13. Cultural contributions of higher education

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INTRODUCTION

The study of cultural contributions of higher education is important for a variety of reasons. The first one is quite evident. As far as we know there is no comprehensive study analysing the role of higher education and higher education institutions (HEIs) as cultural contributors in their respective societies or internationally. However, there are a number of studies focusing on separate cultural activities related to higher education (see below). The second reason is the increasingly dominant role economic perspective has reached in defining higher education and research during the last decades. HEIs have been seen mainly as economic entities and actors that should promote innovations, strengthen national economies and act as engines of regional development. Concerning students, higher education has been defined as an economic investment that should profit students as consumers with promising career prospects and high income (see Chapter 9 in this book).

While there is nothing wrong with defining HEIs also as economic actors, the problem with this myopic, neo-liberally inspired focus is the neglect of other important functions HEIs have internationally and in their respective societies. Especially neglected and overlooked aspects are the cultural roles played by higher education and HEIs. Therefore, this chapter aims to open a fresh perspective to higher education by analysing the variety of cultural contributions that higher education and HEIs have.

Our study is based on both an analysis of web pages of HEIs, analyses of cultural artefacts related to higher education and on critical reading of research literature.

We acknowledge that HEIs themselves are cultural entities, but in this study we do not pay attention to disciplinary cultures, organizational cultures, organizational identities or student cultures because we focus on cultural relationships between higher education and society (on cultural aspects see, e.g., Becher & Trowler, 2001; Silver, 2003; Stensaker, 2015; Trow, 1960; Välimaa, 1998; Välimaa & Ylijoki, 2008).

We will use the concept of higher education to refer to higher education as a social institution responsible for the search of truth (or research), educating and socializing new generations into societies, teaching and learning. The concept of HEI, often a university or a college, in turn, refers to organizations responsible for higher education activities (Välimaa, 2019).

We will begin our study with problematizing the concept of culture followed by the analysis of the web pages of HEIs describing the variety of their cultural dimensions and activities. We continue by analysing cultural contributions of HEIs to societies and to cultural industries, cinema, TV and literature. We conclude our study by discussing the intersections between culture, politics and universities.

ON CULTURE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Culture is a difficult topic to study because it is both *a social phenomenon* shared by all, and *an intellectual device* aiming to understand and explain human behaviour. *As a social phenomenon* culture can be understood as something created by artists whether they are producing cultural artefacts in theatre, opera, classical music, ballet or in movies, rock and pop music, TV shows, street fashion and so forth. In a broader view, culture is a social phenomenon that is shared by all human beings. We live amongst cultural traditions and in cultural environments that have been developing over time resulting in values, norms, cultural imageries, beliefs and belief systems that, in turn, influence the ways people see and define themselves and their relationships with others (Geertz, 1973). Higher education is especially important in this regard because universities and other HEIs are cultural institutions that can be found in every organized society (Välimaa, 2019). Universities with their academic activities of research, teaching and studying are integral parts of societies' cultural heritage and everyday experience through the cultural artefacts they produce: scholarship and innovations, academic and popular publications, degrees, symbols and academic ceremonies. Furthermore, a common-sense understanding of culture often refers to buildings dedicated to cultivating cultural artefacts in art museums, art exhibitions, theatres, music halls, operas and ballet halls, or in cinemas, online platforms, libraries, bookstores and so forth. Higher education has important roles to play in these regards as well.

However*, as an intellectual device* the concept of culture has its own tradition starting with the Latin concept *cultura* (cultivation of different things) and more precisely *agricultura*, agriculture. Over time culture has been used as an intellectual device to describe, explain and understand different ways of life and shared understandings of values, norms, beliefs and habits shared by (more precisely defined) groups of people – especially in the humanist tradition of Western science (Toulmin, 1992). According to Clifford Geertz (1973), culture consists of a 'network of meanings'. Following this tradition Tierney and Rhoads (1993, p. 17) stated that culture consists of 'webs of significance where people simultaneously create and exist within culture'. We are not only born in cultures, but we also interpret and have potential to change our cultures (see also Harré, 1983).

We use the concept of cultural artefacts following the definition of Bartlett (2005) who defines them as 'objects, symbols, narratives, or images inscribed by the collective attribution of meaning. Examples of cultural artefacts include the Cinderella story, the crucifix adopted by many Catholic faithful, the image of the rainbow, or labels like "gifted and talented" or "slow reader" in classrooms' (Bartlett, 2005, p. 3). In university contexts, these include, for example, the widely adopted and universally known graduation caps, which have also been modified to reflect specific identities (Syeed, 2021). Similarly, cultural artefacts include the gowns donned by the members of the old British universities such as Oxford and Cambridge (Baker, 1986); adopted in formal occasions such as doctoral defence ceremonies or graduation ceremonies also in many universities around the world. In the Finnish context, such cultural artefacts include the doctoral hats and swords worn in the university conferment ceremonies (Cowan, 2003); or the nearly ubiquitous colourful student association overalls (Vuorikoski, 2020). These symbols and rituals also contribute to the creation of particular cultural imagery and aesthetic subcultures outside the university (Bateman, 2020).

In this study we will focus on cultural artefacts produced in, around or about higher education in different cultural media because higher education has been both an object in cultural artefacts, a producer of cultural artefacts and promoter of local, national and global cultures and cultural imaginaries.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

To gain a comprehensive picture and understanding about the different kinds of cultural dimensions and activities in universities, we looked at the websites of 120 universities located in capital cities of 77 countries or autonomous regions from all continents. The universities are listed in Appendix 1. The data

collection was exploratory and not aimed at producing countable instances of different kinds of cultural institutions and activities. The aim was to capture a large variation of different kinds of cultural formations.

The Source Data Used

We used the English websites of the universities, and, failing that, Google Translate was made use of to understand the content. Occasionally the Wikipedia descriptions of the universities were searched to identify cultural institutions or activities in case the university did not have an English language website. If the university websites were not very informative, Google searches such as 'University name AND museum' or 'University name AND culture' were used. The cultural activities of the student organizations were also included, using searches 'University name AND student organization'. Occasionally Google Maps searches were used to identify cultural institutions on university campuses. Some of the searched items were predetermined: for example, we chose to look for libraries and museums, as well as associations engaged with cultural activities such as music or drama. Other activities were discovered based on generic searches.

Both the existence of different activities and their numbers are dependent on what each university chooses to highlight on their website, among which there is great variation. The English language websites are typically more limited in terms of content than national language websites. Some universities choose to give a specific number to the libraries or museums they host, while others merely mention hosting 'many' or 'several' such institutions. In the absence of such figures, we have chosen to operationalize all those expressions with the number 2. Due to the challenges of data collection, the prevalence of different kinds of activities should be treated as highly cursory. While the large number of certain cultural institutions in some cases may be relatively close to reality, such as the very large number of libraries, it is likely that the numbers of some other form of cultural institutions or activities – say those with less than ten occurrences – are significantly underestimated in our data.

Analysis of the Data

We analysed the data in order to see how common each of the activities were in an international perspective and created the following three broad categories of cultural contributions: (1) HEIs maintaining cultural infrastructure; (2) HEIs supporting external cultural activities and outreach; (3) HEIs producing culture through internal cultural groups (Table 13.1).

The first category covers a variety of historical and modern buildings and institutions that may hold significance for cultural heritage: historical

buildings, churches or botanical gardens; and places of cultural activity, such as cultural centres, libraries and bookstores. The cultural dimensions in this category may be tangible, such as buildings or gardens, but also intangible, such as knowledge about the past generations. This category was the most numerous of the three, and libraries alone make up almost two-thirds of the typical formations in this category.

The second category comprises number of cultural activities, which cater for the larger society around universities: various exhibitions, festivals or concerts, as well as partnerships with museums not maintained by the university itself. This category also describes activities that are part of cultural industry such as radio, TV and record labels.

In contrast with the first two categories, the third category caters primarily for the community at the university. It pertains to the different cultural activities that the university staff and especially students engage in; and may be organized by the university or the (independent) student union. These include a large variety of music, theatre and dance groups; debate societies or literature clubs. It is, however, difficult to know whether a given club or group primarily caters for an internal or external audience, and therefore there may be some overlap between categories two and three. Even though overlaps between categories are a disturbing matter in an academic study, in real life, however, these overlaps are not a problem because many of the cultural contributions of HEIs do overlap each other.

While the challenges of the data collection caused mainly by the incommensurability of university websites result in imprecise numbers of cultural contributions, the specific number of a given cultural formation is not important to our argument. The aim of this search was to map the variation of different activities rather than calculate them precisely. What is important is that all HEIs host some cultural infrastructure or institutions, and engage in some cultural activities regardless of whether they are located in the Global North (Europe, North America) or Global South (Kenya, Lesotho, Colombia); or in any specific continent or country. Our data comprises universities primarily located in capital cities of the countries, but anecdotal evidence suggests that universities in peripheral areas have a similar, or even stronger, role in fostering national and regional cultures. All HEIs take the responsibility for many cultural activities either by supporting both local communities and national cultures or by maintaining cultural institutions that promote cultural activities, which are offered both for academic and general audiences.

Table 13.1   *Cultural activities of world universities (n=120)*

Category of cultural institutions	Number of activities mentioned
1. HEIs maintaining cultural infrastructure	**1129**
Libraries	720
Museums and galleries	146
Religious places, churches and groups	73
Archives, collections and documentation centres	55
Centres of arts and sciences, cultures, medieval studies, international centres, language centres, observatories	42
Historical campus/historical buildings	40
Bookstores, bazaars and cafes	37
Botanical and historical gardens	9
Concert halls, ballrooms and dancehalls	7
2. HEIs supporting external cultural activities and outreach	**395**
Culture, art, music, theatre events, exhibitions, competitions, festivals, public forums, open stages	124
Museum partners	102
Symphony/philharmonic orchestra, concerts	66
Magazines, newspapers, press, radio, TV, record labels	58
Summer schools, master classes, workshops and projects in music/art/literature)	45
3. HEIs producing culture through internal cultural groups	**1016**
Music/dance/folk/choir groups, dance studios	373
Student organizations, union and clubs	222
Culture clubs/communities/workshop	196
Opera/drama/ballet, theatre, magic, circus group	176
Film group/cinema, photography society	25
Literature, poetry group	7
Food organization/group	6
Painting and cartoons groups, drawing hall/drawing group	6
Debate, philosophy, history, archaeology clubs	5

Source: Authors.

Analysing Common Characteristics and the Variety of Cultural Contributions

After having illustrated above cultural contributions of HEIs, we continue with a qualitative, a more nuanced analysis on the variation and contents of cultural contributions of higher education. We begin by reflecting on the influence of HEIs on local, regional and national cultures.

Supporting infrastructure: university museums, libraries, buildings and gardens

Academic research has paid attention to the role HEIs have in the conservation of national cultural heritage with the help of university museums and art galleries (Willumson, 2000; Young, 2000), libraries and bookstores, or botanical gardens (Byers, 1999; Corner, 2005), which can act as specific bridges between the university, the city and the community as places of communication and transfer of knowledge. Programmes of social interaction, recreation, research and ecology may be inherent in botanical gardens that may contribute both to education and to improving the quality of life.

University libraries may have many functions in addition to their traditional academic one. Dowding (2014) analyses the importance of the library of the University of Kazakhstan to the national culture through digitized information about the Kazakhstan cultural heritage. That can have a significant impact on creating sustainable methods for preserving cultural heritage on a national scale. A library created by Metropolitan State University and city community has hosted many partnership projects between the university and the city, educating citizens about voting and elections, financial and computer literacy, teaching children to read independently, etc. (see Rolloff, 2013).

University museums, libraries and gardens may play a dual role in a society. They can be oriented inwards in preserving the memory of the university and maintaining university archives that focus on the university's history. University of Cambridge Museums illustrate this function, found in most universities.

Also, universities' traditional buildings may be culturally and historically significant monuments representing continuity and different cultural traditions layered over time in built environments (Coulson et al., 2015; Edwards, 2014), playing an important role in regional and national traditions, and cultural imaginaries. The museums maintained by universities, like the Viking Ship Museum within the University of Oslo (2022), showcase how universities may significantly contribute to the national culture. Traditional old universities like Oxford, Cambridge, Tübingen and Heidelberg, but also newer ones like the 160-year-old University of Jyväskylä in Finland have become tourist sites because of their architectural and historical importance. University

buildings and campuses may also have an economic contribution, in the case where a university provides accommodation services for tourists on campus (Connell, 1996). The universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the UK, the campus of Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in Mexico City, and traditional American college campuses illustrate the influence these university environments have in national and global imaginaries and how they are continuously utilized in cultural industries, especially in films.

A typical feature of the old European universities is their location in the middle of cities. This is especially the case with medieval universities in Southern Europe. It has led to the close relationship of university professors and students with the inhabitants of their cities, thus shaping both universities and cities socially and culturally (Välimaa, 2019). Universities being social institutions in cities have also had political and economic impact on the life and development of cities and their regions. This multiple interaction itself is one of the cultural consequences of HEIs.

Students supporting urban cultures

According to Chatterton (2000), students have a role in shaping cultural and entertainment spaces in urban centres. The concentration of students in certain areas of cities supports the livelihood of many local cultural enterprises and events. Students as a mini-community are a significant part of the population in many large cities, which influences popular culture, has an impact on the city centres and helps to create special cultural spaces.

However, students are not a unified group but characterized by difference (Klemenčič, 2014) and, therefore, as consumers they have different ways of contributing to culture. Closed elite clubs, ethnic cafes, street art, as well as local monuments, all can be signs of different student communities contributing to urban culture.

Higher education institutions advancing and producing cultural activities

Organizing scientific festivals and events also belongs to cultural contributions of HEIs. Jensen and Buckley's (2014) analysis of the Cambridge Science Festival showed that the key motivation for citizens visiting the festival was the opportunity to get involved in science in an inspiring way. Participants emphasized the interactivity of the science festival, opportunities for social interaction and learning, as well as access to researchers as a unique combination that is not available in other circumstances. The contribution of a university to a city's culture helps to pay attention to issues such as environmental sustainability, health and cultural heritage development (Goddard & Vallance, 2013). Bridge conferences, in turn, show how mathematics, science and art can be combined in a popular and academic way (Fenyvesi, 2016). European

Researchers' Night, in turn, showcases how university research actually becomes a cultural event and contribution (see, e.g., Mazzitelli et al., 2019; Roche et al., 2017). It is something that is both a European-wide phenomenon and a local event. In 2019, the event was organized in 433 cities in 27 countries across Europe and beyond.

These kind of popular activities help to spread knowledge about scientific reasoning and contribute to a more scientific culture among people (Jensen & Buckley, 2014). The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that scientific knowledge is the best medicine against deadly diseases.

In some cases, universities' cultural activities go beyond the boundaries of the university and become a recognized event or format. Long-running TV shows, such as the British *University Challenge* and the American radio and TV show *College Bowl*, are famous examples of this interaction with the general public from their heyday in the 1950s–1960s. According to Hartley:

> [A]udiences persistently liked know-it-alls, whether highbrow, as featured on *University Challenge* or *Mastermind*, or the other sort, on shows such as *Double Your Money* or *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*? It may even be said that this light-hearted entertainment softened up the general public for the 'knowledge economy' by showing it as a competitive advantage. (Hartley, 2005, p. 102)

In Russia, since the Soviet times there has been a popular humorous competition called 'KVN', an abbreviation that stands for the 'Club of the Funny and Inventive People'. Here, teams of university students perform their sketches, often musical ones, and give funny answers to questions of a jury. There are several leagues from a level of university department to a level of the national TV show (Semenenko, 2018). Another example is 'Total dictation', a mass educational campaign in Russia and abroad, where thousands of participants write dictations according to an original text of a contemporary Russian-speaking author every year. That was born as an initiative of the student association at the Department of Humanities in Novosibirsk State University (2022), but no longer is organized by the university.

This category also refers to the research of cultural traditions and artefacts and the education of students to work in cultural industries by training actors, directors and dramatists in drama studios, painters and sculptors in art academies, musicians in music academies and other culture professionals. Students and graduates as consumers of cultural industries also belong to this category. However, both of these latter categories are far too big to analyse them in any reliable and comparable way. It should suffice to say that the training dimension of higher education gives a very important support for all cultural industries and activities even though it is very difficult to measure precisely

the numbers of trained cultural industry producers or students with cultural aspirations.

Higher Education Contributing to Cultural Industries

The different dimensions of the cultural industry need to be analysed separately since it is the most numerous, most visible and most popular of all cultural contributions of higher education, given its international media coverage.

University in cultural imageries: cinema, TV and literature

Analysing the representations of colleges and universities in popular culture has in itself become a topic in curriculum in HEIs. For example, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development in New York University hosted a special course on 'Higher Education and the Engaged Imagination: Representations of Colleges and Universities'. The main question of the syllabus was 'How do we know what we know about higher education?' This important question illustrates the fact that cultural imageries of higher education not only reflect on but also shape popular understandings of universities, colleges, professors and students.

For this reason, we should reflect on what kind of representations of and on higher education can be found in literature, cinema and TV. We suggest that four main aspects of utilizing higher education in storytelling either in cinema or in literature can be identified: (a) college-life movies and campus novels; (b) university/college is used as a context or a canvas in the story; (c) stories focusing on personal growth of students; (d) the relationship of universities/colleges with society. Cultural artefacts and cultural imageries related to higher education have been utilized in a variety of ways in cultural industries. We are conscious that in most cases storytelling utilizes more than one aspect. We provide some typical examples on each of the aspects in order to illustrate how higher education has contributed to cultural industries.

College-life movies and campus novels

According to Umphlett (1984) college-life movies are a popular genre that started as early as in 1915 with the film *The College Widow* and continued with Harold Loyd's *The Freshmen* (in 1925) and many others over the decades. This genre focuses on student life in (American) colleges, a period of life that is important for the students' socialization into American society. This genre was continued by the comedy *Animal House* (1978), which took a critical look at the process of socialization by focusing on troublemaking fraternity members who challenged the authority of the dean of the fictional Faber College. Furthermore, colleges have also been depicted as spaces of friend-

ships, common living, common projects and development like in the sitcom *Community* (2009–2015) or in the films like *The Social Network* (2010).

Life in college or university can also be presented as a sybaritic experience of mindless parties and sexual freedom like in *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002) and its sequels, or *EuroTrip* (2004). In this kind of film, colleges and universities provide a suitable context in which young people can fight against authorities or try to find a meaning in their life.

The genre of campus novel, or academic novel, emerged in the US during the 1950s. A typical feature of this genre is that main action takes place in and around the campus of a university or college. The influence of campus novels can affect the formation of students' attitudes towards universities and the educational process. Quite often, these texts had a positive effect of motivating students to study and improve their academic performance, as well as introducing potential applicants to student life.

University/college as a context or a canvas in the story
Some of the early examples of utilizing cultural imageries of higher education can be identified in the 1930s with films like *Horse Feathers* (1932) by the Marx brothers taking place and making fun in the fictional Huxley College. Another example is *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), an American screwball comedy with Cary Grant playing Professor David Huxley. Both these films and many others such as *Absent Minded Professor* (1961) and its later version *Nutty Professor* (1996), draw from the cultural stereotype of professors as men who are brilliant in science, yet absent-minded and unpractical when it comes to understanding 'real life' or the opposite sex.

Universities have a central role in books like *Small World: An Academic Romance* by David Lodge (1984) which was the last book of his Campus Trilogy and *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh (1945) which also was developed in a TV serial by Granada Television in 1981 and a film by Julian Jarrold in 2008 (Scott, 2004). John Williams' *Stoner* (1965) tells the story of psychological crises at university, changing social norms, the destruction of the former hierarchies and problems of university professors. J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) shows a university professor who is fired after having an affair with his student. In all these stories the dynamics of academic life in universities help to describe crises of men in their relationships with colleagues, friends and the opposite sex.

The University of Oxford is the context for detective drama TV series *Endeavour* (2012–), based on a series of novels written by Colin Dexter, a senior assistant secretary at Oxford University. This TV series utilizes the beautiful campus scenery and describes the conflicts between the university and the city. The university context helps focusing on fundamental problems

of society – issues of gender, maturation and development, social justice, (academic) rivalry and generational conflicts.

Another aspect of the cultural contribution of higher education is a shared visual culture of old elite universities with their graduation ceremonies (including university robes and tossing academic caps into the air), antique environment and other cultural artefacts. These cultural artefacts attached to elite universities have influenced the aesthetics of dark and light academia subcultures (see e.g. Dark Academia, 2022) created and consumed in popular culture.

Personal growth of students

Stories about students and professors, in turn, quite often focus on finding one's way in life or students' intellectual and mental growth. Examples of this genre include *Good Will Hunting* (1997), a story of a talented but poor student of mathematics, or *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) describing students' mental change, set in a 1950s American single sex liberal arts college. The novel *Marriage Plot* (2011) by Jeffrey Eugenides develops the idea of studies influencing individual worldview and values. The novel's three main characters take literature, biology and theology as their majors in university and build their life trajectories guided by their chosen disciplines. Self-formation during university studies is also one of the main themes of Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* (1992).

The relationship of universities/colleges with society

Using higher education as a context, the stories can reflect on the issues of social justice, protests and revolutions that illustrate the ideas of higher education and student life as a transforming, revolutionary and nonconforming experience (see Scott, 2004). These issues have been addressed in films like *Zabriskie Point* (1970) by Michelangelo Antonioni, *The Dreamers* (2003) by Bernardo Bertolucci or *Something in the Air* (2012) by Olivier Assayas. The romantic comedy *Legally Blonde* (2001) raises questions about social classes and women's position at an elite American university.

The plot of the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* (2007–2019) focuses on the prejudices surrounding the academic world (McIntosh, 2014), making the audience think about how they commensurate with the real world. One of the main characters explained his educational choice by the fact that the University of Cambridge looked like Hogwarts, the magical school from the Harry Potter novels by J.K. Rowling which shows how fiction may utilize existing cultural artefacts and the power of cultural imageries in the cultural industry.

The Big Bang Theory, as well as the novel *Possession* by Antonia Byatt (1990) speak of the joy of scientific exploration. The novel (2003) and film *The Da Vinci Code* (2006) by Dan Brown utilize a popular image of university

professors as skilful problem-solvers in socially significant cases. The Indiana Jones movies introduce a professor of archaeology who is not afraid of good adventures and practical challenges. The expertise of the university coupled with criticism of its closeness and comicality can be found in the novels *Making History* by Stephen Fry (1996) and *The Rebel Angels* (The Cornish Trilogy, 1981–1988) by Robertson Davies. Herman Hesse's intellectual novel *The Glass Bead Game* (1943) portrays academic world in a metaphorical way.

University symbols and rituals, initiation traditions, the atmosphere of old libraries and the value of some 'secret' knowledge have provided rich material for constructing imaginary universities in a number of stories. Among them Philip Pullman's trilogy His Dark Materials (1995–2000) and TV series (2019), Deborah Harkness's All Souls Trilogy (2011) and TV series (2018), and, of course, the Harry Potter books by J.K. Rowling (1997–2007) utilizing cultural artefacts of Oxbridge and Eton. These stories have the notion of mystical knowledge related to educational establishments that has the capacity to shake the foundations of society.

Why have universities and colleges been such an interesting and even inspiring environment for a great number of stories in and on and around higher education? From the perspective of dramatic setting, higher education offers a context for reflecting on intellectual and mental growth and change of young people preparing for adulthood and socializing into society. It also offers an environment where different people (young students vs. old scholars or professors) and different interests (making a career, defending one's truth) and genders, may easily be represented as being in conflict with each other. University life is also a context where it is natural to have important and interesting conversations on theoretical and personal challenges. They also are places and social spaces where new things can be invented, explored and developed. From a dramatic perspective it is tempting to challenge the public image of 'pure academics' – as rational and ethically behaving intellectuals – by showing that academics are driven by the same motives and desires as 'common people'.

INTERSECTIONS OF CULTURE, POLITICS AND UNIVERSITIES

Indeed, higher education has the potential to reproduce or change social structures and cultures of a society (see Bourdieu, 1988). Looking at the cultural contributions of universities it is important to look at the tangents of culture and other sectors of expression, such as politics or science. Cultural activities of universities have influenced for example wider political events. In the nineteenth century, in many European countries the research and teaching into 'national' disciplines such as history, folkloristics, linguistics, literature and

archaeology were important in vocalizing the national linguistic and cultural specificity, influenced by European Romanticism (Bolin, 2012) and the general political activism characterizing much of the century. This national-romantic discovery by academics of a mythical past and distinct character of a nation gave rise to calls for national awakening and political self-determination; but was also subject to political pressures to arrive at acceptable or correct interpretation about the past (Bolin, 2012, p. 37).

The process of blurring the boundary between the universities' cultural contributions and their political manifestations can be illustrated by the case of the nineteenth-century cultural research done by the Imperial Alexander University, since 1917 known as the University of Helsinki and until 1908 the only university in Finland. The research by the historians, philosophers, linguists and archaeologists into the culture, history and language of the Finnish people and its distinctiveness from the prior and contemporary ruling powers, Sweden and Russia, supported the national cultural and political development – or as nationalist historians called it, 'national awakening' – of Finland in the nineteenth century. This new national identity was a picked up and enhanced by the cultural traditions of the university students; such as the students' annual spring picnic. In 1848 the song *'Vårt Land'* ('Our Land'), written by the Imperial Alexander University's Latin teacher, national poet Johan Ludvig Runeberg, and composed by its music teacher Fredrick Pacius, was first performed in public at the picnic on 13 May. It was later to become the national anthem of independent Finland. At the same event, the university's professor of history, Fredrik Cygnaeus, gave a speech titled 'Finland's name', which gave voice to a national-romantic notion of Finland and Finnishness. This cultural awakening led to a political movement called Fennomans, which, in turn, supported the development of Finland as a political entity (Klinge, 1983; Lahtinen, 2008; Välimaa, 2019). Similar features can be seen in the nineteenth-century national awakening in countries like Norway (Langholm, 1995), Estonia (Gross, 2002) and Latvia (Bolin, 2012). In the latter two, national sentiment found an outlet in a national singing festival, modelled after German traditions and established in Estonia in 1869 by the alumni of the Valga Teacher Training seminar.[2]

However, especially in terms of the periods of 'national awakening' in the peripheries of empires, it is challenging to distinguish between the direct political influence of universities or their academics or students, and the influence that particularly the cultural activities of the said groups have had

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[2]   cf.   http://www.estonica.org/en/History/1850-1914_National_awakening/ National_awakening/ and personal communication with Professor Martin Ehala, University of Tartu.

on political events. For example, in nineteenth-century Norway, the academics largely formed the governing elite (Myhre, 2008), and the academic research on national disciplines and topics contributes to the cultural understanding of national specificity (Langholm, 1995), similar to the Finnish case described above.

Cultural research, artefacts and events have often offered an outlet for political sentiments, making it difficult to distinguish between culture and politics. Language as the embodiment of national specificity in multilingual empires/colonial countries, where the language of the rulers was different from the language of the ruled, has especially been a field in which the cultural and the political are intertwined (Saarinen, 2020, pp. 12–13). For example, the ethnolinguistic nationalism in the fringe states of the Russian- or German-speaking empires (Kamusella, 2016) in the nineteenth century, including Finland (Saarinen, 2020), or the linguistic battles of the successor states of the Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia in the late twentieth century (cf. Busch & Kelly-Holmes, 2004, p. 10) offer examples of how the academic linguistic research contributed to political mobilization. Cultural artefacts, such as the famous murals by artists such as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Juan O'Gorman at the UNAM depicting historical and contemporary political themes, may also represent universities' political temporal opinions.

In turbulent political times, university students were often at the forefront calling for political reforms. This is evident in the political activism of Oxford and Cambridge students during the English Civil War, the student radicalism in Europe's Crazy Year 1848 (Boren, 2019) and in the latest examples of student democracy protests in, for example, Hong Kong and Thailand in recent years (Partaken, 2019; Sripokangkul et al., 2019). In the infamous 1960s student protests, which swept the world from Mexico (Gutmann, 2002) to France and Germany to Greece (Kornetis, 2013), student cultural activities often acted as outlets for political sentiments, sometimes putting the conservative university and its more radical students at odds. For example, Suominen (1997) reports that the student radicalism in Western Germany ignited into full flame following the decision of the Rector of the Free University of Berlin to forbid the open meeting organized by the student union with critical author Erich Kuby in the spring of 1965 (Suominen, 1997, pp. 68–69). In Finland one of the milestones of student radicalism was a musical premiered in 1966 at the Helsinki University Student Theatre which depicted the Finnish right-wing nationalism of the 1930s; a topic which had been controversial and largely ignored in the post-war years (Suominen, 1997, p. 169). Similarly, in the Soviet Union, from the 1960s there were unofficial associations of authors and singers of student songs – also known as touristic, bard or author songs. This was not a political movement, but because of its non-state status and negative

attention from the KGB's youth department, these associations became centres of 'quiet' political resistance.

Later examples include the student song festival Gaudeamus in Vilnius in 1988, where the forbidden flags of the three Baltic states, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, were displayed and a choir of thousands of singers protected them from being taken down by Soviet officials (Smidchens, 2014, p. 160). In the late 1990s in the former Yugoslavia, higher education played a significant role in the political mobilization of students, who were active agents in the fall of Slobodan Milošević's government after nearly a decade of protests in Serbia in 2000. For example, the student newspaper *MonopolList*, established in 1997 at the Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade, had a role in mobilizing students in resistance to the regime.[3]

CONCLUSIONS

Universities are dangerous places for those in power, especially in those countries that do not tolerate opposing political opinions and during the times of oppression. The potential is based on the fact that HEIs gather together young students and equip them with intellectual capacities to take a critical look at existing social realities. This may empower them to organize political and/ or cultural activities. This is how culture and politics may be, and have been, interconnected with each other over history. The potential of universities to change societies is one of the dimensions of HEIs no matter whether it happens through culture or politics, or their combination, as often is the case with social changes.

In addition to intersections of culture, politics and higher education we have aimed to show that the cultural contributions of higher education are extensive and numerous even though we have managed to touch only the surface of this manifold and complex sociocultural phenomenon with the help of our cases. What is clear, however, is that cultural contributions of higher education are a global phenomenon. Universities and higher education as social institutions are promoting local, regional and national cultures through interactions in university spaces such as university campuses and buildings, especially libraries, and supporting cultural activities taking place through concerts, art exhibitions, theatre performances and so forth. Universities also have important roles in maintaining cultural traditions through research and the infrastructure of museums, libraries, botanical gardens and through their activities. The fact that

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[3]   See, for example, https://www.ekof.bg.ac.rs/publications/journals/monopollist/ ?lang=en, and personal communication with Dr Milica Popovic, Central European University, cf. Prosic-Dvornic (1998).

high quality research needs excellent information technology infrastructure also helps to support cultural projects that are based on digital technologies and organizational support of the HEIs.

However, it is quite difficult to make a distinction between community outreach or third mission activities and cultural contributions of HEIs (Baum, 2000; Buys & Bursnall, 2007). The same applies on the numerous studies of extracurricular activities as part of the student experience (McNeal, 1995). The distinction between these activities is, however, more an academic problem of definitions than a real problem for actors promoting cultural contributions in their social contexts. We would like to emphasize that without paying attention to cultural contributions of higher education we easily lose sight of the most important channels of influence through which HEIs can bring value for citizens without trying to benefit them as consumers. In this regard, cultural contributions of higher education belong to the main public good activities offered by HEIs.

We have also touched upon the use of cultural artefacts related to universities, colleges, professors and students. Whether these cultural artefacts are truthful or not is an irrelevant question for our chapter. Their existence is a matter of fact; and for this reason we have aimed to describe the variety of cultural artefacts and how they been utilized in novels and films, and popular culture, and by cultural industries. When saying this we do know that artistic conventions have their own traditions and aesthetic rules that prize having an impact on their audience more than being truthful to the realities of higher education. As Groucho Marx, playing Professor Quincy Adam Wagstaff – the Principal of Huxley College – put it: 'Your proposition may be good, but let's have one thing understood, whatever it is, I'm against it!'

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APPENDIX 13-A

Table 13.A1   List of all universities included in the website study (see Table 13.1)

Country	City	University
Albania	Tirana	Albanian University
Algeria	Skikda	University of 20th August 1955
Angola	Luanda	Catholic University of Angola
Armenia	Yerevan	American University of Armenia
	Yerevan	State University
Australia	Canberra	Australian National University
Austria	Wien	Universität Wien
Azerbaijan	Baku	Azerbaijan University
Bahrain	Sakheer	University of Bahrain
Belarus	Minsk	Belarusian State University
Belgium	Brussels	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Bosnia	Sarajevo	University of Sarajevo
Bulgaria	Sofia	Sofia University
Canada	Ottawa	Ottawa University
China	Peking	Peking University
	Peking	Tsinghua University
	Peking	Film Academy
	Peking	Peking Institute of Technology
	Peking	Central Conservatory of Music
	Peking	Communication University of China
	Peking	Peking Jiatong University
	Wuhan	Wuhan University
Colombia	Bogotá	Universidad Nacional de Columbia
Croatia	Zagreb	University of Zagreb
Cuba	Havanna	University of Havana
Cyprus	Nikosia	University of Cyprus
	Nikosia	European University of Cyprus
Egypt	Cairo	Cairo University
Estonia	Tallinn	Tallinn University
	Tartu	University of Tartu
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	Addis Ababa University
Finland	Helsinki	University of Helsinki

Country	City	University
France	Paris	Paris-Sorbonne University
Gambia	Sere Kunda	The University of the Gambia
Germany	Berlin	Freie Universität Berlin
	Berlin	Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Ghana	Accra	University of Ghana
Gibraltar	Gibraltar	University of Gibraltar
Greece	Athens	The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)
Greenland	Nuussuaq	University of Greenland
Guatemala	Guatemala	Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG)
Holland	Amsterdam	University of Amsterdam
Hong Kong	Hong Kong	The University of Hong Kong
Hungary	Budapest	Eötvös Loránd University
Iceland	Reykjavik	Reykjavik University
Indonesia	Jawa Barat	Universitas Indonesia
India	Delhi	University of Delhi
Iran	Tehran	University of Tehran
Iraq	Baghdad	University of Baghdad
Ireland	Dublin	University College Dublin
Israel	Jerusalem	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Italy	Rome	Sapienza University of Rome
Jamaica	Kingston	The University of the West Indies (4 campus areas)
	Trinidad & Tobago: St Augustine	The University of the West Indies
	Barbados: Cave Hill	The University of the West Indies
Japan	Tokyo	The University of Tokyo
Jordan	Amman	The University of Jordan
Kenya	Nairobi	University of Nairobi
Kiribati	Tarawa	University of the South Pacific
Latvia	Riga	University of Latvia
Lebanon	Beirut	Lebanese University
Lesotho	Maseru	National University of Lesotho
Liechtenstein	Vaduz	University of Liechtenstein
Lithuania	Vilnius	Mykolas Romeris University
Luxembourg	Luxembourg	University of Luxembourg
Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	University of Malaya
Malta	Msida	University of Malta
Mexico	Mexico City	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Country	City	University
Monaco	Monaco	International University of Monaco
Montenegro	Podgorica	University of Montenegro
Morocco	Ifrane	Al Akhawayn University
Nepal	Kathmandu	Kathmandu University
Nigeria	Abuja	The University of Abuja
Oman	Muscat	Sultan Qaboos University
Pakistan	Islamabad	Comsats University
Peru	Lima	National University of San Marcos
Philippines	Manila	University of the Philippines Manila
Poland	Warsaw	University of Warsaw
Portugal	Lisbon	University of Lisbon
Russia	Moscow	Lomonosov Moscow State University
	Moscow	Bauman Moscow State Technical University
	Moscow	Moscow State Conservatory
	Moscow	Russian University of Economics
	Moscow	Moscow Pedagogical State University
	Novosibirsk	Novosibirsk State University
Spain	Madrid	Complutense University of Madrid
Sweden	Stockholm	Stockholm University
	Stockholm	Karolinska Institutet
	Stockholm	Royal College of Music
	Stockholm	KTH Royal Institute of Technology
	Stockholm	Stockholm School of Economics
	Stockholm	Royal Institute of Art
	Linköping	Linköping University
Thailand	Bangkok	Bangkok University
Turkey	Ankara	Ankara University
Ukraine	Kiev/Kyiv	National University of Kyiv-Mohula Academy
	Kiev/Kyiv	Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
United Arab Emirates	Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates University
	Dubai	American University in the Emirates
United Kingdom	London	University of London
	London	University of Westminister
	London	Queen Mary University of London
	London	Brunel University London
	London	Royal Holloway University of London

Country	City	University
United Kingdom	London	University of East London
	Durham	Durham University
USA	Washington D.C.	The University of the District of Columbia
	Washington D.C.	American University
	Washington D.C.	The Catholic University of America
	Washington D.C.	The George Washington University
	Washington D.C.	Georgetown University
	Washington D.C.	Howard University
	Washington D.C.	The Institute of World Politics
	Washington D.C.	Marymount University
	Washington D.C.	Pontifical John Paul II Institute
	Washington D.C.	Trinity University
	Hoboken, New Jersey	Stevens Institute of Technology
	Athens, Georgia	University of Georgia
Vietnam	Ho Chi Minh City	Vietnam National University
Zimbabwe	Masvingo	Great Zimbabwe University