector never really engaged [Murray’s] enthusiasm’; see Geoffrey, ‘Murray, Keith Anderson Hope, Baron Murray of Newhaven (1903–1993), Agricultural Economist and University Administrator’; Williams, The History of UK Business and Management Management, p. 13; Murray was also chairman of the Academic Planning Board at the University of Stirling. See Chapter Six.  


petrochemical laboratory. Both the Kerr-Muir and Docksey reports derived evidence from informal meetings or workshops constituted from this same network of educationalists and industrialists. The Docksey working party was probably the worst offender; their oral evidence constituted six workshop interviews with precisely the same dominant establishment industrialists and university men that frequented university-industry discussions throughout the 1960s, including for example, a group which contained both Kerr-Muir and Charles Carter (see below). The report congratulated participants in these workshops calling them a ‘valuable source of ideas’. Docksey in fact often did little more than quantify existing sentiments of industrialists (for example confirming that the greatest weakness of graduates was in their commercial thinking because ‘27% of the replied felt that the aptitude for commercial thinking seriously limited the usefulness of scientists’). To a large extent therefore the UIJC’s reports were not especially novel, and probably reinforced ideas that were already prevalent in the discourse. The repetitiveness of their arguments for breadth is perhaps evidence of a stagnation of innovation in university pedagogy or resistance from universities. Conversely, it may also have been a mutually supporting and affirmative reformists

82 MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, ND; MRC MSS.200/C/3/EDU/16/2, ‘Working Party on Industrial Relations between Universities and Industrial Research’, 14 July 1967; MRC MSS.200/c/4/1970/14, UIJC, ‘Industry, science, and universities’, CBI, July 1970. The working group was established after a meeting of the CVCP in May 1967, on Dainton’s suggestion that the UIJC to act as a ‘deutero’ report to the CSP’s Sutherland committee on ‘Liaison between Universities and Government Research Stations’. The secretary of the Sutherland Committee was seconded to the Docksey working party on an advisory basis. The Working Party were observed by representatives from the UGC, the Science Research Council, the CVCP and the Ministry of Technology. MRC MSS.399/1/1/25, CVCP, Minutes, 19 May 1967; MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC Working Party, ‘Universities and Industrial Research’, February 1970; MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, ‘Secretary’s report: June 1970’, 27 May 1970. Patrick Docksey was an engineer and general manager of British Petroleum’s Research and Technical Development Department; he attended the 1965 ‘Aspects of Interdependence’ conference. Unlike the other two reports, the records of the proceedings of the Docksey Working Party do survive and indicate a greater degree of formality than the other two working parties. The Docksey working party met seventeen times (more than then UIJC itself), and during 1968, the committee undertook six surveys of industry, research and development departments, vice-chancellors, university departments, and postgraduates at three graduate schools. Supplementing this, the committee arranged six meetings for groups to provide oral evidence and received further written submissions. MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC Working Party, ‘Universities and Industrial Research’, February 1970. The Kerr-Muir working party seems to have been coordinated largely on Kerr-Muir’s initiative. Of the Dainton Committee, no records seem to have survived on the progress of the working progress except a note explaining that no meetings had yet taken place in April 1967 and that the working group had instead met with the Swann Committee on Manpower Resources for Science and Technology, which Dainton was also a member of. MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Minutes, 24 April 1967, 11 January 1968.

83 MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, UIJC, Minutes, 24 April 1967.

84 MRC MSS.200/C/3/EDU/16/7, Docksey Working Party, Minutes, 6 March 1968.


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club to reinforce and disseminate good practice, in the face of a threatening national policy direction that doubted the sincerity of university reform (see Chapter Four).

In other ways, loaned the academic credibility of the CVCP, the UIJC was an attempt at making the kind of authoritative account (that reformists like Butterworth agitated for) of the value of a broad university education, which had hitherto been dispersed in conference proceedings and other ephemera.\textsuperscript{86} UIJC reports were circulated to all universities and published in the CBI Education and Training Bulletin. These were proactive, even executive, attempts to communicate the benefits of university education to a wider audience in industry and to instigate changes at university Senate level.\textsuperscript{87} The Kerr-Muir report was described as the definitive and only good summary of the ‘needs of industry’ amongst the plethora of other similar reports published up to 1971.\textsuperscript{88} But that the UIJC felt confident to expand on these recommendations, and to make formerly unthinkable directives to universities on the academic content they might teach, is also perhaps an indication that the UIJC was establishing and reinforcing what was becoming common ground in universities.

5.3.2. Reinforcing the Broad Paradigm

In the publications of the UIJC, it is possible to detect further development and diversification of liberal education. Certainly, the UIJC seems to have grown in ambition in its arguments for breadth now they were promoted by the authority of the CBI and CVCP. There was no special consideration of the idea that universities were not for vocational training, a far cry from the debates earlier in the 1950s. Docksey included a history of the universities anticipating Sanderson’s argument that the retreat from training at universities during the nineteenth century was an aberration from their

\textsuperscript{86} MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Kerr-Muir, untitled paper, 13 March 1967, p. 4; Tress, UIJC, Minutes, 18 September 1967.
\textsuperscript{87} Kerr-Muir was published in December 1967: MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Minutes, 18/9/67, 11/01/68; Dainton was published in September 1968: MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Minutes, 5 March 1970; and Chapter 9 of the Docksey report, ‘Discussion and Recommendations’ also appeared in publication: MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Minutes, 18 September 1967.
\textsuperscript{88} MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, Professor J. W. Linnett, Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce to Mr. Tinkler, 1 February 1971.
historical roles in vocational training.\textsuperscript{89} The role of the university remained to develop the mind ‘in its capacity for logical thought, curiosity and disciplined dissent’; but this was now fully aligned with the idea that an educated graduate would be better prepared than a specialist to deal with any problem they might encounter, translated into the unpredictable ‘interdisciplinary’ problems facing industry.\textsuperscript{90} As another conference put it, universities were for ‘training in the art of living, which for most of us includes both leisure and work’, and might even include the preparation of women for married life, supporting the working man and her children’s futures, cementing an association between mental development, capacity to learn, and useful skills for industry.\textsuperscript{91}

More explicitly than at previous conferences, breadth meant an appreciation of industry and what might be called techno-liberal society. Developing Venables’ arguments from the late 1950s, the UIJC stressed that highly trained specialists with very clearly defined technical roles nevertheless required breadth to ‘appreciate the economic and social effects’ of their specialism. Docksey, in one of its more significant departures from prior advice, emphasised the potential contribution of the social sciences to industry. This might have been under the emphasis of Cottrell, and a response to the specialised and research-oriented degrees Docksey found were prevalent in science departments, less suited to providing the breadth needed to prepare students for industry careers. What this preparation should be also changed. It tended now to de-emphasise the importance of democratic values and instead stress, for example, the optimisation of profitability by cost reduction or product diversification. Similarly, generalists needed to be numerate and know ‘something of the techniques involved in making use of knowledge’, such as the application of thermodynamic

\textsuperscript{89} MRC MSS.200/c/4/1970/14, UIJC, ‘Industry, science, and universities’, p. 9. Ever feeling under threat, Cottrell warned that such a history was not yet uncontroversial: MRC MSS.200/C/3/EDU/16/22, Tom Cottrell to P. M. Knowlson, 10 February 1970.
principles to specific industrial processes and the practical uses of advanced mathematics. Students needed to understand techno-liberalism: how their technological knowledge would be best deployed in service of liberal capitalism.

These arguments were reinforced by a strand of national policy discourse which repudiated manpower planning and instead stressed the importance of individual initiative and student choice as the most appropriate metric to determine the shape of higher education. This argument penetrated into government advisory bodies through reformists such as Claus Moser and Dainton from 1966, who recommended broad educations and flexibility for workers. Both men stressed variation in how far first-degree subjects correlated with the jobs students took after graduation: chemists, for example, had a strong correlation, whereas in electronics and engineering, there was greater diversity. The movement away from manpower planning occurred alongside the strengthening of the maligned ‘swing from science’. The swing, Peter Mandler has identified, was the effect of wider participation in higher education particularly by women, which changed student cohort priorities. But these changes in demand also seem to be very closely aligned with the portrayal of broad university courses at the UIJC, which stressed choice, personal development, and the possibility of constructively contributing to society. Enabling student choice at universities developed essential individual initiative. Universities, Dainton argued elsewhere, needed to be

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96 Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, pp. 159-62.
places of free inquiry ‘the natural habitats of the “innovators”’; Cottrell had even stressed the
importance of broadly educated ‘entrepreneurs’ to advancing technologies. By the end of the
1960s there was a significant body of literature arguing that initiative, not technology per se, was
necessary to realise the good society.

5.3.3. Industry Determining Academic Values

The UIJC intensified the pattern of industrialists playing a more central role in discussing academic
matters. As they did so, in their imagination, the purpose of a university moved away from the
immediate post-war concerns of the importance of deploying common culture to support industry,
to the centrality of industrial values as part of that common culture. One particularly obvious
example in this shift is the enthusiasm with which Kerr-Muir and Docksey recommended how
industrialists might make a substantial commitment to developing influential personal relationships
with staff and students (preferring this support to disinterested, depersonalised provision of money
or equipment). This retained the importance of community to liberal education but reoriented it
towards perpetuating industry values. Such associations would, they believed, inspire students and
introduce them to the values of industry, but also raise the status of the industrialists to that of an
equal colleague of academics. Universities might appoint Industry Liaison Officers, perhaps located

97 MRC MSS.399/4/1/1, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United
Kingdom, ‘Deputation received by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on 24 February 1967’; p.
14; MRC MSS.399/4/1/1, ‘Industry and the Universities - Aspects of Interdependence: Programme’, 10 and 11
December 1965, p. 4. Dainton was critical of manpower planning arguing repeatedly in his other advisory
capacities, arguing that demand, let alone need, was ‘a very subjective quantity’, and that the supply of QSEs
had never matched the distribution of centrally calculated need or demand, and never would. MRC
MSS.399/4/1/1, CVCP, ‘Deputation received by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on 24
Chairmanship of Dr. F. S. Dainton’, 27 June 1968, p.3; see especially MRC MSS.399/4/1/1, Academic
Consultative Conference November 1968, ‘Manpower Planning and its Implications for Universities
Programmes and background papers’ (CVCP, London, 14 November 1968), featuring papers by Claus Moser
and Graeme Moodie.

98 MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC Working Party, ‘Universities and Industrial Research: Chapter 9: Discussions
and Recommendations’, February 1970, p.1; see also Dainton’s support in MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC,
Minutes, 10 January 1967.

99 MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Kerr-Muir, untitled paper, 13 March 1967, p. 5; MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC,
Minutes, 10 January 1967.
in the ‘School of Industrial Studies if such exists’ (like at Warwick), and who might be assisted by CBI
officers.\textsuperscript{100}

These proposals were only one part of surprisingly confident plans, given historical jealousy
of academic freedom, to colour the common culture transmitted at universities through common
courses.\textsuperscript{101} These recommendations represent a decisive shift in the content of common culture that
broad universities were called upon to transmit and how such content was determined. The courses
were clearly inspired by those offered at American universities but especially at Keele, and Essex,
Warwick, and Stirling.\textsuperscript{102} Kerr-Muir proposed a course titled ‘The Role of the Graduate in Society’
was intended to inculcate industry values particularly for arts students who did not have
opportunities to appreciate the social purpose of industry.\textsuperscript{103} They should understand ‘the
dependence of society on manufacture, and the conduct of business as an ethical and essential
human activity’, the structure and financing of industry, the importance of multidisciplinary team-
work and management which enabled faster and higher quality results, and the importance of this in
furthering ‘his personal career’.\textsuperscript{104} This could be spread over the first two or three years of an
undergraduate course, and integrated into existing courses.\textsuperscript{105} Such broad-based study could replace
some of the more specialised, ‘systematic studies which may be overtaken by new developments’.\textsuperscript{106}
Final year students should learn something of how their own chosen specialism was useful to ‘an

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item MRC MSS.399/3/UJC/1, UIJC, Kerr-Muir, untitled paper, 13 March 1967, p. 5. As the second draft of the
paper put it, ‘industrialists would make some of their ideas rub off on to undergraduates who would
appreciate thereby some of the excitement and challenge of industry’. MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, ‘The Training
\item See the similar efforts by industry groups themselves (mainly framed as a reaction against the portrayal of
business in television) identified in Raven, ‘British History and the Enterprise Culture’, pp. 193-95, but which
are generally associated with Thatcherism, pp. 195-97. Kerr-Muir (see below) indicated that his proposed
programmes of study might be valuable in schools.
\item Caroline Hoeferle, ‘Great Expectations: Sloman’s Essex and Student Protest in the Long Sixties’, in Jill Pellew
and Miles Taylor (eds.), \textit{Utopian Universities: A Global History of the New Campuses of the 1960s} (London:
\item MRC MSS.399/3/UJC/1, ‘The Training and Experience Appropriate for Graduates Entering Industry’, 23
\item MRC MSS.399/3/UJC/1, UIJC, Kerr-Muir, untitled paper, 13 March 67, p. 2, 4-5.
\item Ibid, p. 4-5.
\item MRC MSS.399/3/UJC/1, ‘The Training and Experience Appropriate for Graduates Entering Industry’, 7
September 1967, p. 3.
\end{thebibliography}
industrial community’. The course might include no more than two hours per week, or eighteen to twenty five ‘lecture tutorials’, over a period of three years. These values had been implicit before in liaison, but Kerr-Muir was an especially clear national proposal.

With similar sentiments, Docksey endorsed the introduction by universities of courses in ‘Technological Economics’. Technological economics courses were launched at the University of Stirling in 1967 by Cottrell and his colleagues at the ICI (see Chapter Six) and it appears these plans were expansionist. The report defined technological economics as a branch of economics concerned with ‘taking decisions in matters likely to be influenced by technological progress with an emphasis on the use of this knowledge in taking decisions on the development or application of a particular technology’. Such an education included ‘the basic economics of firms and organisations, techno-economic forecasting, evaluation of projects (e.g. risk analysis, DCF calculations, etc.), cost analysis and other features of management economics’. Members of the Docksey working party considered a ‘brief syllabus for technologic economics’ should be agreed at all universities, constituting about twenty hours with more in-depth studies for specialists. Courses in technological economics were introduced at the ex-CAT City University under vice-chancellor James Tait, another member of the Docksey working party.

Elsewhere, necessary breadth, all three reports affirmed, might also be delivered through short, up-to-date, post-industry experience graduate courses in economics, business, or management studies best hosted by universities. Similar single year master’s courses, in which arts and pure and applied science graduates studied what the Kerr-Muir paper called the

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112 MRC, MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Kerr-Muir, untitled paper, 13 March 67, p. 3.
‘unpredictability of humans’ and other general problems of industry in their own first degree subjects, were being piloted at universities already, Kerr-Muir noted with approval.\textsuperscript{113}

5.3.4. Preaching to the Converted?

How influential the UIJC was in effecting change in the decentralised universities is difficult to ascertain but it seems likely that the universities had absorbed its message. Early in the life of the UIJC, a 1966 *Nature* article complained that ‘Universities as a whole have also been uncommonly slow to give attention to their own curricula and methods of teaching’. In fifty years, the number of students graduating each year had increased by a factor of ten, but what was taught, the article claimed, had not changed anywhere near as much. Doubts remained at the DES and inside the universities as to whether universities were really fully exploring best practice in a new system where increasingly, graduates entered industry and business; existing innovations at some universities were ‘only the beginnings of the experiments which circumstances demand’.\textsuperscript{114} The UIJC identified that chemistry and physics departments particularly produced overspecialised graduates.\textsuperscript{115} In 1969, Cottrell continued to worry that industry and technology were still not considered respectable at universities.\textsuperscript{116} Barriers to integration remained. Docksey found that in promotions, universities did not consider a researcher’s skill in assisting industry, instead regarding ‘success in research (rather than its successful transfer to those who can use it) as the most important factor’.\textsuperscript{117} Docksey also found that time in industry was not necessarily a positive experience for students: 38 percent of surveyed students said they had a ‘less favourable’ view of industry after work experience in industry and 25 percent said it had ‘decreased their preference for working in industry’.\textsuperscript{118} It was reported at a CVCP conference in 1967 that there was still ‘“gross

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{114} ‘Universities under Pressure’.
\textsuperscript{116} MRC MSS.200/C/3/EDU/16/13, Docksey Party, Minutes, 9 May 1969.
\textsuperscript{118} MRC MSS.200/c/4/1970/14, UIJC, ‘Industry, science, and universities’, pp. 100-101. Those surveyed were a small group of graduates who had taken part in a handful of industry-experience courses. This is compared to 27 percent who gained more favourable views versus 14 percent who reported an increased preference for working in industry.
ignorance among the vast majority of undergraduates” about industrial careers’, as well as a climate of mutual suspicion and ignorance between universities and industry. While these criticisms indicate a lack of progress, the UIJC remained enthusiastic about diagnosing these faults suggesting a strong motivation to address them.

By the late 1960s there were also more positive signs that universities were responding to the need to broaden their syllabuses and incorporate industry values into their degrees. An informal summary of his report written by Docksey (akin to a school-teacher’s report) included the advice that both sides should ‘Stop nagging’. Generally the UIJC was optimistic of the general ‘goodwill’, quantitatively evidenced by Docksey. Its reports generally found a receptive audience in the CVCP and from universities when they were consulted; for example, the Dainton Report had been accepted by universities as important and ‘had stimulated discussion and had influenced action and attitudes’. Some successes were noted. Technological universities and engineering departments were commended for their sustained contacts within industry. Following the Kerr-Muir recommendations and reflecting his wider interests in building liberal communities, Keith Murray, as Director of the Leverhulme Trust Fund, in 1968 proposed to the UIJC £10,000 per annum for four university teachers to be seconded annually to industry. By October 1968, it was reported the UGC had funded three proposals for Industrial Liaison Officers from a special reserve fund, and two

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more had been proposed. Nevertheless, reviewing the impact of the report, the UIJC considered that industry still needed to play its part ‘to recognise the individuality of students, the importance of the influence of the “grapevine” from graduates in industry to potential entrants and the danger of over-emphasising and misunderstanding the profit-motive’. That these concerns read much the same as the concerns of the 1950s perhaps indicates that little had changed, though they also represent perennial concerns of the period.

By 1970, many in the universities appeared to be at least paying lip-service to the importance of collaboration with industry. Universities even went as far as to criticise industry for not contributing satisfactorily. Some accused industry of being ‘unconvinced of the need for university participation in post-experience training’ and both small and large businesses failed to appreciate the applicability of graduates’ theoretical knowledge. Most universities generally accepted a need to expand industry oriented postgraduate or post-experience courses and facilitate staff exchanges, but resources were often inadequate, and little help or advice had been received from the Ministry of Labour’s new Industrial Training Boards. Many universities favoured strategies of increasing the number of cross-disciplinary generalist degrees while maintaining their specialist research degrees and without sacrificing intellectual appeal. Keele, Liverpool, and Nottingham had all introduced arrangements for consultation with industry on the development of

125 MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Minutes, 21 November 1969.
126 MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Minutes, 18 June 1968. The precise wording of this final sentence (originally ‘over-emphasising the profit motive’) was considered important enough to amend in the minutes of the next UIJC meeting in November to read ‘over-emphasising and misunderstanding the profit motive’. MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Minutes, 4 November 1968. What ‘misunderstanding’ means is a little vague. There was, however, as Jeremy Nuttall has identified, much more of an overlap between profit motive and public service in revisionist socialism at the time. Nuttall, ‘Labour Revisionism and Qualities of Mind and Character, 1931–79’, pp. 690-91.
new short postgraduate courses. Other universities, such as Lancaster, clearly believed the UIJC was not going far enough. In October 1969, its vice-chancellor Carter described the UIJC as ‘a highly productive source of platitudinous advice to both sides: and perhaps even platitudes, sufficiently repeated, issue in some action’.  

The case of the negative reception of the Docksey Report in particular highlights how far the universities had internalised these new values. The report was published as a neat volume, ‘Industry, Science and Universities’, in March 1970. Initial impressions from the UIJC heralded it as an ‘outstanding contribution to the examination of the subject’. Docksey had had ‘good press coverage’, including in the Financial Times. A thousand copies had been sold, and encouraged by the CBI several conferences at the universities of Surrey, Southampton, and City were planned to discuss the report. Likely because of this prominence, the Docksey Report has been identified retrospectively as ‘something of a watershed’ in influencing industry and university collaboration. 

131 On receiving Carter’s memorandum, the UIJC argued that there was a very wide variation in universities and ‘the Lancaster picture would probably not be appropriate as a blue-print for all’, yet, ‘Many universities, probably more than was generally recognised, already have commercially based links with industry in fields of academic relevance’, and further development was desired. The Lancaster paper was accepted by the UIJC as a ‘useful stimulus’. MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, Minutes, 21 November 1969. There is considerable scope for further investigation into the relationship between industry and academia at Lancaster, and in Carter’s economic thought. In his memorandum, Carter encouraged higher education institutions to engage in ‘profit-making contract work for industry’, to take out patents, and to market rather than communicate their research in order to make a much greater contribution to ‘the urgent national economic problem’. Lancaster, Carter argued, was leading the way in these endeavours, with a joint enterprise between the university and the city of Lancaster called ‘Enterprise Lancaster’ attempting to attract small scientific firms. Lancaster has been the subject of a handful of universities histories, though Enterprise Lancaster seems understudied. See Vernon, ‘Engagement, Estrangement or Divorce?’, MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, Charles F. Carter, ‘Higher Education and National Productivity’, October 1969, p. 1.
133 See, for example, Kenneth Owen, ‘Preparing Graduates for Life in Industry’, Research in Higher Education, 37 (1996); the Docksey report is the only UIJC report to have sustained policy and academic interest, including by Shattock, and Sanderson cites the Docksey report frequently. Shattock, The Impact of a University on Its Environment, p. 38 (though Shattock uses it as evidence of the lack of integration between the national automotive industry and universities, see
By contrast, contemporaries were unimpressed with the report’s lack of imagination. A CVCP division in June 1970 noted many of the developments advocated by the Docksey report were ‘already being actively pursued’, and university consultation in September 1971 confirmed these suspicions.\(^{136}\) ‘Insufficient guidance and new ideas had emerged’ from Docksey, the division concluded.\(^{137}\) The Docksey Working Party in November 1971 acknowledged that the number of novel recommendations made had been small.\(^{138}\) For example it was far from novel to recommend the exchange of industry and university personnel, but the report did quantify this and recommend such personnel should dedicate at minimum ten to twenty percent of their time to achieving meaningful relationships to enable the effective collaboration.\(^{139}\) Members of the UIJC were satisfied however that while the division’s criticisms were probably valid, Docksey had increased communication between local industry and universities and sparked new ideas in these particular circumstances.\(^{140}\) It is clear that by the time of Docksey’s publication universities had taken account of the importance of the education they provided and its relationship with industry.

5.4. ALTERNATIVE VISIONS

5.4.1. ‘Warwick Files Affair’

The publication of the Docksey Report coincided with a national student reaction against university-industry collaboration following the ‘Warwick Files Affair’ in February 1970.\(^{141}\) Students and staff at

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\(^{136}\) MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1 Division D Report, 19 June 1970.

\(^{137}\) MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, Division D report, 17 September 1971.

\(^{138}\) A compiled list of main recommendations indicated that the group believed it had made ten distinct recommendations. Docksey personally disputed claims since the publication of the report in July that the report made no new recommendations and stressed ‘there were at least 3 or 4 major recommendations’ but the minutes do not indicate which he believed were new. MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, Working Party on Universities and Industrial Research, Minutes, 25 November 1970, February 1971.


\(^{140}\) MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC, ‘Note of meeting’, 18 February 1971, 18 March 1971.

\(^{141}\) In February 1970, events at the University of Warwick had led to a national scandal and student protest, and the publication by professor of social history E. P. Thompson of ‘Warwick University Ltd’, subtitled ‘Industry, Management, and the Universities’. Thompson criticised the University of Warwick in the volume, and in print in the New Society magazine, for its close association with industry as threatening academic
the new university accused the university administration, including Butterworth and Kerr-Muir, of permitting industry an inappropriate degree of control over the university (see Chapter Six). The event was seen as a major rupture. Student sit-ins were held across British campuses in solidarity with the protestors at Warwick. The effect was great enough to apparently cause vice-chancellors to think again in celebrating their relationship with industry. As one advocate for industry-university collaboration wrote, Docksey’s 1968 surveys had shown all vice-chancellors favoured increased collaboration with industry.\textsuperscript{142} It was however not certain whether the vice-chancellors after February 1970:

if they were wholly honest, [...] could all express quite the same view today in view of the harsh criticisms (again by no means only from extremists) which have been directed towards the vice-chancellor of Warwick as a result of his outstanding success in bringing industrial interests into his university. [...] I have myself been denounced as a ‘lackey of US imperialism and British finance, industry and state monopoly of capitalism, and as an enemy of the broad masses of the British people and the people of the whole world’ and have been called upon ‘to make full account’ of my ‘systematic anti-people activities’.\textsuperscript{143}

Student protestors articulated similar criticisms at Oxford, Essex and beyond.\textsuperscript{144}

This national reaction by university students, and also staff members in many high-profile instances such as E. P. Thompson at Warwick, against industry-university collaboration reinforced freedom. Chapter Six will consider the broader context of the affair. Thompson, ‘Warwick University Ltd’; E. P. Thomson, ‘The Business University’, New Society (19 February 1970).


\textsuperscript{144} Hoefferle, ‘Sloman’s Essex and Student Protest’; Hoefferle, British Student Activism in the Long Sixties, pp. 157-58.
the stereotype of universities as detached from the needs of society.\textsuperscript{145} This perpetuated a trope that universities were stuffed with left-wing academics teaching socialist dogma which opposed the values of industry and the West and denigrated individual initiative.\textsuperscript{146} By 1969, one pamphlet could argue that universities were breeding grounds for anti-industry intellectuals, particularly in non-vocational subjects. They were hostile to the ‘fundamental values of business and capitalism, including private enterprise, profit and commercial competition’, freedom of speech, and their support of state planning would undermine capitalism.\textsuperscript{147} The CBI remained worried about the portrayal of business in the liberal arts through the 1970s.\textsuperscript{148} However, this characterisation of campuses as revolutionary hotbeds has been thoroughly challenged in the historical literature: most students did not take part in student protest, when they did discontent was generally triggered by internal university affairs. Few were members of revolutionary societies.\textsuperscript{149} Conservative associations were large and remembered in association with popular sherry parties.\textsuperscript{150} It is therefore an open question as to how far the virtues of breadth and association with industry were received on campuses beyond these flare-ups.\textsuperscript{151}

5.4.2. Industry Threats to Universities

Some resistance to industry collaboration did remain at a national policy level, though which usually criticised the type of collaboration and did not always vilify its presence. Responses to the Dainton

\textsuperscript{145} See the opposition to management education in the 1970s identified by Tiratsoo and Tomlinson, \textit{The Conservatives and Industrial Efficiency, 1951-64}, pp. 77-78.
\textsuperscript{148} See the example from 1977 in Raven, 'British History and the Enterprise Culture', p. 193.
\textsuperscript{151} For the start of an answer see Caroline Hoefferle’s argument that ‘Students were convinced by mainstream political rhetoric that their time at university was crucial to the nation and that as intellectual workers their grants were their pay for this important national work’. Hoefferle, \textit{British Student Activism in the Long Sixties}, p. 8.
Report and the contemporaneous government report, the Swann Report, particularly exposed such arguments.\footnote{See Sanderson, \textit{The Universities and British Industry}, pp. 386-7. When the CVCP consulted the universities on these reports, some universities responded on the two reports at the same time. Dainton, indeed, was a member of both committees. MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC Working Party on Postgraduate Courses, ‘Notes on the views of universities on the recommendations of the working party report’, 4 April 1970.} Like Docksey, the Swann Report argued that PhD courses, generally in the sciences, overemphasised research and were overspecialised and might be better reoriented towards industry needs, with candidates spending two-thirds of their time outside of a university.\footnote{MRC MSS.399/3/MAT/1, CVCP, Summary of Points made in Consideration of the Swann report by the Universities and Industry Joint Committee, 18 November 1968.} This prompted a widespread defence of PhD degrees by universities as part of wider feelings that ‘research culture’ was threatened by industry-university relationships. This was however not necessarily the same as a retreat back to the liberal university. As other universities argued, industry was necessarily concerned with its own short-term needs. Universities, through their distance from industry and their innovatory research and character, would be better able to meet industry’s unanticipated long-term needs.\footnote{MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, UIJC Working Party on Postgraduate Courses, ‘Notes on the views of universities on the recommendations of the working party report’, 4 April 1970.}

Elsewhere it is clear that many vice-chancellors and their institutions continued to support university and industry collaboration. In April 1970 in response to the Files Affair, the Council for Scientific Policy (CSP), chaired by Dainton, invited Cottrell in his capacity as a member of the Docksey committee to chair a discussion group to ‘consider critically the implications of an increased association between universities and industry’.\footnote{The Working group met twice, in May and October 1970, and included university representatives including Dainton and assessors from the Department Trade and Industry, the research councils, and the UGC (and the chair of the UGC encouraged the CSP’s ‘discussion’, and advice for the universities). MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1, CSP Discussion Group on University/Industry Relations, 20 January 1971, p 1. On the CSP, see Salter and Tapper, \textit{The State and Higher Education}, pp. 166-68.} Cottrell’s report accepted without question that the role of the university was in supporting industry and it seems this conclusion was accepted by universities. It took no account of

the ideological argument that collaboration and contact with technology was of necessity inimical to the human values and functions of the university. [...] the
extent of ‘academic distortion’ which had been put forwards by some writers
[probably referring to Thompson] as the necessary result of university collaboration
with industry, was exaggerated.  

Elsewhere, another vice-chancellor of a new university, Carter, similarly argued that ‘It will be
argued that a close relation to industry is a betrayal of academic ideals. This is nonsense. [...] I see
little but good in sharpening the academic mind against problems of the real world’. University-
industry collaboration was, Cottrell argued, a ‘fact of life’. Indeed many of the pressures to respond
to societal needs ‘had their origin within the universities themselves’. The vocationalism of the
university had been internalised.

By 1970, industry needs, national needs, and even market needs were conflated and
accepted as appropriate metrics with which to judge the validity of university activities. Cottrell’s
report did not consider that pressures from industry worked to ‘the detriment of the university’s
other work’ such as research, as previous university consultation had feared. In its examination of
collaboration through consultation, research contracts, and research grants financed by industry, the
report only identified concerns with confidentiality or secrecy which simply required adequate
safeguarding. Where industry support might prioritise funding for fields such as pharmacology and
chemistry and distort the long-term activities of the university, the working group argued that this
was ‘the proper and natural response of the universities to the balance of natural interests’. The
report concluded by commending measures already taken against abuse, and reaffirmed ‘the
benefits that can accrue from increased collaboration between universities and industry’. It even
suggested that universities might take overhead fees from university members’ consultation fees.

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159 To argue this, the report consulted six universities: Stirling, City, Queen’s University Belfast, Aston,
Nottingham, and Southampton (apart from Stirling, all universities whose vice-chancellors sat or had
previously sat on the UIJC, and Warwick was of course conspicuously absent): Ibid.
160 The paper pointed out that universities were free to adjust the allocation of its own funds to address any
undesirable imbalance. Ibid, p.4.
161 Ibid, p.5.
Cottrell’s report was considered confidential and not intended for publication but was accepted by the CSP and was sent to the UGC and the CVCP for circulation to members and was approved by the UIJC.\(^{162}\)

By 1970 the CVCP could ratify a programme in which the academic activities of university departments rather than being protected by academic freedom were subject to a test of industrial need and even subject to the demands of the market. It was valid that academic exercises which could not attract financial support should not expect to grow. This is a strong contrast to the protectionist liberal education of 1950s that is supposed to have continued to characterise the liberal university throughout this period.

5.5. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has demonstrated how university leaders and industrialists reconceived university education over the period from 1945-72 as inherently responsive to societal needs. The CVCP considered that the quinquennium from 1967-72 had been a period of particularly meaningful change for the universities. Far more research was interdisciplinary as a response to the needs of industry, and there was much greater consideration of the societal purpose of teaching. The CVCP was, perhaps unsurprisingly, even outpaced by the speed in which at least some universities were prepared to respond to the needs of industry to help make their contribution to society. The purpose of the university had shifted. The common culture of the West which universities were custodians and transmitters of now explicitly included an appreciation of liberal capitalism and industry. The universities would through responsible deployment of ‘true’ academic freedom respond to the needs of society as signalled by student demand as the Robbins Report had envisaged, and the market conditions formed by the needs of employers. The UIJC’s evangelical promotion of these values found support from universities keen to demonstrate the utility of their broadly educated students to national economic development. Combined with the constant

\(^{162}\) Ibid; MRC MSS.399/3/UIJC/1 UIJC, Minutes, 18 February 1971.
pressure to deliver improved returns from higher education institutions, it is unsurprising that a narrative which emphasised the failure of universities to fully respond to national needs became predominant. This chapter has provided further evidence that education for ‘character’ had a much more complicated relationship with the so-called ‘entrepreneurial spirit’.\textsuperscript{163} There was scope for a wider understanding of the benefits of ‘character’ reimagined as interdisciplinary study, an ‘understanding’ of the techno-liberal society and as celebrating, ironically, individual initiative.\textsuperscript{164} In this way, universities were able to accommodate change and maintain they were fulfilling their responsibilities to society whilst holding on to some of the traditional values of a university.

The opposition to industrialist involvement in universities opens up further questions. The focus on national policy discussion enables a wider view of changing attitudes towards university autonomy and the increasing pressures of societal demands for the products of higher education both from government and from students. However, apart from glimpses, it is restricted as to how far it can tell us how universities actually responded to these pressures in their teaching. How far did industry and universities’ enthusiasm for breadth influence the foundation and development of the universities? One industrialist at the ‘Aspects of Interdependence’ conference wondered whether ‘Perhaps the brand-new universities are in the best position to take advantage of any such wind of change’.\textsuperscript{165}

Judged by the development of the New Universities, the UIJC was indeed overtaken by events in reimagining the role of a university in society. Chapter Six will show how the ‘New Universities’ of York, Warwick, and Stirling, had, since the late 1950s, reconsidered the function of the autonomous university in the light of societal needs. In York, local businessman William Wallace of the confectionary company Rowntrees brought expectations of the sort of graduate character the new university should hope to produce. Butterworth and Kerr-Muir’s concern for the ‘Role of the

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\textsuperscript{163} Even in Sanderson’s commentary is a critique of an education in breadth and its new emphasis on character as still too divorced from specific vocational training and national requirements. Sanderson, \textit{The Universities and British Industry}.
\textsuperscript{164} See also chapter two of Scott, \textit{The Crisis of the University}.
\textsuperscript{165} CVCP, ‘Aspects of Interdependence’, p. 71.
\end{flushright}
Graduate in Society’ coloured Warwick’s dogged pursuit of a business school and of course led to the Files Affair. Cottrell, at Stirling, pioneered technological economics at a beautiful university campus which was intended to act as a counterweight to the development of technological studies in the rest of Scotland. Like at the CVCP and CBI, that students’ conduct aligned with the aims of liberal society was of great importance at these institutions.
6. BUILDING BREADTH AT THE NEW UNIVERSITIES OF YORK, WARWICK, AND STIRLING, 1959-1972

6.1. THE NEW UNIVERSITIES

6.1.1. The Warwick Files Affair

The events at the University of Warwick in early 1970 are a familiar story. The university was in the middle of just its sixth academic year, as one of the nine New Universities of the sixties. Student relations had deteriorated. The administration had failed to address the muddy, dehumanising, and ‘starkly utilitarian social environment’ of the new campus.\(^1\) On Wednesday 11 February these grievances were intensified when students uncovered a number of files, which seemed to show that students and staff were being spied on by the Warwick administration.\(^2\) Alarmed by their contents and connotations, and following the subsequent escalation of the situation by the university administration, the social historian and socialist activist Professor Edward Palmer Thompson published with his students a collaboratively authored volume, *Warwick University Ltd* (1970). Appearing just two weeks after the affair, the collection decried what it saw as an ‘oligarchy of industrialists’ who controlled the executive functions of Warwick. Warwick, the volume claimed, had swapped the dangers of the subordination of the state with the dangers of subordination under industry.\(^3\) Industrialists had redirected the university away from the pursuit of truth and towards the production of ‘capitalistic’ managers.\(^4\) This was, Thompson and his students argued, a broader issue than the governance of one university: its nature exposed the relationship between a new mode of higher education and ‘the whole way in which a society selects its priorities and orders itself’.\(^5\)

Thompson’s evidence of any improper authority over academic matters was, however, thin. It was

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\(^1\) Thompson, ‘Warwick University Ltd’, p. 13.  
\(^2\) A full account can be found in Thompson, ‘Warwick University Ltd’; see also Hoefferle, *British Student Activism in the Long Sixties*, pp. 135-36; Steedman, ‘Social History Comes to Warwick’.  
\(^3\) Thompson, ‘Warwick University Ltd’, pp. 30-31.  
\(^4\) Ibid. p. 27.  
\(^5\) Ibid. p. 162.
quite easy to caricature his anxieties, as one fellow professor did, as ‘vociferous opposition [...] to the non-existent domination of the University by sinister businessmen’.  

The vice-chancellor of Warwick, John ‘Jack’ Butterworth, was by contrast enthusiastic about the relationship between his university and industry. Indeed, he considered it essential to ensuring that universities could make their full contribution to society. As the previous chapters of this thesis showed, he was far from alone amongst other British university leaders in his belief that individual initiative enabled by a university education in ‘breadth’ was essential to prosperity. This chapter explores how this breadth became a key discourse in the planned educational practice, pedagogy, and built environment of three of the New Universities of the 1950s and 1960s: York, Warwick, and Stirling.

There are two contrasting characterisations of the New Universities held in the wider literature that this chapter will challenge. The first, an accusation, is that they were enthralled by what A. H. Halsey called the ‘magic and moonshine’ of (feminised) Oxbridge in their educational philosophies and societal contribution. Halsey castigated the New Universities as ‘built, like the
medieval cathedrals, for ever, to the glory of God, and for the admiration of the peasantry without regard to their public pocket'. Michael Shattock called some of the arguments deployed in support of new foundations ‘financially illiterate’. Their students were liberally educated in residence, sometimes colleges. Their small size and growth-rates meant they constituted no more than 8.5 percent of the total student population during this period and contributed to the normalisation of university attendance for the middle classes; there was no expansion of the range of social class from which their students originated. They undoubtedly were liberal and bourgeois institutions, but this does not mean they aped Oxbridge. As William Whyte has argued, the New Universities were acting as much in response to Oxbridge pedagogies as promoting them and derived much of their character from the civic universities. But as this chapter will show, in their early years there were experiments at the new universities which attempted to reimagine the role of the university and the student.

The New Universities have of course long been recognised as being ‘harbingers of change’ (though others continue to dismiss this reformist rhetoric as a novel veneer on Oxbridge pedagogy) and this reformist character continues to inform the image of these institutions. However, this also still only provides a partial characterisation. Thompson’s fellow social historian Harold Perkin, in


9 Halsey, Decline of Donnish Dominion, pp. 7, 15-17, 58-59, 80; and Halsey and Trow, The British Academics, pp. 58, 76, 80.
10 Shattock, Making Policy, p. 51.
13 William Whyte’s primary argument is the similar argument for the civic universities in the late and early twentieth centuries. Whyte, Redbrick, pp. 129, 61, 82, 254; Mike Savage suggests that the New Universities were just Oxbridge ‘branded’ though this is still probably an overstatement: Savage, The Politics of Method, pp. 125, 27-8; see also Keith Vernon, ‘Civic Universities and Community Engagement in Inter-War England’, in Peter Cunningham, Susan Oosthuizen and Richard Taylor (eds.), Beyond the Lecture Hall; Universities and Community Engagement from the Middle Ages to the Present Day (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2009).
14 Whyte, ‘Learning from Redbrick’.
15 Pellew and Taylor, ‘Introduction’, p. 2; see Filippakou and Tapper, ‘Policymaking and the Politics of Change in HE’, p. 17; Muthesius, The Postwar University, pp. 185-6; Vernon, ‘Engagement, Estrangement or Divorce’.
1969 and 1991, defined the spirit of these institutions as ‘innovatory’. On both occasions he quoted his interview with Keith Murray, University Grants Committee (UGC) chairman 1953-63, who had remarked the expansion of higher education was ‘one-third numbers and two thirds new ideas’.

Perkin identified the aims of the ‘new revolution’ in higher education were to:

i) To promote breadth and more appropriate specialisation, including the promotion of postgraduate work, to prepare students for their working lives in an increasingly complex society. To do this they aimed to overthrow the traditional English, overspecialised ‘single-honours’ degree resulting in a proliferating series of new, joint, subsidiary, compulsory, and elective courses.

ii) To deliver these courses the New Universities attempted to dissolve the old departmental framework in order to better tackle practical problems which did not fit in disciplinary boundaries. The most publicised example was the new ‘maps of learning’ at Sussex, coined by another social historian, Asa Briggs.

iii) To build closer relationship between students and tutors through tutorials, and to rebuild a sense of community lost in the civic universities by housing high proportions of students in residence.

While these are useful descriptions, often histories of New Universities end up reporting a bewildering variety of specific ways in which these aims were achieved in course structures and built environment. Puzzlingly, despite the historiography identifying that there was little deliberate or

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meaningful collaboration between institutions, new institutions all innovated along similar lines.\textsuperscript{20} Most institutional university histories are written focused on a single institution.\textsuperscript{21} Those that do not, when discussing the new universities, tend to attempt to cover a very large selection of universities, typically the ‘Shakespearean Seven’, and provide prevailing themes and vignette details rather than critical comparison.\textsuperscript{22} Less has been said about the range of justifications for these interdisciplinary and broad courses.\textsuperscript{23}

The wider ideological and power relationships implicit in these reforms are underexamined. Using this thesis’ exploration of the ideas and politics that influenced the development of higher education policy and discourse in the post-war period, this chapter responds to the challenge of Miles Taylor and Jill Pellew that university histories are ‘notorious for their narrow vision and their inability look outwards to understand what is happening within’.\textsuperscript{24} Building on arguments developed by Taylor, Whyte, Mathew Cragoe, and Stefan Muthesius, it explores the way in which an argument about the need for breadth in education was essential to the new institutions.\textsuperscript{25} This educational philosophy was propelled by the idea that this would enable students to best utilise their individual initiative to contribute to the ‘good society’ and uphold the moral and economic superiority of liberal capitalism and the West. As Chapter Three of this thesis explored, during the fifties and sixties, more young people from wider social backgrounds needed to be armed with greater


\textsuperscript{21} Whyte, \textit{Redbrick}, p. 10; Rothblatt, ‘The Writing of University History at the End of Another Century’.

\textsuperscript{22} For these broad surveys of the time see Beloff, \textit{The Plateglass Universities}; Birks, \textit{Building the New Universities}; and the best and only one of these which includes Stirling and to which the critique applies far less, Perkin, \textit{New Universities in the United Kingdom}. The recent \textit{Utopian Universities} is the foremost exception.


\textsuperscript{24} Pellew and Taylor, ‘Introduction’, p. 5.

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technical capacities than ever before.\textsuperscript{26} It was more necessary for these new students to be educated at breadth at the New Universities. They were the perfect location to innovate in order to counteract forces acting on older universities which threatened a liberal education and therefore western society itself. Properly educating these new students would mean immersing them in a bureaucratic and physical environment whereby they could absorb this civilising, freedom-inculcating discourse.\textsuperscript{27} While the universities cannot be said to have ever had a socio-politically neutral purpose, Thompson was undoubtedly right in identifying that university leaders had reoriented the purpose of a university and the role of students in society.

Assessing whether or not reformist university rhetoric, as this thesis has generally explored thus far, was anything more than the defensive posturing of a threatened academic culture requires more than simply nuancing our understanding of the discourse. This chapter takes three of the New Universities as case studies: York, Warwick and Stirling, which opened over the period 1963-67. It examines the factors influencing their imagined design and form with a particular focus on the significance of breadth over four sections. Section 6.1 introduces the three case studies. Section 6.2 explores how their promoters responded to national pressures including the binary divide, local pressures exercise by local authorities and industrialists, and their sometimes allied, sometimes antagonistic, relationship with other visions of the purpose of higher education. These exchanges led to broad curricula and new justifications. Section 6.3 explores the practical solutions to providing breadth in these institutions’ early pedagogy, courses and built environment. Section 6.4 concludes by bringing these programmes together and relating them to their vice-chancellors’ understanding of the place of higher education in the struggle for the good society.

\textsuperscript{26} Salter and Tapper identify this as the perpetuation of an elite protectionist culture which means they overlook the diversity of politics within the liberal education. Salter and Tapper, \textit{The State and Higher Education}; see similarly Lowe, \textit{Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History}, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{27} Shattock, \textit{Making Policy}, p. 46; Whyte, ‘Halls of Residence at Britain’s Civic Universities, 1870-1970’, pp. 163-64.
6.1.2. New Institutions of Higher Education In Britain, 1945-1973

As this thesis has shown, exponential growth in student and national demand for higher education, particularly technological education, challenged assumptions as to the sort of education students should receive. There were two main programmes of expansion which set out to answer this question, as well as an attempted synthesis.

The first solution saw the traditional university sector expand and begin initial experiments into new pedagogic forms. Civic universities expanded rapidly, and elsewhere six university colleges were promoted to full university status, beginning with Nottingham (1948) and ending with Newcastle (1963). This growth was far more important initially than the creation of the new universities. Technological university education also expanded at these institutions, at, for instance Imperial College London and Churchill College Cambridge. The only new university foundation in the immediate post-war period (outbidding local efforts at York, Coventry, Stirling and beyond) was the experimental University College of North Staffordshire (1949), which became the University of Keele (1962). Keele was initially viewed with suspicion by other universities as over stretching limited resources and was not a university but a ‘new type of Technical College’, which threatened to lower the ‘standards’ of the elite common culture they protected. Keele designed its degree courses, including residence, based on the Scottish tradition of broader four year degree courses

29 This included Southampton (1952), Hull (1954), Exeter (1955), and Leicester (1957).
30 Shattock, UGC and the Management of British Universities, pp. 44, 74; MRC, MRC UWA/F/PP/4/3i, ‘Men and Matters: Technological Training’, Financial Times, 3 December 1951; Shattock, ‘Introduction’, p. 286; Agar, ‘Science and the New Universities’; state and university administrators believed that existing institutions could accommodate the demands on higher education by ex-servicepeople (men were their primary focus) and meet scientific manpower targets: Filippakou and Tapper, ‘Policymaking and the Politics of Change in HE’, p. 12; Filippakou and Tapper, ‘Policymaking and the Politics of Change in HE’, p. 13; Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 43-53.
31 The universities were ‘also concerned that the College might be granted permission to become a full university immediately rather than going through an apprenticeship stage as a college’. This was resolved when a number of universities volunteered to act as a proto-academic planning board to validate the institution’s plans: Sir James Mountford, Keele: An Historical Critique (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 57-58, 60; Whyte, Redbrick, p. 223; Shattock, Making Policy, p. 22; Shattock, The Impact of a University on Its Environment, p. 18. Without having examined the records detailing the opposition of the CVCP to Keele myself, it seems possible that excluding Keele from the university fold was more a rhetorical strategy to ringfence scarce resources. Opposition to the scheme seems to have receded from 1946 to 1949.
instead of the English three, with the first foundation year dedicated to the absorption of the heritage of Western civilisation and the methods of the sciences, ranging ‘From Plato to NATO’.  

This, as Chapter Two explored, was intended to prepare students for their roles in post-war rebuilding. Students would learn to harness technology for democracy and would be armed against the anti-liberal and technological forces of fascism and communism. Keele was, however, limited by austerity and (reportedly, what Shattock called) financial mismanagement. Three of its vice-chancellors died within four years, and it did not reach 600 students until 1956-57 and only 1681 students in 1967-68. Other university expansion, as we have seen, continued to be associated with elitism and antagonistic to technological education.

The second, techno-nationalist, programme promoted by the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education and Science (DES), and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) from 1945, feared universities were not doing enough to meet scientific and technological manpower of the nation. From 1956 eight further education colleges, with two more following later, were designated as Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs). These new institutions were to focus on technological studies at an honours degree level, and with a close association with industry, including industrialist representation on their governing bodies. This narrowness, for the universities, meant they were unable to provide a true liberal education (see Chapter Four). A sense of disappointment with universities’ complacency lingered and found a lasting expression in 1959 in C. P. Snow’s well publicised lamentation on the marginalised status of science and technology and its relationship

32 Whyte, Redbrick, pp. 223-4; Mountford, Keele: An Historical Critique.
34 Perkin, New Universities in the United Kingdom, pp. 57-60, 80; Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 45-46; Shattock, The Impact of a University on Its Environment, pp. 18-19.
35 Birmingham, Battersea, Heriot-Watt (Edinburgh), Salford or the Royal College of Advanced Technology, Bradford Institute of Technology, the Welsh CAT (at Cardiff), Chelsea, Northampton (London), Loughborough, Bristol, and Brunel. Minster for Education and Secretary of State for Scotland, ‘Technical Education’ (London, 1956); Simmons, ‘Science and Technology in England and Wales’; Tight, Development of HE in the UK. Table 3.1.
with national decline. Sustained doubts about the liberal education of the universities led to the launch of the polytechnics in 1969 and by 1973 there were some thirty polytechnic institutions.

Thirdly, what I have called the broad, reformist paradigm stressed the capacity of a liberal education at autonomous academic institutions to provide an education inculcating young people with the right character to understand and appreciate liberal capitalism and best utilise their specialism in service of the productive society. This is in contrast to a widespread assumption that liberal education developed little in the post-war period. With UGC and Treasury student number forecasts rising, in 1958 the Association of University Teachers anticipated that Britain required 145,000 places and, to make up the shortfall, recommended the establishment of five small new universities in places such as Norwich, York, and Leamington Spa as centres of ‘cultured life’. The same year the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a £60 million programme of new university construction until 1962. The first of these new institutions was to be Sussex, near Brighton, which opened in 1961. The news in 1958 sparked a rush of local applications for new universities, which were considered by the UGC New Universities’ Sub-Committee established in 1959, chaired by Murray and including Briggs, Kitty Anderson, and Arthur Vick. By 1965, six entirely new universities had been founded in addition to Sussex: East Anglia (at Norwich) and York announced in April 1960.

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39 Shattock has identified that the inclusion of Leamington Spa was surprising and particularly sparked rival local activity in Coventry: Shattock, The Impact of a University on Its Environment, p. 19; Shattock, UGC and the Management of British Universities, pp. 82-83. See MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, W. L. Chinn, Memorandum on the Creation of a University in Coventry, September 1958, Appendix I; Silver, Higher Education and Opinion Making, p. 185.


41 Shattock, 'Introduction', p. 289; Pellew and Taylor, 'Introduction'; Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 49-50; Shattock, UGC and the Management of British Universities, p. 77; Vernon, ‘Engagement, Estrangement or Divorce?’.
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and opened 1963; four further universities were announced from May 1961: Essex and Lancaster which both opened 1964, and Kent (at Canterbury) and Warwick (at Coventry) in 1965.42

While the foundation of the new universities was instigated by the state there was no parliamentary or political party input; the foundation of the New Universities was “an insider’s job” that involved optimistic public funding with virtually no open public debate’ and it has been easy to portray this as a mechanism by which an unreformed liberal education was perpetuated.43 Responsibility for education of what the historical literature refers to as liberally educated ‘rounded and balanced men’ (male-gendered amateurs) in contrast to the highly technically qualified graduates from the CATs, was to fall to these new institutions.44 Murray intended the new universities to specialise in non-technological subjects, and avoid overly costly (medicine) or low-demand subjects (agriculture). This meant that the universities would be dedicated to the pure sciences and cheaper arts, the more traditional basis for a liberal education, but committed to a (then) substantial size of at least 3000 students each to justify their funding.45 Appointed at each of the New Universities was an Academic Planning Board (APB), primarily responsible for the appointment of the initial professoriate and staff and outlining the syllabus and the framework of university governance. They were nominally appointed by the local promotion committees (themselves intended to take the initiative in their applications to ‘host’ universities). In reality, Murray closely vetted APB membership under the guise of maintaining the ‘academic quality’.46 APBs were, therefore, staffed by prominent establishment educationalists and university community members, often Oxbridge educated, expressing similar educational sympathies. One of the first

43 Filippakou and Tapper, ‘Policymaking and the Politics of Change in HE’, p. 16; Birks, Building the New Universities, p. 11.
46 Academic Planning Boards were derived from the sponsorship model pioneered by Keele, whereby academic planning was overseen by a ‘Academic Advisory Council’ compromising representatives of Oxford, Birmingham, and Manchester, and allowing it to award degrees immediately; see Mountford, Keele: An Historical Critique, pp. 72, 80, 299.
duties of the APB was the appointment of the vice-chancellor. Rather than advertise these positions, candidates were generally invited from the same establishment network.

Nevertheless, these new universities were expected, as new institutions without existing traditions and orthodoxies, to innovate in their organisation and teaching. As this thesis has explored, the ‘character’ such a university education was supposed to promote diversified. The APBs permitted a range of opportunities for vice-chancellors to wield considerable influence as charismatic institutional leaders and portray themselves as educational innovators within this elite group, especially through the power to immediately award their own degrees. The desire to cultivate the ‘right sort of chap’, or a traditional ‘academic’ liberal education, remained. Modifying it was however a strong current of breadth. This moved a university education away from a meritocratic liberal education, through the emphasis on post-war citizenship at Keele and the shared influence of John Fulton at Sussex. Sussex took forwards the concern for overcoming disciplinary divisions between arts and sciences, and argued for an interdisciplinary and holistic approach better suited to problem solving to harness the productive power of the individual versus the technonationalist collective in the midst of Cold War competition. Simultaneously university and industry expectations had reformed the idea of a university educated graduate by the mid-1960s. Students were not necessarily members of the ‘elite’ but should be adept at solving practical problems; free to exercise their own judgment over what direction they might specialise; and prepared to become citizens of the West.

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50 Cragoe, 'Asa Briggs and the University of Sussex, 1961–1976'; Cragoe, 'Sussex: Cold War Campus'; Muthesius, The Postwar University, pp. 108-10; see also Blaxland, Swansea University, pp. 35-60.
51 Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 4.
Recognising the importance of breadth, the Robbins Report (1963) recommended an increase in the number and proportion of higher education students attending universities and obtaining broadly based degrees in order to meet national manpower needs. It recommended the CATs should become universities, and for the establishment of sixteen new universities.\textsuperscript{52} However, its dire warnings galvanised established universities to expand at faster rates and to larger sizes than they had previously indicated they would be willing. Just one additional university was established in mainland Britain: Stirling (1967). With three atypical exceptions, the binary system meant there were no further university foundations until 1992 (Figure 8).\textsuperscript{53} The enthusiasm for university expansion had evaporated by 1973. Higher education’s reputation had been damaged by student unrest, it had failed to deliver on its promises for national invigoration, and the universities had failed to muster a convincing riposte to the polytechnics. A further blow came as inflation and the OPEC oil crisis brought an end to generous funding regimes.\textsuperscript{54} This wider context of the interplay between the liberal and techno-nationalist visions of the student were central to these new institutions’ foundation and development.

6.1.3. York, Warwick, and Stirling

To explore the importance of breadth and its relationship with the reformist vision of preparing students for life in liberal capitalism, this thesis takes three universities as case studies. These institutions, York, Warwick, and Stirling, comprehensively archived, recorded, and celebrated their origins and the evolution of their vision of a university. York has a sizable literature detailing its origins and has particularly embraced the use of biography of its early supporters to inform its

\textsuperscript{52} The Scottish institutions were Strathclyde (1964), Heriot-Watt (1966), and Dundee (1967), of the CATs, Aston (Birmingham), Loughborough College of Technology, City University (Northampton), Surrey (Battersea), Brunel, Bath University of Technology (Bristol), and Bradford, all became universities in 1966, followed by Salford (1967), and Chelsea College (in 1971, after a brief stint in the University of London); the Welsh CAT entered the federated University of Wales in 1967. Simmons, ‘Science and Technology in England and Wales’, p. 10. On Robbins Report recommending the foundation of sixteen universities rather than the usually quoted six, see Chapter Three.

\textsuperscript{53} The New University of Ulster (1968), the distance learning Open University (1969/71), and independent, private University College at Buckingham (1973/76); all three institutions were funded outside the UGC.

\textsuperscript{54} Pellew and Taylor, ‘Introduction’, p. 6.
Figure 8. Location of new university institutions, 1947-71. Adapted from https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=2563&lang=en [18 June 2021].
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history.\textsuperscript{55} Warwick possesses a wealth of commentary and commemoration, thanks largely to Thompson (republished in 2014), and Shattock (who joined Warwick in 1968, and was registrar from 1983 to 1999).\textsuperscript{56} Regrettably little has been published on Stirling except for a handful of short, introspective retrospectives and papers.\textsuperscript{57} Reunions, anniversaries, and the recent enthusiasm for oral histories have led to all three universities amassing collections of recorded interviews with early students, staff, and prominent proponents.\textsuperscript{58} The universities have also received the attention of architectural historians, who have understood the designs of the New Universities as attempting to create ‘utopianist’ communities through monumental structures, though these plans also acknowledge limitations on such ambition resulting from sometimes harsh economies and largely prosaic, even ‘conservative’, architectural programmes.\textsuperscript{59}


\textsuperscript{56} Shattock, \textit{Making a University: A Celebration of Warwick’s First 25 Years}; Shattock, \textit{UGC and the Management of British Universities}, especially pp. 73-97; Shattock, \textit{The Impact of a University on its Environment}; Griffiths, 'The New Universities: The Humanities'; Steedman, 'Social History Comes to Warwick'; Thompson, 'Warwick University Ltd', first published in 1970, remains an authoritative account of the Files Affair. The volume was republished in 2014 with additional reflections from early students (just prior to Warwick's 50th anniversary).


\textsuperscript{59} Muthesius, \textit{The Postwar University}; Robert Proctor, 'Social Structures: Gillespie, Kidd & Coia's Halls of Residence at the University of Hull', \textit{Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians}, 67 (2008); Fair, 'Brutalism among the Ladies': Modern Architecture at Somerville College, Oxford, 1947—67; John McKean,
The existing literature celebrates the three universities in rich detail and provides authoritative narratives of events and decisions. It identifies various common features. All three were publicly funded (initially at minimum around 80 percent of their income), de novo, residential, campus-based (with a site covering a minimum of 200 acres, insisted by the UGC), higher education institutions identifying as autonomous ‘universities’. Each was granted the right to confer degrees immediately but under the guidance of an APB. They imagined their campuses in the form of tight communities aiming to house two thirds of their students in residence; they promoted the study of the social sciences and innovative degree courses; and generally they avoided too prescriptive academic structuring through faculties or departments. Carol Dyhouse has identified less specialised degree courses were also attractive to women, thought to be more suitable to their aspirations particularly for careers in teaching. The number of women studying at these institutions was generally higher than university averages: in 1966/67 Warwick and York had 36.2 percent and 43.4 percent respectively; Stirling in 1967/68 had 44.6 percent. Each university had various different permutations of these distinctive features in their pedagogy and built environment. When interrogated in light of the role of the broadly educated student in society, an overarching but flexible philosophy concerned with reorienting the form of the university towards the needs of what Chapter Five called the modern techno-liberal society becomes very apparent.

While York has generally been identified as having a strong attachment to the liberal university, there are nonetheless fascinating hints of an allied or moderating influence of breadth in its early development. One of the earlier New Universities, York admitted its first 216 students in

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60 Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, p. 137. Whyte has demonstrated the need for a 200-acre site was an assumption based on plans from 1946 for the University of Liverpool: Whyte, ‘Learning from Redbrick’, p. 25.

61 Dyhouse, Students: A Gendered History, pp. 101-03; Steedman, 'Middle-Class Hair'; these total also include graduate students. 1967/8 was Stirling’s first year. It enrolled 81 male versus 82 female undergraduate students. For Stirling see Guy Neave, 'The University of Stirling and the Central Region of Scotland: The Adaptation of University to Regional Needs', Paedagogica Europaea, 11 (1976), p. 36.
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October 1963. The chosen site provided the university with an enviable location – a wedge of 180 acres two miles from York Minster. Lord Eric James of Rusholme, renowned High Master of Manchester Grammar School and ten-year member of the UGC from 1951-61, was invited to become vice-chancellor (1962-73); he had been a member of the Crowther Committee into the education of 15 to 18-year-olds in 1959, and while vice-chancellor he chaired the Committee of Enquiry on teacher training (1970-72).\(^{62}\) James was an unrepentant advocate of meritocracy, and an elitist.\(^{63}\) For example, he gave a speech in Johannesburg in 1967 defending elites, though he also argued that it was ‘profoundly wrong’ that such an elite should be based on ‘race or colour’.\(^{64}\) He was reportedly fair, and kindly to porters.\(^{65}\) His vision, together with the interest of local university promoters, particularly from local industry, such as the confectionery company the Rowntrees, gave rise to a plan for a small, elite, modern collegiate university of the minimum permitted size of 3000 students in ten years; in fact by 1970 York only reached 2445 students.\(^{66}\) James never claimed any special originality on the part of York’s syllabus.\(^{67}\) This had the consequence of obscuring interesting developments at York. York emphasised the social-sciences and teacher training and intended its syllabi to respond to industry and national concerns for manpower, efficiency, and productivity.

Lionel Robbins was Chairman of York’s Academic Planning Board, concurrent to his chairing of the Robbins Committee.\(^{68}\) Much of the zeitgeist of York’s foundation was present in the Robbins Report, particularly the concern for rising student demand, and strong focus on providing student residences

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\(^{64}\) James, The Universities and the Idea of Liberty, p. 10.


\(^{66}\) BI UOY/F/ST/1/2; Dr. Brockbank, ‘English at York’, ND; Mountford, Keele: An Historical Critique, p. 288.


\(^{68}\) Warren, Eric James and the Founding of the University of York, p. 60; see Howson, Lionel Robbins, pp. 863-65. The APB only briefly appears in Robbins’ Autobiography.

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and community. Liberal economist Alan Peacock, who shared similar educational sympathies with Robbins, was appointed professor of economics (1963-78) and became deputy vice-chancellor (1963-69). The relationship between James and the university planners and their architectural firm Robert Mathew Johnson Marshall (RMJM) was particularly successful, with a clear relationship between its designed and built environment and its pedagogy. Its development plan received widespread approval in the national and architectural press (Figure 9). York provides a fascinating example of the harmony that was achievable between the liberal education and broad reformism.

By contrast to York, Warwick is notorious for its connections with industry. It was also at the vanguard of institutions promoting a new broad role of universities, particularly in seeking a merger with a local college of technology. Warwick was announced in 1960 and first admitted 436 students in October 1965. Warwick’s 400 acre site straddled the boundary of Warwickshire and Coventry three miles from the city (seven miles from the town of Warwick). It was claimed as the ‘largest site in Britain designated entirely for university development’ and was highly ambitious. Quite unlike York, frequently it was envisaged that Warwick might grow to 20,000 students; it reached 1689 students by 1972, and at that stage expected to reach 5000 students by 1976. There was also a strong national dimension: Warwick promoted itself as serving as a national node with excellent connections to the South-East and London via the developing motorway and railway systems (Figure

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71 The university’s site was assembled from matching gifts of land from the two local authorities.
73 University of Warwick Development Plan (Coventry: University of Warwick Promotion Committee, 1964). This was a highly ambitious target when at that time (see Introduction). Many American universities did have student populations in the tens of thousands. The target of 20,000 was shared with Essex, and ‘exactly matched the flavour of the Robbins Report’, but Briggs, for example, rejected expansion on that scale for Sussex: Albert Sloman, ‘A University in the Making: 1963: The Fulfilment of Lives’, in The Reith Lectures (BBC, 01 December 1963); Muthesius, The Postwar University, pp. 150, 77; Briggs, ‘Some Aspects of University Planning’, p. 17; Birks, Building the New Universities, pp. 10-11. The number of students at the University of Warwick only reached 20,000 in 2000, and was just over 27,000 in 2018. Michael Shattock and Roberta Warman, The Martin Family and the University of Warwick: The Contribution of Private Giving to a University’s Success, 2 edn (University of Warwick, 2010); MRC UWA/PUB/4/5/1, University of Warwick, ‘Prospectus: 1968/69’ (Coventry: W. W. Curtis, 1968)
10). Unique for a New University, Warwick was in close proximity to industry and a city. Consequently, the interests of Midlands industrialists, including representatives from the Rootes Motors Limited, aeronautics firm the Hawker Siddeley Group, and the man-made textiles company Courtaulds were evident. Industrialists played commanding roles in the University’s early promotion committee and executive bodies. Vice-chancellor John ‘Jack’ Butterworth (1962-85), Bursar of New College Oxford and law tutor, enjoyed a close relationship with local industrialists. Butterworth carried many values of the liberal university, including a strong commitment to professorial vision to encourage academic excellence and community, but which he believed was necessary to serve practical industry needs and further Western society. Perhaps because of this, Butterworth’s legacy as vice-chancellor has been polarising: he has been remembered as both a brilliant planner and proactive fundraiser, but also notoriously insecure, non-transparent, and overbearing. The university itself went through a series of fiascos (Warwick’s built environment achieved nowhere near the same level of acclaim as York) and became perhaps unfairly infamous for student discontent.

Stirling pioneered a fascinating and sophisticated educational pedagogy of breadth with a strong national orientation. It launched in 1965 and admitted 186 students just two years later in September 1967 in permanent accommodation, and rapidly grew to 2075 students by 1973, of whom roughly three-quarters were Scottish residents. As the only university founded on the

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74 University of Warwick Development Plan, pp. 11-12; Beloff, The Plateglass Universities, p. 140; Edgerton, The Rise and Fall of the British Nation, pp. 298-302.
75 Shattock, UGC and the Management of British Universities, pp. 78-79.
76 Thompson, ‘Warwick University Ltd’, pp. 31-41.
77 IAS 974/1/1, Michael Shattock, interviewed by April Gallwey, 3, 10 January 2013; IAS 993/12/1/2 Alan Philips, interviewed by Richard Wallace, 2, 16 January 2014.
78 Muthesius, The Postwar University, pp. 87, pp. 115-22.
79 UoSA UA/A/1/8/2/1/2, Lord Murray to Sir Kenneth, 19 February 1986; Stirling remained at that student population for most the 1970s. Neave, ‘The University of Stirling and the Central Region of Scotland: The Adaptation of University to Regional Needs’, p. 36; UoSA UA/A/3/1/1, Table A2, University of Stirling, Abstract of Statistics, September 1977.
Figure 9 (left). The theoretical diagram applied to the site and the building programme, and site with the building programme superimposed. University of York, Development Plan: 1962-72, p. 47. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 10 (right). “Coventry lies on the inter-city electric rail network and at the hub of the national motorway system [...] London is a non-stop one-and-a-quarter hours away by train and most major cities are within two hours’ motoring”. MRC UWA/PUB/4/9/1, University of Warwick, Guide to First Degree Courses: 1972-73 (Coventry, 1972), p. 4. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 11. UoSA x037, University of Stirling, ‘Aerial photo of construction of centre of campus’ (c. 1970). Reproduced with permission. Note also the dinghy sailing on the loch.
recommendation of the Robbins Report, breadth pervaded Stirling’s anatomy; Robbins though not a Scotsman was nevertheless symbolically chosen as chancellor. Stirling is often considered separately to the other New Universities, perhaps because of its lateness, or lumped together with the other ‘Scottish Universities’ despite that category containing as great a variety as ‘English’ universities.⁸⁰

The degree of overlap in personnel and vision of the New Universities and Stirling indicates that their estrangement is unwarranted. Keith Murray (an Edinburgher) having resigned his chair of the UGC in 1963 chaired the Academic Planning Board at Stirling. The APB also included: Glasgow University Principal and then CVCP Chairman Charles H. Wilson; Lady Mary Ogilvie, who had previously served on York’s APB; and another early York comrade, Peacock.⁸¹ The APB unusually advertised the position of vice-chancellor and principal. They unanimously chose Tom Cottrell, an Edinburgh professor of chemistry with a reputation for innovative teaching methods who reportedly became a favourite vice-chancellor of the UGC.⁸² Cottrell had fifteen years of employment as a research chemist, in the Novel Division of Imperial Chemical Industries. This experience led him to stress the importance of breadth, particularly knowledge of theory and method to solve practical problems through courses such as technological economics and teacher training.⁸³ Stirling’s community and

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⁸⁰ Shattock implies the Shakespearean Seven were founded based on national student number targets whereas Stirling and Ulster were selected based on concerns for regional balance. This is true to an extent, but it is also the case that the student demand for Scottish universities was calculated separately to England in the Robbins Report and Stirling was intended to make a contribution to this demand. Shattock, Making Policy, p. 50; CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 155; CHE, ‘Appendix One’, pp. 144-46. Elsewhere, in Perkin’s genealogy if Keele was the mother of the seven new university sisters, then Stirling was a cousin. Perkin, ‘Dream, Myth and Reality: New Universities in England, 1960–1990’, p. 295; see also, the categorisation in 1991 by Peter Scott, ‘Opportunities Gained, Lost and to Be Grasped’, Higher Education Quarterly, 45 (1991), pp. 368-70. Stirling gets only a page in Muthesius’ otherwise authoritative account of the new universities. Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 174. Only Utopian Universities has hitherto provided Stirling with an equivalent degree of historical attention as to the other New Universities.

⁸¹ Nehring, ‘The University of Stirling’, p. 195. Harry Donnelly, previously of Scottish Education Department and assessor to the Robbins Report, became the university’s first Secretary. Founding Professor of Physics at Warwick, John Forty, eventually left his post to become Principal at Stirling, but this was not until 1984.

⁸² The position received nearly ninety applications. Murray recalled that after interviewing a number of these candidates, the Board took only five minutes to agree on Cottrell unanimously. UoSA UA/A/1/8/2/1/2, Lord Murray to Sir Kenneth, 19 February 1986. Perkin, New Universities in the United Kingdom, p. 73; SURSA OH/002, Fred Holliday, interviewed by John Stewart, 6 May 2009 (1’05.55). There has been very limited historical attention on Cottrell. See Ronald Percy Bell, ‘Tom Leadbetter Cottrell’, Chemistry in Britain, 9 (1973). and a short commentary on a personal website, Robert Erskine Waddell, ‘Tom Leadbetter Cottrell’ (OrnaVerum, ND) https://www.ornaverum.org/family/cottrell-tom.html> [Accessed 18 November 2020].

⁸³ Stewart, Higher Education in Postwar Britain, p. 134.
institutional memory venerated Cottrell as ambitious, farsighted, and a ‘polymath’ (sailing, ‘the visual arts and music were his especial delights’) but infatuated with quantification.\textsuperscript{84} Cottrell stressed Stirling’s capacity to innovate through new course design and its celebrated architecture and stunning landscaped campus (Figure 11) two miles from the town. Like York, it was designed by RMJM, with the aim of producing broadly educated and pragmatic graduates.\textsuperscript{85} Despite Warwick’s reputation for its close association with industry, in many respects Stirling more explicitly linked itself to breadth than Warwick. The 1970s were a difficult time for Stirling financially and spiritually. Stirling coasted at the tail-end of the wave of funding that launched other new universities. Its confidence and reputation were seriously undermined in 1972 when some students protested ‘continued cuts to student grants and budgets’ by booing the Queen when she visited the university.\textsuperscript{86} The incident put enormous stresses through the university community and the following year Cottrell died from a heart attack.

Looking again at these universities’ formative years with a critical lens reveals how a discourse of breadth was crucial in the planning and development of these institutions. All three institutions had clear visions for how their students were to contribute to the liberal good society. Freedom, choice, and breadth were key ideas. How this was expressed, however, differed significantly in local contexts and provides valuable evidence of the degree of dynamism exhibited by social democratic higher education institutions and expansion. Institutions and their leaders had to contend with rival visions for higher education, as section 6.2 examines. Section 6.2.1 explores how where local promoters had different visions the national establishment generally considered them well-intentioned but misguided, or they were ignored and at worst repressed.\textsuperscript{87} Section 6.2.2

\textsuperscript{84} SURA OH/002 Holliday; SURA OH/048, Andrew Bain, interviewed by Carolyn Rowlinson, 01 September 2015; T. A. Dunn, 'Tom Cottrell the Man', 	extit{Campus} (September 1973); R. P. Bell, 'Tom Cottrell the Scientist', 	extit{Campus} (September 1973); David Clements, 'His Early Days at Stirling', 	extit{Campus} (September 1973).

\textsuperscript{85} Nehring, ‘Challenging the Myths of the Scottish Sixties’, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid. pp. 69-70; Nehring, ‘The University of Stirling’, p. 198. Robbins as chancellor was in attendance and blamed the troubles at Stirling for Cottrell’s death: Howson, 	extit{Lionel Robbins}, p. 1060.

\textsuperscript{87} Shattock, ‘Introduction’, p. 292.
shows how national priorities of the state also changed and were more difficult for institutions to
navigate, though they continued to plan for breadth and find allies especially in industry.

6.2. CONTESTED IMAGININGS OF THE ROLE OF A NEW UNIVERSITY IN SOCIETY

6.2.1. Local Visions of the New Universities and Breadth

The interplay between national and local visions on the purpose of higher education in the early
years of the foundation of the three universities are illuminating in how breadth absorbed, cajoled,
or rejected local initiatives. Murray’s APB at Stirling considered public consultation liable to ‘throw
up a lot of nonsense’ but recognised it was important for a public consensus and confidence in the
university. All three universities proved particularly proficient at procuring local and national
private financing. Jill Pellew has calculated that from 1964-67 Warwick had raised £2.75 million
from private donations in its appeal, the most of any of the new universities, over half a million more
than the second most successful fundraiser, Stirling, which raised £2.2 million from 1966-68; York
was fourth, raising £1.85 million from 1962-67. Local visions for their universities were particularly
concerned with preserving and transmitting a local culture as common heritage. What precisely this
culture was varied considerably in local contexts. Often, it was vaguely related to educating young
people of the right ‘character’, of civic pride and the general benefit of society and local and national
employers.

6.2.1.1. The Rowntrees at York

York was unusual amongst the New Universities in that the major impetus for the new university
was not from the local authority but from local interest groups. Local supporters were enamoured

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88 All three locales (indeed, all New University hosts save Colchester) had put in applications for a university in
1946 following the Barlow report. Harwood, Space, Hope and Brutalism, p. 256.
89 UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, Minutes of the First Meeting of the Academic Planning Board, 22 December 1964.
90 Beloff also notes this disparity but suggests it was to do with the local traditions of benefaction. Beloff, The
Plateglass Universities, p. 37.
91 Jill Pellew, ‘The New British Campus Universities of the 1960s and Their Localities: The Culture of Support
and the Role of Philanthropy’, in Jill Pellew and Miles Taylor (eds.), Utopian Universities: A Global History of the
see Chapter Five for Lancaster’s fascinating links with industry. Ulster was not included in Pellew’s data.
92 Webb, Oliver Sheldon and the Foundations of the University of York, p. 63.
by the cultural prestige that a university could bring to the ancient city. It also helped that the city had a philanthropic tradition through the local Quaker family businesses, which had already aligned the interests of liberal education and industry.

Early university promoters had established the York Academic Trust (YAT) in 1956 and raised £90,000 towards the establishment of a liberal university. They had also provided postgraduate level summer schools in architecture from 1947 and history from 1953, reflecting citizens’ concern for the transmission and preservation of heritage and high culture. After receiving enthusiastic support from UGC Chairman Murray in 1959 to make an application for a university, the new York University Promotion Committee (YUPC) in their proposal that envisaged students at York would be educated not just in their specialisms. They should be immersed in an environment of cultural excellence to learn how to participate and contribute fully in civil society. The YUPC believed York as an ancient town possessed ‘much of the ethos’ of Oxford and Cambridge and was a perfect environment for a similar liberal education; many at the first YUPC meeting were incredulous that York did not already have a university. It was specially enamoured with the idea of reviving the collegiate university, which would transmit and preserve York’s high culture through the personable contact possible in small communities.

Overemphasising these Oxbridge influences is, however, to obscure YUPC concerns that the ‘traditional interest in social betterment over wide fields should be honoured in the new University system’, and its interesting alliance with the local and national contribution that industry could

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93 BI UOY/F/YUPC/1/3, York Academic Trust, ‘Partially Verbatim report of a discussion with Sir Keith Murray at Bishopthorpe Palace at 2.30pm on 24 June 1959; BI UOY/F/YUPC/1/1, York Promotion Committee, ‘Memorandum to the University Grants Committee’, December 1959, p. 4; for the background of this interest, see Webb, Oliver Sheldon and the Foundations of the University of York.

94 BI UOY/F/YUPC/1/1, York Promotion Committee, ‘Memorandum to the University Grants Committee’, December 1959, p. 2. The YUPC memorandum is reprinted in Warren, Eric James and the Founding of the University of York, pp. 118-30. See also Murray’s praise, pp. 17-19; and a narrative of his visit in Webb, Oliver Sheldon and the Foundations of the University of York, pp. 61-62.

95 BI UOY/F/YUPC/1/3, ‘University of York Sponsoring Body Meeting’, 19 November 1959; local promoters at York had made an unsuccessful appeal for foundation of a university in 1947 (as well as in 1600s, and the 1820s).
The university was provided with a substantial portion of its initial funding by local industry, and uniquely among the New Universities, also its site (Heslington Hall, a sixteenth-century aristocratic retreat and grounds originally purchased with plans to open it as a ‘folk park’). These included representatives of the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust, the Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust, and the C. and J. B. Morrell Trust, an allied banking family. The Rowntree’s philanthropy had supported adult education and anti-poverty reform since the nineteenth century.

To honour this tradition, YUPC proposed that York might provide a liberal education based on the social sciences. The YUPC envisaged the university as a place where ‘fruitful interaction’ between the arts and sciences might flourish, facilitated by a ‘bridge’ through the social sciences.

Local support at York immediately expressed interest in a wider idea of liberal education than the traditional liberal arts education.

Support on the ground at York shows a local dimension to the industry-university dialogue demonstrated in Chapter Five. York promoters such as William Wallace (Chairman of the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust and collaborator with liberal sociologist Seebhomb Rowntree) had

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96 BI UOY/F/APB/1/4, York Academic Trust, ‘Memorandum to the Academic Planning Board of the University of York’, ND. See, for instance, Roy Lowe’s overstatement of the dichotomy between liberal arts and technological training: Lowe, *Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History*, p. 162.


99 BI UOY/F/YUPC/1/1, York Promotion Committee, ‘Memorandum to the University Grants Committee’, December 1959, p. 7.
attended these conferences run by the Federation of British Industries and the university sector.\textsuperscript{100} Wallace and York Academic Trust proposed a social-studies focus would produce:

\begin{quote}
A slant within the department of science and the humanities towards patterns of study which emphasize human values, an awareness of the accumulated richness of civilization and its future adaptations and advances.\textsuperscript{101}
\end{quote}

This was particularly necessary to meet the needs of industry. The university and its social-scientific research would be well placed to contribute to large industrial areas of Yorkshire and York’s ‘own varied industries’ including chocolate, railways, scientific instruments, building, glass and printing and extensive medical services, fitting the Rowntrees’ liberal, Quaker sensibilities.\textsuperscript{102} With this strong sense of the capacity of a liberal education to promote the betterment of society and cultural excellence and support of national figures there were few disagreements over these fundamental aims between the local promoters and the APB.

6.2.1.2. Midlands Industry, the City, and the APB

Warwick (initially promoted as ‘The University of Coventry’) was unusually closely associated not just with industry but with a city. This led to tensions, as becomes clear through analysis of the ideological struggle between Warwick’s APB and local promoters at the City of Coventry.\textsuperscript{103}

Coventry had suffered in the Blitz, targeted for its role in the aeronautical industry. Calls in the 1950s for the foundation of an ‘MIT of the Midlands’ in Coventry to crown its post-war

\textsuperscript{100} On Wallace’s role in the foundation of the university see Warren, Eric James and the Founding of the University of York, pp. 29-30, 145.


\textsuperscript{102} BI UOY/F/YUPC/1/1, York Promotion Committee, ‘Memorandum to the University Grants Committee’, December 1959, p. 2; Hill and Webb, ‘John Bowes Morrell (1873-1963)’.

\textsuperscript{103} Shattock, Making a University: A Celebration of Warwick’s First 25 Years, p. 18. Indeed, Shattock has argued that Coventry’s case for a university was strengthened in the eyes of the UGC as the city was the largest in the UK without a university: Shattock, UGC and the Management of British Universities, p. 78. The current University of Coventry is descended from the Coventry Polytechnic, itself preceded by Lanchester College of Technology (see below).
reconstruction had failed. A fresh attempt was made in 1958 with affirmation in support for a university at Coventry by Birmingham vice-chancellor Robert Aitken. Early local supporters (Shattock called them ‘irregulars’) with City Architect Arthur Ling and Coventry Director of Education Walter Chinn produced an unofficial development plan. They broke with the vision of a technological university, fearing there would not be government support for replicating the resources for higher technical training at the new, potentially rivalrous, Lanchester College of Technology (1961). Instead, inspired by Keele, they proposed a liberal university of arts and sciences featuring a 200 foot tower, but of just 650 students, which gained national press coverage and cross-party City-councillor backing. Local industry was initially tepid, while backing the idea of putting a broadly based university into a dialogue with advanced industry. By March 1960 there was a groundswell of support for a broad university from industrialists, the City, and neighbouring Warwickshire County Council (whose support was secured by naming the university for Warwick), and an Executive Committee of the Promotion Committee (ECPC) was founded. The ECPC was headed by

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105 MRC UWA/F/PP/4/4ii, ‘Proposed University College’, August 1958, see also MRC UWA/F/PP/4A/11. Birmingham later lent its support to the scheme through pro-vice-chancellor Geoffrey Templeman, who contributed to discussion, and would later leave to become vice-chancellor of the new university of Kent.

106 W. B. Stephens, ‘The City of Coventry: Public Education’, in W. B. Stephens (ed.), *A History of the County of Warwick* (London: Victoria County History, British History Online, 1969); Whyte, ‘Learning from Redbrick’, p. 28; Shattock, *UGC and the Management of British Universities*, p. 81. Shattock notes that architecture and urban planning were also included, ‘the first as a nod to the rebuilding of Coventry, the second as a reflection of the concentration of agricultural interests at the National Agricultural centre at Stoneleigh. Technological studies were nowhere to be seen’: Shattock, *The Impact of a University on Its Environment*, p. 26; Whyte, ‘Learning from Redbrick’.


108 MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, 27 April 1959; Shattock, *The Impact of a University on Its Environment*, p. 27; Henry Rees, *A University Is Born: The Story of the Foundation of the University of Warwick* (Birmingham: The Scribes, Studley, Warwickshire, 1989), p. 27; MRC UWA/F/PP/2, Sir Arnold Hall, ‘Transcript of history of university’ (1969). Two informal dinners were held the first in April 1959 and then later in April 1960, and included representatives from companies and individuals who would go on to play significant roles in the university including Courtaulds, Rootes, Jaguar, and Coventry Gauge and Tool: Shattock, *UGC and the Management of British Universities*, pp. 84-85; MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, Charles Barrat, ‘Memorandum of Meeting at Barfold House, Barford’, 27 April 1959.

109 Shattock, *The Impact of a University on Its Environment*, pp. 27-28. In an act of deference in order to secure Warwickshire County Council to support the university project it was agreed to name the university after the town of Warwick rather than Coventry (the name University of Mid-Warwickshire, recalling North-Staffordshire, was rejected).
industrialists Lord Rootes, owner of Rootes Automobiles and an enthusiastic sponsor of business education, and Sir Arnold Hall, previously a professor at Imperial, then Managing Director of the aeronautics manufacturer Bristol Siddeley, who had been considered for a position on the Robbins Committee.\footnote{Ibid; G. Masefield Peter, ‘Hall, Sir Arnold Alexander (1915–2000), Aeronautical Engineer’, \textit{ODNB}; TNA ED46.941, ‘Higher Education: Note of a Meeting in Sir Thomas Padmore’s Room at the Treasury’, 5 August 1960.} Expanding the ‘irregulars’ proposals, it was widely envisaged that Lanchester might be incorporated as a faculty of engineering in the university.\footnote{Ibid; Shattock, \textit{UGC and the Management of British Universities}, pp. 90-91.}

Industrialists’ concern for breadth found an ally in Warwick’s APB, appointed in October 1961. Warwick’s APB was headed by Oxford historian and editor of \textit{Dictionary of National Biography} Edgar T. Williams, and included three men from business including Hall, who was transferred to the APB on the request of the ECPC to represent engineering.\footnote{For a full list see Shattock, \textit{The Impact of a University on Its Environment}, p. 21. Williams was an ally of Alec Lindsay, see: C. S. Nicholls, ‘Williams, Sir Edgar Trevor [Bill] (1912-1995), intelligence officer and historian’, \textit{ODNB}. The APB was originally meant to include Fredrick Dainton, before being replaced with chemist Ralph A. Raphael. Other APB members included economist R. C. Tress (see Chapter Six) and L. C. Sykes (see Chapter Three). To move to the APB, Hall resigned from the ECPC. MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, ECPC, Minutes, 11 October 1961.} The APB’s planned ‘balanced’ liberal university was at first glance quite conservative, with fifty percent of its students in science subjects and fifty percent in the arts. It did reflect local concerns for engineering in the provision of ‘engineering science’ (the study of general scientific principles underlying the broad field of engineering). Some local industrialists though, like J. Kerr-Muir, advocated an even greater emphasis on the arts.\footnote{MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, ECPC, ‘Memorandum concerning the possible range and structure of studies in the University of Warwick [...] for the consideration of the Academic Planning Board’, January 1962. Local proposals varied very widely. Shattock, \textit{The Impact of a University on Its Environment}, pp. 30-31.} Pointedly the APB decreed the university would not deviate too far from the existing university model and was reluctant to commit the university to any mergers without a vice-chancellor.\footnote{MRC UWA/F/APB/1/1, APB, Draft Report of the Academic Planning Board, January 1963.}

The APB’s proposals and planning process excluded local supporters with a more technonationalist vision of higher education from academic planning and caused resentment. Delays in...
appointing a vice-chancellor exacerbated tensions between the ECPC and the APB.\textsuperscript{115} After a joint meeting in May 1962, Chinn authored a memorandum criticising the APB’s proposals for the university as too liberal, ‘conservative’ and unsuitable to meeting national and local manpower plans.\textsuperscript{116} Chinn, a socialist and supporter of comprehensive schools, felt that the four proposed science departments of mathematics, physics, chemistry, and engineering science placed an ‘undue emphasis’ on liberal ‘pure science’ at the expense of ‘applied science’.\textsuperscript{117} Chinn feared that selecting students for ‘pure’ and ‘applied’ science was division based on class and not ‘the ‘natural’ approach of individual students’ spurning equality of opportunity especially for working-class young people and exemplifying elite academia’s continued denigration of applied, vocational study.\textsuperscript{118} Secondly, Chinn conceived of a strong relationship between subject of study and future vocation, and had confidence in centralised manpower planning calculations to be able to determine the type of graduate the university should produce. He calculated, for example, that 43.2 percent of all arts graduates in 1959 went into teaching. Because, he continued, the demand for history teachers by grammar schools was currently low this meant the provision of history at Warwick was unnecessary.\textsuperscript{119} He therefore envisaged higher education as vocational and prescriptive.

The APB’s reports shared Chinn’s concern for vocation but favoured broad liberal education and flexible manpower.\textsuperscript{120} This choice lay in their optimism in ‘pure’ subjects to incorporate applied elements and include students from a wider range of social backgrounds. These were subjects which provided a liberal education, had high student demand, a strong ‘career market’ and relevance to

\textsuperscript{115} Shattock attributes the delay to the first choice of the APB for vice-chancellor, a ‘distinguished scientist’, deciding whether he was available.
\textsuperscript{116} MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, ECPC, Minutes, 11 May 1962; Shattock, \textit{UGC and the Management of British Universities}, p. 82. Chinn had previously noted, pointedly, that universities ‘traditionally exist to further the pursuit of knowledge irrespective of its immediate utility, although his purist attitude has been modified in many respects in recent years’: MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, W. L. Chinn, Memorandum on the Creation of a University in Coventry, September 1958, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, pp. 2-3.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{120} MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, ‘Draft Report of the Academic Planning Board’ (January 1963), p. 2.
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students’ future vocations. For example ‘pure’ engineering science would provide skills ‘beneficial to a student no matter how engineering developed in his life time’. Similarly, science courses would focus on ‘research methods, techniques and equipment [...] carefully related to contemporary life by using worthwhile problems already investigated and solved by industrial sectors’. While Shattock identifies that Warwick’s APB rejected the more deterministic ‘jejune ideas’ for interdisciplinarity at Sussex and other more prescriptive schemes at other New Universities, it is important to recognise that Warwick’s APB was still committed to achieving and delivering a broad interdisciplinary liberal education in service of modern society. Like at York, Warwick’s APB was keen to introduce a fourth year master’s to enable a broader undergraduate degree, along with flexible arrangements around core subjects and first degrees beginning with common courses across a number of subjects. Warwick’s APB also hoped the development of liberal social studies for example might give rise to a ‘graduate school of business studies’ which was not universally considered a subject suitable for study at a liberal university. Once Butterworth was finally appointed in November 1962 he joined both the APB and ECPC, and a submission to the UGC for a broad-based university was made ‘harmoniously’ as Shattock put it; Williams called it ‘mollifying’. The Warwick case demonstrates a broad paradigm as much as it could include local initiatives was also prepared to reject techno-nationalist alternatives.

124 Shattock, The Impact of a University on Its Environment, p. 32.
125 MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, ‘Draft Report of the Academic Planning Board’, p. 6; Tiratsoo, ‘Management Education in Postwar Britain’; Tiratsoo and Tomlinson, The Conservatives and Industrial Efficiency, 1951-64, pp. 70-76. It is important to note that there was considerable support for the expansion of management studies. A financial appeal to industry in support of two new schools of business in Britain raised well over £4 million in six months: McCulloch, Jenkins, and Layton, Technological Revolution?, p. 176.
6.2.1.3. Stirling, Falkirk, Arts, and Technology

The Robbins Report’s recommendation for a new university to be established in response to Scottish educational lobbying and to meet student demand in Scotland meant that the national dimension of Stirling was always strong. At least one study has identified a strong Oxbridge lobby at Stirling. However, in the wider context of the development of the liberal education this thesis has explored, Stirling appears as far more reformist. The UGC decision to choose Stirling as the site of a new university was due to the preference for an institution focusing on breadth and the applied humanities and social sciences rather replicating the focus on technology at the other three new university institutions in Scotland.

Stirling was not the favourite to win the right to host the new Scottish University; the media favoured Stirling’s competitors. The confident campaign from Falkirk, supported by Robbins committee member James Drever, with its emphasis on heavy industry, seemed much more aligned with other developments in technological higher education in the region. By contrast, Stirling’s proposed site was the picturesque Airthrey Castle (1791) and its nineteenth-century landscaped, walled estate, owned by the Scottish Office (the first time that central government had given land as well as the capital for buildings). The Royal Burgh of Stirling’s submission to the UGC stressed Stirling’s heritage as a historically royal city complete with medieval castle, a legacy of its strategic location as linchpin of Scotland – attractive perhaps as a metaphor of Stirling’s potential to act as a focal point of academic and vocational study in Scotland. The proposal hinted at a larger contribution to society than just a purely scientific education, and was sensitive to the acute Scottish

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127 CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 155; Heffernan and Jöns, “A Small Town of Character”; Nehring, ‘The University of Stirling’, p. 193. This included the four percent of students from England and Wales who entered universities in Scotland which would continue to grow in absolute terms as total numbers rose: Perkin, New Universities in the United Kingdom, p. 73; Carswell, Government and the Universities, p. 61.
128 Heffernan and Jöns, “A Small Town of Character”.
129 The other three new Scottish universities (already existing as established institutions) were Strathclyde (1964), Heriot-Watt (1966), and Dundee (1967).
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and national need for high quality school teachers and arts graduates. As one member of the sponsorship committee wrote, ‘With the new University of Strathclyde so heavily overloaded on the technical and scientific side, there would seem to be less need for [...] Stirling to be so similarly balanced or, shall we say?, overbalanced’. Stirling offered exciting potential innovation in making this contribution, beyond that offered by other Scottish universities. It was to be a non-technological university outside the traditional and peculiar quasi-united governance of the four ancient, liberal, Scottish universities. To establish a chair at these institutions or make major changes to their curricular, the universities had to obtain consent from the other three universities, and then from the Privy Council and Parliament, which could take up to six months or longer. This was stultifying and frustrating to academic innovation, and a broadly-based university outside this system would be considerably more dynamic.

Stirling’s deputation won UGC approval. The Falkirk promotion committee themselves blamed their loss on ‘devious lobbying’ of the UGC by Oxbridge protectionists. One local MP attributed the failure of the Falkirk promotion committee to their unwise decision to usher the UGC delegation (including UGC Chairman John Wolfenden and Vick) into a helicopter tour of the particularly bleak proposed site on a particularly blustery day. It seems likely that these factors aligned against the Falkirk case in contrast to the culturally rich and innovative broad alternative imaginable at Stirling. This was corroborated when the UGC-directed APB proposed in its second meeting in 1965 ‘that since there is in Scotland Strathclyde, Dundee, and Heriot-Watt which

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132 UoSA UA/C/12/1/3, Royal Burgh of Stirling, ‘Submissions to the University Grants Committee for the Establishment of University in and adjacent to the Royal Burgh of Stirling’, (1963).
133 UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, Dr. T. Crouther Gordon, University of Stirling Memorandum for the Academic Planning Board (9 February 1965), p. 9.
134 In order of foundation: St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh.
135 Shattock, Managing Good Governance in Higher Education, pp. 7-8; Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, pp. 88-89.
137 For the wider context of this visit, an account of this supposed Oxbridge-UGC lobbying, and a comparison of other Scottish town proposals, see: Heffernan and Jöns, “A Small Town of Character”, who probably underappreciate the possibilities within the liberal education at the UGC; Simpson & Brown, ‘The University of Stirling Campus’, p. 32.
138 50, p. 28.
were mainly involved in heavy technology there might be a point of planning for Stirling work in the light technology or in branches which the present Scottish Universities did not cover’. Stirling’s early fundraising efforts were assisted by this more culturally oriented pitch. ‘The need for a new non-technological and predominantly residential university in Scotland was generally accepted’, the campaign director remarked in their terminal report in 1966. The campaign was particularly successful in obtaining sponsorship from large Scottish companies and from Scots on the boards of large London-based companies, who made sizeable initial contributions to the university.

At each of the universities a programme of breadth was able to attract support from local promoters by its close association with a liberal education and transmission of common culture, but also the importance of the practical contribution that such an education might make to society and especially industry. This was not uncontested, however, and liberal and techno-nationalist assumptions of the imagined contribution of students to society clashed. Nevertheless, resolution and integration was possible. For example, local industrialists’ concerns for engineering and business studies were compatible with Warwick APB’s liberal programme. As the nationally manned APBs took control of planning away from locals, they handed planning over to early university administrations. These administrations reinforced these ideas with a philosophy of the benefits of an autonomous university which was more nationally minded, more abstract, and economic. They, however, had to compete with new national policy directions, as section 6.2.2 explores.

6.2.2. National Needs, Industry, and Breadth

Vice-chancellors and professors did the majority of early concrete planning for teaching and administration. They made plans for institutions which were clearly concerned with the practical and worldly purpose of liberally educated students in capitalist society. At York, this was initially a narrow need for the education of a meritocratic elite, but this was slowly subsumed by concerns for

139 UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, Draft Minutes of Meeting of the Academic Planning Board, 20 February 1965.
140 UoSA UA/C/12/1/12, University of Stirling Campaign Director, ‘Terminal Report’, November 1966.
141 By contrast, support from other regions of Scotland was lacking, with other universities launching their own appeals at the same time: UoSA UA/C/12/1/12, University of Stirling Campaign Director, ‘Terminal Report’, November 1966.
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breadth. At Stirling, even more markedly than Warwick, proposals strongly inclined towards arguments for breadth and against vocational overspecialisation. However, after 1965 and the implantation of the binary divide the DES and UGC increasingly pressurised the universities to avoid what it saw as a separate ‘vocational’ subjects justified by an unwillingness to waste resources by duplicate facilities provided in the further education sector. This threatened the plans at York but especially Warwick; Stirling outside the English system avoided much of these pressures. Nevertheless, these universities continued to promote other ways they could demonstrate that the more ‘academic’ studies they would provide were still responding to national need, often by appealing to private funding.

6.2.2.1. York and Manpower

At York, the stress on breadth was carried forwards from the YUPC and the APB through James and its early professors, especially Peacock. York’s proposed and realised course content and structure were oriented towards supplying skilled graduates to meet national needs. But for James, this was a narrow need. He imbued his vision of the liberal education with qualities of moral and social leadership.\textsuperscript{142} Unsurprisingly, he was a proponent of the expansion of ‘equality of opportunity’ by which he meant meritocratic selection through grammar schools and believed that his university should fulfil a similar principle. He thought that ‘The influences of heredity and environment unite to make it certain that the lower social classes cannot be expected to secure, say, the same representation in the universities that they have in the population as a whole’.\textsuperscript{143} Later in 1970 in the midst of student discontent, James wondered whether a university population of 400,000 by 1980 was too large.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{142} BI UOY/UP/1/1/7, James of Rusholme, University of York: Vice-Chancellor’s Report, 1919-70, November 1970; though see for an alternative perspective: Warren, \textit{Eric James and the Founding of the University of York}, p. 83.

\textsuperscript{143} BI JAM/2/1/4, Lord James of Rusholme, ‘Education and Democratic Ideals’, March 1962, p. 39. Interestingly, he called himself an ‘equalitarian’ (see Chapter Two) and had preceded this comment with the argument that ‘education for conformity and education for freedom must go on side by side’.

\textsuperscript{144} Smith, ‘James and the ‘Utopianist’ Campus’, p. 30.
James’ more elite conception was moderated by breadth. At York, breadth took the form of an emphasis on the social sciences which had local support due to the influence of the Rowntrees and the YUPC, in an unusual degree of concord with the educational establishment in the APB. Robbins, chair of the APB, was also a member of Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust which probably aligned with his nonconformist inclinations (see Chapter Two). Allied with Wallace, Robbins was an effective promoter of the Rowntree Trust’s priorities. York was especially successful in teaching the social sciences: of the first 200 students admitted in 1963, half would take social science courses; of the rest, 30 took English, 40 took History, and 30 took Maths and Philosophy (the sciences were only introduced later, in 1965). By the late 1960s, the social sciences at York were flourishing, with the economics department in particular garnering an international reputation. Peacock could boast that York ‘now has more graduate students in economics and politics than are enrolled in all the Scots universities combined’. The focus on the social sciences was justified with reference to the practical social function of the graduates and knowledge produced at York. Even James’ narrow meritocratic vision was not as detached as perhaps he indicated. He understood that the growing complexity of the world and the importance of scientific knowledge made a broad education desirable for what he called ‘effective citizenship’. At James’ behest, education was provided in a limited fashion as a subsidiary subject as one of York’s experiments, with a fourth year with two terms of practice teaching in a school – a notably ‘unusual’ practice. James’ stress on education presumably to provide grammar school teachers was framed as part of York’s duty to

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145 Robbins was favoured by the YUPC to chair the APB over the UGC choice for the representation of a more local university in the form of Vice-Chancellor of Leeds, Sir Charles Morris: Warren, Eric James and the Founding of the University of York, pp. 30, 144-45, 31, 60-61. Warren slightly overstates the degree of agreement between Robbins and James, particularly their disagreement over ministerial responsibility for higher education: BI JAM/2/2/3, Lionel Robbins to Eric James, 1 September 1961. They were certainly very cordial, however, and visited the opera together in 1961: Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 954.

146 UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, Alan Peacock, ‘Proposals for the Social Sciences at the University of Stirling’, ND.

147 BI JAM/2/4/1, Lord James of Rusholme, General studies in schools, ‘Science and General Education’, 1964.

society, rising to meet the national shortage of teachers and to attract the most academically able students to teaching.\textsuperscript{149}

However, with the implementation of the binary system (see Chapter Four) the UGC was less inclined to support York’s experiments by the mid-late 1960s. The UGC refused to provide funding for York’s decades-long development of undergraduate studies in architecture, which the UGC saw as vocational and belonging to the polytechnic sector, a fate also shared by Warwick’s plans for a school of architecture.\textsuperscript{150} James and his university’s administration were particularly bitter about their failure, arguing the UGC failed to recognise the co-dependency of vocational and academic subjects.\textsuperscript{151} This failure, James thought, was emblematic of government policy and not the fault of the UGC. The focus of the Labour government and the DES was on training and instruction exclusively, and not on research and its practical application. This, for James, undermined the capacity of York to make its full contribution to society. ‘It is becoming ever clearer that the study and practice of architecture gains immeasurably by association with strong departments of social and natural science, and indeed with the humanities’, James argued.\textsuperscript{152} Postgraduate work too suffered from a lack of UGC funding, which James argued ignored ‘the indisputable fact that industry did want, at least for its better jobs, people with graduate training’.\textsuperscript{153}

As a counterweight to these disappointing developments, Peacock looked to private finance to secure research projects and graduate funding for its practically oriented research. The Rowntree trusts were particularly keen to fund graduate work in social studies.\textsuperscript{154} With funding from the

\textsuperscript{149} James, \textit{The Start of a New University}, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{150} Patrick Nuttgens, the director of the Institute for Advanced Architectural Studies at York was appointed on the understanding that he would becoming the first professor of architecture. Nuttgens later became the director of Leeds Polytechnic in 1969.
\textsuperscript{151} Butterworth at Warwick, for example, lamented the missed opportunity at Warwick to provide courses for ‘the engineer, the economist, the sociologist to co-ordinate their work with the Town Planner and the Architect’, including an emphasis on environmental studies: MRC UWA/PUB/1/8/1, Report of the Vice Chancellor. Part I, 1971-1972.
\textsuperscript{152} Bi UOY/UP/1/1/5, Eric James, University of York: Vice-Chancellor’s Report, 1967-68, November 1968.
\textsuperscript{153} Bi UOY/M/AA/1, Academic Advisory Committee Minutes, 8 March 1968.
Rowntree trusts for five years, the university established an Institute of Social and Economic Research headed by Jack Wiseman. An idea for a funded research centre was proposed by Wallace. Echoing national debates, the end result would be,

The University should produce social scientists of liberal education, capable of carrying that broad educational outlook into whatever particular vocation they may select. [...] There is a great need for men and women of this quality to deal with vital work of personnel management in industry.

So convinced was Wallace of the importance of this need that the Trust was prepared to forego its general reticence to contribute to the expenditure of research. The first project Peacock proposed, and which was funded by the trusts, was a project on unemployment insurance and compensation, and the trust indicated they would be interested in funding future interdisciplinary projects. One project proposed by Peacock which had a long-term legacy was titled ‘Health as in Investment’ which looked to ‘measure the contribution of welfare programmes to annual output and economic growth’ in order to provide policy advice on hospital building programmes and the returns on medical research funding. York’s core educational philosophy was keenly invested in the provision of such practical knowledge and of training graduates to take such understanding out into the world.

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155 BI UOY/F/YUPC/1/2, York University Promotion Committee, Copy of a letter from the Director of the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of York, 21 February 1963; BI UOY/F/APB/1/1, Academic Planning Board, Minutes, 6 October 1960, p. 1.
156 BI UOY/F/APB/1/4, Wallace, ‘Note submitted to the Academic Planning Board on the Social Sciences’.
157 BI UOY/F/YUPC/1/2, YUPC, letter from the Director of the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust; BI UOY/F/APB/1/1, Academic Planning Board, Minutes, 6 October 1960, p. 1.
158 BI UOY/F/YUPC/1/2, York University Promotion Committee, Copy of a memorandum by Professor Peacock to the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 27 November 1962.
159 The project was, according to Warren, not an unqualified success. It was too ‘dirigiste’ and dominated by the economists, ‘but the engagement with the range of social services the research underpinning their provision along with a ‘campaigning’ dimension has remained a distinctive and distinguished part of the university’s development, both domestically and in association with the Rowntree Trusts’: Warren, Eric James and the Founding of the University of York, p. 69.
6.2.2.2. Warwick, Lanchester, and the Binary Divide

To an even greater extent than York, attempts at Warwick to promote a new role for universities were curtailed by UGC which blocked potential mergers with Lanchester College of Technology and the nearby teacher training college. Both the ECPC and the APB proposed that Warwick would teach ‘pure’ engineering science to avoid the unnecessary duplication of ‘big “toys”’ with Lanchester. A strong basis in general scientific principles would then broaden out to applied engineering.

Warwick’s lethargic development meant it was not until 1964 that university planners actively began exploring the possibility of absorbing Lanchester as two faculties, Technology and Extra Mural studies, which would have been a radical realisation of a new broad university. A widely supported plan of union was announced in March 1965. To the extreme disappointment of the university, still palpable in Shattock’s narrative, in August 1965 the UGC rejected the merger as it contravened the new binary divide (see Chapter Four).

The university initially therefore only offered ‘academic’ economic science. The first professor of engineering science at Warwick, Arthur Shercliff, was according to Shattock, ‘almost as much an Applied Mathematician as he was an Engineer, and […] had very little to say to the motorcar industry’. Shercliff’s proposal for the faculty of engineering science was detached from

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161 Shattock, *The Impact of a University on Its Environment*, p. 33: MRC UWA/F/PE/1/3, Sir Arnold Hall, ‘Lancaster College of Technology’, 2 October 1964. This was, interestingly enough, after the Keele New Universities conference (1964) which had identified that ‘So far there is no sign of change in the ‘idea’ of a university in Britain. Contemporary pressures notwithstanding, the eight new universities aim at parity in all ways with the other twenty-four; they are not prepared to take any risks as such as might expose them to the charge of offering easier standards of entry or lower standards of degrees’: MRC UWA/B/8, Bosanquet and Hall, ‘The Creation of New Universities’, pp. 12-13.

162 The merger had broad support from Trade Union and Labour councillors: Ibid. p. 34.

163 Shattock, *UGC and the Management of British Universities*, pp. 93-96; MRC UWA/M/S/1, Wolfenden to Butterworth, 13 August, 1965; Senate, Minutes, 29 September, 1965. Instead, in 1970, Lanchester merged with a local College of Art and a Rugby engineering college to form the Lanchester Polytechnic. *Warwick University Ldt* pp. 24-25 presented this failure as a consequence of a two-month delay by the university in presenting scheme to the Department, though it is highly unlikely the merger would have gone through in the existing financial and policy climate. Shattock at interview in 2012 indicated he would have liked a ‘Wisconsin System, with a single governing body over the whole lot’ with the polytechnic as a subsidiary campus. IAS 974/1/1, Michael Shattock, interviewed by April Gallwey, 2, 04 December 2012.

164 IAS 974/1/1, Michael Shattock, interviewed by April Gallwey, 4, 28 January 2013; Shattock, *The Impact of a University on Its Environment*, pp. 33-34.
the image of the ‘low-tech, “metal bashing”’ regional motorcar industry which persists.\textsuperscript{165} One local aerodynamicist during his Ordinary National Diploma visited a factory which he described as ‘a dirty, union-run relic’ and remembered an ‘“old” Midlands spirit: that slightly negative, head-in-the-sand, hands-over-our-ears attitude’.\textsuperscript{166} As Shattock identified, the growth of engineering at Warwick was stultified despite supportive recommendations of a UGC/University Study Group (1966) chaired by Vick.\textsuperscript{167}

This pessimistic narrative does not quite tell the whole story. Shercliff maintained the aim of his engineering department was the application and contextualisation of the unifying influence of mathematics to real world problems (and maintained that women were ‘an untapped source of talent’ in engineering, though mainly for teaching).\textsuperscript{168} In early proposals he argued that the Engineering School should really be called the ‘School of Well-informed Common Sense’.\textsuperscript{169} Rather than teach specialised knowledge, his course aimed to produce character: ‘an attitude of mind, a confident, critical, appraising and sometimes sceptical attitude towards physical situations and industrial practices’, based on fundamentals and an active imagination, requiring study across mathematics, physics, engineering, computer science, and eventually business.\textsuperscript{170} Shercliff was active in promoting industrial links, including sandwich courses, and the appointment of visiting ‘associate professors’ from industry, to lead seminars, lecture, and direct industry-oriented research.

\textsuperscript{165} Shattock cites the Docksey Report (see Chapter Five) as evidence of this: ibid. p. 38.
\textsuperscript{167} Shattock notes that ‘The Study Group recommended that Warwick’s engineering should grow to 600 students by the time the University reached 3000 [...] this target was only reached in 1986 when the University’s student numbers were already 6000’: Shattock, \textit{UGC and the Management of British Universities}, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{170} This was absolutely a broad course, though as Shercliff warned: ‘Students in search of training for immediate entry into a particular technology would be recommended to go elsewhere than Warwick University’, and would require supplementary experience: Ibid; MRC UWA/F/M/4/1, University of Warwick Foundation Fund Appeal (May 1965); MRC UWA/F/PE/1/1, Shercliff, ‘Some Notes on Engineering Science’, p. 1.
projects.\textsuperscript{171} These visits were intended to introduce students to industry problems, methods, and attitudes, especially in the sciences and social studies.\textsuperscript{172} In 1965 these included four professors from the Motor Industry Research Association and Shell, growing to eleven by 1972, now including Plessey's, ICI, and Wellcome.\textsuperscript{173} The sharing of personnel was accompanied by the sharing of laboratory facilities and even playing fields.

Warwick found further lasting success in its commitment to breadth in its pursuit of a business school.\textsuperscript{174} Rootes and the APB enthusiastically advocated a postgraduate business management school at the university, though operating without government funding as the UGC had committed to only partially funding two business schools at Manchester and London following the recommendations of the Robbins and Franks Reports (1963).\textsuperscript{175} In April 1963, sponsored by the Ford Foundation, Butterworth made a trip to American universities including Harvard, MIT, Chicago, Virginia and New York.\textsuperscript{176} He absorbed much of their pedagogy which he combined with the British tradition of breadth.\textsuperscript{177} Butterworth proposed Warwick's business school should spend half of its

time on research to solve business problems and improve business education.\textsuperscript{178} This required the development of applied and pure studies interacting within and across disciplines (economics, statistics, maths, behavioural sciences, biological studies, and even metallurgy) only possible at an autonomous university.\textsuperscript{179} Such practice had in America frequently benefited operating practice in industry and could do the same in the UK and for public corporations.\textsuperscript{180} Butterworth further argued, contrary to the recommendations of Franks, that there was a strong case for a business school at a New University with less chance of established departments overshadowing the school and repressing initiative.\textsuperscript{181}

Private funding was forthcoming: the Pressed Steel Company in 1964 gifted a Chair of Industrial Relations, given to Hugh Clegg, and the Institute of Directors gave a Professorship of Business Studies to Brian Houlden.\textsuperscript{182} Additionally, most staff were appointed from industry. A research Centre for Industrial Studies (1967) with two master’s course from 1968 was supported by the Ford Foundation, followed by an undergraduate School of Industrial and Business Studies (1969). The school unusually awarded a BSc Management Sciences and taught both science and, with special provision to help them deal with quantitative techniques and concrete information, arts students.\textsuperscript{183}

\textsuperscript{179} Ibid, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{181} As Butterworth argued, while Franks had recommended the Manchester and London business schools, ‘it would be wrong to take this recommendation, or the Government’s acceptance of it, as a signal to other universities that what they could offer towards education for management is not needed. It is clear from Lord Franks’ Report that he meant no such thing’: MRC UWA/F/PE/1/4, Sargent, ‘Proposals for Management Education at Warwick’, 15 January 1965.
\textsuperscript{183} MRC UWA/F/PE/1/3, Report of a meeting of Professors, 30 October 1964, p. 10; Clegg and Sargent, Memorandum on a Centre of Industrial Studies at the University of Warwick, 30 October 1964; MRC UWA/F/PE/1/4, Sargent, ‘B.S. Mathematics/Economics/Management science’, ND; MRC UWA/F/PE/1/4, Sargent, Proposals for Management Education a Warwick, p. 3; MRC UWA/PUB/1/3, Report of the Vice-Chancellor, 1966 – 1967; MRC UWA/PUB/1/1/1, Report of the Vice-Chancellor; Part I, 1967 – 1968. The masters course launched with 400 applications for 20 places. Butterworth was particularly vocal about the capacity of master’s course in management and business studies to ‘reorient’, arts students and direct these high-quality students to national industry, which Butterworth considered probably a greater problem than increasing the number of scientists entering industry: MRC UWA/PUB/1/2, Report of the Vice-Chancellor, 1965 – 1966.
Its tuition was academic but intended to develop skills necessary for careers in industry: analysis, capacity to make judgments, considerations of cost and other limits of practical possibilities, and human relations. It would also start students off on ‘a path of practical experience’, but again with an emphasis on the application of abstract methods to selected fields. Likewise, the master’s course followed an approach advocated at Harvard, centred on the use of case studies and concluded with a research project in industry or commerce. In 1973 the master’s courses had met considerable success with 50 students, and Butterworth noted, apparently approvingly, that ‘quite a proportion of students finance themselves by raising personal loans’ anticipating a return on investment.

Warwick’s business emphasis emerged early: in October 1964 Clegg and professor of economics J. R. ‘Dick’ Sargent were arguing that Warwick would specialise in the study of industry across its teaching and research activities. For example, a centre for the study of labour and social history (eventually emerging slightly abrasively headed by E. P. Thompson) was proposed to the senate by founding professor of history John Hale simultaneously with Clegg’s Centre for Industrial Studies. Hale’s proposed centre would provide a valuable historical perspective to Clegg’s (Clegg spoke at Thompson’s Social History seminars). Together they would ‘cover the past and the present on industrial societies in a manner which has no parallel elsewhere’.

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186 MRC UWA/F/PE/1/3, Clegg and Sargent, Memorandum on a Centre of Industrial Studies at the University of Warwick, 30 October 1964; MRC UWA/M/S/1, University of Warwick, ‘Industry as a field of study’, June 1965.


6.2.2.3. Cottrell and ‘Academic Intellectual Qualities’

At Stirling, Cottrell and the APB, particularly Murray, were especially interested in the relationship between academic subjects and their vocational application.\(^{190}\) This called for innovative approaches towards course structure and syllabuses where breadth was a foremost concern. Cottrell embodied this approach; it is little surprise he was the standout candidate for principalship. Cottrell attributed Stirling’s focus on demonstrable usefulness to the Scottish tradition but stressed that Stirling broke ‘new ground’ in this endeavour. Its educational thinking reintroduced the ideas of ‘Keele and Sussex back onto the Scottish tradition’ producing ‘Innovation with Roots in Tradition’.\(^{191}\) Cottrell recalled when he was first appointed, there was a strong impression that Stirling was to be an arts university, specialising in ‘Classics and Celtic’ – ‘so I set out to kill that idea. I have succeeded all too well, because people now say it’s to be a technological university!’\(^{192}\) Stirling therefore, as Cottrell argued, reaffirmed the importance of a general, flexible education as compared to a specialist, rigid one.\(^{193}\)

Of these three universities, Stirling’s APB and Cottrell were the most explicit in arguing that the main contribution to society of a university was its students, not least because of reliance on public funding.\(^{194}\) Importantly, the university needed to ‘promote in particular those powers of the mind which are most likely to be socially relevant in the future’ such as quantitative thinking, computing, statistics, especially economics, and after the student disruption of 1972 Cottrell added ‘wisdom’.\(^{195}\)

There was therefore at Stirling a particularly clear a reflection of the aims of the Robbins Report: to

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\(^{190}\) Murray, for example, found the proposed professionally-inclined mathematics courses for Stirling detailed in a memorandum by Stirling APB member Liverpool Maths Professor Rosenhead ‘extremely stimulating […] it is just the sort thing that I hoped for’: UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, Murray to Rosenhead, 19 May 1965.


\(^{193}\) Ibid.

\(^{194}\) UoSA UA/C/12/1/6, The University of Stirling, First Report of the Academic Planning Board to the Sponsoring Committee; (ND); T. L. Cottrell, ‘The Education of Chemists’ (Inaugural Lecture, No. 2: University of Edinburgh, 20 November 1959), p. 3; UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, T. Cottrell, ‘Draft Initial Academic Plan for the University of Stirling’, Appendix 2: Proposals for the School of Technological Economics at the University of Stirling, September 1965.

prepare young people by expending their general powers of mind for work in the division of societal labour.\textsuperscript{196}

Cottrell’s experience at Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) led him to criticise chemistry graduates and graduates more generally as failing to exercise academic knowledge appropriately in work environments. As early as 1959 Cottrell gave a paper in which he outlined his conception of the utility of liberal education in technological society. He calculated that out of 21,000 qualified chemists, 72 percent were ‘engaged in applied chemistry’, of which 64 percent worked in industry.\textsuperscript{197} These chemists, Cottrell argued, were often strikingly lacking in professional competence. This was, for Cottrell not a matter of an absence of leadership skills or ‘liberal interests’.\textsuperscript{198} Instead, contrasting sharply to James, Cottrell argued that universities were not the place for the education of social leaders, and to believe so was to misunderstand the purpose of a university. Instead, ‘universities are places for the education of scholars and professional men [sic]’.\textsuperscript{199}

The consequence of this misunderstanding was that a university education had generally failed to produce students with the character needed for industry. Cottrell complained, ‘a high proportion of honours university graduates in chemistry are not very good chemists and that their deficiency could be at least partly reminded by improving their education’.\textsuperscript{200} By this Cottrell meant a liberal, ‘academic approach to knowledge […] critical and theoretical, and essentially concerned with its communication’.\textsuperscript{201} Such an education was necessary to ensure the effective application of chemical knowledge to practical problems. Chemists were currently educated using ‘labs’ and lectures without tutorials, which did not encourage the application and understanding of theory.

\textsuperscript{196} UoSA UA/C/12/1/6, The University of Stirling, First Report of the Academic Planning Board to the Sponsoring Committee; (ND); CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 6-7; UoSA UA/C/12/1/4, University of Stirling, Foundation Fund 1966 (1966); UoSA UA/A/4/2/11, Cottrell, ‘The University of Stirling and its Plans, October 1966.

\textsuperscript{197} Of the remainder, 24% were in general education and 4% in academic teaching and research, and 8% were employed by the state.

\textsuperscript{198} Cottrell, 'The Education of Chemists', pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid. p. 6; see his restatement of this idea in 1973: UoSA UA/A/4/2/11, T. Cottrell, ‘Teaching Assessment and the University Department, General Introductory Paper’, 17 March 1973.

\textsuperscript{200} Cottrell, 'The Education of Chemists', pp. 5-6.

\textsuperscript{201} Ibid. p. 8. Emphasis original.
only memorisation for examination.\textsuperscript{202} This meant that chemists in industry were, firstly, poor at applying theoretical knowledge to practical solutions, instead often resorting to ‘the purest empiricism, untinged by chemical theory’\textsuperscript{203} Secondly, they lacked a critical understanding of the application of their expertise, unable to provide an effective, economical or relevant answer to problems, such as providing ‘adequate accuracy’ to an engineer and instead wasting money on irrelevant investigations.\textsuperscript{204} Thirdly, chemists were poor at reading chemical literature, and writing. These deficiencies paradoxically meant ‘The greatest practical defect of the professional chemist is a lack of academic intellectual qualities’.\textsuperscript{205} To this miseducation of chemists, Cottrell argued that far more time should be dedicated to discussion and theory over facts.

As well as this strong commitment to the vocational importance of a liberal education, Stirling was successful in establishing research and teaching programmes with direct association with economic returns and national needs. The obvious concrete commitment at Stirling to the economic benefits of higher education was the Institute of Aquatic Pathobiology. The semi-detached national institute was funded by a £76,000 grant from the Nuffield Foundation, and opened in January 1972. The Foundation had taken a particular interest in the issue of disease in the developing industry of aquaculture and fish farming which was growing in Scotland. By the end of 1972, at the insistence of Cottrell, the unit was providing a MSc in Aquatic Veterinary Studies, despite possessing no dedicated facilities. The MSc was the first in the United Kingdom outside a veterinary school.\textsuperscript{206}

\textsuperscript{202} SURA OH/001, Peter McEwen, interviewed by John Stewart, 20 June 2012.
\textsuperscript{203} Cottrell, 'The Education of Chemists', p. 6.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid. p. 7.
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid. p. 8. Emphasis original.
\textsuperscript{206} Ron Roberts recalled that the unit was, due to delays at Pathfoot, based in a building called ‘Wallstreet’, and limited to six offices with the only plumbing serving a pair of lavatories, which meant that ‘wet autopsies’ were carried out round the back of these facilities: SURA OH/002 Holliday; SURA OH/-, Ron Roberts, interviewed by Moira Ball, 16 October 2018. See Neave, 'The University of Stirling and the Central Region of Scotland', p. 29.
6.2.3. Section 6.2 conclusion

At all three universities, the national university elites who led the universities and designed their programmes imbued them with a conscious appreciation of the utility of liberal education in modern society. This complicates the portrait of these institutions that section 6.1 explored as attempting to replicate Oxbridge or delivering an unreformed liberal education. It places their experimental pedagogies within their social and national context. Importantly the designs of local promoters and vice-chancellors were complementary with wider appreciations of the role of a university to inculcate character and transmit a common culture so that their students could make practical economic and social contributions to the good society. While breadth was still hesitant at York, it gathered increasing strength through the 1960s and became of great importance at Warwick and Stirling and their industrialist allies.

6.3. TEACHING AND BUILDING BREADTH

6.3.1. Breadth in the Syllabus

The first half of this chapter has demonstrated that the new universities at York, Warwick and Stirling had, while negotiating the various interest groups, imagined an inventive range of proposals that stressed breadth and the applicability of academic knowledge to practical problems in society. The next section of this chapter, section 6.3, assesses efforts to realise this vision through the transformation of university curriculum in section 6.3.1, and built environment in 6.3.2. The development of these institutions was of course an ongoing reciprocating process between planning and implementation. But placing special emphasis on reviewing the realisation of these plans permits an assessment of how breadth developed and changed in practice. The success of the broad education was, as this section shows, limited. By the 1970s, evangelism for breadth appears to have faltered.207

207 Taylor, 'Foreword', pp. xviii-xix; Cragoe, 'Sussex: Cold War Campus', p. 236.
6.3.1.1. Combating Overspecialisation

York was especially interested in using quite prescriptive pedagogic interventions in order to combat ‘narrow honours specialisation’ in university education. As Robbins argued in meetings of York’s APB, ‘for the democracy we now live in extreme honours specialisation is not a good thing for many people who deserve a university education’. One way to facilitate greater breadth might have been to extend undergraduate degrees to four years like at Keele or in Scotland, but the UGC would not financially support this. Instead, Robbins proposed a fourth-year master’s for successful students. This would provide an outlet for teachers to pursue more specialised study with their graduate students and provide more time for broader curriculum for undergraduates. York arguably achieved this, its higher graduate student numbers than the national average indicating that many students did effectively adopt a four-year, broader based, combined undergraduate and master’s programme.

The primary way York attempted to facilitate this breadth in the undergraduate degree itself was in the APB’s doctrinal recommendation that there should be no single-subject ‘faculties’ of study at York. Subjects were organised instead in ‘Boards of Study’: Science, the Humanities, and Social Studies, under which ‘schools’ in major subjects surrounded by subsidiary subjects would provide teaching. Other courses would possess a primary subject, and other ‘suitably grouped’ subsidiary subjects (Figure 12), with unexamined auxiliary subjects offered. The social sciences were the most radical in their structure, with a five term Part I with a broad syllabus followed by a four term Part II, with specialism in a chosen subject only in the third year. Allen noted that this pattern was ‘insisted on by both Robbins and Peacock’ and it is clear that this persistence was part of their

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209 BI UOY/F/APB/1/2, Record, 6 October 1960.
212 BI UOY/F/APB/1/1, APB Minutes, 26 October 1961.
great concern for breadth. In addition to their chosen subject, students had the opportunity to study a subsidiary subject, forming a joint degree. Such organisation was intended to permit flexible course design and encourage students to navigate across schools. Such a structure would ensure students obtained necessary breadth and understanding of liberal society before specialising.

York’s efforts to combat overspecialisation went well beyond the curriculum, shaping many aspects of university life. Firstly, York’s general entry requirements were provisionally three A levels, or two A-levels plus three O-levels or equivalent, and a headteacher’s report; however, York attempted to interview as many candidates as possible and preferred those who showed evidence of a continued broad education in sixth form. Secondly, the university abandoned the traditional approach of exams at the end of every year. By removing examination pressures students and teachers would be freer to engage with learning and appreciating knowledge more widely, than simply preparing for examination. Thirdly, York had no compulsory lectures and tried to avoid the mass lecture, which were disparaged as overly concerned with the delivery of facts. York instead insisted on individual or small group tutorials, an Oxbridge staple and a key feature of York’s pedagogy, and seminars where students would develop practical communicative and analytical skills.

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214 BI UOY/F/APB/1/1, APB Minutes, 26 October 1961; James, The Start of a New University, p. 16.
Figure 12. University of York, Development Plan: 1962-72, p. 32, showing the structure of subjects with subsidiary subjects. Reproduced from an original in the Borthwick Institute, University of York.
Finally, York offered the student an unassessed series of open lectures ‘on topics that interest him for their own sake, or that illuminate his major subject of study’. The open courses, for which two hours a week were set aside, were to be given by local teachers and York professors. They included a series of lectures by the three professors, G. Aylmer (History), Brockbank (English), and Peacock (Economics) on ‘The Nineteenth Century: The First Industrial Age’, (implying a second, and perhaps a third age) and another series on ‘Art and Society’. In the first few years, students seemed to have had a muted response to open lectures. However, as late as 1972 these courses, according to James, were still free and well attended, and along with other drama and film activities ensured that students at York had ample opportunities for a broad education.

The idea of prescriptive chosen joint degree courses quickly became impractical, however, and this prompted a change in how James understood the provision of breadth. In 1964, James could comment that ‘the idea of combined degrees was working well, and that education as a subsidiary subject was particularly popular’. In fact, of the intake of 200 undergraduate students, none had yet wished to change to a combined-subject course from a single subject course. By 1965 the practicalities of combined honour courses were proving something of an issue. James reported that the tutorial system had overcome the danger of students on combined honours being neglected by their two departments. However, there remained something ‘unsatisfactory’ about the combined degree sources, due to a lack of ‘genuine integration’ between the subjects and in 1972

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216 Bi UOY/F/YUPC/1/6, The University of York, Form Letter, July 1962.
217 Bi UOY/UP/1/1/1, James of Rusholme, University of York: Vice-Chancellor’s Report, 1963-64.
219 Bi UOY/M/SSC/1/1, SSC Minutes, 15 February 1966.
221 Bi UOY/M/AA/1, Academic Advisory Committee Minutes, 24 November 1964.
222 Bi UOY/M/AA/1, Academic Advisory Committee Minutes, 4 November 1966.
James admitted this was an area where the university had not been successful. In recognising this failure, James articulated a shift in approach to broadening of the curriculum. He instead emphasised ‘that breadth in curriculum is often obtained rather by methods of teaching and the provision of options’. James indicated, for instance, that breadth could emerge from courses of science that integrated teaching with relevance to work in industry and administration. Mode of teaching, and diversity of methods of retrieval of information and analysis, rather than disciplinary range, could be the route to a broader education, more relevant for the world of work.

6.3.1.2. Professorial Vision at Warwick

Warwick provided little prescriptive planning, attempting to avoid too rigid an interdisciplinary straitjacket as experienced at Sussex and York, but still promoted its subjects as providing a broad education. Most of the executive decisions on the design of courses seem to have arisen from meetings between Butterworth and the professoriate-elect. The first professors were selected based on ‘fresh and constructive ideas on how studies in their areas should be organised and developed’, and Butterworth asked the first professors to prepare a statement imaging how their subjects would develop first degree courses, ‘including the way in which they visualised other subjects contributing to the course in which they were concerned’. This emphasis was intended to produce organic interdisciplinary cooperation between subjects. The aim was to produce high-quality graduates capable of dealing with the multidisciplinary real world.

Like other New Universities, Warwick prompted by its APB, avoided departments. However, it also intended to provide its professoriate with a high degree of control over the direction over its

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223 Bi UOY/M/AA/1, Academic Advisory Committee Minutes, 3 December 1965; Bi UOY/UP/1/1/9, Eric James, University of York: Vice-Chancellor’s Report, 1971-72, November 1972.
224 Ibid.
226 Very unusually, while some of the papers of Warwick’s APB survive, the minutes of its meetings do not appear in the archives. Some records of its successor body, the Academic Advisory Committee, do survive but are also very limited with only a single set of minutes surviving. Other records are closed.
227 MRC UWA/F/PE/1/1, Report of a meeting of Professors-elect, 18 October 1963, p. 4; MRC UWA/F/PE/1/1, J. J. Butterworth, Academic Planning, 18 October 1963.
subjects to secure ‘excellence’. Warwick organised itself into Boards of Study, initially, science (including molecular science, physics, engineering science, and maths) and arts (English, European languages, and history) with social studies following later (economics, industrial and business studies, philosophy, politics). Beneath the boards would be the Schools of Study which provided tuition. The professoriate had more influence over these schools than at other New Universities and single subject departments awarded mainly single honours degrees. However the schools were designed to provide ‘maximum flexibility’ through broad first year common courses and general courses shared by multiple degree courses within the same boards of study. Arts students were not finally committed to a particular subject in their first year, and the common science course taught research methods and demonstrated the relationships between ‘contemporary problems and issues’. Specialisation was deferred to later years, and might include study in business and industrial relations.

Practically this organisation meant, for example, applied mathematics was distributed through various schools, and history was intended to concentrate on ‘geographical breadth rather than chronological completeness’, the aim of which was to engender a variety of intellectual interests in a specialised course and complement the overlap with joint degrees and options in other schools. The professors imagined that the schools structure at Warwick ‘quite apart from their obvious educational advantages, […] will have utilitarian advantages’ for graduates entering the Civil Service, business, and teaching. The history courses’ two exchange schemes to modern America

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229 See, for example, ‘Founding of the Department’ (Warwick: Economics: University of Warwick, 17 February 2016) [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/about/history/founding/#aims] [Accessed 18 December 2020].
230 MRC UWA/F/PE/1/1, Memorandum on draft statues, 20 December 1963.
231 Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 102.
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and classical Italy and association with the Centre of Industrial Studies meant that ‘any of our history graduates who chose to go into industry will be unusually studied to deal with the issues they will be confronted with there’. 237

One academic directive from Warwick’s APB was for a first-year compulsory course (Keele’s foundation year ‘in miniature’) to be taken by all undergraduates in ‘language, logic, and ethics’ to ‘ensure all students could ‘think and write clearly and to examine ones relation to society’. 238 The hope was such study might provide a ‘common language’ throughout the student body and facilitate cross-school discussion. 239 The course was developed, primarily by philosophy professor Phillips Griffiths, in meetings of the professors-elect and the senate. While the professors do seem to have valued the course, it was matter of considerable contention for several years. 240 It found enthusiastic support from professor of mathematics E. Christopher Zeeman. Zeeman argued that where other broadening courses shovelled ‘in small parcels of knowledge hastily snatched from other departments’, Warwick’s common course with a unified syllabus aimed instead to understand the relationship between subjects. The course would draw students’ attention of ‘the method of procedure’ of different subjects and discussion of the validity of each subject would help a student appreciate their own subject. This had huge ‘value in terms of the intelligent thought he will bring to bear on the problems of his later life, personal and professional; as a teacher possibly, as a member

239 Phillips Griffiths later, betraying his scepticism of the course (perhaps reinforced retrospectively), joked that the common language of the university should have been English: Griffiths, ‘The New Universities: The Humanities’.
240 MRC UWA/F/PE/1/1, Report of a meeting of Professors-elect, 10 January 1964. The APB welcomed the professors’ proposals for the common course but in Butterworth’s opinion ‘it clearly did not want to exercise any pressure towards this end on the University’, and the decision for the professors to continue to pursue the course indicates there was some degree of genuine commitment to the idea: MRC UWA/F/PE/1/1, Report of a meeting of Professors-elect, 15 February 1964, p. 6.
of society certainly’. Others were more cautious: professor of molecular science V. Malcolm Clark dismissed the proposed syllabus as ‘superficial froth’ which would ‘encourage people to waffle’ – Phillip Griffiths countered this by arguing that ‘Leaders of seminars will it is true often have to say “I don’t know” and “I don’t understand”, but these are excellent things a student should learn how to say too’. There was considerable debate over whether the course should be compulsory, the availability of staff to teach the module, and how it should be assessed. Shercliff favoured the module as a way to provide training in writing and precise thinking for engineering and science students. It was eventually decided that the course should be ‘experimentally pursued’ for the first year and might be ‘very desirable in the early days before student societies, etc., have crystalised’. A sense that it and other common courses were provisional was endemic in professorial discussion.

The course, ‘Enquiry and Criticism’, appeared in the first university prospectus. Students would attend one lecture and one seminar a week assessed with a 2500-5000-word essay. Topics included ‘the concept of knowledge’, epistemology, maths, science, art, and education, including universities and their social responsibilities. However, the senate and Phillips Griffiths, reviewing the course in April 1966, felt that ‘It cannot be said to have achieved these aims. It has not in fact even succeeded in holding the attention of most of the students’, with terrible lecture and seminar.

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242 MRC UWA/F/APB/1/1, A Phillips Griffiths, ‘Memorandum on the Common First Year Course’; 12 January 1964.

243 Ibid.


attendance. It required much greater teaching resources than had ‘supererogatory attention’ that had been made available, and Butterworth failed the mention the course in his annual reports after 1965/66. Attempted reforms muted the courses’ original interdisciplinary ambitions. The reimagined course for 1966/67 was slightly unfairly described by Jon Agar as a ‘beauty contest for disciplinary competition’. It was redesigned as a series of elective courses attached to different departments. Phillips Griffiths taught on how far ‘ethical and political thinking and social didactic literature influence actual social practice’ and government (Charles Dickens on Poor Law, for example). Shercliff taught on principles of engineering for humanities students. Zeeman reportedly discussed theorems showing ‘you couldn’t comb a hairy ball smooth’. Houlden’s ‘The Nature of Management’ course was by far the most popular (Table 1). It was the top choice of engineering and economic students and a high proportion of history and politics students. However, campus punters reportedly offered short odds that even a revised syllabus would fail. Without the possibility of funding for dedicated teaching resources Enquiry and Criticism was terminated for 1967/68. It was replaced by a series of open lectures like York’s in the autumn term to ‘liberalise students’ intellectual approach and interests’. Additionally, lectures considered of general interest were open to all students ‘to promote inter-disciplinary understanding’ (but notices of such lectures vanished from later prospectuses).

248 MRC UWA/M/S/3, Senate Minutes, 27 April, 1966; MRC UWA/RFiles/G158, Academic Advisory Committee ‘Enquiry and Criticism’, 26 November 1966.
250 MRC UWA/M/S/4, A. Philips Griffiths, ‘Enquiry and Criticism’, 28 September, 1966; David Hirst, 'Staff Memories, 40th' (University of Warwick, 7 December 2006).
251 MRC UWA/M/S/4, A Philip Griffiths, ‘Enquiry and Criticism’, 25 January 1967. A breakdown by student’s degree subjects was included but is now shown below. 67 students put Houlden’s course as their first choice, near double the next most popular choice, Phillips Griffith’s course. These figures however ignore the fact that the courses were not well attended. Records survive detailing which students from which schools chose which subjects. For some reason Shercliff’s course attracted nearly all first-year philosophy and politics and philosophy students.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>No. of students allocated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The Triumph of the European Bourgeoisie</td>
<td>Hale (His)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Mechanics, Thermodynamics, and the Nature of Things</td>
<td>Shercliff (Eng)</td>
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<td>3 Some Eighteenth-Century Poets</td>
<td>Rawson (Lit)</td>
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<td>4 The Nature of Management and Management Research</td>
<td>Houlden (Bis)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 What is Mathematics</td>
<td>Zeeman (Maths)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Some Problems of Knowledge and Belief</td>
<td>Phillips Griffiths (Phil)</td>
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<td>7 Government and Politics in the USA and USSR</td>
<td>Anderson (Pol)</td>
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<td>8 Probability and Inference</td>
<td>Pyatt (Econ)</td>
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<td>9 The Writer as Philosopher in c20th French Literature</td>
<td>Charlton (French)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Some Case Studies in Applied Criticism</td>
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6.3.1.3. Approaches and Methods, Technological Economics, and Microteaching

With Cottrell’s sharp criticism of the lack of practical utility of existing academic education, Stirling had a clear mission to provide breadth in their syllabus as a means to practical ends. ‘Most of the important industrial problems don’t fit into the academic categories’, Cottrell argued, and Stirling innovated relentlessly to overcome disciplinary boundaries at every opportunity but suffered similar problems to Warwick.253

Cottrell and the early professoriate crafted plans for their curriculum which were even more ambitious than Enquiry and Criticism. They considered how long it would take for ‘an English student to learn something about atomic physics […] or poetry […] for physics students’.254 Stirling proposed that this might be achieved through a module called ‘Approaches and Methods’ to be taken by all first-year undergraduates. Because this would require an estimated term and a half to teach, Stirling

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254 SURSA OH/063, Rodger McEwen, interviewed by Bill Inglis, 27 May 2016, 14:16.
elected, in one of its most prominent innovations, to reimagine the academic year as two fifteen-week semesters. Approaches and Methods was intended by Cottrell to provide ‘what we think the educated man of our time should know’. As early senior lecturer in economics Brain Loasby recalled in 2016, the course’s overarching philosophy was to explore ‘different ways of thinking about things! Because if you want to be an innovator, you have to think about things in ways that other people haven’t!’ Its syllabus ranged across ‘logic, elementary social arithmetic and computers, and scientific method’. To teach such a programme, academic staff were paired up from different disciplines to act as tutors and a textbook was produced.

From Approaches and Methods, the other courses branched outwards. Students were to be admitted to the university centrally and not to individual departments. Students would begin their degrees in the first three semesters by studying several core disciplines in Part I. These subjects would address ‘some general topics of the day’. For example, the APB envisioned Mathematics would be studied as a ‘tool, and treated in so far as they were required for other subjects’ and professions, much like Warwick. Core ‘spine’ subjects would branch off into various specialisations as a student progressed through their studies into Part II. In the first two semesters of Part II, students would pursue modules in a few chosen topics. The final semester would centre on one topic, allowing an element of specialisation. Following the Scottish pattern, students finishing after three years would graduate with a General Degree, or specialise for a further year and receive an Honours Degree. To support this flexibility, subjects were organised into ‘Boards of Study’.

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256 SURSA OH/068, Brian Loasby, interviewed by Penny Dade, 15 September 2016, 47:45.
259 Bomont, The University of Stirling: Beginnings & Today, p. 18.
261 UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, Draft Minutes of Meeting of the Academic Planning Board, 21 April 1965.
also replaced the end-of-year exam with periodic testing throughout each semester, allowing greater choice and a broader education.263

Stirling proposed two new degrees that epitomised the ambition for practically oriented courses with broad curricula and social responsibility. Studies in education at Stirling were designed to combine professional practice, academic theory, and specialism in a secondary dual subject, and awarded its graduates a professional teaching qualification. This was, Stirling claimed, a ‘complete break from the Scottish tradition’ where teacher training colleges did ‘no basic professional training’ and had a poor reputation.264 To blend practice and theory, the education degree deployed a method called ‘microteaching’. ‘Microteaching’ used closed circuit television to review teaching practice and allow opportunities for the discussion of theory and practice simultaneously (rather than the traditional blocks of theory followed by blocks of practice).265 Stirling’s novel semester structure also allowed ample time for teaching practice in schools in January when the Scottish school’s spring term had begun but Stirling’s second semester had not.266

Stirling’s and Cottrell’s greatest pride was a degree course in ‘Technological Economics’ (Tech-Ec) designed to educate mainly the scientifically trained, but also some high-quality arts graduates, in the application of technological knowledge in conditions of scarcity in society. Cottrell argued that ‘at present, effective leaders must broaden their academic skills after they leave the universities, those trained as scientists learning some economics and those trained as “humanists” learning some technology’.267 Stirling believed that such a course might fulfil the ‘need in industry and the public service for administrators who have a knowledge of science, but who are not going to become professional scientists’, distinguishing it from more business administration oriented MBAs.

263 Ibid.
264 UoSA UA/C/12/2/6, Roger Young, ‘The Roger Young Enquiry: Report on the Policies and Running of Stirling University from 1966-1973 made to the University Court’ (22nd October 1973), p. 2; SURSA OH/024, Martin Davies, interviewed by Bill Inglis, 04 May 2014; Stewart, Higher Education in Postwar Britain, pp. 133-34.
265 50, p. 132.
266 SURSA OH/001, McEwen.
267 UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, T. Cottrell, ‘Draft Initial Academic Plan for the University of Stirling’, Appendix 2: Proposals for the School of Technological Economics at the University of Stirling, September 1965.
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such as those at Warwick.\textsuperscript{268} Tech-Ec, apparently following courses at Manchester and Lancaster, was spearheaded by Cottrell, Peacock, and A. A. L. Challis, a colleague of Cottrell’s at ICI where he was director of the petrochemical and polymer laboratory and a member of Stirling’s Court.\textsuperscript{269} The course was championed by two of their appointments, founding economics professor Andrew Bain, and the founding professor of industrial science Frank Bradbury.\textsuperscript{270} Bradbury, another ICI man, had made himself a niche overcoming communication difficulties between central research departments and product divisions. Cottrell anticipated that there would be a market for such skills across industry.\textsuperscript{271} The Tech-Ec proposed to teach tools concerned with the application of social scientific theory to practical situations. Students would learn how to define ‘probable error’ in comparing fact and prediction, and modern theories of ‘uncertainty’ including game theory, ‘backed by computer-simulation and analysis of real situations’.\textsuperscript{272} The course was a clear commitment to Stirling’s ambition to produce graduates with theoretical knowledge and the ability to apply this knowledge in productive capacities and in future employment.\textsuperscript{273} Bain and Bradbury initially established an MSc for 1967, and a sandwich course in Tech-Ec was introduced in 1972.\textsuperscript{274} Tech-Ec remained closely associated with ICI, running successful industry ‘refresher’ week-long courses and taking on ICI employees as master’s students.\textsuperscript{275}

Like York and Warwick, Stirling’s broad courses suffered from administrative problems and the ambitious plans were unrealised. Tech-Ec was perceived as successful yet did not manage to attract the number of students desired. The original plans intended ten percent of the student body

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{268} UoSA UA/C/12/1/4, University of Stirling, ‘Foundation Fund 1966’ (1966); SURSA OH/048, Bain.
\item \textsuperscript{269} Nehring, ‘The University of Stirling’, p. 196.
\item \textsuperscript{270} UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, Alan Peacock, ‘Proposals for the Social Sciences at the University of Stirling’, ND, p.4; SURSA OH/048, Bain.
\item \textsuperscript{271} SURSA OH/068, Loasby.
\item \textsuperscript{272} UoSA UA/C/12/1/6, The University of Stirling, ‘First Report of the Academic Planning Board to the Sponsoring Committee’ (ND), Appendix 2.
\item \textsuperscript{273} UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, Tom Cottrell, ‘Draft Initial Academic Plan for the University of Stirling’, Appendix 2: Proposals for the School of Technological Economics at the University of Stirling, September 1965.
\item \textsuperscript{274} UoSA UA/C/1/6, University of Stirling, Annual report 1972-73, p. 40.
\item \textsuperscript{275} SURSA OH/068, Loasby.
\end{itemize}
studying Tech-Ec; the most Stirling ever had ‘was about three’. Its broad programme of study required four courses per semester rather than the usual three, which meant it effectively became a prohibitively exhausting ‘double honours’ course. There were also difficulties in the joint Honours courses with education. The only dual educational courses offered at Stirling were with mathematics, biology and history, based on professorial collegiality and not utility. There was substantial debate over the pedagogic value of microteaching. Periodic testing was particularly controversial, and criticised for putting ‘a premium on stolidity and perseverance as against scholarship and originality’. The most evident victim of this retreat from breadth was Approaches and Methods. Suffering from precisely the same student and academic disengagement as Enquiry and Criticism and beset with administrative difficulties from the outset, amplified by the growth of the student body, the course was discontinued in 1970. Staff opposition originated from a lack of clarity in its objectives, and many staff felt unqualified to lead the module. Support remained; one staff member commented that it ‘would have been the envy of other universities’. Cottrell remarked with bitterness that new staff and new students were academically ‘conservative’ and likely to renege on innovations in breadth unless their importance was constantly proselytised.

6.3.2. Socialisation, Mixing, and Conduct

Just as important to these institutions as the academic activities studied in section 6.3.1 was the socialisation of students and through the construction of ‘communities’, which section 6.3.2

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276 Young, ‘Young Enquiry’, p. 5; SURSA OH/048, Bain, 10:00. Bain’s estimate is corroborated by: UoSA UA/A/3/1/1, Table A4, University of Stirling, Abstract of Statistics, September 1977, which indicates a peak of 3.7 percent of new first year students registering but barely over 1 percent most other years.

277 UoSA UA/C/1/6, University of Stirling, ‘Annual report 1972-73’.

278 Cottrell, ‘Role of the New Universities’, p. 53.

279 Lecturer in Education and English Martin Davies was particularly critical in his reflections, calling it ‘programmatic and simplistic and idiotic’. Microteaching, Davies argued, had been first applied in California where its purpose was for teachers in service training to review their already established teaching practice. It was not suitable for the training of teachers. Inferentially it seems the critique was that students would not be ready to carry out reflective practice on their own teaching if they did not have an understanding of what teaching was supposed to be: SURSA OH/024, Davies.

280 ‘Young Enquiry’, p. 5.


282 SURSA OH/048, Bain.

283 ‘Young Enquiry’, p. 80.

284 ‘Young Enquiry’, p. 38; Cottrell, ‘Role of the New Universities’, p. 53.
explores. Architectural historians such as Stefan Muthesius have, however, hitherto rather coyly claimed that ‘we never meet with much emphasis on actual pedagogy’ in architectural plans. Similarly, Whyte’s analysis of these spaces as part of a process of enculturation sometimes fails to address what these cultural values were. Taking these three universities’ architectural programmes in their wider context, the use of space as a key pedagogical tool for an education in breadth becomes strikingly apparent.

Before the lowering of the age of majority from 21 to 18 in 1970, the three institutions were in the dubious position of acting in loco parentis. Even after this, the conduct of their students remained a key preoccupation of the universities. As has been widely argued, the location of the New University campuses, removed from their local population centres, was partly due to pragmatic considerations such as cost, availability of land, and expansion and development. The designed campuses were however, within practical constraints, overwhelmingly concerned with encouraging socialisation between students, teachers (across ages), and other university staff. This included, as the APB at Warwick hoped, balance ‘in terms of scientists and humanists, women and men’ (at York James needed convincing of the value of co-ed residential accommodation), and across cultures through overseas students and visitors (even if accusations of colour bars arose intermittently).

285 Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 3. See also, for a comparison of the residences at Shakespearean Seven: Débora Domingo-Calabuig and Laura Lizondo-Sevilla, ‘Student Housing at Plateglass Universities: A Comparative Study’, Arquitetura Revista, 16 (2020); and on the lack of reflection on the idealism of these spaces at Stirling: Nehring, ‘Challenging the Myths of the Scottish Sixties’, p. 62. This is interesting considering that the plans of RMJM at York were steeped in James’ pontificating, as this section explores. Though see the helpfully critical account of the importance of community in a slightly caricatured liberal university in: Troschitz, Higher Education and the Student, pp. 49-53.
288 MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, ‘Draft Report of the Academic Planning Board’ (January, 1963), p. 10. York’s development plan assumed equal admission of men and women but to be accommodated separately, but the APB and the new professoriate argued that mixed colleges would be a ‘civilising’ experience: BI UOY/F/ST/1/1, Staff discussions, 24-25 November 1962. In professorial discussion, concern for mixing races was almost invisible. Alan Peacock argued that it essential that lodgings should not be reserved for ‘coloured students, since this could be interpreted as a form of colour bar’: BI UOY/F/ST/1/2, Professorial Discussion, 24-25 November 1962. Ironically, in 1996 a first-year student in the student newspaper Eboracum accused the university of exercising just such a colour bar: Victoria Taylor, ‘Using Press Cuttings to Understand the Early
While, for example, James celebrated cohorts of mature ‘Central African’ students on one-year courses in economics, no useful data on the racial composition of the student body of these institutions was available during this research. To encourage the mixing of these groups, there was a ubiquitous concern with overcoming the impression of the ‘nine-to-five’ work ethic which it was claimed eroded the communities of the civic universities. All three of the universities intended to have at least two-thirds of their students in residence on a single campus site despite the expense. These and allied spaces such as arts centres, often funded by external benefactors, were intended to cultivate ‘taste’, good talk, manners, even ‘good food’. While these concerns are closely allied to the kind of university education intended to produce the ‘right sort of chap’, they were pedagogic tools to inculcate into the students character an appreciation of consumer culture, social mobility, and the capacity of liberal society to cultivate prosperity and raise standards of living. Neither were these ambitions and spaces wholly replicative of the Oxbridge college model.

Despite Murray’s emphasis on residence on ‘educational grounds’, shared by the Robbins Report, the UGC did not provide financial help to support this type of accommodation. There was a concerted effort to convince industrialists and other potential donors that funding for residences

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289 BI UOY/UP/1/3, James of Rusholme, University of York: Vice-Chancellor’s Report, 1965-66, November 1966. Inquiry in this direction would require dedicated study. Stirling, for example, in 1976 had students hailing from nearly fifty territories from Algeria to Zambia, with the most undergraduates, nine, from Malaysia, and 26 ‘visiting students’ from the United States, but contained no information on students’ race or identity: UoSA UA/A/3/1/1, Table A10, University of Stirling, Abstract of Statistics, September 1977.

290 MRC UWA/F/EPC/1/1, Minutes of the Executive Promotion Committee, 1961; the civic university ‘nine-to-five’ was identified by civics themselves as a problem and their solution, like at the New Universities, was to recommend better provision of residential accommodation, see: Whyte, Redbrick, pp. 190-91; Whyte, ‘Learning from Redbrick’, p. 26; Whyte, ‘Halls of Residence at Britain’s Civic Universities, 1870-1970’; and Birks, Building the New Universities, p. 18.


293 This was a consequence of civic universities, expecting students to live at home, struggled to provide accommodation as they became national institutions, and it was seen as unfair for the new universities to obtain state finance to fund their own accommodation: Pellew, ‘The Role of Philanthropy’, p. 229; Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 74; CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, pp. 193-97.
were in their interests and most universities were successful in raising some funds. Murray, for example, remarked that industry sponsors tended to like the idea of university residence. Part of this was to stress the importance of the built environment to achieving an education in breadth. One further caveat was that these spaces needed to be attractive and comfortable to achieve this aim, even if their construction was expedient and constrained within tight budgets.

These emphases led the universities towards a markedly informal, inclusive character, with young staff, the use of first names as the primary mode of address for all, and the inclusion of non-professorial voices in consultation and executive decision-making processes. Ironically this did not always expand to a willingness to include students in significant consultative machinery. How successful these attempts were in constructing communities and in realising a broad education is debatable and their social engineering was contested. York’s colleges became an unattractive symbol of paternalism for many students, which jarred with its concern over student choice elsewhere. Warwick’s decentralised halls of residences were fragmented, disrupted, and ultimately as we shall see, farcical. Stirling began its celebrated programme late enough to avoid pitfalls (such as attempting to integrate staff into residential blocks who emphatically did not want to live with students) but encountered severe funding issues.

6.3.2.1. Colleges and York

James reflected that conversation with the architects prompted deep introspection over the idea of a university: mundane questions such as “How often will the students bath?” would quite often end with the question “But Eric, what do you think a university is really for?” Their relationship

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294 UoSA UA/A/1/8/2/1/2, Keith Murray to Tom Cottrell, 4 March 1968. Pellew suggests that Murray ‘showed no understanding that donors will respond to their own interests [in engineering or agriculture] rather than a need dictated by government’: Pellew, ‘The Role of Philanthropy’, p. 229. Compare to the evidence of Chapter Five in this thesis were concern by industrialists for community is prominent.


296 Whyte, Redbrick, pp. 258-67.

297 On residential accommodation at Stirling see Nehring, ‘Challenging the Myths of the Scottish Sixties’, pp. 61-62.

298 JAM/2/1/5, Eric James, Untitled Speech, 8 April 1964.
produced the widely praised York development plan of 1962 which propounded a strong, even
dogmatic, broad liberal education emphasising community.\footnote{Muthesius, The Postwar University, pp. 130-37.}

York’s primary identifying feature after 1965, its residential colleges, were imagined prior to
James’ arrival and envisaged as distinct from their Oxbridge counterparts.\footnote{Warren, Eric James and the Founding of the University of York, pp. 61-62. The first cohort of students were taught across three sites scattered across York and Heslington House before the first colleges opened in 1965.} York’s APB agreed with
the YUPC that York should be a collegiate university to provide a sense of community in a large
university (then considered over 3000 students). Initially, Robbins and the UGC were less
enthusiastic: the Oxford Colleges were notoriously wasteful and chaotic, and it would be inexcusable
to waste public money replicating identical accommodation and facilities in different colleges that
might otherwise have been shared.\footnote{Bi UOY/F/APB/1/1, Academic Planning Board, Minutes, 6 October 1960, p. 1.} Such colleges were ‘out of the question’\footnote{Bi UOY/F/APB/1/2, Record, 6 October 1960, p. 3.}. Instead, pressured
by local concerns, James and Lady Ogilvie proposed that ‘a modified system was more desirable’,
transcending mere halls of residence.\footnote{Bi UOY/F/APB/1/1, Academic Planning Board, Minutes, 6 October 1960, pp. 1-2; for more on the tension between the UGC and the York YUPC see Smith, ‘James and the ‘Utopianist’ Campus’, p. 33.} The YUPC identified that many new students coming to York
might lack ‘family background conducive to studious habits and cultural interests pursued in
common’ and that colleges were a pedagogic necessity to instil this character; York’s APB in its
interim report repeated this concern verbatim.\footnote{Bi UOY/F/YUPC/1/1, York Promotion Committee, ‘Memorandum to the University Grants Committee’, December 1959, p. 7; APB, Interim Report, April 1961, p. 7.}

Their proposal was for colleges which would not be financially autonomous. They would still
provide for a mix of students including both genders from different disciplines, communal meals,
social activities, teams and societies. They would also provide teaching facilities of various
disciplines, but timetabled centrally. Teaching would take place in small tutorials, with as few as
three or four students.\footnote{Muthesius, The Postwar University, pp. 133-35.} Staff would be assigned to colleges and a ‘moral tutor’ allocated to each
student to provide weekly tuition and counsel. The size of a college was proposed as three hundred
undergraduates plus some graduate students and staff. This multidisciplinary environment would ensure that students would be provided with admirable examples of how to act and the character and habits required to participate fully in such an education. The ‘ethos’ or Platonic beauty of the ancient universities, particularly the Backs of Cambridge, were a considerable influence (at York through its picturesque unifying lake rather than Cambridge’s Cam; Figure 13).

To some consternation, however, York’s colleges were built using the rapid, efficient, supposedly economical, and labour-saving prefabricated building technique CLASP (Consortium of Local Authorities’ Special Programme), using concrete cladding to dress steel frames. As James remarked, ‘My architect says beauty is in sticking to the cost limits... I am not sure whether this is OK’. CLASP was, however, eventually accepted as a practical necessity in order to deliver the university expediently and to meet Robbins’ short-term emergency in student places (‘we may be able to do something with the fenestration’ one YAT member reportedly muttered).
York’s development plan distinguished its colleges from the chaotic Oxbridge college pattern and the ‘nine-to-five’ civic pattern which was supposed to engender a sharp and intellectually impoverishing work-life separation, and rigid division of the academic faculties from residential colleges or lodgings in idealised diagrams (Figure 14).\footnote{See Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 89, who describes them as so abstracted to become problematic.} York hoped to use colleges to blend ‘cells’ of living, learning and teaching, and social space on a centralised campus, where all facilities were no more than a ten minute walk from one another. To expand, the cells were to grow outwards organically through mitosis.\footnote{University of York, Development Plan: 1962-1972, p. 33.} ‘It should ideally be impossible to go from one unit of accommodation to a similar one without coming into contact with at least one of completely different academic or social character on the way’, the plan declared.\footnote{Ibid. p. 13.} The colleges would provide the intermingling of students, staff, and different subjects required for a young person to be educated in breadth; they were to offer far more than just functional living accommodation. They held symposia, elected...
Presidents of Junior Common Rooms, and had ‘scarves, societies, and rules of their own’.\textsuperscript{314} James remained optimistic but, like the student body, was cautious to unilaterally declare them a success given their youth, though they were frequently gestured to as preventative of student unrest that effected other universities.\textsuperscript{315}

The colleges did not always operate as planned. There were intended to be eight colleges by 1972 but financial pressures limited York to six.\textsuperscript{316} The student newspaper \textit{Nouse} reported that students found the colleges as friendly but too ‘conservative for a good social life’ and objected to the midnight curfew as paternalistic.\textsuperscript{317} Peacock’s economics department, allied with Robbins, mutinied against the plan to disperse disciplines across the colleges. He commandeered Alcuin college (Figure 16) to recreate a miniature LSE and support his broad two-part social studies degree by bringing economics, sociology, and social work under one roof.\textsuperscript{318} This, however, was not a success. Ironically, as Warren described, students ‘disliked its dirigisme’ and staff teaching politics and sociology felt constrained. The unity of the Part I therefore did not last much longer after 1973.\textsuperscript{319} Staff had been similarly loose with ‘tutorials’; James complained that their size in many departments at six students was ‘verging on the seminar’ and that some staff considered the insistence of the tutorial system as arising from ‘tribal loyalties than from hard evidence of educational efficiency’.\textsuperscript{320}

\textsuperscript{314} Beloff, \textit{The Plateglass Universities}, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{316} BI UOY/UP/1/1/9, Eric James, University of York: Vice-Chancellor’s Report, 1971-72, November 1972, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{317} BI UOY/SP/1/1/2, ‘Opinion poll: The first three terms’, \textit{Nouse}, 24 June 1965.
\textsuperscript{318} BI UOY/HIS/4/1/14, Andrew Derbyshire, interviewed by Gregory Neale, 1, 4 December 2012, 98:00; Warren, \textit{Eric James and the Founding of the University of York}, p. 66; Anne Riddell remembers a similar event occurring at one of the first colleges, Derwent: BI UOY/HIS/4/1/40, Riddell, 15:00.
\textsuperscript{319} Ibid. pp. 68-69; Taylor, ‘Foreword’.
\textsuperscript{320} BI UOY/UP/1/1/9, Eric James, University of York: Vice-Chancellor’s Report, 1971-72, November 1972, p. 5. While the definitions of categories of learning activities such as seminars or lectures was certainly fluid, the Hale Committee did attempt to make some definitions. Lectures were ‘continuous exposition by the lecturer’, a ‘discussion period’ where students participated and raised academic problems on initiative of the group described both tutorials, of no more than four students meeting regularly with the same tutor, and seminars,
which were any other discussion period which was not a tutorial. Hale Committee Report on University Teaching Methods, Appendix B: Definitions of teaching periods, 5 February 1965.
Building breadth at the new universities of York, Warwick, and Stirling, 1959-1972

Figure 15. ‘Derwent College’ (c. 1965-70), <https://dlib.york.ac.uk/yodl/app/image/detail?id=york%3a20164> [Accessed 10 May 2021]. Built using CLASP, and see Heslington Hall (right, background). Made available by the University of York for Educational Non-Commercial re-use.

6.3.2.2. ‘The Saga of Mudguard’

Early students and staff at Warwick recalled encountering an expansive, wind-blasted site, sparsely studded with brutalist white square buildings, cranes, and building sites marooned across ‘seas’ of thick, churned, red mud; Shattock described it as ‘pretty disgraceful’.321 One student recalled an incident where after a night out a friend fell down a trench ‘eight foot deep […] up to their waist in water’.322 The initial buildings of the university by Ling and Goodman were built for 1965 opening on the ‘East Site’ on Gibbet Hill. This nursery campus housed flexible accommodation for subjects before they moved into permanent accommodation, fifteen-minutes’ walk down through woodland to the ‘magnificent’ main central campus site.323 By November 1963 Yorke Rosenberg Mardall, (YRM) had been appointed for the main site and diverged from Ling and Goodman’s 1964 plan.324 YRM were reportedly selected on the suggestion of Rootes, and commonly attributed by contemporaries to the architects’ exceptionally quick airport construction, but after criticism were replaced by Shepherd and Epstein in 1972.325 Throughout these plans however a firm commitment to achieving breadth through the built environment remained albeit through different strategies.

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321 IAS 974/1/1, Michael Shattock, interviewed by April Gallwey, 6, 14 March 2013; see similar comments in Beloff, *The Plateglass Universities*, pp. 140-41.
322 IAS 993/12/1/1, Alan Phillips, interviewed by Richard Wallace, 1, 16 January 2014.
323 University of Warwick Development Plan, p. 5.
324 It is a little obscure why this was the case. Shattock has indicated that there were a number of factors: firstly, Warwick was the only New University that seriously took the UGC’s advice that there might be separate architects for the development plan and designing the buildings. Secondly, it was apparent Ling was leaving Coventry by 1963, and Whyte has identified Ling lost faith in the project. Thirdly, Butterworth seems to have been unimpressed with the development plan and there are some indications it was too closely associated with the city as well as being quixotic and overly prescriptive. Muthesius called the 1964 development plan for an urbanised main site for 20,000 students and costing £58 million a ‘town planner’s and architect’s dream’. It included, for example, shopping arcades, seventeen-story towers, flyovers, greenways, and serviced by a ‘Tangential Urban Motorway’ circumscribing Coventry. There also seems to have been some degree over overspend: *University of Warwick Development Plan*, pp. 11-12; Muthesius, *The Postwar University*, pp. 116-17; Whyte, ‘Learning from Redbrick’, p. 28; MRC UWA/F/PE/1/1, Report of a meeting of Professors-elect, 20 December 1963.
325 IAS 974/1/1 Shattock, 6. Shattock recalls it was Newcastle Airport, but there seems to be some confusion. YRM built Gatwick Airport but designed the interior of Newcastle Airport; Muthesius only mentions Gatwick; another professor thought it was Teesside. Beloff recalls students at every New University disparaging their social hall as feeling like an airport lounge ‘with a repetitive air of witty originality’: Beloff, *The Plateglass Universities*, p. 166; Yorke Rosenberg Mardall, *The Architecture of Yorke Rosenberg Mardall, 1944-1972* (London: Lund Humphries Publishers Limited, 1972), p. 118. Muthesius, *The Postwar University*, p. 117; Dyson, ‘Memoirs, the University of Warwick 1970-1989’, p. 12.
Warwick opposed the distribution of communal buildings amongst residential ‘colleges’ such as at York. This fracturing, Warwick believed, would lead to narrow socialisation along academic lines or an unsatisfactory estrangement of related academic groups; Warwick therefore ‘zoned’ academic and residential spaces. The first communal buildings, opened in 1966, were five or six story high concrete blocks in ‘the most straightforward Modernist type of rectangular structure’ cladded with white tiling, built along a main academic street. The central building was the library, intended to serve a student population of 5000. Opposite and across the main street was the zone for science buildings. Internal access galleries provided ‘continuous links between all parts’ of the science buildings, and the main concourse bridged extended out and over the main access road to

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326 Like Robbins, Butterworth had first-hand experience of the lack of economy achieved at Oxford.
329 The library building won the RIBA architecture award for the West Midlands in 1967. The arts were initially housed in the top two floors of the library until 1970: Mardall, The Architecture of Yorke Rosenberg Mardall, 1944-1972, p. 53.
the library (Figure 17). These walkways reflected ‘the inter-dependence of scientific subjects’ by providing a connective artery across the spatial and academic gaps between disciplines to encourage the organic academic mixing and innovation. Like at York, the importance of crossing the campus in less than fifteen minutes was important to preserving a sense of community. However, at Warwick, residences, services, and open spaces were zoned further out from the centre. A grid of internal access roads and infrastructure separated these zones, ignoring the contours of the land, and intending to extend from a central roadway ‘spine’, providing flexibility to support sustained expansion in the future, anticipating that Warwick might grow into a 20,000 student-strong behemothic broad university. This had the unfortunate consequence of spreading facilities out over the campus (a problem compounded by a long, unilluminated and therefore dangerous walk up to the nursery campus).

Warwick agreed with York that traditional halls of residence were pedagogically insufficient. More than York, Warwick’s APB were initially extremely pessimistic about the calibre of first generation students it was likely to attract and emphasised the need for moral tuition to inculcate ‘common’ interests. The Warwick professoriate preferred ‘personal tutors’ over ‘moral tutors’, though these tutors were still intended to ‘broaden his [sic] students’ outlook, and to stimulate interests outside their immediate academic work’. In Warwick’s early years, academic staff were provided with an allocation of about £10 to form social relations with their students, often

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331 Perkin, New Universities in the United Kingdom, p. 29.
332 MRC UWA/PUB/1/1, Report of the Vice-Chancellor to the first meeting of the University Court, 17 November 1965.
334 One student recalled ‘one or two people were attacked’. IAS 993/12/1/1, Phillips. See also MRC UWA/M/S/2, Senate, Minutes, 23 February 1966. Similar problems with lighting were experienced at York, see: BI UOY/M/SSC/1/1.
335 IAS 974/1/1 Shattock, 6.
hosting (sometimes apparently quite awkward) dinners in their domestic settings. Following the APB, the development plans imagined fourteen hall of residence communities, each with a unique architectural flavour, to socialise and cater for around 1000-1500 students of different genders and disciplines. The first residences, Rootes Hall (named after the late industrialist), opened in 1966 and constituted of a residential block and separate social building (Figure 18). Butterworth in 1968 reported that there were encouraging signs of community emerging, including a student run ‘discotheque/coffee bar’. To assist this socialisation, a sports centre (1972) and an arts centre (1974) were built. The arts centre was one of a series of projects funded by the Gulbenkian, the Nuffield Foundation, and anonymously by the charitable trust of Helen Martin (whose family owned Smirnoff Vodka), who also funded an American exchange programme. Warwick also invested heavily in its visual art collection (Figure 19; Figure 20).

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337 This is roughly equivalent at the time of writing of £200. MRC UWA/F/PE/1/4, W. Harrison. Personal Tutors, 26 January 1965; MRC UWA/F/PE/1/4, ‘Personal Tutor Scheme’, 12 March 1965; IAS 974/60/1/1-3, Terence Kemp, interviewed by Richard Wallace, 20 January 2014; and IAS 993/12/1/1, Phillips. Interestingly, the early professors noted that they would expect ‘women students to be allocated to women Personal Tutors’; instead of reflecting on their hiring practices they appointed the lodgings officer to act as a special women’s welfare officer: MRC UWA/F/PE/1/4, W. Harrison. Personal Tutors, 26 January 1965; MRC UWA/F/PE/1/4, Report of a meeting of the professors, 12 March 1965. The first female professor, sociologist Margaret Stacy, was appointed in 1973. MRC UWA/PUB/1/9/1, Report of the Vice-Chancellor. Part I, 1972 – 1973. There was only one female professor in Stirling’s early appointments. Nehring, ‘The University of Stirling’, p. 196. I did not come across any information on the first female professorial appointment at York.


340 Her gift also paid for the halls of residence Benefactors (1966) to house exchange students. MRC UWA/PUB/4/9/1, University of Warwick, Guide to First Degree Courses: 1972-73 (Coventry: Edwards the Printers. 1972); Shattock and Warman, The Martin Family and the University of Warwick; MRC UWA/PUB/1/3 Report of the Vice-Chancellor, 1966 – 1967. The American exchange involved Berkeley, Madison, South Carolina, Washington College, Swarthmore, Tulane, and Rochester. When Beloff visited Warwick, he found the first two exchange cohorts (some students had refused to visit a ‘“capitalist imperialist country”’) had found ‘American universities had too many compulsory classes’ but that they profited from the experience of American society as well as education in its history: Beloff, The Plateglass Universities, p. 144.

341 Alex Buxton, ‘University of Warwick’s Post-War Public Art Protected’ (Press Releases: University of Warwick, 22 January 2016) <https://warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressreleases/university_of_warwick146s_post-war_public_art_protected1/> [Accessed 13 May 2021]. In the foreground of Figure 18 (below), 3B Series No. 1 by Bernard Schottlander Coventry, 1968 commissioned by YRM. The red provides dramatic visual stimulus in what became known as ‘Rootes Red Square’ against the austere Rootes social building, background right, and Benefactors residences, left. Rootes residences are out of shot to the far left and behind the camera. Note their separation. See also the picket fences erected to mitigate the dangers of falling tiles.
Figure 18. MRC UWA/Photos/II.D.1/1/42; Dales and Fleckner Photographers Coventry (nd). See footnote 341. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 19 (left). MRC UWA/Photos/II.A.6/1/43, Thomas-Photos, Oxford ‘Interior of library with art pieces’ (nd). Reproduced with permission; Figure 20 (right). MRC UWA/Photos/II.A.6/1/46, ‘Henk Snoek Interior of library with art pieces’ (nd). Reproduced with permission.
This social engineering conflicted with the expectations of many students and staff. Campus, the student newspaper, in March 1969 remarked few students felt part of a community.\(^{342}\) Thompson felt the campus had been ‘set out with a divider and a ruler’ and with no centre ‘where the staff and students can easily intermingle’.\(^{343}\) Criticism mounted of YRM’s austere Modern International Style slab blocks.\(^{344}\) Absurdly, and dangerously, the tiling affixed to the new buildings began to fall off around 1969.\(^{345}\) The university, especially Butterworth, rejected students’ call for a centralised students union building which conflicted with their own socialising vision of the halls of residence.\(^{346}\) As early as 1968 Butterworth attributed extreme dissent in universities as a form of rejection of ‘the whole of society’ (Cottrell at Stirling likewise conflated student countercultural critique as an attack from outside ‘Western European culture’).\(^{347}\) Many students attributed the opposition to a centralised student union as evidence of industrialists’ stranglehold over the university and their hostility to united organised labour movements.\(^{348}\) Following the student unrest of 1970 the administration relented: a centralised students’ union building as an extension of Rootes opened in 1975.\(^{349}\) No further buildings like Rootes social building were built. Like most of the New Universities including York, Warwick found catering failed to achieve satisfactory economies and student preferences gravitated towards independent study bedrooms and flats over halls.\(^{350}\)

\(^{342}\) MRC UWA/PUB/C/2/44/1; ‘All the lonely people’, Campus, 44, 7th March 1969, p. 3.
\(^{344}\) Beloff in 1968 described Rootes residences as laying a claim as ‘the most unsightly university structure in the country’: Beloff, The Plateglass Universities, p. 141.
\(^{345}\) IAS 974/60/1/1-3, Kemp. See also Christopher Hall, ‘Staff Memories, 40th’, University of Warwick (7 December 2006) <https://warwick.ac.uk/about/40/memories/staff/christopherhall/> [Accessed 12 December 2020]; Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 182; Birks, Building the New Universities, p. 109; MRC UWA/PUB/C/2/45/1, Dick Clifton, ‘The saga of Mudguard’, Campus, 45, 2 May 1969, p. 3; by January 1971 the student newspaper Campus could comment on new Arts building’s ‘unique quality of this being the only model in this range which is as yet unadorned by picturesque picket fences and the old familiar “DANGER – FALLING TILES” signs’. MRC UWA/PUB/C/4/75, ‘YRM’s new baby’, Campus, 75, 15 January 1971, p. 11.
\(^{346}\) Griffiths, ‘The New Universities: The Humanities’, p. 337; IAS 974/1/1 Shattock, 1; IAS 993/12/1/2, Phillips.
\(^{348}\) Anecdotally, Butterworth is supposed to have decreed that ‘there will never be a Union building in my lifetime’: Connor Woodman, “‘Red Warwick’: A Hidden History’, Boar, 9 February 2016.
\(^{350}\) Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 77.
Following these fiascos, a less rigid architectural approach informed the arts centre (Figure 21), administration buildings, and the later social sciences buildings.\textsuperscript{351} Looking to humanise the stark built environment, Warwick turned to Shepheard and Epstein, who had met success in their designs of Lancaster: a pedestrianised hill-top ‘Italian villa’ with tightly packed academic and residential collegiate buildings radiating out from a central hub again hoping to foster encounter and community.\textsuperscript{352} A shrub and tree-planting programme (a concerned father had made a small donation to this end in 1966) was also begun to soften the site.\textsuperscript{353} However, Warwick’s building programme, due to its later start, was disproportionately affected by building moratoriums and lower-than-expected quinquennial finance settlements.\textsuperscript{354}

\textsuperscript{351} Ibid. pp. 122, 280; on Lancaster see pp. 161-163, 170; Birks, Building the New Universities, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{354} Shatock, The Impact of a University on Its Environment, p. 97.
6.3.2.3. Lochs and Zones

Stirling, designed and built within just two years, envisioned its built environment as a place where ‘students should learn from their contemporaries as well as from their teachers by living and working together’.\(^{355}\) Stirling was however more sceptical than the earlier universities, particularly reflecting on the experience of York, which Cottrell visited in 1967. It aligned itself with a movement disavowing social engineering in favour of ‘post-modern’ spontaneity.\(^{356}\) Yet Cottrell still appreciated York’s interweaving of, for example, socialising spaces like coffee bars within teaching areas.\(^{357}\)

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\(^{356}\) See, for example, UoSA UA/A/4/2/11, T. L. Cottrell, ‘Planning and Building a University’, 1973.

The 1966 Development Plan called for a ‘permissive rather than a determinative approach’ and argued against a ‘plan which preconceives tightly-knit social communities’. Mary Ogilvie of the APB, unlike her recommendations at York, argued that Stirling should experiment and try to focus on accommodation where there was the ‘greatest demand’ which was anticipated to be single student flats. The APB did however suggest that Stirling might copy York’s residential blocks: segregated by gender but linked by shared refectories and common rooms large enough to be used by non-residential students, including graduates, and with some ‘married members of staff to assist in running the hall’. Like York and Warwick, Stirling assigned each student their own tutor, in this case given the title of a ‘Director of Studies’, to provide guidance. At Stirling, tutorials and

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358 UoSA UA/C/12/1/8, Robert Mathew, Johnson-Marshall and Partners, University of Stirling: Interim Development Plan (December 1966); see Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 5; Nehring, ‘Challenging the Myths of the Scottish Sixties’, p. 63.
360 Ibid.
seminars, university societies, and the provision of social and study spaces would play key roles in facilitating genuine socialisation that colleges provided only artificially. The college system was especially unsatisfactory in the case of the sciences. The system at Oxford, Cambridge, and York had partially dissolved due to the need for specialised accommodation for research. Consequently, scientists, given dedicated buildings, were less likely to mix. Cottrell and the Development plan argued that, as teaching and research were together different activities from other kinds of living, their separation was both a practical necessity and desirable and new solutions to socialisation were required.

Stirling’s development plan used zoning, and placed academic buildings to the south, separated from the residential buildings by the central loch (Figure 22). Residential buildings were zoned to the north of the Airthrey site facing south into the sun and overlooking the academic buildings, while being set back into the landscape to provide some privacy and to emphasise the ‘natural’ formation and beauty of the site. Symbolically linking the two zones was a focalising minimalist bridge (reportedly indented to be tall enough for dinghy masts to pass beneath; Figure 23) which spanned the loch. Like York, Stirling’s widely praised site retained a sense of Platonic beauty. Drastically impacted by reduced UGC norms for residences, however, the Architectural Review reported that “All finishes are spartan, the structural blockwork has simple white paint inside, and this attracts the (verbal) abuse of residents; its spaces were cramped and “soulless”, and lacking individuality. Elsewhere, Cottrell was particularly keen to invest in the visual arts which he argued, had a strong effect on the university, ‘a fact I first appreciated at the University of

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365 Ibid.
366 Margaret Richards, interview; Simpson & Brown, ‘The University of Stirling Campus: Conservation Plan’, p. 120; Clements, ‘His Early Days at Stirling’; The campus newspaper, Brig was named partially for this connection: UoSA UA/D/2/1/1, Paul Martin, ‘Your New Paper’, Brig 1:1, 3 October 1969.
367 Young, ‘Young Enquiry’, p. 17.
Warwick’, and one percent of capital building costs would be allocated to provision of fine art. The Macrobot Art Centre (1971) and a swimming pool (1973) were both opened to the local community. The centre’s function in cultivating ‘taste’ was the target for student dissatisfaction: a report of student opinion found that they thought that the programmes ‘were too “highbrow” and/or “bourgeois,”’ a claim the administration found absurd and antithetical to the university’s role in transmitting the ‘genius’ of western society.

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369 This suggestion which was shut down by the UGC, but revived at Stirling through other financial channels: UoSA UA/A/4/2/11, T. L. Cottrell, ‘Planning and Building a University’, 1973, p. 16.


371 Fair, Modern Playhouses: An Architectural History of Britain’s New Theatres, 1945-1985, pp. 138, 221, 57. ‘Mozart, Shakespeare, Stravinsky, and Cranko may be highbrow’, the report admitted, ‘though it is not obvious in what sense they are bourgeois, but in any case both charges are irrelevant to the essential fact that a community concerned with man’s intellectual and creative strivings and discoveries cannot afford to despise or ignore the artistic products of his genius’: Young, ‘Young Enquiry’, p. 10.
Stirling’s teaching and research spaces were designed for expediency in their construction time, flexibility, and to encourage academic cross-pollination using a principle of ‘spine and rib’.372 Primary teaching spaces were built along a main corridor ‘spine’, with ‘ribs’ of related study spaces and facilities branching off the spines, and perhaps intersecting other spines (Figure 24). The architects hoped that these egalitarian interlocking spaces - a ‘continuous teaching environment’, in the widely used phrase of American university planning theorist Richard Dober - would encourage encounter and cooperation between staff and students and of all disciplines and promote the flexible use of space and resources.373 Such transfer of people and ideas across space was essential

373 UoSA UA/C/12/1/9, University of Stirling, Development Plan Report 1968 (1968), p. 35, SURA OH/067, Margaret Richards, interviewed by Carolyn Rowlinson and Jane Cameron, 8 August 2016; Muthesius, The Postwar University, p. 87; Simpson & Brown, ‘The University of Stirling Campus: Conservation Plan’, p. 108.
for the organic exchange of ideas and the practical application of knowledge to problems. Stirling’s first teaching space, the Pathfoot building which opted for a cheaper ad-hoc design over CLASP, opened in 1968 and won architectural awards from the Civic Trust and the RIBA.\textsuperscript{374} T70 opened in phases from 1970 and 1972 due to financial difficulties and like Pathfoot followed a variation on the ‘rib-and-spine’ design and philosophy (Figure 25).\textsuperscript{375} The allocation of subject space in the T70 building was, according to one senior staff member’s recollection, calculated by Cottrell himself.\textsuperscript{376} Cottrell allocated mathematical weightings of the relationship between different subjects to decide which subjects would be placed next to other closely related subjects to encourage mutual association.\textsuperscript{377} As we have already seen and mirroring the experiences of the other universities, Cottrell struggled to convince his staff and students of the value of these relationships. The broad plans imagined by the universities detailed in section 6.2 therefore, as section 6.3 has shown, were only realised with mixed success.

6.4. REIMAGINING LIBERAL EDUCATION AND THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITIES

The preceding sections have provided strong evidence that the early planning, pedagogy, and form of these new universities was informed by a reimagining of liberal education. Each of the three universities and their vice-chancellors provide something of a snapshot of different sorts of possibilities latent in liberal education, as this concluding section 6.4 examines.

Out of all three vice-chancellors, James was the most committed to an ideal of a meritocratic liberal university; perhaps unsurprisingly C. P. Snow’s antagonist, F. R. Leavis, was offered a visiting professorship at York.\textsuperscript{378} James believed that essential to the function of the university in society was

\textsuperscript{375} T70 was later renamed the Cottrell building after the principal’s death: ibid, pp. 108-10.
\textsuperscript{376} This seems likely, see, for example, the operational language Cottrell used in: UoSA UA/A/4/2/11, Tom Cottrell, ‘Planning and Building a University’, 1973, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{377} SURSA OH/002 Holliday, 38:02.
\textsuperscript{378} Ortolano, The Two Cultures Controversy, pp. 238, 44; Warren, ‘The Founding of the University of York’, p. 81.
educating a clerisy and obtaining the ‘truth’. 379 However, in James’ understanding of academic freedom, the freedom of the universities to pursue ‘truth’ was ‘but one aspect of a wider freedom for all men’ and of the West. 380 Universities were not places of peculiar liberties but places where ‘essential liberties of a civilised state find strongest champions [...] who by reason of the intellectual strength which they possess [...] have a particular responsibility’. 381 Here James articulated a similar vision of higher education and its place in a balance of freedoms to Robbins (see Chapter Two) but shorn of Robbins’ strong advocacy of democratisation. For James, referencing J. S. Mill’s concept of negative liberty, universities had the freedom to pursue their own interests with the constraint that it did not result in harm to others. 382 But James conceived this freedom as necessitating strong societal responsibility. James, in contrast to many other vice-chancellors, publicly supported the inclusion of the universities under the Ministry of Education, and public scrutiny of a democratic society over its finances. 383 James continued to support the more directive and evaluative nature of university financing, arguing that budgetary constraints were a form of expression of public good. 384 Even James, however, felt that by the late 1960s the universities were being forced towards conformity and constrained in their freedoms to provide for society the needs it did not yet know it needed. 385 James argued that the existing funding arrangements overlooked the wider value of a university: ‘A university is not simply a place for training in socially necessary skills, and for the transmission of socially acceptable values. It exists also to scrutinise, to interpret and to question

381 Ibid.
382 Ibid. pp. 2-3.
383 Ibid. p. 2; BI JAM/2/1/5, BBC, Transcribed from telediphone recording, extract from Ten O’Clock, 28 October 1963; see Shattock, Making Policy, pp. 92-93; but cf. Agar, ‘Science and the New Universities’, p. 234. When access to university financial books was granted to the public accounts committee in 1968 James believed that this would be beneficial and not detrimental to academic freedom. James was not alone, he was joined by Charles Carter: Halsey and Trow, The British Academics, p. 98; BI UOY/UP/1/1/4, Eric James, University of York: Vice-Chancellor’s Report, 1966-67, November 1967.
385 For the wider context of this belief, see Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, pp. 124-25.
those values’. 386 James believed that the universities were being strangled of the resources they required ‘not simply to respond to social needs but to transform them’. 387

By contrast, for Butterworth, universities needed to come to terms with their role in producing trained talent and to come to terms with the importance of a liberal education in breadth to contribute to the prosperity of the West. Warwick went only a little further in reorienting the objectives of a university towards the needs of liberal society than York and perhaps even less than Stirling. As we have seen, Warwick saw itself as developing the good practice of existing universities. 388 Butterworth felt that while a university offered the possibility of withdrawal in order to specialise with detachment, it was no longer acceptable to be indifferent to the world. 389 Instead there were important practical roles of universities which required reform, even transition to a ‘new model’, to perform their required role in society. In stronger terms than James, and quoting Eric Ashby, Butterworth saw that the reformed university would bring about a second industrial revolution and was inclined to think of the consequences up to the year 2000. 390 At the same time, Butterworth channelled the concerns of liberal educationalists like Walter Moberly when he argued that the universities were critical to provide the national need for ‘wisdom’: ‘Not just “how do I become an engineer” but “what is the purpose of being an engineer”? 391 Only a ‘balanced orthodox university’ could provide this, ‘and our relationship with industry and commerce renders even more imperative the need for a strong arts side’, the traditional site of the liberal education. 392 Arts subjects (in sentiments he repeated both before and after the events of 1970), in their pursuit and

388 MRC UWA/M/S/2, Draft: Note for submission to the UGC in relation to its visitation of the University on 6 June 1966, 9 March 1966.
Building breadth at the new universities of York, Warwick, and Stirling, 1959-1972

revelation of cultural and moral values, could ‘alone arm an industrial and technological society against the dangers and potential evils which inevitably beset its progress’. 393

Butterworth strongly associated the capacity of broadening of the role of the university as requiring a close relationship ‘with industry and commerce as equal partners in a venture of the greatest significance’. Warwick earnestly included local industrialists such as Kerr-Muir in commanding roles of the university’s Executive Council with a lay majority which Butterworth believed ensured academic freedom. 394 Equally, like James, Butterworth accepted the need for the socially responsible use of resources. In a time of public financial stringency, it invited industrial consultants John Tyzack & Partners to report on the institution. Their report in May 1968 was damning: ‘Sooner or later, the University of Warwick will have to come to terms with the age-old conflict between democratic principles and effective government’. 395 This needlessly antagonised an already fractious relationship between Butterworth and members of the senate who accused him of excising monolithic administration. 396 It also exposed Butterworth to Thompson’s criticism that values of industrial capitalism were inappropriate to judge the social contributions of an academic community’s pursuit of truth. 397

394 MRC UWA/PUB/1/6/1 Report of the Vice-Chancellor. Part I, 1969 -1970; Thompson, ‘Warwick University Ltd’, pp. 27-28. Warwick University Ltd. viewed these arrangements with suspicion. Lay representation on the council, bar the Bishop of Coventry, were all industrialists. Many of these men, including the new Lord Rootes (Rootes Motors Limited), Hall (aerodynamics manufacturer Hawker Siddeley Group Ltd), Gilbert Hunt (Rootes), Lord Iliffe (Coventry Newspapers Ltd), Sir Stanley Harley (Coventry Gauge and Tool Ltd), Sir William Lyons (Jaguar Cars Ltd), and R. J. Kerr-Muir (Courtaulds Ltd) had been invited to the Council from the Executive at the expense of various local educationalists and trade unionists.
395 The Tyzack Report, cited in ibid. pp. 136-42; see Thompson, 'Warwick University Ltd', pp. 79-81. Tyzack himself had already been in personal contact with the university and was nominated by the Institute of Directors to the electoral board of their funded and proposed chair in business administration: MRC UWA/F/PE/1/3, Report of a meeting of Professors, 30 October 1964, p. 4. Tyzack very much seems to anticipate the Jarratt Report, whose authoring committee Butterworth was a member: CVCP, Jarratt Report.
396 MRC UWA/M/S/8, Senate, Minutes, 30 October 1967; IAS 974/1/1 Shattock, 1.
397 Thompson was particularly critical: he quoted the Tyzack’s report’s finding that ‘“Taken as a whole, the university is certainly inefficient by normal commercial or industrial standards.”’ ‘Alas’, Thompson wrote, ‘no lecturer’s profitability could compare with that of Sapphire 7’, the Armstrong Siddeley Sapphire turbojet (under Hall), which had been found to have been sold to the British public at an inflated profit of 124.9 percent: Thompson, ‘The Business University’. This aligned Thompson with Leavis against Snow, for example. See Ortolano: The Two Cultures Controversy, pp. 140-59; and Rogan, Moral Economists.
Thompson, who had been an extra-mural tutor at the University of Leeds in partnership with the WEA before coming to Warwick, represents another form of liberal education, which sought to democratise independent critical thinking and being. He entirely rejected Butterworth’s conception that the capital generated by industry which was being invested back into a productivity raising enterprise was in the ‘national interest’. As he and his students argued, ‘the world of industry is emphatically not a world of a neutral technocracy working for the benefit of all. It is [...] a world of efficiency and quantification in the interests of profit’. Thompson’s critique of Warwick was that it failed to provide a university which was conducive to the critical enterprise of ‘liberal academics’ and would preserve the independence of the university institution as a place of critical learning. For Butterworth, responding to these criticism but still under pressure in the national competition for resources and keen to articulate how Warwick contributed to the ‘good society’, Thompson’s retreat to what he saw as an older vision of the purpose of higher education was insufficient. Thompson’s critique overlooked the contribution that the individual armed with a proper broad understanding of their specialism and its practical use could make to industry and wider society. Ironically, breadth may have contributed to a student critique of Butterworth’s programme. As Thompson wrote, students ‘took the initiative. They asked the right questions. They began to understand the answers. They stood firm against rhetoric, against threats, against the special pleading of those with large interests to lose’. From this perspective the debate between Butterworth and Thompson looks quite slight. They mainly disagreed as to whether the student whose character had been fully developed through liberal education should support or critique liberal capitalism.

398 Searby, Rule, and Malcolmson, ‘Edward Thompson as a teacher’.
400 Thompson, ‘The Business University’.
402 Thompson, ‘The Business University’. Similar reflections have been made by historians, see 50, p. 45; Agar, ‘Science and the New Universities’, pp. 135-36; Hoefferle, British Student Activism in the Long Sixties, p. 209; Rogan, Moral Economists, p. 146; and for a comment of this concept of a university education and its mirroring of arguments for the liberal education by Michael Oakeshott, see Troschitz, Higher Education and the Student: From Welfare State to Neoliberalism, pp. 100-02.
Cottrell and Robbins shared very similar visions for the development of liberal education. Cottrell considered the social responsibilities of a university in explicitly economic terms and, like Butterworth, stressed the importance of industry to that project particularly through his close association with ICI (a similar course to Tech-Ec at Warwick, MORSE, was proposed by another ex-ICI employee in the early 1970s and was much more successful).\textsuperscript{403} Cottrell recalled he had been a member of a working group trying to quantify the economic benefits of fundamental scientific research without much progress and remarked that ‘If this is difficult, then how much more difficult is the problem for higher education in general’.\textsuperscript{404} But Cottrell had no doubt that there was a benefit, and Stirling considered its public duty to break out of orthodoxies to rejuvenate the Scottish liberal tradition of breadth in education to make this economic and social contribution.\textsuperscript{405} Robbins in particular was especially taken by Stirling’s educational philosophy. After visiting Stirling in February 1967 Robbins wrote it was ‘one of the most exciting things that has happened in all the educational developments of the last twenty-five years’.\textsuperscript{406} As Chapter Two explored, Robbins linked Stirling’s educational philosophy of balancing specialisation with broadening influences with western society’s present prosperity, a belief that Cottrell also later propounded in 1969.\textsuperscript{407}

\textsuperscript{403} MORSE (Maths, Operational Research, Statistics, Economics) degrees began in 1975 and are still awarded today: Dyson, ‘Memoirs, the University of Warwick 1970-1989’, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{405} UoSA UA/A/4/1/5, Lord Robbins, Inauguration Address, University of Stirling, 5 April 1968, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{406} It is important to note that Robbins himself had no direct influence over the foundation and direction at Stirling (though his indirect influence in championing liberal economic thought in Higher Education policy of course substantial). Robbins conceived a chancellorship merely as a ceremonial and consultative role. As Robbins wrote to Cottrell in 1967 after his appointment, the press had misunderstood his role as to have ‘some vast scheme which I should proceed to propound, not only to you and the University, but to the world at large’: UoSA UA/A/4/1/5, Lionel Robbins to Tom Cottrell, 5 January 1967. Robbins had previously rejected an offer of the chancellorship at Brunel University in 1964, which he refused ‘on the ground that he was involved in the creation of the University of York’, but this did not seem to have been an issue in his accepting of the chancellorship at Stirling, perhaps because Stirling more closely aligned with his broad educational philosophy and the wider reformist network: Howson, Lionel Robbins, p. 987; CHE, ‘Higher Education Report’, p. 97; UoSA UA/A/4/1/5, Lionel Robbins to Tom Cottrell, 10 February 1967.
There were two related factors beyond the importance of productivity and collaboration that Cottrell believed a socially responsible broad education provided: firstly, it prepared students to deal with an uncertain future labour market and thus allocated their resources of ability to where they might best be deployed. This was particularly important for those entering employment, as rapid technological change made purely vocational training in specific skills liable to obsolescence: ‘the job one is trained for may have disappeared within a few years of the training’. A key skill was therefore the capacity to deal with unknown problems and uncertain labour-markets in the future. It was even relevant over the brief period of time between a student selecting their GCEs, their university course, and their graduation. Cottrell further suggested that the marginal wage differentials between subjects in variable labour market conditions might influence student choice. Cottrell was explicit that this was about the efficient distribution of national resources.

Secondly, in a revealing speech given to the Scottish Council for Commercial, Administrative and Professional Education, Cottrell argued that one of the aims of a broad education should be to educate students to ‘understand the whole system’. By ‘understanding’ Cottrell meant an appreciation of the social good of industrial society. The university education was necessary so students might learn how to justify the capitalist system, ‘if they think it is satisfactory’. Stirling’s educational philosophy was far from neutral. It saw capitalism as a social good, quite unlike Thompson. The range of possible social outcomes it was imagined might be derived from liberal education is strong evidence refuting any easy static view of liberal university education in this period. These spaces were part of a concerted effort to realise the liberal capitalist good society.

6.5. CONCLUSIONS: THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF BREADTH

How successful and influential an education in ‘breadth’ was in the long term is contestable. There were clearly a range of justifications influencing breadth, from local industrialists to national

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educational elites, overlapping sometimes constructively and sometimes less so. At York, James’ enthusiasm for meritocracy and equality of opportunity combined productively with local and national concerns for the transmission of a common culture which included a role for these students in serving industry. Warwick’s liberal emphasis on professorial vision meant that by the 1970s it had built up a considerable reputation for research, but its attempts at social engineering highlight how such attempts could be disastrous as often as they were satisfactory.\textsuperscript{411} Planning at Stirling, an institution that has been identified as an English university transplanted into the Forth Valley, was clearly characterised by the national concern for breadth.\textsuperscript{412} However, their programmes for delivering joint and broad courses were often troublesome to administer, faced opposition at a national policy level, did not last especially long, and were not especially well liked by students or staff.\textsuperscript{413} As Muthesius has identified, by the end of the 1960s, the tide of opinion had turned against even the ‘lighter’ social engineering exercised by Stirling.\textsuperscript{414} The removal of students from the cities and local communities was particularly incongruous if the purpose of the university was to socialise students in the complexities of the real world. The new universities looked suspiciously like a reproduction of the detached elite Oxbridge liberal education when the nation still needed science and technological manpower. Worse, greenfield sites were expensive, slow to gain momentum, and required new long-term funding commitments.\textsuperscript{415} The urban civic universities, and the supposedly cheaper polytechnics, gained favour.\textsuperscript{416} As Butterworth feared the universities were outflanked by a

\textsuperscript{411} Contrasted to Warwick and Stirling, York experienced only a small number of notable incidents: in 1968 over catering arrangements, in 1970 in sympathy with Warwick, and student demonstrations in 1972: Warren, \textit{Eric James and the Founding of the University of York}, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{412} On the Oxford influence challenged in this chapter, see Heffernan and Jöns, ‘“A Small Town of Character”’, 1963–1965.’

\textsuperscript{413} See also Blaxland’s exploration of how far students appreciated Fulton’s pedagogy of breadth at Swansea: Blaxland, \textit{Swansea University}, pp. 51-53.

\textsuperscript{414} Muthesius, \textit{The Postwar University}, p. 77.

\textsuperscript{415} Carswell, \textit{Government and the Universities}, pp. 61-62. For the effect of this image on Stirling, see Nehring, ‘Challenging the Myths of the Scottish Sixties’, p. 76.

\textsuperscript{416} Muthesius, \textit{The Postwar University}, pp. 184, 279; McKean, ‘The English University of the 1960s: Built Community, Model University’; Whyte, \textit{Redbrick}, p. 267; Ian Brown, ‘The Dispersed Polytechnic’, \textit{Higher Education Review}, 3 (1971). These contradictions had been apparent prior to the foundation of the New Universities Lowe, \textit{Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History}, p. 163; so it seems likely that external forces were in play bringing them back into prominence.
different vision of higher education and this, he claimed, stultified the capacity of the universities to maintain a commitment to breadth necessary to meet national needs.417

There is scope for further enquiry in this direction. This chapter has avoided discussing in too great detail the issue of university constitution and the conflict between the growth in non-professorial voice in the governance of the universities.418 It has only hinted at the experience of being educated and educating at these early institutions. How far did students and their educators appreciate, absorb, navigate, or reject breadth?419 Far from all students lived in residential accommodation; many lived in ‘digs’ with landladies or at ‘home’.420 Many memories of the early universities emphasise camaraderie, adventure, opportunity, and manic campus cosmopolitanism. It might even be possible to speak of a hidden curriculum of participating in a new university foundation.421 Conversely, there are also more negative depictions. Interiors were often cold, arid, overcrowded, and harsh. Self-service cafeterias offered only greasy food. The consumption of

418 For an overview of the types of governance at the new universities, see Brawne, ‘University Planning and Design: A Symposium’; and Graeme C. Moodie and Rowland Eustace, Power and Authority in the British Universities (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1974); particularly their appendix on the troubles at Warwick. Moodie, professor of Politics at York, penned a report on York’s more minor student troubles, and a similar study at Warwick under Lord Radcliffe was performed after the Files Affair. A third study at Stirling by Roger Young was boycotted by the Students’ Association and was based on interviews with ‘no more than 50 staff and students’, held back on policy recommendations in favour of dialogue, and was deemed unhelpful by the Stirling administration after Cottrell’s death. Nehring, ‘Challenging the Myths of the Scottish Sixties’, pp. 72-73.
419 See, for example, the student survey on the Foundation Year at Keele and staff discussion reproduced and discussed in Mountford, Keele: An Historical Critique, pp. 257-85; or the student authored Critique of Sussex’s interdisciplinary programme cited by Beloff, The Plateglass Universities, p. 46.
420 See for one account Hoefferle, British Student Activism in the Long Sixties, pp. 140-41.
421 See, for example, the often-quoted comment that the lucky few living in university accommodation were found to have ‘studied more, conversed more frequently with their fellow students on their subject, read more non-fiction books, attended more university societies and clubs, and entertained a member of the opposite sex in their room more frequently’, cited in Whyte, Redbrick, p. 238;
Figure 26: UA/D/2/1/43, ‘Mental breakdown’, Brig, May 1973, p. 3.
cigarettes, sleeping tablets, and ‘recklessly mixed’ drinks at parties was commonplace. Instances of petty theft, vandalism (in one notorious event, a statue was destroyed at York), sexual assault, and drug use (a student was suspended for selling drugs at Warwick in 1966) were not atypical. Students had a higher-than-average rate of suicide (one issue of *Brig* included a ‘Mental Breakdown’ board game, Figure 26). ‘Apathy’, Beloff summarised, was the word most frequently used by student editors to describe students’ attitude to their university’s communities.

The scope of this chapter’s inquiry is limited to just three of the nine or ten *de novo* post-war higher education institutions in Britain. It did not consider the role of breadth in older and more populous university institutions (Cottrell, for example, had made his reputation as a pedagogical reformist at Edinburgh); the university colleges and CATs which gained university status at this time (one tutor admiring Stirling’s plans was ‘thoroughly ashamed’ of his own former-CAT’s lack of innovation); London Business School, founded ‘on a greenfield site’; or, perhaps most interestingly, non-university institutions: institutions of further education, polytechnics, and other colleges.

Further education institutions have repeatedly been accused of undergoing ‘academic drift’, losing some of their vocational character as they became universities (after 1969 and 1992). It seems likely that differentiated forms of liberal education and novel pedagogies responding to new societal challenges might be found at these institutions.

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422 IAS 993/12/1/1, Phillips, 1; see Sarah Crook, ‘Historicising the “Crisis” in Undergraduate Mental Health: British Universities and Student Mental Illness, 1944–1968’, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 75 (2020); on suicide, see J. Maxwell Atkinson, ‘Suicide and the Student’, *Universities Quarterly*, 23 (1969); for a fictional account heavily inspired by York covering these ideas, see Linda Grant, *Upstairs at the Party* (London: Virago Press, 2014).

423 MRC UWA/M/S/4, Senate, Minutes, 19 October 1966; Beloff, *The Plateglass Universities*, pp. 56-61 and 163-72; cf. his comments on p. 66 that ‘most students display a consistent and liberal attitude’. On vandalism discussed in a later period see Blaxland, *Swansea University*, p. 216; for a charming but critical student film on student life at Warwick with a bootleg Beatles soundtrack, see: MRC UWA/AV/3/1, Stefan Sargent, ‘On Campus’ (United Kingdom, 1974), 24:48.

424 UoSA UA/A/1/8/1/1, Brian Pamplin (University of Bath) to Lord Murray, ND; cf. the innovation of the ex-CATs listed in Steele, Taylor, and Haynes, *British Labour and Higher Education*, p. 59. On polytechnics, p. 83. On London Business School see the uncited quotation in Williams, *The History of UK Business and Management Education*, p. 84 (and Manchester Business School’s innovative pedagogy is another potential avenue of inquiry; p. 85-87).

425 Tight, *Development of HE in the UK*, pp. 104-06.
7. CONCLUSIONS

A LAMENT FOR NEOLIBERALISM

7.1. CONTRIBUTIONS

This thesis has considered the British expansion of higher education of the sixties from the perspective of the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Today, there is great anxiety as to how higher education moved from aiming to secure public good to financing a system where students pursue an education as a private investment.¹ To begin considering this question, the thesis asked: how divergent is the expansion of recent decades from the expansion of the sixties? More particularly, are these eras underlying rationales of the purpose of higher education and their vision of the student distinct? How helpful is describing one vision as a product of neoliberalism and the other of social democracy? By examining the discourse around the ‘student’, this thesis has demonstrated that this is too simplistic a characterisation.

During the sixties, the role of the student in society was contested by a number of competing and collaborating liberalisms. This vision took existing understandings of a holistic university education and redeployed them so that more young people might exercise their choice, attain personal flourishing, and deploy their skills the service of modern liberal society. This reformist programme achieved both success and failure. These shifts in emphasis and new associations attached to old ideas have been obscured in existing histories.²

7.1.1. The Student and the Good Society

This thesis has explored three competing visions which contested the role of the student in contributing to modern society. Their arguments were supercharged by the constant anxiety over British decline: whether the good society was to be realised by technological and scientific manpower, or by an educated clerisy imbued with a common culture to guide society through the

¹ Vernon, ‘Canary in the Coal Mine’.
² See also Ortolano, Thatcher’s Progress, p. 28.
dangers of technologically driven modernity. Figure 27 (below) shows a schematic visual representation of these visions. Each symbol represents a protagonist of this thesis. They are plotted firstly along a vertical axis, representing how far they considered the student should be educated in a common culture or whether they prioritised the transmission of technological knowledge. Secondly, they are plotted along a horizontal axis, representing how far they considered students should join an elite or whether higher education needed to be democratised. Their placement along these axes is reductionist. It fails to capture the nuance and intricacies of many protagonists’ positions and cannot account for change over time. However, it does help clarify the overarching relationship, overlaps, and differences between the various visions.

![Figure 27. Visions of higher education during the long sixties.](image)

The icons towards the top-left of Figure 27 represent the vision of the traditional liberally educated student. This vision imagined its students would join the ranks of a meritocratic clerisy as a living embodiment of an elite ‘common culture’ of social leadership. This liberal education was often

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3 It should be noted that icon’s placement on the left or right of Figure 27 has no correspondence to the political left or political right.

4 For example, on Leavis and Snow, see: Ortolano, *The Two Cultures Controversy*; on Thompson, see Rogan, *Moral Economists*; on Ashby, see: Silver, *Higher Education and Opinion Making*.
anti-expansionist. It was criticised as elitist, as denigrating technological training, and as a poor use of reserves of ability. By contrast, ranging across the lower portion of Figure 27 are techno-nationalists, who envisaged the student as a future worker in a technological society imbued with fixed vocational skills. Critics charged techno-nationalists as dangerously overoptimistic about the capacities of planning, especially the direction of manpower, to realise the good society. They were unable to prevent the misuse of technological knowledge if it was directed towards inefficient, illiberal, or nefarious ends such as under communism or fascism. Despite mutual antagonisms there was also overlap and common ground between these two visions. The reformist programme, grouped amorphously towards the centre-right of Figure 27, instead stressed the importance of providing young people with specialised technological knowledge by which they might contribute to society, but also their obtaining a holistic understanding of their contribution to the productive liberal ‘good society’.

The reformist programme importantly stressed that students should be empowered to choose whether to go to university or not and what they should specialise in. Like many of his generation of liberal thinkers, for Lionel Robbins, an individual’s conscience was sacred. Individuals might have variable mental faculties and different capacities. Their contribution to society and the returns they might expect to be able to derive from society would vary accordingly. They should all, however, Robbins argued, be empowered to exercise subjective choice as economic agents and pursue their self-interest so that they might come to realise their potential within the good society. This included obtaining pecuniary and non-pecuniary returns from their experience of higher education. As part of their personal flourishing, students would attain specialisms by which they could participate in the societal division of labour and increase productivity. This philosophy was central to the formulation of the expansion of higher education recommended by the Robbins Committee as Chapter Three argued. Student demand, and students’ ‘wishes’, were of central importance.

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To secure student choice, it was necessary to limit total freedom and utilise the interventionalist tools of the state. The Robbins Committee saw that historical, social, and psychosocial barriers prevented full, free participation in higher education especially by women and those of lower classes. They therefore argued in favour of redistributing income through general taxation in order to remove these barriers and finance expansion. Loss of income and freedoms in contemporary society would be outweighed by the benefits to future society and the freedom and prosperity of its citizens. New and revived institutional forms and communities, such as those imagined and built at the New Universities as Chapter Six explored, would be required to educate more of these students from a wider variety of backgrounds. These spaces would counteract these psychosocial barriers and inculcate habits conducive to personal flourishing through the consumption of higher education. But as state investment removed these barriers over the timeframe of twenty years or less, the onus would fall to the individual student. Through their increased pecuniary returns from their contribution to society, students would come to repay the cost of their education through a system of loans. Doing so would minimise detriments to general freedoms while maximising freedom of the student to flourish as part of a self-reinforcing state-sponsored programme of their transformation into citizen-consumers.

By highlighting this specific understanding and importance of freedom of the student to higher education expansion, this thesis contributes to nuancing the history of the development of liberalism and neoliberalism in Britain over the twentieth century. Examining Robbins’ statesmanship in Britain and moving into higher education policy and pedagogy helps develop a sense of the afterlife of early neoliberalism. It indicates ways in which the individualist values of post-1947 neoliberalism interplayed with social democracy, and complicates the assumption that neoliberalism only began to inform policy from the 1970s. In the schema of Philip Mirowski, it indicates something of the relationship between esoteric intellectual neoliberalism of the Neoliberal

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6 Stedman Jones, ‘The Radicalization of Neoliberalism’.
7 Beddeleem, ‘Michael Polanyi and Early Neoliberalism’, pp. 2-3; see also the role of the IEA in: Kenny, ‘The Rise of ‘the Market’ in Political Thinking About Universities’. 
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Thought Collective, and exoteric or ‘really-existing’ neoliberalism of industry, states, workers, and education.\(^8\) It paints a complicated picture, showing how early neoliberalism, the growth of youth consumer culture, and the developments across the reformist left, aligned along similar individualist and consumerist values.\(^9\) The formative years of an increasingly large portion of a generation were spent in institutions which cultivated choice and exposed them to all manner of middle-class jobs, socialising and culture, and helped reinforce a consumerist higher education system.\(^10\) The concept of the student as consumer of education seems to have been aired as early as 1966 by students themselves (and almost certainly before) but further research would provide a clearer view.\(^11\)

It is still undoubtedly the case that the acceptance and implementation of the scale of post-war higher education expansion needs to be understood within the context of the developing liberal welfare state. But it is also the case that the particular way in which the Robbins Report articulated its programme of expansion rested on a complicated set of overlapping liberal assumptions.

Robbins’ idiosyncratic blend of democratic neoliberalism, and his stressing of ‘wish’ and choice, appears to have captured the zeitgeist of the sixties. As Holger Nehring put it, the long sixties have been identified as a period of both ‘extensive planning and a period of social and cultural permissiveness. But scholars have not yet connected these two themes within one analytical framework’.\(^12\) This thesis’ account of higher education expansionism goes some way towards

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\(^8\) Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste*, pp. 76-77.
\(^10\) MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, pp. 31-32.
\(^12\) Nehring, ‘Challenging the Myths of the Scottish Sixties’, p. 55.
reconciling these two superficially contradictory characteristics.\textsuperscript{13} It challenges too great a distinction between education for citizenship and education for consumerism.\textsuperscript{14}

7.1.2. A Reformed Liberal Education

To educate new consumer-citizens, Robbins and other expansionists imagined a reformed liberal education as a ‘broad’ education. Students would, through their time in higher education institutions, absorb a common culture. This common culture however, would not prepare students to utilise Hellenic and Hebrew learning as meritocratic leaders. Instead, the broad education would prepare students to use their specialism in service of the good society, to preserve freedom, and champion liberal capitalism.\textsuperscript{15} This had a strong economic (albeit not always financial) dimension. Absorbing this ‘creed of freedom’ as Robbins termed it, would perpetuate the conditions necessary for the cultivation of consumer-citizens.

Drawing on post-war fears of the misuse of technology by fascist and communist regimes, Robbins envisaged his students as only being fully educated citizens when they understood the importance of freedom and choice to the good society. This meant that students should appreciate that their specialised technological knowledge had the power to realise greater freedoms for all and also destroy them. As Chapters Five and Six showed, industrialists and university leaders such as Tom Cottrell also championed such an education. They imagined a broad education would instil in students an appreciation of how their specialist knowledge related to the aims of industry, particularly considerations of economics, cost efficiency, and the function of the profit motive as demonstrating societal need. New universities were eager to expand and confident of the capacity of their new teaching programmes and campus environments to mould these worldly students.

\textsuperscript{13} There is also an interesting resonance with Jim Tomlinson’s call to replace narratives of decline with narratives of deindustrialisation with this thesis’ interest in programmes for the provision of flexible labour: Tomlinson, ‘De-Industrialization Not Decline’.
\textsuperscript{14} It is therefore probably worth being cautious about dividing history into educational paradigms providing ‘culture’ or ‘skills’. See for example the division made between enculturating Robbins and skill-giving Dearing in: Barnett, ‘The Coming of the Global Village’, p. 299.
\textsuperscript{15} This extends Robert Troschitz’ identification of the importance of flexible skills and what became known as ‘lifelong learning’ long before the 1990s: Salter and Tapper, \textit{The State and Higher Education}; Troschitz, \textit{Higher Education and the Student}, p. 126.
Some of this reformist rhetoric of the universities, and that of the CVCP as Chapter Four explored, was likely an attempt by universities to rebrand their identity and ‘reproduce their own conditions of existence’ in the face of wider social and cultural shifts. But this does not mean that they were not also genuine in their vision of how university students might contribute to the good society. Understanding the development and diversification of liberal education begins to provide an answer to Shattock’s question as to whether the universities’ form in the sixties was ‘essentially backward- or forward-looking’. They redeployed the individualist values of the liberal education towards the needs of modern consumer society. The broadly educated graduate armed with the powers of the mind to tackle any challenge, the descendant of Macaulay’s gentleman from 1833 and the generalist amateur, would supplementally be equipped with highly specialised technical knowledge. Through their ingenuity and flexibility, they (even, occasionally, she) would deploy such knowledge responsibly for the good of liberal society towards the year 2000 and beyond.

Detailing these changes in emphasis and meaning in the universities’ reformed ‘liberal education’ has comprehensively challenged the impression that the university education in the post-war period rested on a static pedagogy. Rather than viewing any deviation from techno-nationalism as a suspect conservatism, this thesis has uncovered a widespread concern in industry and the New Universities for students armed with initiative and an appreciation of free liberal society. Any distinction between the civic skills of liberal education and vocational skills for participation in the labour market of liberal capitalism emerges as very tenuous.

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16 Troschitz, Higher Education and the Student, pp. 78-79.
17 Shattock, UGC and the Management of British Universities, p. 73.
18 Rothblatt, ‘How Elite?’. This thesis has challenged Rothblatt’s assertion that ‘Liberal individualism is in conflict with the character-forming legacy of liberal education for the simple reason that it is suspicious of any form of education that does not allow free play to the personality’; Rothblatt, ‘The Limbs of Osiris: Liberal Education in the English-Speaking World’, p. 40;
20 Steele, Taylor, and Haynes, British Labour and Higher Education, pp. 96-97. For the historical dimension of this perspective which is especially clear from the class-conscious research into the history of further education, see Simmons, ‘Civilising the Natives? Liberal Studies in Further Education Revisited’, pp. 88, 93;
7.1.3. Success or Failure?

How successful the promoters of an education in breadth in the sixties were in securing their aims is contestable. In the medium term the Robbins Report failed to secure its imagined programme for the expansion of universities. The reformist auxiliaries of the CVCP successfully generated considerable discussion with industrialists on the importance of breadth in education to British prosperity. But their challenge to the techno-nationalist national policy direction was lacklustre. Coming to accept the techno-nationalist arguments for the binary system may have contributed to the eventual retreat from breadth. Leaving ‘vocational’ studies to the polytechnics, the more conservative elements of the UGC and universities retreated into their traditional academic furrow. As funding fell, university student numbers shrunk as a proportion of higher education over the 1970s and 1980s and the polytechnics expanded dramatically. New courses in breadth faced considerable challenges, both in terms of practical feasibility, cost, and ideological opposition. Students do not seem to have appreciated the educational innovations. This disillusionment marks the endpoint of this thesis.

However, this endpoint requires re-evaluation. The idea of an abandonment of breadth is in fact overstated. The disruption of the 1970s was only an aberration of the ongoing trend of higher education expansion, and Whyte has shown growth was very sporadic across universities and polytechnics. An appreciation for general broad degrees and ‘graduateness’ appears to have been maintained by industry. The Dearing Report in 1997 even included a reference to providing ‘general powers of the mind’ which underpinned ‘other generic skills so valued by employers, and of

23 For another example, the Keele experiment, has been dated as ending in the 1970s. A three-year degree was agreed to in 1971, and the whole foundation year programme was subjected to a major review in 1973-74: Taylor, ‘Keele: Post-War Pioneer’, p. 48; Whyte, Redbrick, p. 268.
24 On the wider context of this disillusionment and declinism, see Whyte, Redbrick, pp. 275-77; and Scott, ‘Conclusion: Triumph and Retreat’, p. 191.
25 Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy; Whyte, Redbrick, p. 280.
importance throughout working life’; and Peter Scott speculated that the broad values of a liberal education still held appeal in 2016.\textsuperscript{26} Students are now, of course, ubiquitously referred to and act as consumers of education. This thesis contributes to the beginning of a more comprehensive account of how these values were maintained, reinvented, or rediscovered across the last seventy years.\textsuperscript{27}

Why then has the stagnation of liberal education been overstated? An answer can be found by recontextualising the histories and narratives of the development of higher education since 1945. University expansion and, for example, the role of the CVCP as Chapter Four explored, were celebrated up to around 1970. Today this period is remembered as a ‘golden age’ of higher education.\textsuperscript{28} Equality of opportunity for young people and the pursuit of truth were placed as central to higher education policy. There remained strong optimism in liberal education and breadth to secure the conditions of the free society up to the publication of the Robbins Report. As Chapter Four also identified, there was also a rival narrative critical of the universities. It viewed social democratic expansion of universities for all its good intentions as an apologia for complacent universities and an elitist liberal education, dominated by the figure of ‘Oxbridge’.\textsuperscript{29} The universities of the post-war era were, without question, ill-suited to receive state support to deliver the opportunities for especially women and underprivileged groups. In some instances, they were reluctant to change or respond to the demands of the economising central democratic state.\textsuperscript{30}

This understandable distrust of the universities is closely related to declinist narratives. Universities’ educational programmes were unconvincing for techno-nationalist lobbies, concerned with increasing the volume and quality of scientific and technological manpower and the cost-


\textsuperscript{27} A new line of inquiry is desperately needed; Michael Sanderson’s seminal work is almost as old as the ‘New’ Universities: Sanderson, \textit{The Universities and British Industry}.

\textsuperscript{28} Tight, \textit{Development of HE in the UK}, pp. 271-73; Blaxland, \textit{Swansea University}, pp. 200-02.

\textsuperscript{29} The thesis has avoided engaging with Oxford and Cambridge to be able to assess whether or not this idea was itself a caricature.

\textsuperscript{30} Salter and Tapper, \textit{The State and Higher Education}; Scott, ‘Conclusion: Triumph and Retreat’.
efficiency of public institutions. From this perspective, bourgeois, defensive universities blustering on the continued importance of the education of gentlemen and receiving increasingly large funds from public coffers to do minimal amounts of unproductive research and teaching certainly looked morally corrupt. Advocates of elite meritocratic university education such as F. R. Leavis and Kingsley Amis reinforced this reactionary image. Student discontent and the failures of universities to deliver on their promise of national rejuvenation after 1968 revived their narrative in the Black Papers. The result was a reinforcing of the wider declinist narratives of C. P. Snow and Martin Wiener which emphasised the failures and complacency of the universities and the need for further, more radical reform. Universities provided neither the necessary scientific or technological training Britain required, nor students with the necessary entrepreneurial spirit. It is little wonder those invested in extracting the most from higher education like A. H. Halsey became frustrated and joined the chorus lamenting the complacency of the universities.

Herein lies a classic rise-and-fall narrative of social democracy. Social democracy failed to provide the forms of governance necessary to steer the reluctant universities towards servicing society, and so was superseded by a form of governance that could. Once this was in place, this governance finally saw higher education provided for 'all those qualified by ability and attainment [...] and who wish to do so'. However, what this provides is a history of complaints of the

32 See Bruce Truscott’s caricature of ‘Professor Deadwood’, Whyte, Redbrick, pp. 200-03; and Morse, ‘English Civic Universities and the Myth of Decline’, p. 199.
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complacency of the universities. Following this history, the historiography has homogenised liberally educated students, denigrated them as anti-utilitarian, and has overshadowed other alternative ‘students’.

As this thesis has shown, there were prominent visions of the university student as champions of liberal consumer capitalism present in the 1960s in a range of discourses and institutions. Challenging the idea of the static liberal education opens the possibility of a fuller understanding of a wider spectrum of ‘liberal vocationalism’ across the spectrum of higher education institutions and its adoption by young people. Many policies and pedagogies of breadth such as Robbins’ calculation of student demand, or Warwick’s connections with industry, have retained lasting resonance in the twenty-first century.

7.2. FURTHER DIRECTIONS

It seems likely therefore that further nuance and diversity in the politics underlying pedagogy might be found across the history of higher education. The thesis has pointed towards several further directions of inquiry.

To retool a phrase from Edgerton, Science, Technology and the British Industrial ‘Decline’, p. 11.


The story of Warwick is particularly enlightening in retrospect. Rumours of its closure lingered through the 1970s (indeed Warwick lecturer Andrew Davies’ satire of the New Universities, Lowlands University, was shut down). But by 1986, Warwick was the largest of the New Universities and the ‘darling of the press’. Its ‘entrepreneurial path’ won the praises of Margaret Thatcher and later Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, and in 1994 it was the only New University to join the splinter group of the CVCP, the research-intensive universities’ club, the Russell Group (though York followed in 2012): Andrew Davies, A Very Peculiar Practice: The New Frontier (London: Methuen, 1988); Whyte, Redbrick, pp. 273-75; David Palfreyman, ‘The Warwick Way: A Case Study of Innovation and Entrepreneurship within a University Context’ (unpublished project report in partial requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration, University of Aston, 1987); David Palfreyman, ‘The Warwick Way: A Case Study of Entrepreneurship within a University Context’, Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 1 (1989); see also Halsey, Decline of Donnish Dominion, p. 121; Stevens, University to Uni: The Politics of Higher Education in England since 1944, pp. 54-55; Shattock, UGC and the Management of British Universities, p. 97. On the broader success of the New Universities up to the turn of the century, see: Rich, ‘The 1960s New Universities’.

The first would be to explore beyond English and Scottish institutions, and especially outside the de novo New Universities which are already the focus of greater historical attention. Further inquiry will need to consider the white-tile universities; the ex-CATs and the new Scottish universities; the universities of Northern Ireland; the polytechnics and their constituent regional, area, and local colleges; teacher training colleges and their successors; alternative ‘providers’ from the Open University to Buckingham and beyond; and even unsuccessful bids for universities. While some of these institutions have been the subject of historical attention since the turn of the century, particularly through the focus of William Whyte, there is scope for a significantly expanded field of inquiry. From the perspective of this thesis’ interest in reform of liberal education, the ‘academic drift’ of the CATs and polytechnics becomes something more than a bourgeois retreat from technical education. As Brian Salter and Ted Tapper put it, ‘the university experience was as much about the acquisition of social and cultural values as it was about acquiring a formal education’, which they seem to equate with formal training but strangely divorced this training from the cultural performance needed to participate in the labour market. Participation in the labour market is never culturally neutral. There is also scope for expansion beyond traditional patterns of learning to include exploration of part-time, distance, and adult learning. This also includes postgraduate learning and other early-career experiences. While prioritising the formal curriculum, this thesis has made some consideration of the hidden curriculum of higher education including residency and art.

41 See the interesting review article by Shattock which shows something of the possibility, Shattock, ‘The Transformation of the Civic Universities’; see also Scott, ‘British Universities 1968 - 1978’, pp. 42-43. On unsuccessful bids for universities, see the brief overview in Shattock, UGC and the Management of British Universities, pp. 77-79; or for the type of study possible see Heffernan and Jöns, “A Small Town of Character”.
42 Whyte, Redbrick.
43 The polytechnics themselves were never the technologically inclined caricatures of Crosland and his civil servants, but included art, design, and social studies, and their student bodies were predominantly middle class: ibid. p. 281. On academic drift see: Malcolm Tight, ‘Institutional Drift in Higher Education’, in Jung Cheol Shin and Pedro Teixeira (eds.), Encyclopaedia of International Higher Education Systems and Institutions (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2017), pp. 1-5; Mandler, Crisis of Meritocracy, pp. 83, 93; see also John MacInnes, ‘What Kind of ‘Ology’? Two Cultures and the success of British Sociology’, in Plamena Panayotova (ed.), The History of Sociology in Britain: New Research and Revaluation (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), pp. 389-414.
44 Salter and Tapper, The State and Higher Education, p. 184; see also Scott, The Crisis of the University.
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This could be expanded to include sport, travel, and social lives. Finally, while this thesis has attempted to pay particular attention to failures in the history of higher education, further capturing disappointments and discontinuities (which often leave only partial narratives) would provide important alternative accounts.

Further interesting insights would certainly arise from a wider Commonwealth or global context. The networks of university leaders that this thesis has followed had strong international dimensions that others including Miles Taylor and Tim Livesy have begun to explore. Robbins was, of course, embedded in an international network that spanned across Eastern Europe to North America and Southern Africa, and an advocate for an Atlantic federation. Eric Ashby, John Fulton, Jack Butterworth, and many others were members of the ‘Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas’ which played a large role in the foundation of British Commonwealth universities.

Linking to this thesis’ findings, Taylor’s investigation of these new post-war overseas universities indicates that these institutions were neo-colonial creations, and later nation-building institutions. They aimed to inculcate Western, liberal, and capitalist values in non-western populations. An equally interesting area of study would be the experiences of Commonwealth students who attended universities in Britain, those from Britain who went abroad, and the outcomes derived from these experiences.

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45 For an example of what this might look like, see Vernon, ‘A Healthy Society for Future Intellectuals: Developing Student Life at Civic Universities’.
46 For an example of what the history of failed higher education might look like, see: Tom Horwood, ‘The Rise and Fall of the Catholic University College, Kensington, 1868–1882’, The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 54 (2003); or: Tim Livsey, Nigeria’s University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development (Cambridge: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), who has highlighted that failure is always a matter of perspective and may not always be an appropriate label. For a methodological model, see: McCulloch, ‘Historical Insider Research in Education’.
49 Ibid.
50 A really effective global history of universities would require language skills that I do not possess. I can only apologise to Robbins’ ghost; as he wrote in 1968: ‘It is a depressing experience for a university teacher, [...] to be confronted with classes [...] whose members wilt with anxiety at resource to elementary algebra or geometry, or giggle at the futility of the recommendation if they are referred to any standard work in French or German’). Further difficulties which would have severely hampered such a project include travel restrictions.
A third direction of inquiry is to more closely consider the lived experience in university institutions, bureaucracies, and spaces. How did students, staff, and other members of higher education communities participate and navigate the governmentality of these spaces? The sources from this study, like that used by Harold and Pamela Silver and Robert Troschitz for example, are mainly samples from the discourse around the ‘idea’ of the student derived from written texts, authored mainly by institutional leaders. The student in these documents were of course an abstracted ideal. Similar ideas of the ‘student’ are found in plans for universities’ built environment, generally derived from higher levels of institutional decision-making. Other university histories, particularly on student protest, tend to emphasise the ‘high politics’ of student life rather than lived experience. To ascertain how far students and staff responded to university discourses and inhabited or navigated the idea of the ‘student’ requires moving beyond the sources used by these histories. Such study would contribute to a history which additionally acknowledges divergence of students and staff experiences in terms of disability, sexuality, gender, race, class, and intersectionality. This has begun in the work of Carol Dyhouse and Sam Blaxland, amongst others, who have made admirable and analytical use of student and staff testimony. There is, however, always the danger of nostalgia, particularly in oral histories, and in spaces so closely associated with imposed through the coronavirus pandemic, a lack of funding and opportunities to access the locations and sorts of primary sources at sufficient length (which all had an impact of the depth of research I could conduct at Stirling, for instance) and the inability of the independent research project of the PhD to facilitate the sort of especially fruitful scholarly collaboration of Utopian Universities, for one example. UoSUA/A/4/1/5, Lord Robbins, Inauguration Address, University of Stirling, 5 April 1968;

51 In the case of staff, this may involve revisiting studies from the time. For example, for Halsey’s attempt to assess this, see Trow and Halsey, ‘Attitudes to Expansion’; and his retrospective review Halsey, Decline of Donnish Dominion. As I have suggested attempting to create a general overview of university tutors may have inadvertently produced an overly homogenised view of the degree of support for reform and expansion.


53 Hoefferle, British Student Activism in the Long Sixties. For an exception see Burkett, ‘Introduction: Universities and Students in Twentieth-Century Britain and Ireland’.


55 Blaxland, ‘Re-Thinking Student Radicalism’; Blaxland, Swansea University: Campus and Community in a Post-War World, 1945-2020; Dyhouse, Students: A Gendered History; Davis, ‘Silent Minority?’.
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people’s formative years. Fully responding to Gary McCulloch’s and Tom Woodin’s call for a social history of learners and learning in higher education will require the use of radically new archives. Studies at a departmental or pedagogic level (written from learning materials, exam papers, notes, textbooks and annotations, and accounting for the experiences of secretaries, administrators, and office spaces) are scarce. A history and politics of signature pedagogies beckons. Investigating the archives of student unions and student societies (media, films, art, performance, and soon, social media), constituted of haphazardly collected and transient ephemera consumed and recycled, will require new approaches. Inventive uses of sources, such as Blaxland’s use of average weekly campus newspaper sales to approximate political views on campus, or the work of Mathew Cheeseman, demonstrate the breadth of possibilities. Whyte’s forthcoming work on the material culture of universities promises fascinating new insights. As the field of post-war higher education develops it will be important to continue to explore learning experiences alongside pedagogy and institutional strategies, and failures as well as successes.


57 McCulloch and Woodin, ‘Towards a Social History of Learners and Learning’; see also Anderson, *Universities and Elites in Britain since 1800*, p. 42. Other approaches might include revisiting past studies such as the research of the Hale Committee (1964): see the discussion in Tight, *Development of HE in the UK*, pp. 212-20.

58 For example, tutors at the Leeds Extra-Mural department ‘wrote detailed reports on the profess of their tutorial classes [...] which exist in abundance in the department’s archives – a record of approaches, successes and failures that is invaluable for the historian (and which one wishes were paralleled for internal university faculties’: see the brilliant Searby, Rule, and Malcolmson, ‘Edward Thompson as a teacher’, especially p. 7; Pieter Dhondt, ‘University History as Part of the History of Education’, in Pieter Dhondt (ed.), *University Jubilees and University History Writing: A Challenging Relationship* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Rothblatt, ‘The Writing of University History at the End of Another Century’, p. 160; see an exception in the research of Robbin Simmons, particularly Simmons, ‘It Wasn’t the Wilt Experience’ (at Least for Some’); a rough start might be found in Tight, *Development of HE in the UK*, pp. 155-89. This history would also need to connect with histories of disciplines; pp. 193-199. Biography of academics might provide something of an initial framework.

59 With thanks to Pierre Botcherby, Kathryn Woods, and Lauren Sleight for discussion of these sources and challenges.

60 Blaxland, *Swansea University*, p. 231; and the probably overly pessimistic Cheeseman, ‘On Going Out and the Experience of Students’; though for something of an antidote see the conclusion of: Cheeseman ‘The Pleasures of Being a Student at the University of Sheffield’.

61 See, for example, Whyte’s use of a roll of film showing degree day precession at the University of Birmingham, 1901 (preserved entirely by chance) and his discussion of attitudes to women’s casual sex in: Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 293.
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The final theme recurring across this thesis is the expansion of the orientation and alignment of the internal conscience of the student towards societal ends. Higher education expansion retained something of the Weberian understanding of Puritan values and rested on wider set of morals and values shared across the population. It strengthened the importance of interiority of conscience and the subjectivity of what was a ‘good’ choice. There was an expectation that the return on investment from these good choices to correspond to social goods. Universities sustained a proselytising vigour and continued to move away from the idea of an elite clergy or clerisy and towards a priesthood of all believers. There is the possibility of an interesting reappraisal of the relationship between universities, industry and their ethical and societal missions.

7.3. POLICY AND PEDAGOGY, PAST AND PRESENT

In her *Lament for Economics* (1938), Barbara Wootton accused Robbins of shearing economics of its ethical foundations. It is similarly clear that the neoliberalism that contributed to higher education expansion of the long sixties has today been shorn of its concern for individual initiative, human flourishing, and social good. Michael Freedeen, in comments which ring true of the development of...
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Higher education today, has decried the ‘few vestiges of an ethical mission towards a fair society among neoliberals’, and the lack of ‘commitment to engage the engines of progress in the question for human self-improvement’. While the ‘safeguarding of individual space and liberation from tyranny is retained’, it is ‘effectively redirected towards free competition among powerful and vastly unequal economic players’. Higher education, particularly in Britain, currently sits in a severe depression. As one commentator noted, the recent boom in university history writing is implicitly part of a discussion addressing ‘the current crisis of the university, to offer a counterweight in the context of neo-liberalism, increasing commodification and the almost exclusive focus on research’.

In 2021, the current policy environment provides a chance to explore the consequences of these underlying issues in a very immediate way. Hanging over British universities, beyond the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, is the ongoing government strategy to further instrumentalise higher education following the Augar Review. It is the government’s aim to reduce the relative attraction of ‘low value’ education without clear market functions and which does not achieve ‘industrial strategy priorities’ to provide people with skills for ‘a fulfilling working life’. In practice, high value has meant STEM; low value meant especially arts and humanities. This narrow measurement of social contribution in terms of financial returns to private companies allied with a resurgent techno-nationalism threatens the core importance of subjectivity by centrally determining what is best for students to study.

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68 This is a shift from earlier in the century: see the impression in Anderson, British Universities Past and Present, p. 197; and Mandler, ‘Educating the Nation: IV. Subject Choice’, p. 12; though as we have seen suspicions of manpower planning and concern for the subjectivity accommodated through the market were prevalent before even Robbins. On the place of the Teaching Excellence Framework in this, see Troschitz, Higher Education and the Student, pp. 147-48; see also Jack Grove, ‘PM to Lead Council Setting 'Strategic Direction' for UK Science’ (Times Higher Education, 21 June 2021).
provide students with a higher rate of return than any other higher education.\(^69\) Government policy has, in the words of one vice-chancellor, demonstrated a ‘lack of understanding for how arts and humanities degrees operate’. Arts are universally acknowledged by employers to provide a range of transferable skills to prepare students for the so-called ‘Grand Challenges’ of the twenty-first century: technological change, automation, climate change, and the trials of the post-pandemic world.\(^70\) Elsewhere, the (private) London Interdisciplinary School, accepting its first students at the end of 2021, is the most visible promoter of ‘novel’ interdisciplinary liberal arts and sciences courses.\(^71\) In many instances the marketing materials promoting these courses is indistinguishable from the speeches of figures like Tom Cottrell. The value of this resurgence of liberal education, and indeed of university education as a whole, as one recent handbook put it, is in the development of:

Communication, social intelligence, and emotional intelligence [...] skills that are increasingly valuable, under-appreciated, and often strongest among those traditionally disadvantaged in the labour market. Plus, robots can’t do them.\(^72\)

The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) expects increasing student demand with growth in the student-aged population combined with rising attainment, which would require around 350,000 extra higher education places by 2035. It concluded by making a new call stressing the importance

that ‘all those who wish to enter higher education are able to do so’. Some have called for new participation rates of up to 70 percent, while at the same time others warn of spiralling public expenditure. As Nick Hillman put it, echoing the Robbins Report, to secure these places or indeed maintain the expansion of higher education there is a need to make clear again ‘why should taxpayers’ contributions pay for more higher education instead of paying for A, B or C instead?’

One theme that was often very central to the debates examined in this study that now stands out as being of less relevance, and possibly antiquated, is that of residence and community. As Harold Silver, writing in 2004, pointed out, while student accommodation had a high profile in Robbins, there was no reference the subject in Dearing. Students, Silver continued, were ‘being encouraged to see accommodation as simply somewhere to live’. A few years later, one commentator disparaged the practice of British universities leaving Wednesday afternoons ‘free of teaching, to allow for the Arnoldian bonding exercise of team games’. However, an HEPI report in 2018, in language that in the context of this thesis sounds uncannily familiar, argued that students not living away from home ‘do not always have such rounded and fulfilling experiences’ or benefit as much from their education.

In a subsequent report in 2019 Whyte urged a debate about the purpose of student residence. ‘It was once thought that residence would be an education in itself,'

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76 This is probably more of a lingering reaction against the prescriptive forms of social engineering evident in Chapter Six, versus the less overt but nevertheless undoubtably a form of social engineering still evidence in the concern for university experience today.
77 Silver, ‘Residence’ and ‘Accommodation’ in Higher Education’, pp. 130-31; see also Tight, Development of HE in the UK, pp. 221-25.
creating community and offering opportunities to enculturate undergraduates, affecting them even more effectively than any formal teaching', he mused. 'Do we still believe this? I suspect not.'

Whyte’s slight doubt is telling: new pedagogic interest in the importance of communities, co-production, and dialogues to learning outcomes must initiate a re-evaluation of the experience of living and learning at universities. The coronavirus pandemic has brought the importance of physical space to learning to the fore, intensified by rent strikes and calls by students for refunds for a lack of in-person learning. Enormous emphasis is now placed on student experience, wellbeing (which, as Sarah Crook has begun to highlight, is a recolouring of historical concerns since the early 1900s), and increasingly on tackling racial discrimination and sexual violence on campuses.

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consideration of university bureaucratic and physical spaces and their consequences for living and learning is of immediate importance to the future of higher education.

This thesis has shown how higher education has long been grappling with questions of how to best respond to student demand and societal needs whilst maintaining their capacity to facilitate human flourishing.\textsuperscript{84} Today, higher education once again faces criticism of its supposed complacency. This time, can institutions mount an effective challenge? Or are the inequalities that exert power through actually-existing neoliberal discourses currently in command of the state too entrenched?\textsuperscript{85} There are signs of the beginning of an informed, critical engagement in university practice and policy debates of how higher education contributes to the practical realisation of the good society.\textsuperscript{86} The history of universities can contribute to this discourse.\textsuperscript{87} We should consider the successes and failures of higher education past and present to a greater degree than hitherto attempted. By accounting for the societal challenges they attempted to face, we might provide useful guidance in forming the pattern and pedagogy of higher education in the future.\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{86} David Cannadine, ‘Open letter to students approaching graduation,’ The British Academy (23 June 2021) <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/open-letter-to-students-approaching-graduation/> [Accessed 7 July 2021].
\textsuperscript{88} This is, as Miller and Rose identity, to become complicit in the construction of regimes of governmentality; there is, however, no possibility of escape from these regimes whilst society depends on human interrelationships. Energy instead should be directed towards reform, redirection, and creative navigation. Miller and Rose, ‘Governing Economic Life’, p. 4.
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