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**Abstract**

This paper concentrates on the expansion of Finnish higher education between the 1960s and 1970s, exposes its background in the light of the policy decisions that were made, compares the unique features of this expansion with those of certain other countries, discusses the impact of the controlled ?top down? governance of higher education policy, and describes the Finnish higher education system today. The paper argues that the driving forces behind universal mass higher education were, on the one hand, changes in the structure of society, and on the other hand, individual demand for education but also increased need for skills in production processes. This was the case in Finland as well but the Finnish higher education expansion was also characterised by regionalism. The actual location of universities in the era of expansion was a function of local political actors who were able to have an influence on ruling political parties. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)