IV.5

KNOWLEDGE, ENGAGEMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Paul Benneworth and Michael Osborne

While European universities have much to offer European society in the field of community engagement, there is an urgent challenge to improve their current performance. A great deal is demanded across all walks of society for the knowledge emanating from universities, and for the exchange and co-production of knowledge with universities, and a failure to respond will undermine popular support for the sector. University work in engagement occurs against a range of competing forces, including modernization, internationalization and budget cuts. As a consequence, universities are faced with having to make strategic choices and are being overloaded with missions; seemingly less important missions risk becoming peripheral within this scenario.

Nonetheless, there is much that is outstanding in European universities in terms of community engagement, and in this chapter we provide a historical and contemporary background as well as many examples of exemplary practice. Covering a territory within which there are so many countries, and indeed regions, with distinct policies and practices is a challenge, and much has inevitably been omitted. That being said, we believe that, in most societies, the community engagement of universities in Europe is still at an early, peripheral phase, and the central challenge is in placing it at the heart of university life.

SOCIETAL ENGAGEMENT IN EUROPE

European universities have been inextricably tied up with their host societies since their foundation, and universities' institutions and ideas have evolved along with their host societies. Universities have always faced a dependency on sponsors, which has influenced their relationships with society. As Biggar (2010, p. 77) notes:

> Right from their medieval beginnings, [universities] have served private purposes and practical public purposes as well as the sheer *amor scientiae* ['knowledge for knowledge's sake'] … popes and bishops needed educated pastors and they and kings needed educated administrators and lawyers capable of developing and embedding national systems.

The scope and scale of engagement has subsequently increased from producing elites to working closely with firms and citizens,

TABLE IV.5.1
Universities between autonomy and dependency – a historical perspective

Social change	Sponsor urgent desire	'Idea' of a university	University societal engagement
Agricultural revolution	Reproducing religious administrators	Cloister (11th-century Italy)	Establishment religious elites
Emergence of nobility	Educating loyal administrators for courtly life	Free cloister (12th-century France)	Religious elites, both establishment and dissenting
Urbanization	Educated administrative elite to manage trade	Catholic University of Leuven (15th century)	Temporal elites and regulators
Sustaining national communities	Validating the state by imagining the nation	Newman's idea (from 17th century onwards)	National cultural elites 'imagining' the nation
Creating technical elite	Creating a technical elite alongside the administrative elite	Humboldtian (19th-century Germany)	Industrial elites overseeing national industrialization projects
Promoting progress	Creating economically useful knowledge	Land grant universities (19th–20th-century USA)	Mass industrial expansion through extension
Supporting democracy	Creating elites for non-traditional societal groups	Dutch Catholic Universities (20th-century Netherlands)	Political elites leading/underpinning corporatist settlements
Deliberative democracy	Equipping citizens with knowledge to function in a mass democracy	Robbins era plate glass universities (1960s UK)	Mass democratic expansion and participation

Source: Pinheiro et al. (2012).

as universities have developed relationships with and duties to religious powers, temporal authorities, cultural communities, industry and latterly civic society. This evolution is summarized in Table IV.5.1.

Universities' contributions to social progress have shaped their evolution. Some engagements have long-standing links with social movements including European popular education in the late 19th century (Steele, 2007). Continuing education brought knowledge to excluded groups (at that time, the working classes and women), providing 'enlightenment' of the masses. This emphasis on liberal adult education, based on a model of knowledge transfer from the elite to the masses, rather than on a co-production of knowledge, has contributed to the decline of continuing education in the 21st century (Osborne and Thomas, 2003).

This has partly been functional, with universities becoming part of the 'establishment' through their relations to their patrons (Daalder and Shils, 1982). But universities' engagement with marginal communities has also driven experimental practices that have changed society. Cambridge University was formed when a group Oxford scholars left dissatisfied by the religious restrictions they faced. The VU University Amsterdam was formed by orthodox Calvinists facing discrimination from the Lutheran mainstream, so that they could educate their future leaders. The Sorbonne in Paris and the Maagdenhuis in Amsterdam were flashpoints for strikes and wider social unrest driven by growing social tensions in the late 1960s regarding the closed nature of post-war society (Daalder and Shils, 1982). These struggles left us with several essential engagement repertoires such as science shops or community engagement (Gnaiger and Martin, 2001).

APPROACHES TO ENGAGEMENT WITHIN EUROPE

Contemporary university engagement in Europe began with the late 1960s 'democratic turn', in which Western European universities became highly engaged with society in many different ways and by many different mechanisms. Alongside the 1970s' general pessimism, the 'spirit of 1968' engendered much grassroots activism, this positivity driving many different kinds of innovative university engagement activity, exemplified by the Netherlands' science shops (Mulder et al., 2001), to activism and community work, through continuing and worker education, to policy advice and business consultancy. The early 1980s' report from the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) high-

lighted the variety of institutional approaches to community engagement; CERI's typology (Table IV.5.2) remains useful for understanding those activities.

TABLE IV.5.2 University engagement with societal collectives	
Way of providing service	Mechanism for delivering service
University puts facilities at the disposal of the community	Use of equipment, premises and laboratories Use of teachers and students to make direct contribution Drawing on the community in delivering occupational training
Execution of orders placed by community	Offering training as occupational, continuing education or cultural University receives a payment from community for delivery of a service A near private contract between the buyer and the vendor
Analysis of needs of community	The university comes into the community as an outside expert The university provides services for the community with some reference to an 'order' by the community
Analysis of problems at request of community	University engages at community request in developing solutions University has the autonomy and freedom to suggest a range of solutions away from overarching pressure
University delivers a solution on behalf of the community	The university delivers a service for the community which is compatible with its institutional status
Source: Benneworth et al. (2013) after CERI (1982).	

CERI reported the tendencies of universities to work with nearby communities, whether based on a proximity that was geographical, ethical (for example, a common confessional position) or mission-based (for example, businesses). The report presented the best practices of university engagement, including KU Leuven R&D and the North East London Polytechnic Company. Different practical examples of institutional arrangements were presented for promoting university–business engagement, urban regeneration and community development. However, all approaches implied that public engagement was an adjunct activity to the universities' core activities, within the 'development periphery' (Clark, 1998).

From the 1980s onwards, European higher education (HE) was increasingly centralized through strategic modernization, with payment-by-results and new managerial autonomy introduced to improve the productivity and efficiency of public spending (Kickert, 1995). This profoundly affected relationships between universities and society by:

- framing universities' activities' value in cash terms;
- ranking different kinds of university activities on their strategic importance;
- encouraging universities to focus on only a few strategically important activities.

Societal engagement is increasingly managed in exclusively financial terms as a 'third mission' at a time when national HE systems face European Union (EU) pressure to prioritize the reform of teaching and research. Public engagement activities with income-generation potential (primarily business engagement) have become more important, marginalizing other engagement activities. Benneworth and Humphrey (2013, p. 182) characterize this effect in Scotland thus:

> Community engagement was based on existing activities, (continuing professional development, volunteering, widening access) rather than culturally or structurally embedded, activities that were marginal or existed to support 'core university businesses'. Research tended to be project-based and reliant on relentless income generation. 'Communities' were often restrictively defined as professional bodies, the voluntary and community sector and other organised stakeholders (companies, local authorities, NHS, Police).

In former Eastern Bloc countries, scientific academies enjoyed a degree of natural freedom from their important role in (re-)producing the cultures and narratives of national elites. However, the power of university professors was not always dependent on party structures, and therefore they were not always enthusiastic proponents of communism, representing an intelligentsia opposed to Soviet domination (Connolly, 2000). Student mobilization was an important part of power in these socialist regimes and did not always function predictably: while Polish and Czechoslovakian students opposed the socialist regime, East German students were as late as 1989 strongly supportive of it. Following a period of transition, public Eastern European universities were able to adopt very Humboldtian postures, while a huge private HE sector emerged based on immediately marketable skills. From the late 1990s, national reform efforts focused on compatibility with the Bologna Process and the European Research Area, leaving little space to develop distinctive post-socialist approaches to community–university engagement.

There is also a strong tradition of engagement in southern and Mediterranean European countries,[1] most clearly in Spain, where, in 1898, the University of Oveido adopted the proposal of *extensión universiteria*. What began as bringing community education to local industrial populations quickly moved towards addressing the atrocious living conditions of these communities. The successes of the 'Oviedo Group' led to similar efforts by the Universities of Salamanca, Seville, Valencia, Zaragoza and Santander, using HE as a progressive force in industrial communities in the next 35 years. Civil war and dictatorship halted this as universities were integrated into a single bureaucratic structure. Following the restoration of democracy, universities acquired a new societal role in decentralizing power to civil society institutions. Spanish HE reforms in a 2001 Act gave universities a substantive public and community role, including cultural enhancement, supporting regional cultural development and diffusing university values and cultures.

Looking back three decades, where the situation set out by CERI in 1982 is no longer salient for Europe is in its emphasis on citizens rather than consumers. The CERI report saw business and societal engagement as two comparable elements by which universities fulfilled their societal compacts. What has happened in that intervening period in Europe has been a massive expansion of the emphasis that all stakeholders have placed on business engagement (Zomer and Benneworth, 2011). This has been driven by the increasing dominance in Europe of the innovation imperative, a belief that as economic development depends on innovation, public expenditure should be increasingly managed to functionally drive innovation activities.

This has dominated consideration of the 'third mission' and, perhaps unsurprisingly, has seen business engagement prioritized over more diverse kinds of social engagement. Less visible has been a formalization of social engagement activities, with an increasing emphasis on working through formal, contractual relationships, often with public sector groups, this coming at the expense of less-well organized and informal community groups. The net results of these shifts has been that societal engagement either remains voluntary (in those systems that retain a high degree of academic autonomy) or has become increasingly marginalized (in those systems in which there has been a shift to managerial autonomy).

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Insofar as it is possible to talk about a European engagement tradition, it is best to talk about an informal tradi-

tion (Teichler, 1991; Schütze, 2010), that is extremely pluriform and defies simple characterization. Even in less centrally regulated systems, such as the pre-1980s UK, many activities were carried out with a sense of 'detached benevolence' (Benneworth, 2013) rather than being closely tailored to the needs and demands of external groups. In Europe, service-learning is less advanced than it is in the USA, notwithstanding programmes such as the Community-University Partnership Programme (Hart et al., 2007). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) CERI report highlighted the problems and tensions that this relative informality brought for the societal role of European universities:

> [The] question of a university's society function in the very broadest sense of the term … includes not only the development of access to qualifications, but the production of knowledge and the social significance of that knowledge. It also involves a change in the sharing of responsibility for the development of knowledge and teaching… If the university is to be effectively integrated into the community, it must no longer concern only those who attend the university, namely the teachers and the students. It should be possible to pass on one's skills without being a teacher and to receive training without being a student. (CERI, 1982, p. 13)

CERI identified many ways by which universities met societal needs but where the university and not the community often chose which activities were provided. The key challenge since then has been to integrate external stakeholders into university engagement activities, allowing these communities a right to co-determine how universities make their knowledge available to society. CERI failed to anticipate the change in relationship with the State from individuals being 'citizens' to being 'consumers'. CERI envisaged that business and societal engagement would be comparable elements but failed to foresee the belief that public expenditure should be managed to drive innovation (Kenway et al., 2012).

The emphasis placed by all European HE stakeholders on business engagement has expanded massively (Zomer and Benneworth, 2011) over more diverse social engagement. The formalization of social engagement activities has increased, favouring formal, contractual relationships with public sector groups over those with less-well-organized community groups. The net result has been that societal engagement has remained voluntary (in systems with high academic autonomy) or has become increasingly marginalized (in systems with managerial autonomy).

REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY–UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement activities across European universities tend to be short-lived, with university leaders having difficulty in supporting them in the face of other more urgent pressures. This makes it important to develop resources for institutional leaders (Robinson et al., 2012), including indicators for engagement, benchmarking of community engagement, development of classifications of universities including engagement, and collective organizations such as the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi) promoting community engagement (Conway et al., 2009; Benneworth, 2013).

Societal engagement remains implicitly important to universities today. A diversity of universities' societal missions – in contrast to their consensus around teaching and research – means that these are much less prescribed by statute than are teaching and research activities. The regulatory framework – legislation, regulation, policy, governance, finance and funding – influences institutional behaviour. Some European HE systems are naturally structurally more diverse in terms of missions and regional forms, and have different archetypes as social and economic change demands new university tasks (CEDEFOP, 2008; UNESCO, 2011).

Some of these regulatory frameworks are pan-European. Financial support for research (for example, the European Seventh Framework Programme's Science in Society strand) provides direct opportunities for a collaboration between researchers and civil society. Since 2009, this strand's 'Structuring Public Engagement in Research' has funded projects developing Mobilisation and Mutual Learning Action Plans on Societal Challenges in 2011 (European Commission, undated). Funding for three years brings researchers and a wider constellation of societal actors together to create a plan for a constructive dialogue between science and society around societal challenges, with nine consortia receiving funding in the first three rounds. In 2013, six grand challenges were targeted, namely infectious diseases, assessments of sustainable innovation, water, integrated urban development, the internet and society, and ethics assessment.

The majority of regulatory incentives are national or regional through relevant legislation, regulation

and funding provision. These areas are not always equally developed – while the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden give HE institutions (HEIs) clear legal duties, they are weakly implemented financially. In contrast, in the UK, where there is no formal legal duty for engagement of universities, substantial funding has been allocated to universities for their engagement plans and, from 2014, with the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the impact of their research. France provides an example of a system with both strong duties on universities to engage as well as the relevant resources to deliver that engagement.

The Netherlands legally mandates universities' societal roles: the 1992 Higher Education Law gives universities and universities of applied sciences the mission of making their knowledge available for society (Benneworth et al., 2013; for Sweden, see Armbruster-Domeyer, 2011). But there is no funding stream for societal engagement as there has been for technology transfer activities. The net effect has been a huge amount of activity but a lack of extensive coordination, as for example in the European Higher Education and Research Areas.

Other countries also require HEIs to engage with society: Finnish universities have 'performance contracts' with the Ministry of Education and Culture, and universities have a responsibility to regional stakeholders defined as knowledge transfer aligned to regionally defined needs (Lester and Sotarauta, 2007). Within the university 'steering system', regional/local tasks fall under 'soft steering' and 'steering by information', and no indicators or results are specified in performance contracts. Universities decide their own third mission approach: some universities prioritize regional and local tasks (for example, the University of Lapland and the University of Eastern Finland), while others emphasize national or international targets.

Sweden has no financial incentives, but the Swedish Higher Education Act (1997) legally obliges universities to interact with society. This leaves room to interpret the third mission broadly from educational outreach to technology. National policy and legislation has, however, been implemented in a weak 'top-down' approach (Brundenius et al., 2011). Some institutions choose a strong approach: Mälardalen University College collaborates with several local municipalities in a formalized partnership called the *Samhällskontraktet* (Social Contract), and Karlstad University, Luleå Technical University, the University of Gothenburg and Linnæus University have similar constructions. Such work rarely involves the whole university, while collaborative action plans have little traction in university policies.

The UK by contrast has little relevant legislation as UK universities are autonomous organizations part-funded by the State to drive desired behaviours including societal engagement. One of the principal metrics used by UK funding councils to measure 'engagement' is success in recruiting from socially disadvantaged groups ('widening participation'). This has increased participation rates, although not necessarily from previously excluded communities (Osborne and Houston, 2012). Similar schemes have incentivized universities to engage with their regions or business, such as England's Higher Education Innovation Fund, a metric-based reward system stimulating a broad range of knowledge exchange activities including regional consortia. Funding has remained modest compared with teaching and research, and institutional responses were vertically differentiated: elite institutions remained aloof while more locally oriented universities engaged with non-traditional students and businesses. The 2014 REF introduced an impact element into research evaluations, partly scoring on the impacts of the research on culture, creativity and society, but the effect of the REF on public and community (as opposed to business and policy) engagement remains to be seen. One high-profile UK example is the Beacons for Public Engagement initiative, six university-based centres across the UK funded by UK Funding and Research Councils and the Wellcome Trust (see the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement homepage at http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk).

France is a clear example of both strong legislation and significant financial rewards. A range of decrees and laws mandate French universities, with associated funding at national and regional level, to engage with various communities, including working adults, the unemployed, socially excluded young people and those with disabilities. The principal emphasis has been on improving access, including university continuing education regulations permitting adult progression to higher level lifelong learning, formalized in the 2007 Law of University Responsibilities and Freedoms (the 'LRU Law'). Most well-known internationally is the Recognition of Prior Learning system, initiated by a 1985 decree and extended in 2002, which enables individuals to claim credit up to doctoral level based on their professional (paid/unpaid) experience, including in non-profit-making associations and trade unions. This has obliged many French universities to rethink their social role, with a considerable impact on academic practice.

While regulatory frameworks are vital, it is inevitable that, in the plurality of legislative models found

across the countries of Europe, engagement is a choice rather than a compulsion, and that choice is often linked to the synergy that engagement has with traditional missions of teaching and research. In the next section, we will provide a typology demonstrating how that integration can come about, with some exemplars.

ARCHETYPAL PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

Universities respond to this highly differentiated regulatory engagement framework in a variegated manner. With few formally managed duties and responsibilities, there are few incentives for universities to institutionalize engagement. Although structures such as technology transfer offices have become pervasive (Wink, 2004), that has been much rarer for community engagement structures (Robinson et al., 2012; Powell and Dayson, 2013). Similarly units promoting widening participation (UK) or validating prior experience (France) remain peripheral to core HEI infrastructures. The typical European picture is of much activity, but greatly fragmented without overall institutional coordination.

Arguably, massification means that universities are having a greater impact on societal activity than ever before. The sector is incredibly innovative – with new kinds of engagement (Science Slam) and engagement theories (Living Laboratories and Social Innovation) emerging from universities. However, European policy-makers have had difficulty finding ways to place this university engagement with society at the heart of HE missions. Notwithstanding their lack of political traction, many good practice examples can be found across European universities, although the general peripherality of societal engagement for universities makes creating effective community engagement extremely time-consuming and place-specific.

AN OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY–UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

One way to classify university engagement is 'modes of delivery', distinguishing teaching, research, knowledge exchange and service-learning. These various kinds of potential community–university engagement are shown in Table IV.5.3 (Benneworth et al., 2009; Benneworth, 2013). Most concrete engagement initiatives have multiple aims, some covering all of these categories and involving different kinds of university activity together. Science shops include both service-learning and teaching, and may also bring elements of knowledge exchange and in some cases even research.

The precise mix of activities is in some cases driven by the universities' own supply wishes, while at the other end of this continuum are activities that are collaborative and responsive to community demands.

TABLE IV.5.3 **A typology of different kinds of university engagement activity**	
Mode	**Main areas of engagement activity**
Research	Collaborative research projects
	Research projects involving co-creation
	Research commissioned by hard-to-reach groups
	Research *on* these groups then fed back
Knowledge exchange	Consultancy for hard-to-reach group as a client
	Public funded knowledge exchange projects
	Capacity building between hard-to-reach groups
	Knowledge exchange through student 'consultancy'
	Promoting public understanding and media
Service	Making university assets and services open
	Encouraging hard-to-reach groups to use assets
	Making an intellectual contribution as 'expert'
	Contributing to the civic life of the region
Teaching	Teaching appropriate engagement practices
	Practical education for citizenship
	Public lectures and seminar series
	CPD for hard-to-reach groups
	Adult and lifelong learning
Source: Benneworth et al., 2009, in Benneworth et al. (2013).	

Service-learning – taking students into communities – is less prevalent in Europe than North America, although there is a European Service-Learning Association. A recent European Commission-funded project, VALUE (Volunteering and Lifelong Learning in Universities in Europe; http://www.valuenetwork.org.uk), provides a good overview of activity across 12 countries. The case of Leuphana University (Germany) exemplifies how volunteering and service are integrally embedded into the curriculum; Reinmuth et al. (2007) provide further illustrations from Germany. Other universities such as the National University of Ireland (Galway) are also explicit about volunteering and service – its Community Knowledge Initiative allows students to obtain credit for service learning.

Science shops, first established in Europe in the 1970s in the Netherlands, are a means for a university (or non-governmental organization) to provide participatory research support to civil society groups normally excluded from specialist knowledge. Having

spread internationally, they are linked through the Living Knowledge Network in Bonn, Germany. Their importance is illustrated by the considerable funding provided by the European Seventh Framework Programme for the Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society (PERARES) project. This project, coordinated by the University of Groningen Science Shop, 'aims to strengthen public engagement in research through involving researchers and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the formulation of research agendas and the research process' (PERARES, 2013) and looks at 26 best-practice European science shops.

Validation of informal and non-formal learning (VNIL) provides arguably the best example of ascribing value to knowledge developed in community settings that may challenge university monopolies as the sites of knowledge production. This field has exercised the European Commission in the past decade with an emphasis on employability, with the Malta Qualifications Council (see http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/), among many such European bodies, speaking of VNIL's benefits for third-sector and voluntary organizations.

OUR CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY–UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

The following sections document a range of examples of good practice in engagement that are innovative, sustainable and provide lessons for others seeking to engage. Some are drawn from recent work within the Pascal Universities Region Engagement project (Duke et al., 2013), which mapped HEI engagement systems at city and regional level in 11 European localities covering Finland, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the UK, using a framework developed by Charles et al. (2010; following Charles and Benneworth, 2002).[2]

Societal engagement can be categorized as being directed towards economic, societal, cultural or environmental development (cf. OECD, 2007), very broad distinctions illustrating principal purposes, but in practice, engagement activities may cover multiple categories. Brennan et al. (2006) provide a framework to analyse how such work can be analysed in relation to communities that have been *disadvantaged*[3] in relation to their HE access. They refer to local and regional partnership working, cultural presence, civic roles and the provision of employment opportunities by universities. Kaunas University of Technology in Lithuania provides an all-embracing example in supporting its city to develop itself into a Learning City, covering *de facto* all potential aspects of engagement. Here the university and municipality have sought to develop

partnerships and citizens' networks to stimulate formal and non-formal learning on a city-wide basis (Eckert et al., 2012).

Another interesting example demonstrating engagement across the economic, social, cultural and environmental is the South Transdanubia region (Hungary). Community activists, including the Mayor of Karasz, work with HE in various activities seeking both to restore traditions and to generate income. Some activists have visiting faculty appointments at the University of Pécs, enabling student work experience and research project placement in the villages. They draw on university expertise, mainly from Pécs but also from the University of Kaposvár (forestry management) and two other universities with relevant specialisms, particularly in mycology. The village fruit-juicing facilities – a cooperative-style multi-supplier activity that spreads the benefit widely – even include apples from the University of Kaposvár in their mix; part of the value-added finished product is marketed in places such as Budapest.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Universities' contributions to economic development is usually understood in terms of high-technology businesses and job creation, but these impacts often bypass excluded communities. European universities face the resultant tensions between their high-technology footprints and the ordinary economic needs of their neighbouring communities, and some have developed modes of economic engagement relevant to these ordinary communities. A key problem facing excluded communities is that of capital flight and disinvestment, so universities can make key contributions by creating new facilities in poorer areas, demand for transport and retail services of more general local benefit.

Liverpool Hope University (UK) created a new campus in England's poorest ward, Everton, with a cultural centre including arts incubator units; this campus anchors other public sector investment, including the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Another economic development problem for excluded communities is access to credit, with doorstep lending and payday loans financially burdening already indigent communities; Salford University has worked with local groups to create Moneyline, a set of community finance initiatives bringing access to credit back to ten inner city communities in England's north west (Powell and Dayson, 2013).

Universities as a whole or departmental/ faculty units may contribute directly to community partnerships or be major stakeholders in community development projects,

contributing to regeneration, business development and environmental sustainability. In Helsinki (Finland), the Active Life Village is sponsored by the City of Espoo and the Laurea University of Applied Sciences with involvement from Aalto University of Technology, and service and technology companies. It supports new businesses drawing on technological innovation to provide new opportunities in the welfare sector.

Another area where universities and communities are working closely together is around creating and capitalizing on cultural assets, often supporting this with creating niche small and medium-sized enterprises in tourism and the environment, and meeting their training/development needs. Examples are:

- the University of Lecce, Puglia (Italy) – the regeneration of an abandoned factory in an urban area to make a major cultural centre;
- Buskerud University College in Buskerud County (Norway) mountain – eco-tourism;
- Mid Sweden University in Jämtland – tourism related to nature culture and indigenous peoples, local food, sport and adventure.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social exclusion involves individuals being systematically disadvantaged in ways that hinder their access to jobs, housing, transport, education and other services vital for participation in contemporary society (Benneworth et al., 2013). These barriers are often overlapping and self-reinforcing; university contributions to social inclusion are not just about opening education provision, but about making this sufficiently easy that people can benefit in practice. In Europe, this involves delivering education close to communities, and facilitating progression from basic to advanced educational levels. Different institutions have emphasized various dimensions, lifelong learning, learning in minority languages and flexible learning, alongside activities targeting other exclusion elements undermining participation in education, including health issues.

In Glasgow (UK), several universities have community outreach programmes encompassing the arts, culture, lifelong learning and work with poor communities. The Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde have both made considerable provision in the liberal adult education tradition: the Senior Studies Institute at Strathclyde focuses on work with those in the 'third age', not only engaging older people through leisure courses, but also offering enhancing employment opportunities in later life (the Learning in Later Life programme). There is considerable activity across European universities in engaging with ageing

populations: a number of initiatives target in varying measure both improved labour market prospects and improved well-being. The Tertiary Higher Education for People in Mid-life Project provides cognate case studies from the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK (Krüger et al., 2014).

There is also work around health and well-being in ageing societies, with much university work inspired from a research perspective, but also integrating public engagement, as in the example of Newcastle University's Initiative on Changing Age in the UK (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/changingage/). This programme seeks, through an engagement and education centre, to engage with voluntary sector agencies, facilitating consultation with communities around ageing and demography issues, and thereby engaging non-experts in shaping future research and policy-making.

Other targeted groups include ethnic minority groups, currently with a particular focus on the Roma people, lower socioeconomic class categories, women, those in remote regions and people with disabilities. A number of policy documents from the European Commission (EC), starting in 1991 with the *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community*, have emphasized the need for greater inclusiveness. This memorandum urged HEIs to widen access to higher qualifications, create opportunities for the updating and renewal of qualifications, increase preparatory courses and also do more to recognize prior learning and experience (EC, 1991). The main imperative is the need to support an increasingly knowledge-driven society, an argument that continues to resonate today.

The extent to which these various schemes for improvement are responsive to community demand and recognize communities' contribution to knowledge production is, however, debatable (Osborne, 2003). France's system of *validation d'acquis de l'expérience* (VAE) challenges what counts as valid knowledge, although ultimately HEIs still validate credits within the system. The national system provides many interesting cases, and particular institutions such as the Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille (Lille1) are leaders in the field. Social and economic imperatives need not be contradictory: the VAE scheme encompasses both human and social capital facets, stimulating social inclusion by helping individuals improve their employability. While some commentators suggest that the scheme contains a paradox of objectives (Pouget and Figari, 2009), it is not unusual for programmes of access to focus on the improvement of individual economic prospects.

A linked notion is the recognition and exchange of indigenous knowledge that is unique to a particular culture or society (Warren, 1991) and which has been described as the social capital of the poor. Although much of the focus of debate on indigenous knowledge is not generally on Europe, we can find interesting engagements in countries such as Finland, for example at the Arctic Indigenous Peoples and Sami Research Office of the University of Lapland.

A final dimension is university involvement in community research. Spain is particularly strong in this with the Instituto Paulo Freire, a national community–university research network. This Institute supports activities in a number of Spanish universities, based on the critical pedagogy theories of Paulo Freire, and community–university participatory research is active in stimulating social engagement (Hall, 2011). In Barcelona, the Centre of Research in Theories and Practice that Overcome Inequalities is concerned with analysing social inequalities and with the consequent training needs.

Interesting cases are also found in Italy. Laura Saija (2013), for example, explains how substantial efforts by the University of Catania have contributed to driving out Mafia influence from a 1960s Sicilian new town, Librino, contributing in many ways to building a new democratic and participatory culture to replace the dominant patronage-based relationships.

CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

Universities are pipelines into other cultures in other times and places, providing lenses through which their host societies can understand these other situations and develop their own place in the world. This has not always been edifying, with universities and their scholars playing a role in some of the worst excesses of imperialism and colonialism. But universities have also been important in developing local cultures: sometimes new universities have been created explicitly to gain recognition for minority cultural groups. This activity has recently magnified in scope, partly with the explosion of 'popular culture', with universities both providing a lens to understand these cultural developments and equipping particular groups with the knowledge and tools to utilize that culture to benefit itself.

A key focus for many universities has been activities oriented towards creativity and the creative industries. These range from short courses oriented to particular interest groups, supporting the creative industries, making available cultural assets such as museums and galleries and research, development and infrastructure support linked to events on an international scale.

These activities may be facilitators of social inclusion for excluded groups, catalysts for innovation and significant elements of local, regional and even national economic development.

In Pécs, Hungary, the university has built upon the city's European Capital of Culture (ECoC) status in 2010 by offering provision linked to the wider region's multicultural heritage, including local Roma individuals being able to study in their mother tongue at the Department of Romology. The university has also created a cultural industries incubator at the Zsolnay ceramics factory, a prime objective of the ECoC: the Faculty of Arts and some departments of the Faculty of Humanities of the university are being installed in the incubator both to attract creative artists and to foster cultural tourism.

There are many other examples of universities contributing to cultural events. In the UK, the University of East London is adjacent to the 2012 Olympic Games site. The university is building on the Games' success by promoting public access to its facilities and its sports science courses, and is validating courses in sports and events management, exploiting its closeness to other large-scale cultural venues (the ExCel Exhibition Centre and the O2 Arena) and developing foundation degrees (short-cycle) in visitor management related to retail, exhibitions, tourism and hospitality. Similarly in Glasgow, the University of the West of Scotland is contributing to assessing the impact of the forthcoming 2014 Commonwealth Games on community development where students' service-learning offers a potential contributory mechanism.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In contemporary Europe, the environmental costs of development are pushed onto the poorest communities that are least able to resist them (Davoudi and Brooks, 2012). Environmental justice is increasingly important for sustainable development – poor communities frequently disproportionately bear the pollution costs of urban transport systems, while at the same time, because of their limited access to transport services, they gain the lowest benefit from them. The greatest contribution that universities are making to sustainable development is therefore in terms of social and environmental justice, and fairness in the allocation of the costs and benefits of economic development. Universities are not often politically powerful actors able to change or challenge society's working; their most effective work comes in supporting grassroots mobilizations that challenge these environmental injustices.

A number of European universities have commit-

ted themselves strategically to promoting sustainable development, being active in and signatories to the Third Talloires Declaration, a set of commitments by university administrators to embed sustainable development in all their universities' activities. The Declaration evolved into the organization University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, although its spread has been less wide through Europe than other parts of the world. In the UK, a number of universities have committed themselves to a more practical sustainable development tool, the Universities that Count accreditation system, based on an index of environmental and social responsibility (ESR). This was promoted by Higher Education Funding Council for England, and a wide range of UK HEIs now follow the ESR monitoring activity to give their contribution to sustainable development a strategic focus.

The findings of Davoudi and Brooks formed part of the work of the Newcastle Fairness Commission, which was important in bringing into focus some of the injustices that exist but are often invisible or taken for granted in the distribution of environmental burdens and benefits in urban development. An important role played by universities in environmental justice is placing the demands of minority and excluded communities on wider agendas and forcing others to take notice. An obvious challenge for universities comes when this conflicts with their own corporate interests, for example around gentrification. Universities need to develop an effective ethical framework to ensure that their position as relatively strong, well-resourced actors with spatial interests does not come into conflict with their wider societal duties.

At the most basic level, much university work has focused on the universities' own management practices and on moving towards sustainable behaviour. The earlier work of GUNi notes that 'greening the campus' has been the main response in this area (Tilbury, 2012, p. 19). It is evident from earlier examples that much more than this is possible. Internal change is essential, and many practices are illustrative of what can be achieved, one example of note being the University of Plymouth (UK) with what it describes as a holistic model of change, the 4C model of Campus, Curriculum, Community and Culture.

The development of green skills has been noted in studies by CEDEFOP (2010) and the International Labour Organization (Srietska-Ilina et al., 2011) with many EU examples among the 21 country studies covering Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Spain and the UK. The regional government of the Ile-de-France illustrates concretely possible approaches that can provide dialogue and action between researchers and communities in sustainable food production. The Partnerships of Institutions and Citizens for Research and Innovation was stimulated by the work of the Community-University Research Alliance to create collaborative projects between researchers and CSOs, and has sought to build an eco-region in this part of France. One subsidiary project involved developing new farming practices in managing and selecting wheat varieties for organic bread production (Gallet al., 2009).

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO ADVANCE ENGAGEMENT IN EUROPE

The preceding section has told a story of engagement by European universities being an 'exceptional' activity, where a university group places additional effort into engaging with a public group to bring wider benefits from university knowledge. The challenge is bringing these activities away from universities' experimental peripheries and incorporating them into the heart of the 21st-century university, bringing various engagement projects out of their protective spaces nurtured by enthusiasts, exposing them to the reality of existence within universities. Any serious university engagement activity raises challenges and problems: contributing seriously to European society requires a commitment to address these tensions and face down interests challenged by engagement activity. In this section, we highlight some key tensions and pressures that universities experience when consolidating experimental engagement activities into holistic strategic management practices.

Universities can contribute to balancing knowledge asymmetries by mobilizing 'outsider' knowledges in peripheral communities. But this highlights the tension that the financialization of HE brings: when universities are steered through financial mechanisms, groups without financial resources have difficulty influencing strategic university decisions. The move from universal free HE to student fees and loans threatens to limit the participatory opportunities in HE to society's wealthy. With Europe undergoing financial austerity, budget cuts to universities might encourage a restriction of access to their knowledge to those able to pay. Emphasizing commercial outcomes for third mission activities can discourage community groups from working with universities – even universities' decisions on floorspace charging can drive out community groups and create additional wedges between universities and community groups.

Universities can be important in the thinking to renew society, with public intellectuals providing a useful reservoir of cultural capital contributing to civic reinvention and even resistance. But university academics also face pressure to focus on a handful of core activities that may restrict that wider public function. The relentless rise of the world-class university norm – placeless research excellence rather than community-based research relevance – represents a real threat to extending engagement. University research now focuses almost exclusively on winning research funding and on excellent publications than on making social contributions: contributing to the public intellectual realm is a second-class activity, one not valued by the universities. This risks universities abandoning their capacity to contribute to wider processes of collective reimagination and rethinking.

European universities are strong as meeting places of transcultural elite dialogue and understanding. Universities have long equipped societies with the intellectual tools to relate to other societies, and universities have been very effective in responding to challenges from fundamentalist ideologies or the rise of the so-called 'BRICs'. Universities remain marketplaces of ideas, and the European Research Area and Bologna Process have been very effective in promoting intercultural exchanges between academics and students. But the challenge in Europe is extending this from the metropolitan elite to a more demotic level. The metropolitan elite share common norms and behaviours with universities – universities are familiar to them. Bringing other kinds of community – with their own behaviours and values – into the university brings particular tensions and may conflict with university desires for universalism. But engaging in these conversations, for example around extreme right-wing nationalism, is vital for European societies, and universities have the opportunity to address the problems these communities may bring.

Universities have strong linkages with civil society, but current pressures risk universities facing a choice of ignoring civil society or treating it as a junior partner in the relationship. Engaging with a plurality of civil society interests generates conflicts and tensions with scientists' autonomy to choose their own research questions, particularly around controversial new technologies or where there are strong differences between public and private benefits. We have already seen civil society groups opposing university research into genetically modified crops because of dissatisfaction that they concentrate power unhelpfully in the hands of a few agrochemical firms. Facing such opposi-tion, universities may restrict their engagement to those community groups who share university norms and interests. This risks confusing a general duty to support socioeconomic development with a more self-interested reading that community engagement should directly benefit the university. Although universities should engage with communities with which they share values, restricting engagement to those where there is a clear mutual benefit risks undermining universities' universality in their social mission.

CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL COMMENTS

Universities have a great deal to offer European society in terms of their engagement contributions. European universities face an urgent challenge to improve their engagement – there is great demand across society for their knowledge, and a failure to respond will undermine popular support for universities. But this is happening against a background of a range of pressures, including modernization, internationalization and budget cuts, that drive in the opposite direction. Universities are faced with having to make strategic choices and being overloaded with missions – less important missions risk becoming peripheral within universities.

Community engagement is still at an early, peripheral phase in many European universities, and the central challenge is in placing it at the heart of university life. Anyone reading the CERI report in 1982 would be surprised to see the extent to which only one element of 'community' – business communities – has been embraced and normalized by universities. Europe must likewise normalize community–university engagement, a common-sense and taken-for-granted mission rather than a special, peripheral and experimental situation. But there remains the very real problem in mainstreaming these interesting and alluring experiments, incorporating them into the mainstream of universities as institutions, organizations, companies and networks, and consolidating them to change the very nature of European HE. Indeed, if Europe's universities fail to heed this agenda and follow the seductions of ignoring the wider public, this risks undercutting the social compact by which Europe's publics provide privileged positions for its universities.

Sophisticated demands and pressures from civil society are difficult for universities as responsible actors to reject and ignore in the long term, but in Europe's increasingly individualized and consumerist society, these signals and wishes risk being lost against the

noise of markets, league tables, rankings and competition. Vital to this is creating a space within Europe's 'overloaded universities' for community engagement to become important to universities. Contrary to what is sometimes claimed, it is not enough for university leaders simply to declare that 'engagement matters' (Benneworth et al., 2013). Making engagement central to a university necessitates changes in its full portfolio of activities. When students must complete a community engagement project to graduate, all staff must accept that engagement matters, rather than some staff being enthusiastic where it is voluntary. Universities must build up their capacity to:

- deliver community engagement;
- accept community engagement;
- embed community engagement within core teaching and research activities;
- make and win the ethical case for engagement within universities.

This transformation process is a journey from superficial engagement to engagement lying at the heart of universities' essence. This is a long and hard journey, and universities urgently require encouragement and support from their stakeholders along the way. Universities' existing huge contribution to societal plurality and vitality through community engagement needs be credited and celebrated. Only if European governments (and the EC) prioritize community engagement will it ever become significant for universities. As European government becomes more specialized, technocratic and deracinated, Europe's universities need to get back to their roots, roots that lie in engaging with Europe's diverse publics. Governments need to drive universities to better engage, and universities should be vocal in demanding this from them. Only when this is achieved will government and universities work better together to meet societal needs and harness the power of universities' diverse knowledge bases to drive a sustainable and inclusive Europe.

NOTES

1 This paragraph draws very heavily on the written contribution of Paul Younger to Conway et al. (2009).
2 These eight domains are regional, human capital, social capital, business, sustainable, community and cultural development and institutional development.
3 As pointed out by Brennan et al. (2006, p. 5), '"Disadvantage" is a loaded term, assuming deficit in those to whom it is ascribed and advantage to participation in higher education, both of which can be critiqued.'

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Inside View IV.5.1
Knowledge production, regional engagement and higher education in Poland

Marek Kwiek

While the policy discourse in Poland is already stressing the fundamental role of universities' regional engagement in research, it is hard to assess how long it will take to develop strong links between universities and their regions. The strongest links are clearly seen in the teaching dimension of regional engagement. Regional engagement in research is a much more distant goal, and the investment of more public resources in joint programmes for universities and companies, as well as major changes in current individual and institutional research assessment formulas and academic promotion requirements, are needed.

Recent reforms of Polish higher education and research systems (2008–2011) have been based on several assumptions. The first assumption is that higher education is increasingly conceived as a vehicle for economic development of the nation and of the region in whose social and economic fabric it is embedded (see OECD, 1999, 2000). The regional mission means opening up universities to the regions in which they are located, which may result in a wide range of interactions, from cultural to social to economic (Arbo and Benneworth, 2006). The fundamental role of knowledge production in the economic growth of knowledge-driven economies puts universities and the outcomes of their teaching and research increasingly in the public spotlight (Foray, 2006; Leydesdorff, 2006; Etzkowitz, 2008; Kwiek, 2013a).

The second assumption is that the 'economic relevance' of universities, directly or indirectly, links university activities with innovations in the private sector (Geiger and Sà, 2011). Links between higher education and the economy are tightening throughout Europe. The third assumption is that teaching is expected to be more closely linked to the needs of the labour market, avoiding the mismatch between higher education offerings and labour market needs, and research is expected to be more easily commercialized.

In Poland, following the new law on higher education of March 2011, new mechanisms to link universities and their regions include state funding for university partnerships with businesses, especially through public and private science and technology parks, new incentives for universities' regional initiatives, including for new study programmes prepared with the assistance of local and regional companies, modified requirements for the academic career ladder, and increased cooperation with local industry in university governance, with new industry representatives on universities' (still optional) boards of trustees.

The level of university responsiveness to labour market needs in Poland is still low. The level of cooperation with the business sector is also low. As a ministerial report on the barriers of cooperation between research centres and companies stresses, Polish companies need to be made more aware of the possibilities associated with cooperating with universities: approximately 20% of companies did not know that that it was possible to cooperate with the academic community, and 40% of companies had never tried to get in touch with universities. In addition, 40% of surveyed companies did not know how to reach research centres that were potentially interested in the commercialization of research. At the same time, surprisingly, almost half of the companies surveyed that had actually been in touch with scientists (45%) reported that the initiative for cooperation came from the scientists. Companies involved in partnerships with universities were generally satisfied; the effects of cooperation with scientists were rated as 'rather positive' by 51% and 'definitely positive' by 17% of respondents. Only 3% of surveyed companies provided a 'rather negative' or 'definitely negative' assessment of a university partnership (MNISW, 2006, pp. 4–10).

The linkages between Polish universities and their economic environments are, from a comparative international perspective, weak, and international reports on Polish higher education released in the last few years stress the exceptional academic character of Polish universities, and their engagement with their own (academic) issues rather than issues of interest to, or relevant for, society and the economy. The linkages between educational offerings (especially in public institutions) and labour market needs are also weak, although both are strengthening. As an OECD report has stressed, Polish institutions are 'typically – although not always – strongly inward-looking in focus, rather than facing outward towards the wider society, including working life' (OECD, 2007, p. 77; see also World Bank/EIB 2004).

The linkages between Polish universities and their social environments are, in contrast, strong: both national metropolitan research universities and local universities engage with civil society organizations, third-sector organi-