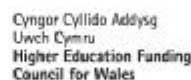# University approaches to engagement with excluded communities

Working Paper 2 "University learning with excluded communities" project

Part of the ESRC *Regional Economic Contributions of Higher Education Institutions* programme

Final report, January 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. THE RISING IMPERATIVE FOR ENGAGEMENT

There has been a resurgence of interest in how universities choose to engage with society, and increasing pressure for universities to improve their societal contributions. The last time this was so evident was in the early 1980s, where there was much pressure on universities to lead the evolution towards knowledge-based societies, in response to the long recession and increasing foreign competition. Today, we see across the OECD a more concerted effort to understand and improve universities' contributions, from America's Kellogg report urging the Land Grant Universities to get back to their roots, to the requirement now made by all UK research councils for applicants for first-stream funding to make a statement of their wider research impacts.

In part, this increasing interest in engagement can be seen as the consequence of a set of overlapping pressures upon universities. Just as in the early 1980s, there have been two new waves of foreign competitor countries (firstly the Asian tigers and now the BRIC economies) which have created more urgency in developing knowledge societies. Alongside that has been recognition that there are a series of 'grand challenges' to which universities have the necessary knowledge for solutions, around demographic ageing, climate change, resource scarcity and urban exclusion. A very contemporary pressure arises from the fiscal consequences of the global credit crisis, which will create long-term downward pressures on public budgets and lead governments to look for increased future impacts from recipients of their past funding.

In short, universities' responses to these rising pressures for engagement will shape the special privileges which are accorded to universities in response for their special contributions. Behind this question of why are universities engaging more lies the question of to what extent are universities remaking and responding to this new societal compact. And it is that question to which we are primarily concerned in this working paper, as we observe that in the last quarter-century, the early general interest in university impact gave way to a very business-focused definition. The idea of the entrepreneurial university has become common currency, and societal impact is defined excessively restrictively in terms of profitable innovations, patents, licenses and spin-off companies.

1.2. FROM COMMUNITY TO BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT – AND BACK AGAIN?

We argue that in the context of these grand challenges, this is a very restrictive and limiting perspective to take of universities' potential contributions. These challenges are what Ackoff (1999) calls "multidisciplinary messes", and require many kinds of knowledges to be combined in ways that are not necessarily anticipable beforehand, requiring flexibility, opportunity and redundancy. This means that a perspective on university knowledge exploitation that embodies a linear model of knowledge transfer will fail to offer all the potentials necessary for university knowledge to effectively be put at the service of society.

But Feldman & Desrochers (2003) have compellingly argued that universities are not in complete control of their research base. They argue that despite Johns Hopkins University best efforts in the 1930s, it was impossible to stop their research base flowing out into a newly-created biotechnology and instrumentation cluster in Maryland. This raises the question of whether – despite a failure to really manage towards societal engagement in the quarter of a century since the seminal 1982 CERI report *The university and its community* – universities are delivering a broader set of benefits for society as a whole that are remaking this wider university-society compact.

It is against this background that we are undertaking the research project "Universities and excluded communities", which seeks to explore whether universities can produce benefits in the extreme case of socially excluded communities. These communities may lack both internal cohesion and external connections, undermining their capacity to negotiate their position within an increasingly networked political economy. In this research project, we have sought to explore whether universities can work with those communities and help them to develop social capital which helps in turn to re-engage them with the contemporary knowledge society. In taking an extreme case, we seek to produce compelling findings which can be generalised to other dimensions of the societal compact – if universities can benefit this most hard-to-reach group, then there are potentially benefits to be reaped through engagement with a wide range of societal partners.

This working paper reports the first substantive element of this research project, which has been undertaken within the ESRC-funded Research Initiative "The Regional Economic Impacts of Higher Education Initiatives", directed by Professor Peter McGregor and Ursula Kelly from Strathclyde University. This Research Initiative is jointly funded by the four UK higher education funding councils, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and the Department for Education and Learning-Northern Ireland (DELNI). Many thanks are also due to the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies at the University of Twente in the Netherlands for supporting the final editing of the report.

1.3. THE STRUCTURE FOR THE REPORT

This report begins by providing some of the background to the project, and developing a conceptual framework for understanding why universities may seek to engage with excluded communities. Literature suggests that there are a number of narratives which suggest why this might take place, including uncontrollable overspill, a sense of corporate social responsibility, and more functional attempts to improve recruitment and project acquisition. We then explain in more detail about the methodology we have used for the survey, and the fieldwork we undertook, interviewing around 3 staff members at all 33 institutions in three regions, the North East, the North West and Scotland.

The following chapter then presents the basic findings from the research. The simplest finding is that there is a huge amount of engagement activity taking place amongst those HEIs interviewed, and we offer a typology of 12 main kinds of engagement. The university which has the fewest number of those activities is St. Andrews, which has activities in seven of the 12 categories in the typology. Having set out the typology in more detail, we then turn to the second major finding, which is

the unmanageability of university-community engagement by HEIs – many have tried but none have successfully developed a management strategy that can fit it within the complex and overlapping institutional demands of the contemporary environment within which universities operate.

The following three chapters turn to explore why this happens, as the basis for developing an understanding of the limits to engagement and what can be done to incentivise and stimulate university-community engagement. Chapter 5 explores in more detail the various mechanisms which universities have deployed in order to make engagement a more central part of the repertoire of university activities. The university begins by making the (obvious) point that there are different kinds of engagement undertaken by universities. However, and pace the shorthand currently used by DIUS, it is not necessarily those newer, more teaching-intensive institutions which are more community-facing: whilst these institutions have a particular engagement mission, there are a significant number of civic, research universities in these regions with a very diverse and very far-reaching set of engagement activities.

Chapter 6 examines how universities management the business of engagement, particularly in the context of increasing management and accountability through quantitative mechanisms and business modelling. Community engagement is hard to measure quantitatively, and for these kinds of hard-to-reach communities with which we are concerned, it is hard to develop profitable models for engagement. This chapter highlights the importance of developing an institutional narrative for engagement, with sufficient flexibility to encompass the current and future institutional activities. This helps to deal with the uncertainties and vulnerabilities in developing a mission as peripheral as that of community engagement.

Chapter 7 explores the tensions which the universities in the sample have experienced in the course of seeking to become engaged, a mission with which we note that relatively few of the institutions have made significant headway. The chapter notes firstly that universities are under a significant number of external pressures, which relegate the importance of community engagement, as well as encouraging a more symbolic rather than substantive approach to engagement. However, universities are also the architects of their under-engagement, focusing primarily on doing 'to' not 'with' communities, and in particular, not involving communities wholeheartedly in their institutional governance in the ways that business and corporate stakeholders have been.

In the final chapter, the consequences of this situation for the meaningfulness of university contributions to social capital building are discussed. The following project phase, and working paper, deals with this issue, and Chapter 8 provides a framework to explore the significance of the interactions, and in particular, how university-community engagement can become a significant part of the university repertoire in the age of the overburdened institution. The chapter, and the report, concludes with a set of what are termed 'wicked issues' for university engagement, which set out the necessary steps before a well-intending, and capable university can seriously embark on and deliver a wider engagement mission.

2. ENGAGEMENT AS ONE OF MANY UNIVERSITY MISSIONS

Fundamental to understanding university engagement with excluded communities is understanding why universities might choose to engage. A traditional conception of universities is that they deliver teaching and research as their core missions, and that they may undertake other activities for other reasons that make sense within their own particular contexts. There is uncertainty as to whether there is sufficient coherence within activities currently emerging for it to be considered as a novel mission for universities, or whether it remains a series of externalities which emerge in a more or less uncoordinated way.

In this chapter, we explore the reality of university engagement as one of many missions for universities in an increasingly overloaded managerial environment. The key conundrum for university-community engagement is how can community engagement compete with larger, more central missions. Of course the answer to this is not straightforward, and engagement has emerged in practice in many different ways in many different situations, namely that **engagement is an emergent mission**. However, a number of common themes can be discerned, in terms of the common drivers for engagement and common barriers hindering the development of effective engagement. Reflection on the interplay between these drivers and barriers allows a better understanding of the scope and the impact of the engagement mission in the wider higher education landscape.

2.1. THE DYNAMICS OF THE NEW SOCIETAL COMPACT

It is clear that societal expectations of higher education are changing. The example of student fees illustrates this – up until the age of the truly mass higher education experience, there was a belief that the general societal benefits of higher education justified fully subsidising higher education for students. However, mass higher education has made that option prohibitively expensive, and at the same time social atomisation has made it possible to develop an argue for the individual benefits that acrrue to the holders of higher education. A mix of pragmatic financial concerns (rising costs) as well as a broader social shift (atomisation) have changed the relationship between universities and society from that of a public good towards an increasingly marketised commodity.

In order to provide a background to understand the changing drivers on the societal compact, this relationship of expectations between society and higher education (*cf.* 2.2), in this section we reflect on broader issue of the societal compact. The term is used to describe an implicit bargain between society and higher education, which will be mediated through a range of institutions dependent on context, at a variety of degrees of remove. In the UK (England), the Treasury, DIUS, HEFCE, learned societies, charities (most notably Wellcome), the NHS and regional development agencies all have a stake in defining this societal relationship on the basis of their own interests, and the way their stakeholders stimulate their development. The key issue here is that universities exist within relationships of funding and accountability that require them to respond to these stakeholders, and the changing position of these relationships results in the shifting societal compact.

2.1.1. Universities' dependence on societal relevance

This report is fundamentally concerned with universities' societal contributions generally speaking, as part of an increasing recognition of the changing nature of the university in the knowledge society. Understandings of these contributions have become increasingly nuanced, moving away from a 'linear' model of knowledge transfer with universities undertaking blue-skies research, and transferring it to firms and other societal institutions which exploit that knowledge. The paradigm of knowledge transfer has evolved to that of knowledge exchange, where universities and other key partners come together with their own knowledge capacities, interests, questions and challenges, and work collectively to create new knowledge, products, processes, technologies and solutions.

Yet, at the same time, there are signs of societal dissatisfaction with the way universities contribute to their host societies. Governments have reinvented the idea of the public research laboratory into the model of the public-private research institute, co-ordinating societal efforts to exploit existing knowledges. In the UK, the Energy Technology Institute is one example of a large scale research activity seeking to provide social benefits, in which universities are taking a secondary co-ordinating role with the emphasis lying on relevance and business leadership. The long-term nature of university research and short-term pressures in the credit crunch have exacerbated this trend of emphasising the societal importance of immediately relevant findings over the longer-term development of societal knowledge bases.

Barnett (2000) refers to the expectation that universities produce societal benefits in return for their privileges and public funding as the 'societal compact'; in the 1970s, this compact was grounded in universities as independent, autonomous and slightly detached institutions contributing to a democratic society. The current expectation seems to be evolving into universities as engaged, inter-dependent, and accountable institutions contributing to a more competitive and sustainable society. Increased interest in engagement can be regarded as a reflection of this evolving societal compact, and therefore considering the dynamics of this engagement provides a practical lens through which to consider the changing institution of university in the context of the new knowledge economy.

A final point worth reiterating at this stage is that this is strongly rooted in a network model of governance where inter-dependent organisations hold one another to account. In that sense, the societal compact is rooted in a notion of **inter-institutional network accountability** rather than a **direct democratic societal accountability** or the previously dominant model of **producer-led peer accountability**. The consequence of this is that whilst universities are accountable to a group of external stakeholders, those stakeholders are not individuals within society, but rather institutions who make claims upon universities on the basis that they represent or articulate a societal interest.

2.1.2. The complexity of the 'idea of a university'

Part of the issue arises from a sense that the engagement mission is something new and which has never been known before in history. Universities as institutions are intimately connected with the societies from which they emerged, negotiating between two philosophies of education, the academic and the practical. Baumunt (1997) argues that universities have always been a quintessentially post-modern

institution in finding an institutional mechanism to hold subjects esoteric and practical together in a way that ensured social support, privileges and subsidies. Despite rhetoric of excellence and ivory towers, even a cursory historical review highlights that universities have always had some kind of engagement mission.

Ernste argues that the modern European institution of university emerged in 13th century Italy as an improvement on monasteries as a means of elite reproduction, leading to the creation of the University of Bologna – associated with but independent from the Catholic church. The University of Leuven was created in 1422 by Flemish merchants to drive regional economic development and innovation, and after the fall of Antwerp in 1572, Leuven's Dutch-speaking elites fled to Leiden in the Independent Netherlands where they became an intellectual centre of independence.

After 1648, the institution of university became associated with nation-building and the emergence of nation-states. Sweden created a new university in Lund in 1666 to establish its cultural domination of the formerly Danish provinces of Skåne, freeing them from the Danish intellectual influence of nearby Copenhagen. From the 18th century, universities took on an increasingly economic role – Phillipson (1976) argues that a failure by Scotland's ancient universities to meet the demands of new industries led to the eclipsing of the universities in the 18th and 19th centuries by the learned societies, with their intellectual preeminence not re-established until the very late 19th century. The Humboldt University idea emerged in Wilhelminian Prussia as part of attempts to improve national competitiveness with respect to England, France and the Netherlands, and in the US, the Land Grant model tied the creation of new universities to the development of new state-level territorial development coalitions.

But even in the 20th century, it was not purely economic concerns which shaped the development of the institution of university. In the Netherlands, from 1890, when Abraham Kuyper created the Free University in Amsterdam to accommodate intellectuals from the Conservative Reform Church, and in the 1920s, the state created two Catholic universities in Tilburg and Nijmegen to accommodate the Catholic pillar. The wave of expansion in Higher Education after the uprisings across Europe in the summer of 1968 saw the university as a means of correcting the closedness of post-war society, and allowing all to participate in mass democratic higher education. In sparsely populated regions, notably in Norway and Australia, provision of higher education has become regarded as an issue of service provision to sustain falling rural populations and attracting highly-educated people to outlying areas.

2.1.3. Pressures and tensions for engagement: the engagement conundrum

This historical narrative suggests several important issues for a contemporary consideration of the societal mission. The first is that societal engagement – or relevance – has always been an important feature of the missions of higher education. The second is that there is no consensus on what that mission is, whether it is promotion national elite reproduction, supporting minority cultures (e.g. the Saami university in Norway), promoting national economic competitiveness or contributing to the intellectual and democratic life of the nation. The societal compact can therefore be considered as an emergent and path-dependent property of decisions taken within higher education systems, rather than some abstract ideal embedded within the idea of a university.

However, it is clear that this new engagement mission is emerging in a highly selective manner, embodying a number of assumptions that seem to reflect path-dependency rather than a rational appraisal of the potential benefits for engagement. The primary of business engagement, a view that engagement is incidental to research universities, and a perception that excellence and engagement are incompatible all complicate the domain of university community engagement. In order to better ground our understanding of how universities can contribute to hard-to-reach societal groups, it is first necessary to understand how the university engagement mission has emerged in the context of the rapidly evolving higher education sector.

2.2. THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT FOR UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A key issue behind the emergence of the engagement mission has been a concurrence between a set of drivers which higher education has facing, for all of which increased societal engagement has been an appropriate response. There have been a range of large-scale societal shifts which have had quite profound consequences for the way that higher education (self-)organises its business. Just as in the 1960s, the increasing dissatisfaction with the cosy, closed policy-networks of national corporatism led to an increasing democratisation of higher education (Daalder & Shils, 1981), so these high-level societal changes have had impacts on the nature of the contemporary university (Delanty, 2002). Although these various pressures are overlapping and any distinction between them is somewhat arbitrary, for the purposes of this report we distinguish three main drivers and three main consequences:

- The rise of the knowledge economy and the changing institutional role of the university

- Increasing globalisation & marketisation and the rise of market-like behaviours by universities

- The rise of the grand challenges of the 21st century and new models for knowledge exchange leadership and management by universities.

2.2.1. The knowledge economy: New institutional roles for the university

It is now widely accepted that we live in a knowledge economy, where it is as much the knowledge capital within an economic space that determines rates of productivity and welfare growth as much as the accumulated land, labour and physical investments (*cf.* Temple, 1998 for a review). Early identification of this situation came through macro-economic analyses which highlighted a residual growth driver which could not be accounted for in terms of traditional capital stocks, which became termed 'total factor productivity' (TFP) (Solow, 1994; Romer, 1994). From 1945 to 1985, the long decades of post-war growth, it has been estimated that one-half of all growth can be attributed to TFP, and more recent analyses suggest that its importance is further increasing.

Unlike traditional factors of production, TFP is characterised by 'increasing returns to scale' (Romer, 1986) which implies that TFP would increasingly concentrate in particular well-endowed locations. At the same time, the importance of 'Megacities' has suggested that it is these cities which optimise the benefits of agglomerated TFP, (Smith, 2003; World Bank, 2009) in turn suggesting that it is the human dimension –

the people – which determines growth rates. In contrast to traditional forms of capital, it is not just the labour power of those individuals, but the skills, networks and innovative capacities that these individuals have (Storper, 1995), and the role of the city in facilitating innovation, which delivers the observed productivity benefits (Gordon & McCann, 2005).

It has been argued that this has led to a change in the nature of the societal innovation process. At the same time that innovation has become *the* primary determinant of differential growth rates, the nature of the innovation process has shifted from being a linear process towards being organised in reflexive, inter-linked and multi-disciplinary networks. Gibbons *et al.* (1994) have termed this shift the emergence of Mode 2, and Etzkowitz has argued that contemporary innovation is centred around 'triple helices' – networks of relationships between government, firms and universities. There are divergent opinions on the implications that this has had for universities, and there is a pessimistic thread which sees Mode 2 allowing new kinds of institution – private universities and research laboratories – challenging and undercutting state university privileges, ultimately leading to the unbundling of the HEI into service streams provided by the lowest cost providers.

But universities have perhaps surprised some commentators by reinventing themselves as modern knowledge economy institutions. In parallel with changes in the social nature of innovation, there has been a shift in the nature of public decision-making, which Rhodes (1997) characterises as from 'government in networks' to 'governance in networks'. What has been striking is that universities have in the last decade or so redefined themselves as societal institutions with a voice within a range of policy networks (Goddard & Chatterton, 2003), expressing their interests beyond the traditional realms of higher education and research into policy domains as diverse as health, culture, environment, territorial development and competitiveness. Their legitimacy within these domains comes from the now widely-accepted contributions that universities make to these policy fields, and therefore the rise of the 'third mission' can in one way be regarded as part of a reinvention and relegitimation of the university as a neo-corporatist actor.

2.2.2. Globalisation/ marketisation: Competitors & league tables

The second issue which has impacted on higher education has been the increasing globalisation of business, and in particular the business of HE. What distinguishes the current wave of globalisation from internationalisation is the extent to which trans-national institutions have emerged to break down borders and facilitate the movement of labour, capital, goods and services. This has been greatly aided by a range of technological and organisational innovations which have emphasised the global nature of the market place for ideas and emphasised that universities are in competition for staff and students.

One set of innovations have been a set of technologies which have helped to shrink cartographic distance, although without precipitating the 'death of distance' as was anticipated. The rise of mass air travel has greatly accelerated the development of international intellectual communities as well as the mass movement of students between countries of residence and study. New ICTs have allowed much faster exchange of ideas and the development of virtual communities on a grand scale. These technologies have allowed much finer grained divisions of labour within

innovation processes, and permitted even very remote partners to work together intensively in R&D activities.

A second set of innovations have been the organisational and regulatory innovations necessary to uphold a free market in goods and services, and to maximise free flows of capital and talented individuals. These changes, which some have referred to as the neo-liberal project, have involved two main strands. The first has been a deregulation of the private sector, removing barriers to trade and capital flow, and encouraging private companies to provide an increasing share of public services. The other element has been a re-regulation of the public sector, creating neo-market environments within which public providers are held accountable, and demonstrate their efficiency with respect to private providers, through elaborate arrays of performance measures, targets and audit regimes. Together, these create markets for public services which have encouraged private efficiency and competition, and allowed a reduction in public expenditure on services whilst boosting the efficiency and competitiveness of private providers.

The net impact of this upon universities has been considerable, although the extent to which different nations have pursued a re-regulation of the university sector varies markedly. In terms of the societal compact, one impact has come through new public management, holding universities accountable through targets and audit regimes which have the effect of ensuring that "what is measured, matters". Societal engagement in its widest sense is difficult to measure accurately and quickly, and therefore NPM approaches have undermined a broad reading of engagement. A second impact has come as new institutions have sought formal accreditation from regulatory bodies, and the third mission has been regarded by these regulators as an important element of what a university is, encouraging third mission activity. Finally, the third mission has also been important to some universities as a means of distinguishing themselves to talented staff and students in an increasingly noisy and crowded marketplace,

2.2.3. New urgent challenges: New opportunities for valourisation

The final set of pressures upon society, and hence on the societal compact, has come through an increasing recognition that humankind faces a set of problems whose solution in the 21st century is necessary if we are to survive into the 22nd century. Although there has been an intellectual acknowledgement of these problems since the 1960s and the emergence of ecological movements, it is only recently that these problems – and their potentially devastating impacts – have been fully emotionally recognised by key decision-makers and have moved into the realms of politically salient questions. There are a significant number of these issues, from ostensibly exogenic issues such as resource scarcity and catastrophic climate change, to sociological problems such as urban sustainability and inclusion, and social cohesion and security.

As these ideas have progressed onto the public agenda, there has been a four phase response to them, in part because of the size of the societal reconfigurations that seem to be implied by any serious attempt to address them. There has been a cycle of denial, shock, pessimism and then mainstreaming, evident in many of these problems, and for a number of them, the political agenda remains in denial or shock. With climate change, for example, although there is a grudging acceptance that there will be a climatic shift over the next century and it is likely to be significant, there has

been much less consensus to develop mitigation measures, and a defaulting to assuming that future governments will introduce effective adaptation measures.

These grand challenges are at the heart of societal stability, and as democratic governments govern through fundamentally ensuring societal stability and reproduction, the pressing nature of these challenges is increasingly going to channel government efforts and concerns towards these problems. A corollary of this for higher education is that their core budgets are likely to become increasingly dependent on their ability to contribute towards solving these problems. We can identify that universities might contribute in two quite different ways, and use Gunesekara's distinction between generative and developmental contributions.

Generative contributions are those which occur from the core businesses of universities, namely teaching and research, so we can expect for examples, governments to become increasingly insistent that teaching addresses these concerns, but also that new disciplines are created to deal with these issues; likewise, research funds are likely to become increasingly contingent upon contributions to solving these large and intractable problems.

Developmental contributions are those that universities make that change the way that solutions emerge, and it is possible to envisage two main contributions, providing leadership and integration. Universities have long played a function of intellectual leadership, helping to place issues on political agendas, assembling data and helping governments to assemble the political capital necessary to take hard decisions. Universities may be able to reinvent this expert role – as they have within policy networks – as independent and trusted leaders around these issues. Secondly, universities are inherently complex, multi-disciplinary environments, and these problems are also what Ackoff terms "multi-disciplinary messes", and it might be that universities become the spaces where heterogeneous solutions are assembled and then diffused into wider society.

2.2.4. The emergence of the idea of the third mission

Within the preceding pressures, it is possible to discern a number of complementary rationales behind the recent emergence of the 'third mission'. These various pressures and rationales are clearly dependent on a range of different pressures operating at a range of different scales; at a European scale, there has been an emphasis on the development of student mobility and the construction of trans-European research networks, which have emphasised particular types of intra-European competition. Some national systems have promoted marketisation and regulation much further than others, with the UK being in the vanguard of those. The UK has also been in the lead of encouraging commercialisation activity, with increasing direct funding given to universities to exploit their research activities and increase the value of their educational courses to employers since the early 1990s.

In an attempt to simplify the range of pressures which universities are under, and the complexity of 'engagement' activities which this has produced, we have attempted to draw together the various types of pressure which operate at different scales, and distinguished (after Goddard *et al.*, 2007), three different scales at which universities are being encouraged to engage. These three scales are the global/ transnational (flows of investments and talent), the national (sectoral policy measures) and the regional (culture, skills, consultancy). The kinds of benefits which universities can produce are also articulated at these scales, from participation in transnational

research networks, to contributing to national research programmes, to supporting the development of new urban quarters.

Figure 1 The university as the place where competing interests are joined up
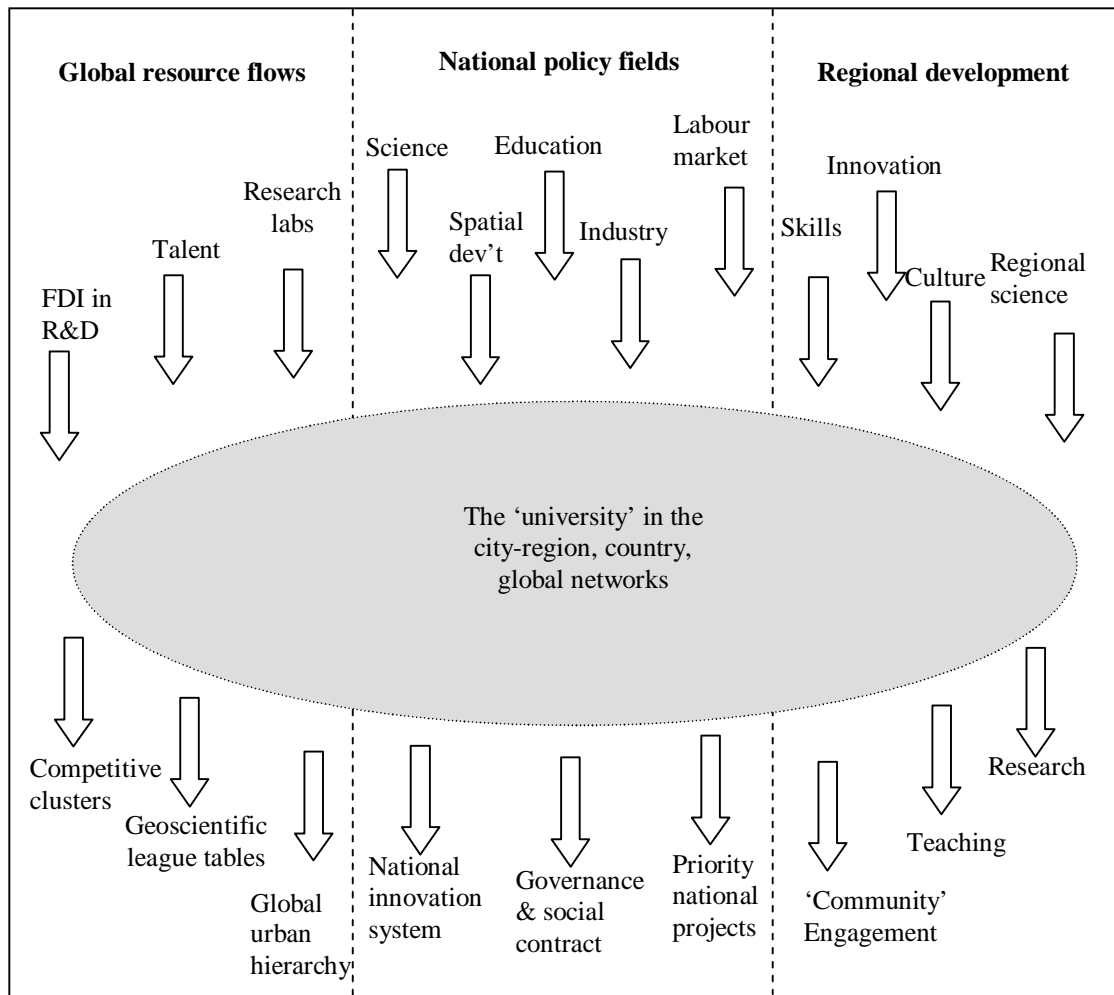
Source: authors' own design, after Goddard et al., 2007.

This diagram highlights the complexity of the third mission and the wider societal compact. As Barnett notes (2003, p. 137) "engagement comes … in many guises, but some of these have powerful backers". If we return to the issue that the debate around the societal compact is taking place within **inter-institutional network accountability** then it is clear that socially excluded communities have very weak voices and representation within these networks. National policy funders typical invest significantly in their respective policy fields, and foreign investment in R&D laboratories can also be significant and eye-catching. This seems to suggest that the 'societal compact' as it is currently evolving is likely to exclude rather than include the interests of excluded communities.

2.3. THE BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

To explore this apparent subordinate status of community engagement within the third mission as part of a reinvented and reinvigorated societal compact, we now turn to explore what barriers can hinder effective engagement by universities. There are some barriers which can make it difficult for universities to engage with excluded

communities – they are institutionally arranged for inter-institutional network accountability through bureaucratic norms of boards, platforms, steering groups and audit, and may find it difficult to deal with organisations not similarly configured. HEIs are highly responsive to incentives and targets set by market-making organisations (HE regulators), and community engagement is rather elusive and difficult to set targets for. Finally, an argument can be advanced that for a variety of reasons, commercial and business engagement has already occupied the institutional engagement space within HEIs. In this section, we look at the barriers which exist to effective engagement between universities and excluded communities.

2.3.1. The slipperiness of engagement within NPM

A key issue for societal engagement is that outputs are very difficult to specify and to measure – a range of learned societies, research councils, education ministries, HE lobby groups and universities have spent a huge amount of time trying to identify clear social impacts (*inter alia* SSHRC, 2001; RKTTG, 2004; Metrics Expert Group, 2006; British Academy, 2008; U-Map, 2008). In the context of new public management, where what is measured matters, a failure to effectively measure community engagement means that it is not managed, and thus from the perspective of increasingly centralised and managerial institutions, engagement in the round does not matter as an institutional mission (May, 2007; Greenwood, 2007).

The key issue for the management of engagement is the fundamental incommensurability of the impacts which engagement brings. Unlike with commercial engagement, these are not directly expressable in financial terms – how to bring together newspaper articles, student volunteering, cultural facilities, social cohesion and media appearances within a pricing framework. There has been a recurrent failure – replicated internationally – by anyone to identify measures for engagement which command broad support. Performance measures identify efficiency and allow it to be rewarded – but in terms of community engagement, the issue of fairness is much harder to settle, as the references cited above have repeatedly experienced in what at the outset seems like a relatively simple challenge.

Firstly, there is a basic issue of diversity of activity and incommensurability of outputs – unlike with commercialisation, there is no simple proxy such as dollar market value which allows activities as diverse as newspaper articles, public lectures, exhibitions, sports centre usage, health services, coffee shops and museums to be reconciled. Secondly, there is a question about what kinds of engagement fit with what kind of institutional mission, and whether it is fair to differentiate funding and rewards according to the institutional profile. Finally, there is a set of technical issues around the cost of generating meaningful data when it is not already collected. These seem to suggests that developing management measures for community engagement is a very difficult task.

The second limit to the development of effective engagement incentives is the emergence of university ranking systems both at the national level, but also increasingly internationally. Engagement criteria is basically absent in the data used for compiling various league tables. As university senior managers seek to improve their performance in these league tables, the pursuit of the variables which are counted by *Times Higher Education* or *Jiao Tong* precludes an interest in the softer areas. Marginson (2007) has a particularly stinging critique of ranking systems for

failing to deal with the issues that really matter to higher education, of which one is clearly engagement.

The purpose of these tables is ostensibly to provide information for customer decision-making, and to help the operation of more transparent markets in higher education. The increasing internationalisation of higher education, and in particular, increasing numbers of foreign students has driven this need for market information. But alongside this information role, these league tables are also serving more symbolic purposes, becoming enrolled into the stories that universities tell to science funders about their impact. There is some evidence that these league tables are themselves becoming a target for policy-intervention, with policy-makers targeting improving the performance of their institutions globally, by concentrating on those that perform most strongly on national measures. But the main ranking systems and league tables have been criticised for their subjective methodology and partiality of indicator set, and it has been extremely difficult to incorporate measures of societal benefit and community engagement within the ranking methodologies.

2.3.2. Preferences for business & commercial engagement

The second set of barriers arise out of the fact that universities have become increasingly active in engagement in recent years, but for policy reasons, this has primarily been around commercialisation and entrepreneurship. The idea of the entrepreneurial university emerged in the 1990s in a time of financial stringency. Central to this notion was that universities could reduce their dependence on the state by generating their own income by exploiting their past investments in intellectual property through creating new spin-off companies, patenting and licensing deals. A few really eye-catching deals helped to create a sense of potential for income generation, such as Leuven University's $1bn royalty stream from licensing a transverse plasmin activitor patent to Genentech in the US.

In the US, the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM) helped to create a new occupation within the university system, that of the business development manager, who generated HEI income from its established knowledge base. AUTM helped to develop the norms, assumptions and metrics for this new community, which was wholeheartedly welcomed across the Atlantic in Europe. Burton Clarke (1998) set out his ideal type of the ideal entrepreneurial university, comprising five elements which together created the conditions for income generation.

In the context of understanding the barriers which have emerged to the formation of a community engagement mission, two elements are particularly salient here, firstly the strengthened managerial core and secondly the extended development periphery. There has been an increasing shift of universities towards behaving corporately as businesses, introducing top-down managerial norms replacing notions of collectivity and collegiality. Secondly, universities have created internal institutions able to manage the financial risk and imperatives of dealing with commercial organisations to generate a profit, Jones Evans *et al.* (1999) highlighting the emergence of the Industrial Liaison Office as an institution within universities capable of handling the legalistic issues to maximise revenues.

Our contention is that one side-effect of this has been to give commercialisation first-mover advantages in terms of the changes made to university cultures. Although some HEIs institutions do have locally-oriented missions, in reality there are

significant barriers which can prevent universities from reinventing themselves as promoters of social inclusion. On the other hand, universities are contradictory institutions, institutions evolved to balance divergent philosophies of knowledge, embodying and supporting that contradiction, allowing quite different activity strands to mutually cross-fertilise, whilst maintaining public support. As Marginson (2007) notes,

> "[t]he values practised by individuals, or by units for teaching or research or institutional marketing, sometimes mutually contradictory do not embody the values of the institution *qua* institution. Only a small number of purposes and ethical regimes are common across the whole institution. These are purposes and ethical regimes that sustain universities as self reproducing, knowledge-forming organisation. Broader agreement is not just impossible, it is undesirable "(p. 127)

Our argument is therefore that the rise of ideas of entrepreneurship, commercialisation and knowledge exchange through business interaction have become one of these purposes and ethical regimes across the university. These have been reinforced within institutions by increasing business representation on the governance organisations of universities, which had previously been made up from (often democratically-elected) representatives of various internal stakeholder communities. This has been accompanied by a transformation of the culture of the Rectorate from passive stewardship to active executive management. This suggests that a reason for the failure of the community engagement mission to emerge is an absence of will and resources within the university to undertake it, in part linked to the reliance of universities on external income generation, and the configuration of their 'extended development peripheries' precisely towards contractual profit-based relationships.

2.3.3. Systemic barriers between universities and communities

It is important not to argue that universities have no autonomy because, as the emergence of the business engagement agenda shows, early adopters are critical to prove that a model for behaviour can work, and help work with government to develop instruments and funding streams which support that activity. There are a range of reasons why universities may choose not to engage with communities which emerge in a reading of the literature.

- Management choices – the absence of someone responsible for community engagement at a high level and the machinery to deliver continuous performance improvement (Watson, 2007)

- Financial incentives – the way that other funders and investors do not incentive HEI community engagement. (Chatterton, 2000)

- Skills for engagement – the absence of the skills to ensure that strategic intentions are delivered by a motivated academic staff and effective support services (Kezar, 2005)

- Fit with regional needs – a poor fit between the capacities of the university and the demands of the university, either subjects, or what university wants from community (Fontes & Coombes, 2001)

- Staff orientation – a focus on global excellence diverts or prevents academics from spending time on engaging with communities (Bond & Patterson, 2005)

- Student direction – students are isolated by housing choice, curriculum demands, accreditation requirements and cultural gap from having a wider impact on their communities (Miscovic & Hoop, 2006)

Likewise, although hard-to-reach communities may lack social capital, that is a rather derivative explanation of why universities do not engage with them. The reality is that hard-to-reach communities have many features which can make it hard to universities to work with them. At a time when universities may be wrestling with the internal dilemmas highlighted above, then this can make it a great deal of effort to work also reach-out to communities which are not necessarily attempting to reach in,.

- Structural divides: there are aspects of the community which do not easily fit into the institutional arrangements which universities have created for engagement

- Policy issues: the absence of incentives, instruments and methodologies in engagement policies which fit with community needs.

- Personal characteristics: there are particular attributes in the community which resist engagement and encourage greater distance from universities.

This can create what appear to be an insurmountable set of barriers inhibiting university-community engagement, which is in itself a considerable disincentive to co-operation. The two sets of barriers identified above is shown in the figure below, which lists the range of barriers which can inhibit interaction between universities and local communities. On the left hand side, there are the considerable disincentives and distractions which universities encounter which can reduce their community engagement. The right hand side of the diagram explores the features of hard-to-reach communities which may make them less attractive as engagement partners for universities.

Figure 2 Barriers potentially inhibiting interaction between universities and communities

University		Community
Engagement not compulsory	Absence of 'roots' in communities	Absence of leaders to sit on boards/ committees
Absence of institutional strategy	Community do not make demands	Lack of capacity to mobilise around issues
Absence of engagement manager	Community seen as a 'problem'	Misunderstanding of university capacities
Diffusion of responsibility	Third parties divert university activity	Invisible barriers put communities off engagement
Lack of dedicated funding stream	Other funders buy research 'on' communities	Formal structures exclude communities
Incentives to lure students	Global networks favoured over local links	Engagement projects have high staff turnover
Core funding ignores engagement	Excluded communities avoided/ ignored	Community skills mismatch with project demands
Other funders do not demand engagement	Town/ gown tensions create student enclaves	Communities lack knowledge absorptive capacity
No career structure for engagement	Enclaves 'turn off' non-tradn local students	Individual activists not repeatable learning
Engagement seen peripheral hobby	Difficulty of rewarding student engagement	Exclusion from professional engagement discourses
Do 'research on a community'	Engagement not fit into professional curriculum	Absence of individuals wanting to engage
Lack of subject knowledge	Professionalisation of engagement routes	Engagement helps cleverest to leave community
Physical distance from communities		Engagement driven by experts not local learning
		Absence of individuals with 'feet in both camps'

Source: Working Paper 1

2.3.4. The practical and conceptual limits of the third mission

It is important not to regard the preceding diagram as some kind of proof that engagement is impossible, rather to point out that in the extremely crowded environment within which universities operate it is difficult. To understand the realistic potential for the emergence of a community engagement third mission, it is first necessary to appreciate the limits to the 'third mission' more generally which restrict what can be achieved. The third mission is not an abstraction – there is little consensus about what universities *should* be doing to contribute to society – although there is a great deal of understanding about *what* universities are already doing. There is no real sense of an 'ideal type' of third mission – and the commercialisation mission appears to have emerged as the 'least bad' incarnations of the kinds of benefits which universities might bring to society.

One way to understand the diversity of reality is to begin from the perspective that the "third mission" varies considerably along a number of dimensions. There are clear differences between national higher education systems, notably Latin American systems which mandate a one-year voluntary placement as a requirement of graduation (Tandon, 2007), which is cognate to but different from ideas of service learning in America. There are differences between appropriate engagement missions dependent on the profile of the particular institution (*cf.* chapter 5). Universities have a degree of autonomy to exercise their own choice and discretion in defining and realising their own third missions, and in particular, universities like Warwick and Strathclyde were in the vanguard of establishing the idea of the entrepreneurial university. The third mission also varies with the kind of pressure that external stakeholders are able to exert: in 2005 in Finland, for example, the government made developing regional engagement strategies compulsory for HEIs.

Rather than talking baldly about the emergence of a new third mission, it is important to have a more nuanced view of a more diverse process of a change in the way universities engage, their reasons for engagement, and with whom they engage. Shifts in the various pressures outlined above are shifting engagement behaviour in different contexts, and as we will see in Chapter 4, relatively small differences in university governance post-devolution are producing visible impacts in terms of that engagement behaviour, particularly with hard-to-reach communities. Because these pressures are to some degree inter-dependent, engagement behaviour tends to slowly evolve rather than undergoing dramatic and lumpy changes.

Community Engagement is often a relatively small element of any university engagement mission, and it is important to be realistic about the scope that institutions have to become engaged. Community Engagement is likely to emerge in those institutions where there is a congruence between the various dimensions outlined above in favour of more work with harder to reach communities. Where there is a reinforcing between the various dimensions, then it is to be expected that there would be a gradual evolution of the university, its key stakeholders and its community partners towards a situation of more engagement.

2.4. AN EMERGENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE 'ENGAGED UNIVERSITY'

The preceding section highlights the fact that Community Engagement can be regarded as an emergent property, something with very few ubiquitous features, heavily dependent on context and choices, past and present. In an attempt to develop

a more conceptual understanding of the place of the Community Engagement mission within universities, it is therefore necessary to understand the dynamics of this emergence, the process of becoming engaged. From that, it is possible to distinguish a range of competing rationalities for engagement, and also to categorise the different kinds of activities which are typically undertaken in "becoming engaged".

2.4.1. The interplay of drivers and barriers: the idea of the engaged university

Although it is possible to identify characteristics of engaged universities, the fact that engagement is an emergent, path dependent process means that it is best understood in terms of progress along a journey. In 2.3.4, we highlighted how there are a range of stakeholders in the process of a university becoming engaged, and in the course of that process, those external stakeholders themselves also change as well as the university developing its own internal systems, approaches and culture. The extent of engagement by a university can therefore be regarded as the extent to which these different groups become more supportive of engagement. Engagement therefore involves the addressing of these barriers in ways that reconfigure the constellation of engagement stakeholders as more sympathetic toward engagement.

The first group is the university itself, and it is worth distinguishing between management and staff. University management may experience a range of intrinsic barriers to engagement (ie not externally determined by stakeholders) which may be attitudinal, infrastructural or relational. Conversely, staff may experience a range of disincentives to engage which may originate from the university, from their core funders' goals, from personal inclination or capacity. The key point is that universities cannot 'bootstrap' community engagement, because effective engagement involves changing perceptions of other key stakeholders.

The main group of external stakeholders are those that fund universities' core missions, and those that regulate university behaviour. In the UK, the first tier of stakeholder are the Funding Councils and Research Councils; in England, the Science and Universities ministry is a second tier stakeholder, regulating HEFCE and RCUK at one remove. Behind DIUS lies the Treasury, whose insistence on calculating rates of return on investments has driven DIUS to pressure HEFCE and Funding Councils to try to make universities' contributions more visible and enumerable. In becoming engaged, universities may help to configure these various stakeholder groups to become more accepting of engagement as a more core mission – in the HEIF 3 engagement funding stream, there was a 10% quantum awarded for intangible (i.e. community) engagement activity to which universities responded well.

The final group are the excluded communities themselves. In 2.3.3, we identified how hard-to-reach communities own characteristics inhibited engagement by universities. It is widely accepted that effective business engagement by universities even in sparse innovation environments can help to create a more munificent environment for knowledge exchange and commercialisation. Likewise, one would expect there to be evidence in those communities themselves that they were becoming better at engagement, in ways that corresponded to their increasing social capital, which in turn represents their core benefits from the engagement process.

2.4.2. Rationalities for university engagement

The emergent nature of Community Engagement means that for it to happen, then one or more of these groupings must be committed to the concept for a long time whilst the groups of stakeholders respond and build engagement in that particular context. This in turn implies that the universities – as core stakeholders in university behaviour – must be able to identify a long-term rationale for engaging, and that over time, that rationale or those rationales will become embedded within institutional behaviours, cultures, norms and routines. Whilst Manners (2009) identifies three main rationales, the moral, the functional and the commercial, we would highlight a fourth rationale, the inadvertent, in which Community Engagement is part of the regular activities of universities without necessarily being identified as such.

The first rationale for engagement is one of benevolence, what Manners terms the moral case for engagement. The moral rationale is that universities have a duty to wider society to engage with them in return for their privileged societal position. For those universities that find themselves near to poverty and social exclusion, they have a duty to contributing to finding solutions to those problems. One example of this is in the case of Durham University, who in Royal Petition to King George V at the height of the Depression highlighting the Durham academic tradition has been profoundly shaped by its location in the North East:-

> "In the loving concerns with the Kings show for the welfare of their people, it is known to your Majesty that the area in which our university is situated has long been suffering from severe economic decline. We hope that both directly by co-operating with the many agencies engaged in works of alleviation and indirectly by labouring to increase knowledge and to qualify youth for wider opportunities of work, our university has not been unmindful of the honoured tradition which associates learning with the relief of need".

Durham University Royal petition, 6th May 1935

The second rationale for engagement is a more opportunistic rationale, where engagement is necessary to achieve particular aims of the university. In the USA, much community engagement by universities is concerned with good neighbourliness, and in particular, reducing neighbour resistance to campus expansion plans (Wiewel & Perry, 2005). Other examples of opportunistic engagement include using engagement as a means of recruiting poorer students to hit Widening Participation targets, or in being able to use a community as a laboratory to attract research funding.

The third rationale for engagement is that a business case can be made for engagement activities and universities can approach engagement with the certainty that it will not undermine the delivery of its core teaching and research activities. Manchester University offers a very good example of this, receiving funding for its merger from the regional development agency in return for reporting quarterly against its Community Engagement activities. There are other examples where RDAs have specifically funded universities to undertake engagement, and in those cases, the benefits and costs to the university are made clear at the outset.

The final rationale for engagement by universities is that of serendipity, where universities unselfconsciously engage with communities in the course of their core activities. Excluded communities are target groups for all kinds of professions whose main training comes through higher vocational degree courses, such as law, nursing

and medicine, planning, social work and education. University staff can be intimately concerned with ensuring placements that bring their pupils into contact with, and learn from, these communities – around ¼ of all Dundee University's students, for example, fall into this category, whilst at the University of Chester around 200 students (around 5% of the cohort) undertake their compulsory Work-Based Learning module in the voluntary and community sector. Evidence from elsewhere (e.g. Kitson, 2009) suggests that engagement is a common activity within the university sector whilst not being actively promoted. In the context of an emergent mission, it is significant that many institutions have a base load of engagement activity that may pass largely unrecognised, which communities and governmental stakeholders can encourage universities to deal with more systematically.

2.4.3. Practicalities of university-community engagement

In this report, we have dealt with community engagement in the most general terms, defining it primarily as a subset of the third mission, to some extent black-boxing and stereotyping the groups with whom engagement takes place. To give a sense of the kinds of activities which take place under the rubric of engagement, it is necessary to consider the various ways in which universities come into contact with these kinds of communities, and then the various interactions and relationships which may build up. Allen (1989) developed a hierarchy of activities by which universities engaged with society, and the benefits of the social benefits which accrued from university involvement. These benefits were defined rather broadly, but Baumunt's assertion that the university has essentially become a post-modern phenomenon is borne out by this analysis.

Figure 3 The hierarchy of university engagement missions

The hierarchy of university engagement missions

	Knowledge	Preserving existing knowledge
		Disseminating knowledge for learning
		Discovering knowledge via research
		Applying knowledge in practice
The needs of society	The arts	Acting as a centre for arts activity
	The discovery and development of talent	Developing skills in talented individuals
		Creating skills for national productivity
		Offering education for all (inc. overseas)
		Providing all types of cont. ed.
	The university experience	Providing staff/ student satisfaction

Source: Allen, 1989, p. 102-103

Separately in 1982, an OECD report "*The university and the community: the problems of changing relationships*" was published which included a classification of potential university contributions to communities. This report dealt with all universities' stakeholder communities, including government, business and what we refer here to as "communities". The paper acutely observed the rise of technology transfer offices (such as Leuven R&D) but also noted that universities at that time were also engaged with society. The report offered a typology of university activities which could benefit communities. This is reproduced in table 1 below:-

Table 1 a typology of university services for excluded communities

Way of providing service	Mechanism for delivering service
University puts facilities at the disposal of the community	Use of equipment, premises, laboratories, 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: CERI (1982)

In 1999, the Office of University Partnerships of the US Department for Housing and Urban Development published the report *University Community Partnerships—Current Practices*. This offered a seven-fold typology of the actions undertaken by universities which benefited communities and in which communities could become engaged:-

- Service Learning
- Service Provision
- Faculty Involvement
- Student Volunteerism
- The Community in the Classroom
- Applied Research.
- Major Institutional Change

2.4.4. Key research questions for the paper

The key question is what is the relationship between the barriers, the rationales for engagement, and the practical engagement activities undertaken between universities and excluded communities. Our argument is that in being an emergent outcome, various actors work together on the practicalities of delivering activities, each for their own reasons, and over time, the barriers to effective engagement are reduced. The heuristic is that as a group of actors develop a set of activities over time, this in turn makes those partners more willing to countenance university-community engagement. This in turn reconfigures the environment for that engagement to encourage these interactions, and to reconfigure the institutional cultures to be more supportive of that activity. We attempt to represent this process of 'becoming engaged' in the figure below.

This heuristic is a 'best case' scenario of where an institution does become more engaged, and underpins that engagement by working with its regulatory and community stakeholders to become more supportive of that engagement. Our argument is not that there is a single pathway within this process of becoming engaged, rather that on the basis of the literature review, this suggests that there are a range of pathways which might be more propitious to the development of engagement missions than others. These more successful pathways might be shaped by a number of distinguishing features, such as who initiates the particular activity, which motivations underpin the activity, or how successful activities address the barriers to engagement.

In the remainder of this working paper, we explore the detailed dynamics of university-community engagement from the perspective of universities, to ask the overarching question of whether it is possible to discern dominant pathways by which (particular kinds of) HEIs become engaged. Successful engagement we define as engagement between universities and communities – involving activities whose completion improves the environment for further co-operation by changing internal and external engagement cultures. To do this, we will focus on six main research questions:-

1. What are the main motivations for universities seeking to become engaged which lead to successful engagement?

2. How do universities go about the business of engagement, internally through policies, structures, and incentives, and externally, involving hard-to-reach communities and other key stakeholders?

3. What kind of factors influence whether particular engagement activities succeed, are regarded as successful and provide a solid basis for further engagement?

4. How do successful engagement activities lay foundations for future engagement by addressing the wide range of internal and external barriers that inhibit university community engagement?

5. To what extent do successful engagement activities by universities help to persuade governmental regulatory actors of the importance of the community engagement mission? and

6. How does motivation, activity, behaviour and consequence vary in response to the type of institution undertaking that engagement?

FIGURE 4 THE 'VIRTUOUS CIRCLE' OF UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Serendipity
- Morality
- Commercialisation
- Opportunism

Universities

BARRIERS:

Difficulties in setting targets

Commercialisation agenda

Excellence vs. engagement

BARRIERS:

Lack of governance opportunities

Lack of co-operative opportunities

Lack of mutual knowledge

ACTIVITIES:
Opening facilities
Providing services
Analysing needs
Analysing problems
Solving problems

Government

BARRIERS?

Excluded
Community

- Better connections
- Better coherence
- Better local services

- Solving big problems
- Return on investments
- Joined up government

3. METHODOLOGY

This working paper reports the findings of a survey of all 33 higher education institutions in the North East, North West and Scotland in 2008. This survey attempted to map out the environment for Community Engagement by universities, and in particular to understand the relationships between engagement activities, institutional rationales and the external pressures to which universities are subject. The aim of this survey has in turn been to establish empirically – given the extremely crowded environment for the institutional engagement mission, whether it is possible for university-community engagement to genuinely offer the opportunity for socialised learning to excluded communities.

3.1. STRUCTURATION AND SHIFTING POLITICAL ECONOMIES: THE PROJECT RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The fundamental starting point for this research project is to consider whether universities can help to reintegrate excluded communities with the knowledge economy. This is rooted in an understanding of contemporary society as being underpinned by a network governance model. These governance networks decide the allocation of resources within society, both public and private, and there has been a shift away from hierarchical, corporatist relationships towards multi-level public-private networks. Relative societal power is effectively the ability to produce collective outcomes which better meet that institution's aims, using knowledge, legitimacy and resources to influence others in designing collective solutions.

This provides a lens to reconceptualise social exclusion, as indeed *inter alia* Byrne (1999) and Moulaert *et al.* (2000) have done. In a corporatist age, social exclusion can be equated to exclusion from general welfare rights established through state regulation regimes, through absence of housing rights or labour market protection. In the shift to network governance, social exclusion has in turn been recast as an inability to engage with collective institutions who operate and represent those societal grouping's interests in the relevant policy networks. Socially excluded groups lack knowledge or resources to challenge their own situation, and may not mobilise collective legitimacy to build interest in their situation, although successful examples of urban social movements can be striking.

In this project, we have rationalised this problem of social exclusion as a social capital problem, and drawing on Putnam's (1997) division, the absence of both bonding and bridging social capital. We begin from Bordieu's (1972) position that social capital is a form of capital which allows you to dominate and influence the capital of others, as this seems to encompass the key problem for such communities in governance networks. We follow Moulaert *et al.* (2000) in arguing that such communities are both internally fragmented and externally distantiated. They may lack internal coherence to articulate their legitimacy, and the relationships and connections to utilise their legitimacy and knowledge in wider (urban development) governance networks.

We draw on socialised theories of learning to argue that one benefit which university engagement might bring to communities is to build social capital which helps those communities to improve their situation with contemporary governance networks. By becoming more powerful in those networks, they can help to ensure that policy and

private investment decisions reflect those communities' needs, and help to reverse the out-flow of investment undermining those communities. It is not the particular activities which are significant in this analysis, but the lasting legacy which those communities bring in terms of improving social capital, developing relationships with external bodies and encouraging internal coherence and reflectiveness that make those communities able to better function within governance networks.

The model of socialised learning that we use to explore whether university-community engagement helps build social capital is that of the communities of practice approach set out by Wenger (1998). The model highlights how where groupings of individuals work together collectively to solve shared problems, the solution process and the learning becomes embedded in a wider set of social routines. These routines underpin interactions and relationships, as well as holding the 'received wisdom' of the group. By building up relationships around the excluded community, within that community as well as to other actors in the governance network, this learning activity has the opportunity to reposition those excluded communities within these governance networks, and to re-engage them with the knowledge society.

3.2. ESTABLISHING 'THE UNIVERSITY' POSITION: FROM HEURISTIC TO EMERGENCE

This is a very abstract model of university-community engagement benefit, and we are operationalising it over two phases, exploring engagement at two levels, firstly whether university engagement has the 'space' to allow genuinely socialised learning processes, and secondly whether in practice universities and communities are co-learning together – via communities of practice – in ways that builds up social capital in those excluded communities. This working paper reports the first phase of the research project, looking at whether – despite all the pressures on universities detailed in 2.3 above, there is sufficient conceptual space for universities to co-learn with excluded communities.

It is important to look at the practice of the various rationales for engagement. In some rationales suggested above, it is clear that there is a rationale of detached benevolence or social responsibility in which universities 'do good things' to excluded communities. This offers almost no opportunity for these excluded communities to work together with universities and co-learn, shape university activity and help make the university a better representative of its interests. Conversely, problem analysis at the behest of the community suggests that excluded communities can become potentially influential in shaping research agendas.

In part this opportunity is an emergent property of the decisions taken by policy-makers, universities and communities. This is exemplified by the Community University Research Alliance policy in Canada, where *post hoc* consultancy found a great deal of difference in how far communities shaped research agendas and co-learning opportunities, which in return reflected the willingness of universities to take seriously the Community Engagement agenda. So in this first phase of the research we consider the reality of how universities are engaging with communities and the scope that this offers for co-learning, the details of which will be explored in the second project phase and in subsequent working papers.

We will therefore focus on the 'university' element of the model presented in 2.4.4, to explore the potential there is for engagement activities *with* excluded communities

that create opportunities for socialised learning that leads to the development of social capital. This model fragment is reproduced in the figure below, highlighting the three key elements of the research, the tangible activities, the university attitudes and the barriers to engagement experienced by universities. In this research, we look at which attitudes prevail in universities, the kinds of activities they support, and whether in those activities they reduce the barriers to engagement to facilitate more, and more effective engagement, better oriented towards socialised learning by community partners.

Figure 5 University involvement in creating socialised learning opportunities for excluded communities in engagement activities
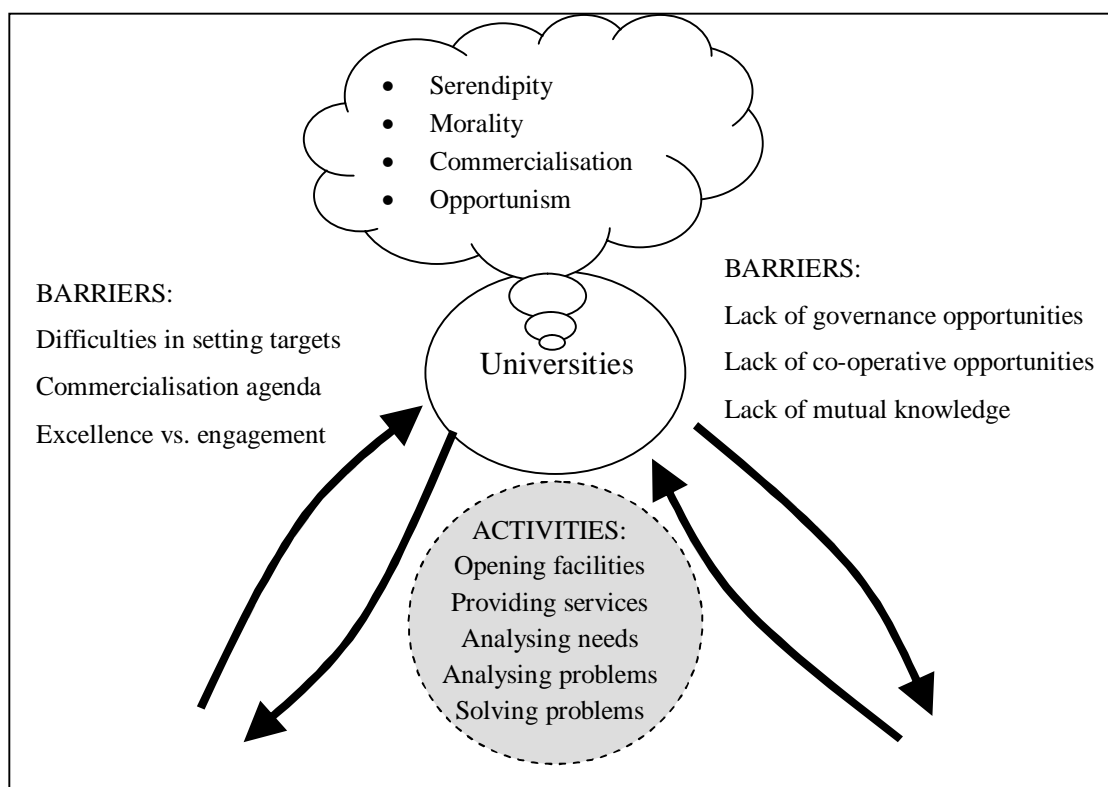
3.3. A SURVEY OF UNIVERSITY ACTIVITY: THE METHOD

The basis for this research was the development of a survey of a number of different regions with significant numbers of different types of universities with excluded communities with which they might work. We did not want the research to produce null returns where there were no naturally excluded communities for the universities to work with, and selected regions to reflect this need. We selected three regions, the North East, the North West and Scotland, home to 33 HEIs and with a good range of institutional types, including civic research universities, former polytechnics and small specialised colleges. These regions are home to cities with the most severe urban social exclusion problems, and we expected on the basis of prior knowledge that the three regions would provide good examples of university-community engagement, for example through our knowledge of UR-Mad and the Beacons for Public Engagement (*qvs*).

The heuristic for the method we proposed at the start of the project was to interview "community development managers" in each of the universities, or at least someone

in those institutions with a responsibility for those activities. We have previously undertaken research on university business development managers, and found that they were able to convey concisely a sample of business engagement activities, the university engagement philosophy, and provide a narrative for its development over time. We had expected that the apparent policy emphasis on working with excluded communities (e.g. HEACF) would have endowed universities with staff with a good understanding of Community Engagement in the context of their institution. We planned to interview the appropriate person in each university to gain a set of institutional narratives and overviews.

It quickly became clear that this assumption was untrue, and that in very few institutions were there such individuals with sufficient institutional knowledge. We therefore reconfigured the methodology to create a set of synthetic institutional narratives on the basis of a wider sample of interviews at each institution. To attempt to provide a set of perspectives within each institution, we therefore attempted to speak to people from four levels within the university, a senior manager responsibility for Community Engagement at board level, an engagement manager responsible for business and community engagement, an academic undertaking engagement and then someone else involved in engagement from a support services or student perspective. We also complemented these interviews with documentary analysis, looking at university strategies, mission statements, and other public documents appropriate to the national context. In England, these included their bids into the Higher Education Innovation Fund, whilst in Scotland, we examined their Regional Access Forum prospectuses and Cultural Engagement Strategies.

On the basis of the interviews and the background reading, we compiled 33 institutional fiches which attempted to create synthetically a survey of each university's engagement activity, its evolution and its context against other core university missions.

The key elements of the university community engagement institutional fiche

- What is the university doing in terms of community engagement?

- How is community engagement promoted, supported and sustained in the university?

- How has the community engagement agenda developed within the university?

- Why has the university become interested in Community Engagement (if applicable)?

- How have the university developed to their current status and activity levels around Community Engagement?

- What activities is the university promoting under the rubric of community engagement?

- How do you gauge the overall successes and impacts of Community Engagement activities?

- How have you institutionally promoted that particular engagement activity?

- Why is Community Engagement something that you are not institutionally interested in (if applicable)?

These fiches were agreed with participants although were confidential documents and not made available outside of the core research team. On that basis, a two stage analysis of activities was made. The first phase involved the development of a typology for Community Engagement activities, which is presented in Chapter 4.

The second analysis phase draws on the figure 5 model to try to understand the dynamics of the "virtuous circle of becoming engaged", exploring the three different dimensions in turn. The first dimension is the relationships and dynamics in the evolving attitudes to engagement by the university, both senior managers but also across the whole university family. The second dimension is the way that activities are constructed in networked relationships between a range of competing stakeholders and how that affects their context within the university. The third dimension is the scope to which the theoretical and practical tensions identified in section 2.3 have been addressed in the course of assembling activities. These three dimensions are each analysed in the following chapters, 5 to 7.

3.4. A PARTIAL SNAPSHOT OF A COMPLEX FIELD: THE OUTCOME

In the remainder of the report, to preserve anonymity of participants, the data from our survey is presented in an authoritative voice. However, we recognise that our survey is extremely limited and so in this final section we present explicitly the limits to our research and to our certainty about our findings. The fieldwork for the research took place between January and August 2008, involving mainly face-to-face interviews, but also some telephone interviews, with the respondents as set out in 3.3 above. There were a total of 113 interviews across the 33 institutions, split relatively evenly between the four categories of interviewee. The interviewee numbers by class and institution are provided in the table below.

Table 2 Interviewees by institution and class.

Institution Name	SMT	BDO	Acad	Suppt	Total
Durham University	1	1	2	0	4
Newcastle University	1	1	1	2	5
Northumbria University	1	2	1	0	4
University Of Sunderland	1	0	3	2	6
University Of Teesside	1	0	2	3	6
University Of Bolton	1	1	1	1	4
University Of Central Lancashire (Uclan)	1	0	0	1	2
University Of Chester	0	2	0	4	6
University Of Cumbria	0	0	1	1	2
Edge Hill University	1	1	0	4	6
Lancaster University	0	1	0	1	2
University Of Liverpool	1	1	1	2	5
Liverpool Hope University	2	1	5	1	9
Liverpool John Moore's University	1	1	0	1	3
University Of Manchester	0	0	0	1	1
Manchester Metropolitan University	0	1	1	1	3
University Of Salford	1	0	0	0	1
Dundee University	1	1	0	1	3
Abertay University	1	0	1	2	4
The University Of St. Andrews	1	0	0	1	2
University Of Aberdeen	1	1	0	0	2
University Of Edinburgh	0	2	0	0	2
Glasgow Caledonian University	1	1	0	0	2
Heriot-Watt University	1	1	0	0	2
Napier University	0	3	1	2	6
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	0	2	0	0	2
Robert Gordon University	1	1	0	0	2
University Of Stirling	0	2	1	0	3
University Of Strathclyde	1	2	1	0	4
Uhi Millennium Institute	0	1	2	0	3
University Of The West Of Scotland	1	3	0	0	4
University Of Glasgow	1	1	1	0	3
TOTAL	**23**	**34**	**25**	**31**	**113**

The first limit to the research was the fact that it was impossible to get a good overview of what was going on at particular institutions. A number of the institutions we had interviewed had attempted to map engagement comprehensively and it had been unsuccessful because the difficulty of mapping made it a significant effort and time commitment. This in turn meant that by the time the institutions had completed the mapping exercise, it was out of date and of relatively limited use in moving their

strategy forward (*cf.* 6.3). This mirrored our own findings, that it was impossible to produce an authoritative audit of institutional activity, and the narratives were therefore an attempt to interrelate the specific stories we were told about institutional engagement and development of the engagement mission with the activities that were drawn to our attention.

Alongside this restriction, we did identify a great deal of activity taking place across all the institutions interviewed. In chapter 4, we produce a fourfold classification of that activity, with twelve sub-classes, and we found that every HEI was undertaking activity in a majority of those sub classes. That activity was not always large scale or significant, but it is clear that engagement is taking place across a range of institutions. This fits with the findings of Kitson's (2009) that a significant minority of UK academics are involved with some kind of engagement (fairly broadly defined, and not restricted to excluded communities).

A further limitation of this methodology is the fact that it does not allow the opportunity to explore substantively the issue of whether co-learning did indeed take place, and help to develop social capital in the excluded communities. All the research did was identify a number of arenas (substantive activities) where universities and excluded communities did appear to be working together to create new knowledges. The dynamics of those arenas, the question of whether or not it constituted a community of practise and the lasting benefits of that engagement are to be explored in the various phase 2 research activities, including the Cornerstone Campus (Liverpool Hope University), the Community Financial Solutions Unit (Salford University), and a community arts project in Scotland.

4. UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: A SURVEY

In this chapter, we attempt to present some of the findings about the university-community engagement activities which were taking place in the surveyed institutions. Firstly, to provide some background, we provide an overview and pen portrait of higher education in the three study regions[1], although discussion of the institutions in detail is held off until section 5.2. We then turn to highlight twelve different kinds of activity through which engagement takes place, and some exemplars from the 33 case studies of emblematical engagement. We then attempt to use these examples to develop a taxonomy of engagement activity, under four main headings. We then finally turn to look at the stories which universities tell about their engagement activity, to understand in some more detail the complementary and competing rationales by which Community Engagement is justified.

4.1. ONE COUNTRY, MANY SYSTEMS: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLAND & SCOTLAND

To address this question, we look at how universities are working with excluded communities in three regions of the UK, the North East, the North West and Scotland. These three regions contain areas with relatively high levels of deprivation, as old industrial regions which have suffered gravely from deindustrialisation in the last three decades. The regions contain inner city poverty, rural deprivation in former one-industry towns in rural areas, as well as remote sparsely populated areas in Cumbria, Northumberland and the Highlands & Islands. Governments have prioritised improving these regions' economic performance as part of improving overall national economic performance.

These three regions have a number of problem communities which could potentially benefit from a concerted service effort from universities. One potentially complicating factor arises because Scotland and England have quite distinct university systems, although there is a common set of Research Councils funding research activities across them. To provide some background for the empirical data, this section provides an overview of the HE system in each country, as well as the socio-economic context of each of the three regions.

4.1.1. Scotland: commercialisation and community learning

Scotland occupies the northern half of the British Isles, and is a country of 5.1m inhabitants. The majority of these are resident in the central belt, a 100km urban network running from Edinburgh in the south-east to Glasgow in the south west, and incorporating several urban centres including Dundee, Perth and Stirling. Scotland has many institutional differences with respect to the rest of the UK reflecting its long tradition of independence preserved under the 1707 Act of Union. Scotland has a

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[1] Or better said, sub-national levels of the UK. Although the North East and North West are regions of England, Scotland has a status apart in the devolved UK. For statistical purposes, the three territories of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are often compared with the regions of England because of their similar size. The phrase 'regions' in this paper is used to refer to the regions of England as well as to Scotland without carrying wider implications for Scotland's position in the UK constitution.

long history of industrialisation, although its decline during the 20th century has left a legacy of intensive pockets of urban and rural deprivation.

There are fourteen universities in Scotland, four of which predate the 20th century, the so-called 'Ancients' (Aberdeen, St. Andrews, Glasgow and Edinburgh). A second wave came in the 1960s with the new foundation Stirling and granting of university status to Strathclyde, Herriot-Watt and Dundee. The 'post 1989' institutions comprise Abertay, Robert Gordon, West of Scotland, Napier, Queen Margaret and Glasgow Caledonian. The universities' distribution approximates to Scotland's population distribution, with the exception of the Highlands: universities have been central to efforts to sustain population outside the Glasgow-Edinburgh conurbation.

Community engagement in Scotland has fallen between two policy stools which has obscured the concept in the popular consciousness. On the one hand, science and innovation policy has placed great faith in universities' capacities to drive an intellectual and technological rebirth of Scotland. Universities have been strongly encouraged to create commercialisation institutions to generate revenue from their intellectual capital. On the other, there has been much interest in Community Learning, providing opportunities for people neglected by traditional education pathways by micro-managing local provision from adult, further and higher education. There has also been a widening participation policy, widening access, which makes an element of the university block grant dependent on recruiting from particular deprived Scottish localities.

4.1.2. England: an ambivalence towards community engagement

The 1997 Dearing Report (on the future of higher education in the UK) recommended the introduction of a specific funding stream for "outreach" activity. This was implemented in England as "Higher Education Reach-Out to Business and the Community" in 1998. Despite its title emphasising both business and community, the HEROBAC fund was primarily focused on promoting commercialisation by universities. In the subsequent Science and Innovation White Paper (2004), a new permanent third funding stream was announced, the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF). In the third round, the UK government announced the intention to shift it towards being driven by metrics – but an allowance of 10% was initially to be made to encourage activities outside the narrow metrics (which covers almost all social engagement). This was intended to buy time to allow the development of metrics to measure societal impact and community engagement, but the failure to achieve consensus on a suitable methodology led to the abandonment of the idea – and the allowance – in 2008.

The North East: universities as key knowledge society actors

The North East of England was at the forefront of the industrial revolution, but a century of decline has left its mark as the poorest of the English regions with the lowest population. The region is based around two urban areas based on heavy industry (Teesside and Tyne & Wear) with an expansive, albeit sparsely populated, rural hinterland. There are comparatively few innovative actors in the region, and particularly absent are innovative large businesses. Universities have become highly important to policy makers in trying recent years to reverse the region's decline and build a new competitive future.

There are five universities in the North East; three of these are former polytechnics, Sunderland, Northumbria and Teesside, which have links to local businesses and public sector employees through their vocational educational programmes. The region also has an 'ancient' collegiate university, Durham University, which previously formed a federal university with the colleges which went to form Newcastle University, a classic red-brick institution hosting the region's main medical school. Since the early 1980s, the North Eastern universities have co-operated together around knowledge transfer activities and post-experience education in the regional higher education association, which in its latest incarnation has included a number of community engagement projects including sport, music and art.

The North West: Manchester Knowledge Capital and the future of Barrow

Although the North West of England is also a post-industrial region, it is a region whose economy diverged very strongly in the latter part of the 20th century. Originally, the city of Liverpool thrived as a port gateway, initially importing sugar, and later for the cotton industry, feeding mill towns located at the edge of the Pennines. Manchester emerged as the centre for this textile industrial, and acquired a number of wider regional service functions, which it has successfully levered into a highly productive financial services sector. At the same time, outlying towns such as Barrow and Blackpool have lost much of their rationale. A key challenge for the North West is ensuring that the region's economic success is balanced between these different areas, and in particular reintegrating excluded communities to benefit from Manchester's growing burgeoning economic success.

The North West has an extremely diverse population of universities primarily concentrated around the Mersey-Manchester belt to the south of the region. Manchester and Liverpool each have their own large civic university as well as former polytechnic. There are a number of (relatively small) former teacher training colleges across the region, in Chester, Ormskirk and Liverpool, and universities which were formerly institutes of technology, Salford (1957) and Bolton (2005). There are also polytechnics in Preston and Salford, a 1960s liberal university in Lancaster, as well as the University of Cumbria which defies a simple categorisation[2]. There are several large towns in the North West that do not have a university, and expanding the geography of provision (geographical equity) has been a central thrust of economic stimuli for the universities.

4.2. ENGAGEMENT WITH HARD-TO-REACH COMMUNITIES: A SPECTRUM

For the first stage of the analysis we have identified the differing kinds of activities taking place in the various institutions under the rubric of community engagement. This forms the basis for a later analysis of the kinds of community engagement taking place, and whether they are able to build linkages with more core university missions (teaching and research). We identified eleven distinct kinds of community engagement taking place within universities where there was a clear and identifiable

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[2] The University of Cumbria was formed from a merger of a number of antecedent institutions across the North West, including a Fine Arts college (Cumbria Institution for the Arts) a teacher training college(St. Martins), the 'Carlisle campus' and the Penrith campus of UCLan (Preston). The 'Carlisle campus' had been established by Northumbria University as part of its attempts to expand, and was passed on to UCLan in 2004 as part of Northumbria's refocusing on the North East.

link with core missions (with community engagement 'piggy-backing' onto other investment streams. These are presented in the following section.

4.2.1. Opening facilities up on the campus for use by community groups

Universities have moved in the last fifteen years to aggressively manage their estate assets as profit centres, which can price excluded communities 'off campus' because of their reduced ability to pay room rents to use facilities. A number of universities made commitments to allow community groups to use their campus facilities, and to manage the tension this would create with their paying customers. A question remained about how useful these facilities were when university campuses were not located within excluded communities. In many cases, particular services were delivered within university premises organised by third parties (often in the field of arts or sport), relegating the role of university to caretaker rather than active engager.

One area where community engagement was able to benefit from linking up with other investments was in the field of sport. Large capital investment programmes were impossible without the support of the Lottery and Sport England. Support from these bodies was dependent on demonstrating how the 'community' would benefit from using the facilities. Universities had to have strategies in place to encourage excluded communities into these facilities as a condition for winning these larger projects. A good example of this was the Sporting Edge facility at Edge Hill University, Ormskirk. This was also true for other cultural facilities where large capital investments were made contingent on serious community engagement.

4.2.2. Attracting communities onto the campus to use services

Although universities often house considerable resident populations and host a range of services for those residents which are notionally open to non-residents, these services are not always planned or advertised with outside users in mind. External users might not be prohibited from using these services, but as excluded communities often feel that universities are not for them, the services do not attract residents from excluded communities onto those campuses. By services we are not thinking about cultural activities with their own engagement programmes or continuing education centres, but bars, restaurants, shops and markets.

This area proved difficult to link up with larger capital projects because of the low spending power of excluded communities. Multi-functional campus redevelopments were funded following business plans which required a rate of return to investment, and activities targeting low-income groups could not justify their place on the premises. There were relatively few activities where this was used to challenge the attitude of these residents that they did not belong on university campuses. Given the emphasis on investing in universities as drivers of urban regeneration, this absence was perhaps quite a worrying one.

In the course of the research, we were lucky enough to be able to attend a community conference organised on the Queens Campus, Stockton campus. Entitled 'There is such a thing as society', it was organised by three of the people who we had interviewed in the course of preparing the Durham University fiche (the senior manager, a head of research centre and a researcher). The event brought a number of community groups onto the campus to present about their collaborative work with the

university, and provided a showcase for Durham's community engagement work. However, the interviews also revealed that these partners had been involved in the development of the community engagement model at Durham University more widely, by for example being partners in the community development fund.

4.2.3. Providing non-accredited education in a community setting

Although community education has long been a university task in the UK, there have been a number of disincentives which have undermined university involvement in that. As well as more general financial pressures and the dwindling accessibility of European Social Funds, universities have seen the hypothecated funding streams cut; they have been passed to Regional Access Forums in Scotland and regional AimHigher organisations in England. Funding Councils have targeted resources towards accredited programmes which have squeezed traditional 'liberal' education activities.

This insistence on accreditation has provided a means for upgrading the quality of continuing education from something provided by standalone adult educators to something more closely involving graduate teachers and academic staff. In Dundee, for example, the two universities (Abertay and Dundee) work with the local authority community education programme and Dundee College on the "Discover Learning Partnership" (Discover Learning, 2007). Particular courses are arranged in discussion between community learning managers and university representatives to match vernacular interest with academic interest. Courses have been run on crime writing, forensic science, psychology and sociology in a community setting, leading to accredited qualifications. The involvement of university tutors and quality standards in community education is in practice challenging but its successful management helps to raise the quality of education provided in poorer communities across the city.

4.2.4. Involving the community in university decision-making

One of the most difficult challenges for universities is meaningfully involve the community in university decision-making. Part of the challenge is managing expectations in that involvement, particularly that universities cannot do everything that is possible because there are a range of other stakeholders whose needs must be satisfied. At Liverpool Hope Everton Campus for example, expectations had to be managed around community education and facilities use – the jewellery workshops could conceivably have been used for motor maintenance training but this would have adversely impacted their utility for the students. There are significant time costs for universities in briefing community representatives to be meaningfully engaged with the university – Liverpool Hope managed through establishing a community forum to transparently discuss these issues.

A good example of where the community have been involved to have a significant voice in a university activity is in Newcastle University's Regional Centre of Excellence for the United Nations University. These Regional Centres of Excellence aim to provide opportunities for everyone in a region to access appropriate education. The North East Centre has been established at the initiative of Newcastle University and community groups are involved in its two main governance bodies, the Governing Body and the Management Board. The Governing Body includes a formal representative from the voluntary and community sector, and the management board will involve "a representative of a properly constituted local community action group"

(IRES, 2007, p. 14). This will provide an important voice for this community group to exercise a more general community interest in the way that decisions are taken around the CoE which in turn itself is nested within two flagship university institutions, the Swan Institute, part of the Institute for Research on the environment and sustainability.

4.2.5. Consulting with the community around decision-making

As well as involving the community in the university's general governance process, there have been some efforts to consult with communities when they will be particularly affected by university-led developments. Many universities in the three regions abut poor localities, and in seeking to regenerate their campuses (*qv*) they can create new problems for these communities. A key issue here is of gentrification, which can drive up rents and land prices, so thereby forcing residents to leave, further destabilising already disrupted communities. There have been some efforts to involve communities in these developments to at least ensure that no resistance emerges to destabilise those projects. The most successful consultations are those that manage to configure these university projects so that whilst the university receives its desired campus, there are clear benefits for the community.

This can be a very complex topic, because in many cases deprived communities are already well organised and not easily co-opted into university expansion attempts. In Working Paper 4, we expand at more length on the case of the role of West Everton Community Council as a co-decision maker around the development of a new university campus for Liverpool Hope University in Everton. University attempts to consult via creating a new council actually accelerated a split within West Everton Community Council, and therefore the university abandoned their forum, and chose to work more closely with the WECC, producing a more balanced and equal relationship between the two groups, where for example Hope has been able to benefit from projects initiated by WECC and their other partners (*cf.* In Harmony, WP4).

One example of this has been the development of the West Everton Community Council by Liverpool Hope University. This was originally convened by the university to liaise with the local community, which as one of the poorest wards in the country undergoing depopulation, lacked a strong community infrastructure with which to consult. WECC has been a means for university and community to tackle common problems around Cornerstone@Everton such as drug dealing and prostitution, as well as 'town/ gown' tensions, such as parking. From 2008, WECC is also becoming a conduit and a means to manage the access of other community groups into the Cornerstone site, and give the community more influence over the engagement activities that happen in their name.

4.2.6. Integrating university campus developments within wider regeneration projects

As well as listening to community voices in planning their own developments, universities in the three regions were influencing how wider regeneration schemes impacted these communities. Universities in the three regions are involved in a range of partnership activities which determined spending on regeneration projects, in particular in England through Local Strategic Partnerships. Universities were involved in regeneration activities as experts and evaluators, but more significant input came when university campus developments were used as the anchor or engine

of larger urban regeneration projects with wider university benefits. University interests in these programmes were often rather instrumental, in ensuring that their wishes were supported, or at least not opposed. But a number of universities were active within 'science quarter' projects in which university redevelopment was intended to drive urban regeneration (including Salford, Bolton, Liverpool, Dundee, Teesside as well as the three science city projects).

Manchester University is actively involved in a wider programme of renovation and regeneration around its Oxford Road campus, through its participation in the City South Manchester Regeneration Company. Amongst others involved in this partnership initiative are Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), Manchester City Council and the local NHS Trust. Manchester's campus is adjacent to highly deprived residential areas such as Ardwick and Moss Side. The campus and other property regenerations are expected to bring follow-on benefits to local residents. The Regeneration Company has commissioned a feasibility study exploring how local employment opportunities can be improved and develop a more entrepreneurial culture amongst local residents.

4.2.7. Developing specific strategies for engagement at a university level

Universities always face a tension in undertaking non-core activities which can be forced to the institutional periphery and then quietly abandoned because of the drain that they impose on core university resources whilst remaining non-central purposes. A number of interviewees promoting/ community engagement reported that they did feel peripheral within the universities, even where they had successfully delivered flagship engagement projects. One way to address this is to embed engagement as a core university mission along with a machinery to ensure its delivery. A number of the universities interviewed had senior managers with specific identified responsibilities for community engagement, including Liverpool Hope, and Durham University, and Newcastle University, whilst other universities had sections concerning engagement within their corporate strategies with named responsibilities and targets.

One example of this comes from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) in Preston. Alan Roff is the Deputy Vice Chancellor and chairs the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Executive. Commitment to engagement is stated as a core value for UCLan, and the university engages at three levels, with the regional institutions (including RDA), the county council and the local strategic partnership. The university has a set of objectives related to the regional plan, including the numbers of regional bodies engaged with. The intention with this is to ensure that engagement is seen as something central to UCLan's activities so that there is a presumption institutionally towards, rather than against, engagement.

4.2.8. Involving students in communities in the course of their studies

A truism of universities is that "knowledge travels on legs" and that one of the greatest contributions which universities make to their communities is in training those professionals who will later go into those communities. Institutions which have a large number of departments in medicine and allied professions, social work, teaching, planning and urban studies, are often extensively engaged with communities

by sending their students into those communities for work experience (such as Dundee University). The pre-clinical "Medicine in the Community" programme at Durham University (at Queen's Campus, Stockton) includes a compulsory 60 hr community placement in the Tees Valley region, with students working in schools, youth clubs, hospices, Diabetes UK, HIV advice organisations and other charities. The challenge is to bring these benefits in disciplines which do not necessarily demand community engagement, and to use the students to create a bridge between the university and these community groups.

Sunderland University is an example of a university which has encouraged students that do not necessarily have to engage with excluded communities to undertake such project work. The School of Computing and Technology requires all masters level students and final year undergraduates to undertake a project researching and solving "a real world problem" in partnership with a sponsoring organisation who may be business or community based In the academic year 2007-08, just under 50% of student projects have a community focus. Relationships have been created with a number of community organisations through staff and student projects, including the Sunderland Carers Centre, the Hendon Young people's Project, Lambton Street Centre and the North of England Refugee Service.

4.2.9. Volunteering activity by staff and students

Volunteering is something that is regularly highlighted as a benefit which universities produce for their communities. England experimented with the higher education Active Communities Fund as a means of promoting student volunteering, and 19 of the 50 projects cited for best practice were in the two study regions North East and North West. These projects attempted to identify what were the barriers to increasing the impact of university volunteering, and included things such as celebrating volunteering within the institution and creating on-line support for volunteers. The question remains of whether this remains a peripheral activity or whether it helps to leverage other resources within the university. In the cases of those universities with a large influx of external students, it could be argued that these communities do benefit from the presence of the university.

A good example of this is Lancaster University, in which the bulk of its community engagement work is run through its volunteering centre, LUVU (Lancaster University Volunteering Unit). The Volunteering Unit was set up in 2002 as a joint initiative between the University and the Students' Union and works largely on a project basis. The Unit runs a number of current projects which offer students the opportunity to become involved as volunteers. Voltage project volunteers work with teams from schools and FE colleges in Preston, Blackpool and Lancaster to encourage sixth formers to set up and run social enterprises. The CommIT (Community IT Solutions) project, partly funded through ERDF money, runs a variety of IT initiatives with community organisations in Blackpool. The Activate project places volunteers to lead activity and sports sessions with children in Lancaster. The Safe project is a partnership with Lancashire Constabulary which trains volunteers to work with older and vulnerable people around home security. Through its Schools Partnership, LUVU has created relationships with a majority of schools in the Lancaster district, and student volunteers are placed as classroom assistants and reading buddies, and also lead lunchtime and after-schools activity sessions. Additionally the Unit runs a project –Fuse – which provides a one day training course to support students who wish to set up a new volunteering project.

4.2.10.   Undertaking research work on and with excluded communities

Universities can help create social capital in excluded communities by working with those communities on shared research projects, particularly those oriented towards researching issues of community interest. Unlike Canada's Community-University Research Alliance, in the UK there have been no dedicated funding streams for community-led research. Much research on communities has been driven by evaluation of community projects with the voice of the community relatively muted between researcher and client (local authority, NHS or local strategic partnership). Research councils have attempted to promote user engagement across research, but the relatively incoherent voices of excluded communities appear to have reduced their capacity to be as demanding of university research as are businesses or local authorities.

At MMU, the Community Psychology research strand within the Research Centre for Social Change and Wellbeing (one of the three Centres which make up Research Institute for Health and Social Change), has a specific theme around 'University-community engagement'. This looks towards bridging the gap between universities and 'the actuality of local and national communities' and encourages University research and researchers to 'address the aspirations of the community'. Researchers in the Community Psychology strand work in collaboration with a number of community groups and activists and through these partnerships 'theorise and challenge marginalisation and exclusion' around a research agenda which addresses issues including poverty, debt, gambling, crime, community cohesion and local decision making

4.2.11.   Running projects that seek to improve the lot of the community.

Many of the universities in the three regions have been active in running projects whose beneficiaries have been excluded communities. Many of these were subsidy projects funded by European Funds, notably the Structural and Cohesion funds, but changes to eligibility have reduced university interest in these activities. In Scotland, many universities have had community education centres and widening access centres, but changing funders' requirements have reduced the attractiveness for these kinds of activities. The risk for these projects is that they remain highly peripheral to the university, as stand-alone units, that have to continually fight to justify their position.

These projects can capture benefits from universities' wider research and corporate networks when they are connected to larger research projects. A good example of this is the Community Financial Solutions unit at Salford University, which undertakes research on financial exclusion in low income neighbourhoods. As well as developing a theoretical solution, the "Community Reinvestment Trust" (CRT), CFS also enrolled a bank and the city council to establish a CRT in Salford. This CRT has lent out £1.8m to local businesses, social enterprises and individuals, and became a prototype for rolling out the model nationally. Similar activities have also been pursued in supporting communities to win capital grants to develop community centres and facilities.

Liverpool Hope University has a campus located in Everton, an extremely impoverished locality within the city of Liverpool. The Hope campus has become a focus for activities that contribute to community empowerment. There are a number of community arts activities which not only use Hope as a venue, but also draw their instructors and employees from the staff and student body, and are mentored by university senior management to achieve financial and institutional viability. Alongside that, the university developed a special institutional form to project-manage the site development, and subsequently placed that innovative institutional form at the disposal of community groups to develop other (off-site) community development activities (Urban Hope, *cf.* 5.2.4, 6.4.2).

4.3.   CLASSIFYING THE UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The next question regards how to make sense of the various kinds of engagement activity undertaken by universities. Firstly, it is important to stress that it is impossible to objectively evaluate the success of the activities, because in this project phase there has been no triangulation with the communities. The benchmark of success has been how successfully the activities have been able to take a comparatively peripheral purpose, and create linkages from it to the core university that carry the significant amounts of funding.

One way to consider these various activities is to classify them according to the types of income that the successful examples cited above have been able to exert a claim over. In the UK, universities receive income from a variety of funding sources, primarily the Funding Council (first stream, for student places and research capacity), Research Councils & DG RESEARCH (second stream, for basic research projects), commercial/ consultancy activity ('third stream', applied research), and from Development Agencies and DG REGIO for regeneration and special projects. Some kinds of activity cited above, such as involving the community in research projects, do help to enrol those kinds of resources behind community engagement. In some cases, accessing the resources can be dependent on community engagement, such as the campus development activities funded by regional/ European budgets.

Figure 6 An outline classification of the various forms of community engagement in evidence in the fieldwork
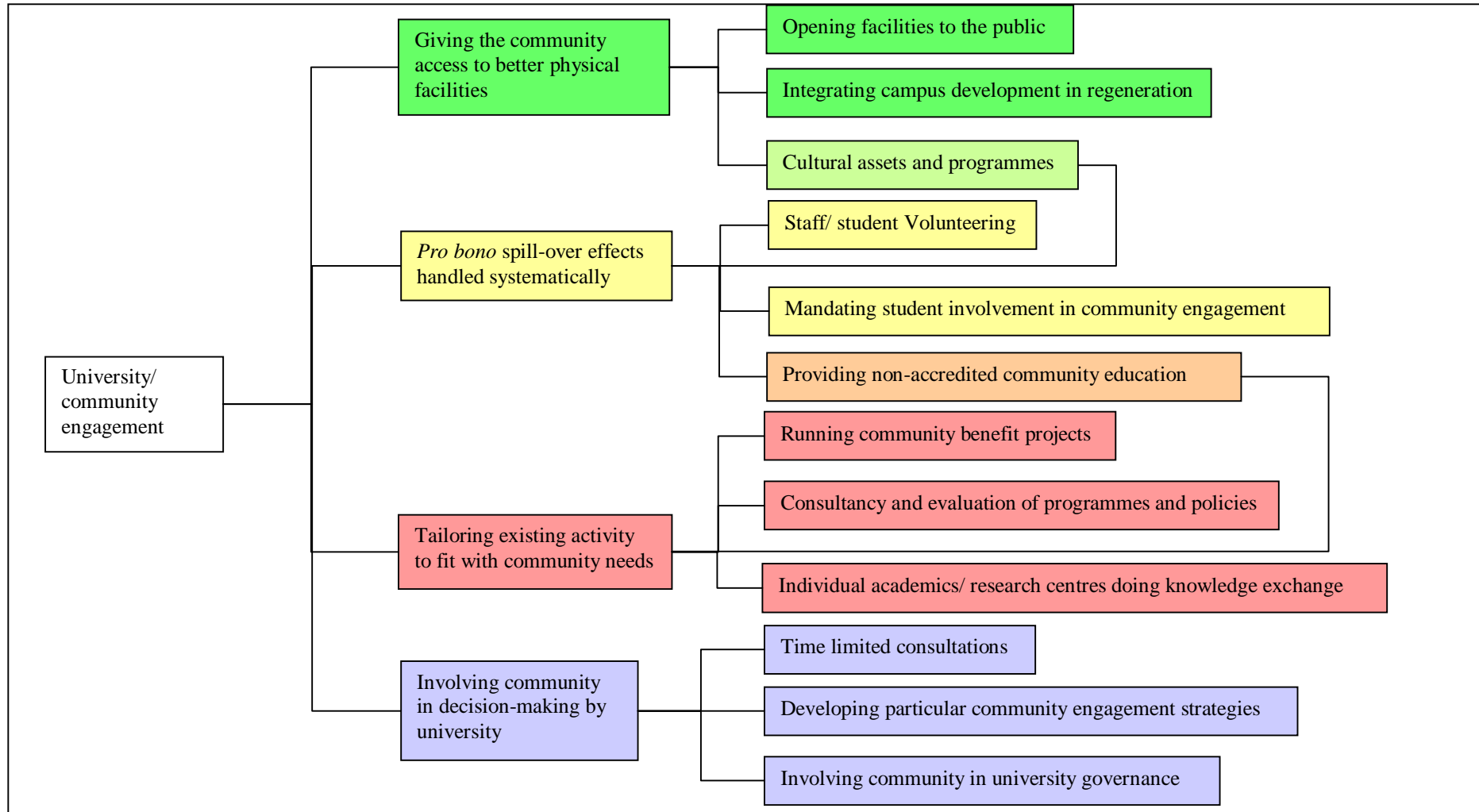
4.4. SIX STORIES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In chapter 2 above, it was argued that there are a cluster of three rationales which are regularly used to explain university engagement, the moral, the functional and the business;

The table above shows that under certain circumstances, it is possible for community engagement to achieve more than a strictly peripheral and functional output closely tied to particular project-based resources. By connecting with core university missions, and critically, with core university funding streams, community engagement activities are able to 'magnify' what they achieve by sharing in success elsewhere. The eleven examples cited above are repeated more generally through the 33 case study universities in the three regions. But of themselves they demonstrate nothing of the more general ability of community interests to align themselves with university interests through the medium of engagement. The cases highlight where a particular university (or element, individual, or subdivision) has been willing to engage with excluded communities for a particular reason.

It is this willingness to engage that has allowed the communities to benefit from the other resources, and which has made community engagement less peripheral within the university. Part of this came through reducing community engagement's reliance on dedicated resources, which generated opposition to those activities from managers facing tricky budgetary balancing process. Under what kinds of conditions were people willing to engage with the community? How did that align with the goals and interests of the university and its component elements? In the course of the research we encountered six basic rationales for engagement – the stories told about why universities engaged – which corresponded with three different levels of the university. The six different rationales for engagement which we encountered in the course of the interview were:-

- **Social responsibility**: the university was 'expected' to be a good citizen, and community engagement formed part of that.

- **Institutional development**: community engagement allowed the university to access resources which could fund capital campus developments.

- **Seizing opportunities**: community engagement raised conceptually interesting questions that stimulated new fields of research.

- **Serving the market**: community engagement kept the university in contact with key markets for recruitment in excluded communities

- **Commitment to 'the cause'**: community engagement was pursued within the autonomy of academic freedom as something ethically desirable.

- **Personal self-advancement**: community engagement allowed particular activities to be delivered that supported an individual or research centre.

These six stories tended to correspond with different levels of the institution, with the first two being primarily told by university senior managers concerned with the university's public face, the second two by university senior managers concerned with the maintenance of the university machine, and the third two by individuals and

research centre directors involved in actually engaging in the course of their work. On this basis, this section presents the stories told about engagement, and the insights that this gives for understanding how community engagement can become an integrated component of what universities are doing. Some of the key distinguishing characteristics of the six stories are summarised in table A below.

4.4.1. Senior management with outside stakeholders

Social responsibility

All of the universities interviewed recognised that they had a wider public duty than purely delivering targets for their funders. For some institutions, their commitment to community engagement did not go much further than a kind of 'corporate social responsibility', acting as good, ethical citizens and being mindful of their impacts on others. Most universities had some kind of staff and/ or student volunteering programme which ran on a voluntary, negotiated basis which embodied a CSR approach. The CSR approach was focused on ensuring that the university had evidence that they fulfilled a wider public role, without necessarily demonstrating that what they did was valued by the users.

Institutional development

The funding freeze-and-squeeze on higher education in the period from 1976-1995 meant that many universities ceased new capital investment programmes for a two decade period (see figure 1 b. Universities wanting to develop campuses during this period often looked to the availability of regeneration funding as a means of developing new facilities, particularly the urban development corporations in England and for Merseyside, the Objective 1 programme. Subsequently, although new funding has been available, it has taken some time to come on-stream, and university campuses have a huge backlog of investments necessary to bring their estates up to their aspired-to world class status. A number of universities have embedded campus developments within wider regeneration projects as a means of accessing regeneration funding to support campus development.

Chart 3.16 – Index of public funding per student for higher education 1976-7 to 1995-6
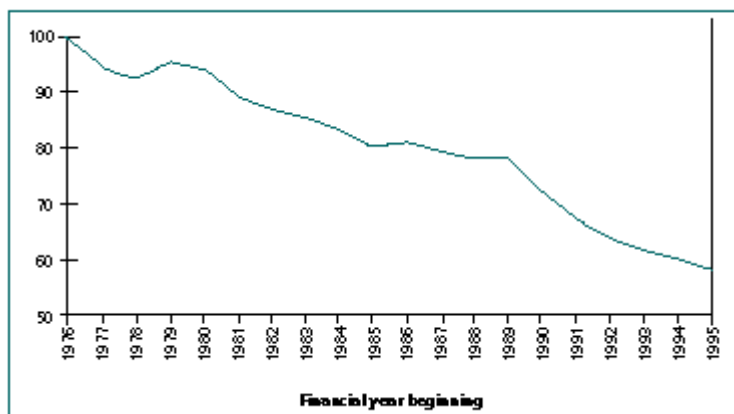
Source: Dearing, 1997.

4.4.2. Core business units delivering teaching and research

Seizing opportunities

Engagement can be an important part of teaching and research activities, particularly for those kinds of universities with professional education which involves much engagement with excluded communities. Given that universities largely do not micro-manage staff thematic activities, creating an empowering environment allows staff to create rich teaching programmes and move into new research areas as the needs of the communities with which they work are changing. It was more problematic to create career incentives for engagement, so the most acceptable forms of community engagement were those that produced good courses and research outputs through effective engagement. In that sense, the engagement was valued as a means to an end, the end being the core university missions (and income generating activities) of teaching and research.

Serving the market

All the universities were aware of the political sensitivity associated with the widening access agenda, increasing participation in higher education from communities not traditionally oriented towards HE. In England, the Office for Fair Access regulates universities' recruitment to ensure that higher fees are not discouraging non-traditional students, and community engagement formed part of institutional agreements with Offa which in return allowed the higher top-up fees to be charged. Taster courses, summer schools, open access facilities all formed part of a case made that universities promoted engagement, as part of a claim to justify generating higher income for the universities.

For the newer universities more reliant on the attraction of non-traditional students, community engagement served another set of functions, which were related to access and recruitment, but also to retention of these students. Non-traditional students typically face a range of problems which arise earlier in their educational career than the point of application to HE; similarly, these students often needed more support whilst in university, both in terms of induction but also during crisis points, in the absence of personal or family social capital to know how to deal with these situations. Universities used community engagement as a means to improve their recruitment and retention by understanding the issues facing individuals and communities, and to improve the family backgrounds and attitudes to HE to try to compensate for lower individual social capital.

4.4.3. Individual academics and research centres

Commitment to 'the cause'

Beyond the four functional stories related above, it is important to state that there were individuals and groupings who were clearly strongly ethically motivated in their desire to engage with excluded communities. Many individuals were researching the problems of these groups as a means to help them solve those problems, and were driven by the apparent injustices that they encountered in the course of their research. In the case of senior managers who came into post with those experiences, they could be articulated at the level of the university. There is insufficient evidence to argue that any of the universities studied were strongly motivated by an ethical commitment to social justice that came at an opportunity cost. However, that is the case for some

of the individuals, who had struggled and made sacrifices in their professional lives in order to pursue an agenda about which they felt passionate.

Personal self-advancement

There were also functional reasons for individuals and research centres to undertake community engagement, because it provided a competitive edge and was rendable in terms of grants, publications and teaching activities. In this phase of the research it is not always possible to distinguish those who make a virtue out of a necessity (for engagement) and those who were genuinely committed. Because universities could represent hostile environments for those whose engagement was seen to come at the expense of teaching and/ or research, or whose resultant raised profile was seen as an unnecessary distraction, academics and centres continually managed the tension of engaging meaningfully, whilst ensuring that engagement could be represented as hitting other university or faculty missions and personal development plan targets.

4.4.4. From rationalities to institutions – classifying HEIs?

In one sense it is intuitive to expect that particular types of institutions would have particular dominant rationalities. In England, there has been a distinction emerging in the policy documents for example between research-facing and business-facing universities (DIUS, 2007). These institutions have quite different business models, with research universities typically justifying large capital investments around one-off research grants and infrastructure fund bids (such as JIF) whilst business facing universities are much more dependent on recurrent student fee income. This might suggest that business-facing universities would be primarily interested in engagement for the sake of recruitment, research-facing universities would be more interested in the possibility of engagement as a means of justifying investment in new research infrastructure.

In table 5 below, we tentatively map the various activities undertaken by institutions across to the kinds of rationalities by which they are justified. What is quite notable is that there is no simple one-to-one correspondence between activities and the rationalities. There are all kinds of rationalities, for example, involved in consulting with the community in the course of campus development projects. A socially responsible university will do it out of a sense of the need to "be a good neighbour", a phrase which was often used in the course of our interviews, whilst consultation might also feed into developing new research and recruitment activities in neighbouring communities. Community consultation is almost impossible to avoid for large campus developments which are part of larger regeneration activities, and of course good relations with the community are necessary for individuals seeking to prosecute research and teaching activities in these areas.

What this reflects is the point made in 2.4 that universities are complex institutions, and there is not only one rationality present within the institution. Activities are proposed, mobilised, supported, and sustained, or otherwise, within complicated internal governance and resource allocation models. Understanding why universities engage requires a closer look therefore at relationships between internal stakeholders within the university, and in particular how decisions around particular engagement activities are taken.

Table 3 A first typology of drivers of university engagement with socially excluded communities

	Senior management motivations		Business unit motivations		Staff/ unit motivations	
	Social responsibility	**Institutional development**	**Seizing opportunities**	**Serving the market**	**Commitment to 'the cause'**	**Personal self-advancement**
Why engage?	To demonstrate fulfilment of the social contract: blue skies research benefits humanity	To develop a set of infrastructures that could not otherwise be funded	To ensure that staff can take any opportunities that might enrich teaching and research	To maximise recruitment and retention by building awareness of community dynamics	Out of an ethical concern to help solve the problems which are being researched, a praxis commitment	To generate a stream of activities that fulfil tenure/ promotion criteria around teaching and research
Key mechanisms	Supporting charitable/ voluntary activities which cost the university and help communities	Building new campuses with funding streams that require engagement be demonstrably delivered	Administrative change & PR in the university – task groups, venture funds, champions	High levels of pastoral support for excluded students, contact with their friends/ family.	Community activism, using the community as a laboratory, presenting community findings elsewhere	Indistinguishable from 'committed' individuals but with less accent on participation and more on exploitation
Influence on teaching	Sporadic and unplanned, 'festival' approach with senior managers and press releases.	Campus becomes a focus for community-based modules and experiences which may be compulsory for students	Where relevant, community links enrich teaching experience through placements and content	Curriculum design in selecting modules/ courses that meet the demands of local communities	Provides real world examples for inclusion in lectures – longer term influences professional course and provision	Provides real world examples for inclusion in lectures but less influence in terms of professional development

…ctd.

	Senior management motivations		Business unit motivations		Staff/ unit motivations	
	Social responsibility	Institutional development	Seizing opportunities	Serving the market	Commitment to 'the cause'	Personal self-advancement
Influence on research	Helps university to make a case for research that could potentially serve the needs of excluded communities	Campus acts as outpost in excluded communities where exploratory missions can be arranged.	Potential for focus on research with community application for those academics with that interest.	Allows HEI to shape local research environment in certain fields through contact with stakeholders	Community involved in 'co-production' of knowledge with the researcher, so a co-dependency	Use of community as laboratory to develop new theories, win research projects and prestigious publications
Community benefits	Access to university resources (physical, intellectual) at subsidised rate – more aware of HEI	Campus can act as a driver of regeneration and anchor for gentrification activities, local employment created	Placements etc can provide services, build capacity and louden the voice of the community	Graduates remain in community and learn a skill set to help them improve own environment	Increasing their power in governance networks, and control over own local situation	Greater external representation of the community in external decision-making networks – communities are not easily manipulable…
Conflict areas	"We don't believe you want a genuine partnership" Limited community influence over university decisions	University may seek to create profit via gentrification displacing local communities	Reliant on enthusiastic academics and strong leaders – risk of the institutional pendulum	Information asymmetries, so enrolling people on profitable courses, not really building their voices	Within university around academic freedom and tenure; RAE tail wagging engagement dog;	Balancing preserving academic position with ensuring community stay enthusiastic for activity.

5. STRATEGIC PLANNING & CHAMPIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

The first perspective taken on university-community engagement is that how the broad set of activities outlined in chapter 4 can prosper within the university setting. The first element looks at the way that community engagement has become a strategic mission for universities, and in fact argues that the extent to which this has been possible has been very restrictive(5.1). What has happened is that community engagement has been defined in a very fluid manner which has defied simple attempts to hold universities accountable for it. What is therefore important for community engagement is not that the university is committed to it, but that it has found a way that community engagement can be made to work in an environment where there are very may pressures, but also very real debates about the extent to which an institution should be undertaking community engagement.

What is important – and this emerges very clearly from the interviews – is institutions managing to find a 'style of engagement' – the way that engagement can be made to work for them in a way that allows excluded communities to genuinely benefit from that work. By genuine benefit, we mean here that they have some degree of co-determination of what those benefits are, rather than receiving a purely altruistic set of benefits. 5.2 attempts to trace the contours of those 'styles of engagement'. The central argument here is that effective engagement happens not only when there is institutional commitment, but also critical an unselfconscious fit with engagement and the institutional mission, a set of policies to support engagement, as well as strong leaders to encourage and support engagement.

5.1. STRATEGY AND MISSION

Since the 1990s - and in some cases for longer - universities have been awakening to the importance of engagement with communities as an element in their mission. Initially engagement was something of an *ad hoc* activity, often linked to one-off collaborative partnerships, and often developed from the bottom up, with little prioritisation in the overarching mission of the university. At the time of the CVCP Universities and Communities report (Goddard *et al.*. 1994), it was clear there was a lot of activity but little by way of strategy. One of the recommendations of that report was that universities should undertake an audit of their engagement activities and bring those activities together via a forum that should develop a university-wide strategy for engagement (a process which is currently underway in Newcastle University).

This point was subsequently reinforced by the Dearing Commission which stated that 'As part of the compact we envisage between higher education and society, each institution should be clear about its mission in relation to local communities and regions' (NCIHE, 1997). Dearing clearly stopped short of making 'community engagement as a university mission' one of the high level recommendations made by the committee. Nevertheless, the issue has been subsequently developed in the UK as a consequence of the emergence of third strand funding by the Funding Councils and various exhortations by successive ministers for higher education.

The rise of engagement, and within that of engagement with particular communities, has coincided with a greater emphasis on strategic management within universities

both in the UK and internationally (*cf.* Harding *et al.*, 2007). The notion of the university as a loosely coupled federation of academic departments and units, governed by academics in the interests of a wider community of academe - rather than the specific institution - has disappeared under the weight of assessment, accountability and international competition.

Higher education reform in most countries has emphasised tighter managerial control, streamlined governance and a clearer focus on mission and strategy (Neave ref). Much of this in the UK was initiated or reinforced by the Dearing Inquiry, including a recommendation on the size and role of the governing body (Barnett, 2003). So if universities are becoming more managerial and are expected to have clearer missions and strategies, this then raises the question of where does engagement fit into that strategy?

Previous surveys of universities for CVCP and the Department of Employment have shown that there was an increasing emphasis on engagement within university missions in the 1990s. In this study we have reviewed the place of engagement by universities with disadvantaged groups within those missions. The study focuses on three regions where we might expect to see a greater focus on disadvantaged communities: the North East and North West of England and Scotland. All three regions have a long history of areas of industrial decline, urban disadvantage and of rural peripherality and all three have been subject to considerable public support for regeneration, within which there have been opportunities for university involvement.

Universities across the three regions do claim to have increasing interest in engagement with communities. This section will examine the extent to which this engagement incorporates the needs of disadvantaged groups, and the institutional context – leadership vision and support mechanisms at the university scale.

5.1.1. Community engagement in the mission

The current position of universities regarding engagement depends in part on their traditions and history. Most of the institutions surveyed made at least some reference back to their traditions in describing their mission, whether it be to affirm a longstanding commitment to their particular communities or to explain a waxing and waning of engagement over time. We can therefore group the universities roughly and crudely into at least five categories based on their historical development and the implications of this for the form of relationship and engagement they have with specific communities:

- Ancient universities – in Scotland the four pre-19th century universities have at times played a central role in the development of the cities in which they are based and are deeply rooted in their local communities albeit often with strong links to local elites rather than disadvantaged communities.

- Civic research universities – in the two English regions there are four universities which have roots in the 19th century and emerged from local interests, evolving to become leading research based universities. Three have strong roots with local industry, Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle, whilst Durham's link with the church has become less significant over time. All are currently looking to rethink to some degree their role in their region, and strengthen their engagement. In this group we could also include Dundee in Scotland which was established late in the 19th century as a college affiliated

to St Andrews University and like Newcastle with regard to Durham split off from its parent institution in the 1960s. Although Dundee is smaller than the other four universities it has similarities in profile, with a medical school and strengths in biomedicine.

- The majority of universities in the three regions have origins as technical or vocational institutions of some form which have migrated to university status at some point – an initial round in the 1960s in the form of Salford, Heriot-Watt, and Strathclyde, and later rounds of former polytechnics and HE institutes such as Northumbria, Teesside, Sunderland, Manchester Met, Liverpool John Moore's, Central Lancashire, Chester, Edge Hill, Bolton, Liverpool Hope, Abertay, Robert Gordon, Glasgow Caledonian, West of Scotland, Napier and Queen Margaret. Most of these were technical colleges of some kind, but with a few based on other vocational qualifications such as teaching and nursing. The earliest to convert to university status are more research intensive than those that came later but it is useful to group these together in terms of a shared background as locally focused technical institutions.

- Only two universities have been established in modern times as greenfield sites, Lancaster and Stirling. Whilst many such new universities of the Robbins period had weak community relations, these two both had quite strong connections from their formation, and indeed, in the case of Lancaster, the county council had been a very strong advocate both in the decision to establish the institution, as well as its subsequent establishment (*cf.* McClintock, 1974).

- Finally there are two 'universities' with a strong networked rural focus: the new University of Cumbria and the evolving UHI Millennium Institution which has still to obtain its charter. Both of these have emerged as a result of local pressures, bringing together several existing small colleges and institutions to serve a dispersed rural community.

5.1.2. The relationship between institutional background and commitment to community engagement

There is some degree of similarity in the way that universities in the different classes regard community engagement within their core mission. The nine older institutions have varying degrees of commitment to community engagement, and for most this is very much a secondary concern to that of their international research profile, which is, in financial and reputational terms, much more significant for their long term future. By contrast, most of the other institutions are very strongly dependent on local recruitment and retention for their survival, and consequently have very functional and often dense relationships with local communities, embodying a very particular view of the value of local engagement.

Community engagement by the elite research universities

For the most part this group have balanced an elite research focus with a base in regionally focused professional education in medicine, law and engineering. Whilst the origins of the three oldest Scottish universities differ from the English redbricks in their mediaeval religious foundation, Edinburgh was born as a civic institution

sponsored by the town council. This contrasts with the industrial sponsorship of Liverpool and Manchester (and of the colleges in Newcastle that were absorbed into Durham before finally being established as a separate university). The foundations for these institutions may have been rooted once upon a time in community service of one form or another. However, these universities currently all play a role as the lead research institutions for their regions, and so increasingly have a deep concern for their position in international research rankings.

Edinburgh - as the 'Oxbridge of Scotland' - looks to be a 'distinctly Scottish university based in Scotland's capital, but our reach and aspirations are international and it is in that context that we must be measured'.[3] Manchester has also been seeking to reposition itself as a challenger to the four 'golden triangle' leading research universities in England (Imperial, University College London, Oxford and Cambridge). In a recent facts and figures report on its website, it comments that the research power figures from the latest RAE place it as third in the UK behind Oxford and Cambridge. Edinburgh is also 5th in that ranking.

Whilst these institutions focus on their international rankings, others among the wider group are also concerned that they need to boost their international research profile in order to ensure financial success. Aberdeen's Principal identified the need to be 'among the leading research-led universities in Britain' as its underpinning rationale.[4] He points out that:

> 'It is clear that research-led universities in England are likely in the near future to have greater financial resources at their disposal. We also expect the research funding going to those institutions that are rated as research excellent to increase. In short, the importance of strengthening our research has never been greater.[5]

Glasgow links this international research mission with the contribution it can make to its regions thus:

> 'to undertake leading-edge, internationally-competitive research while offering a challenging student-centred learning environment. Through our status as a leading international university, we aim to sustain and add value to Scottish culture and society, to the natural environment and to the national economy'[6]

Liverpool and Newcastle tend to emphasise the regional role a little more strongly. On the one hand, this is partly because they are smaller institutions than Manchester and Edinburgh, and therefore they are not so sensitive to research rankings. On the other hand, they are also more embedded in cities that have seen considerable problems, and as relatively strong actors in these problem environments, they have felt greater pressure to balance excellence with engagement.

Durham and St Andrews have similarities in that in each case they adopted a satellite college in their larger neighbours (Newcastle and Dundee respectively) which grew more rapidly based on medical sciences and engineering and split off in the 1960s.

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[3] See: http://www.planning.ed.ac.uk/strategic_planning/SP2008-12/StrategicPlan.pdf (Accessed 19 September 2008), p2

[4] http://www.abdn.ac.uk/central/colleges/ (Accessed 10 September 2008)

[5] Ibid

[6] http://www.gla.ac.uk/about/ (Accessed 24 September 2008)

This left Durham and St Andrews with a more traditional academic structure and character, and distinguishes them from the civic universities of the Russell Group. In both cases community engagement has perhaps been more difficult to develop in the context of an elite image and a location in a smaller town.

Durham has been more closely exposed to the declining coalfields around it, but it is only really in recent years, and especially after the establishment of a new campus in post-industrial Teesside (Queens Campus, Stockton) has it become more committed to engagement. St Andrews arguably has not had the same pressures, as although the Kingdom of Fife does have problems with rural poverty, they are on quite a different order of magnitude to either East Durham or Tayside, where Dundee's universities play an active role.

Community engagement by technical and vocational background HEIs

The universities with longstanding technical backgrounds have always had a strong focus on the needs of their region. Often developing from colleges for the working classes (usually men but in some cases including women's colleges such as Notre Dame which went onto become part of Hope), technical colleges and teacher training colleges, this group of universities tend to have a strong vocational orientation and roots based in local student participation and close links with local communities and institutions.

Having said that, this group are also extremely diverse, especially comparing those that were converted to university status earlier in a time when greater resources were directed at building research capacity with the more recent designations. Thus whilst missions all reflect the background of engagement, the degree of emphasis on community varies, with a tendency amongst the older and more research-intensive institutions to have a lighter-touch view of engagement as something subordinate to building research excellence.

At one end of the spectrum are those institutions which see their position as being research based universities which have a focus on international quality and engagement with business and the professions, but where the regional community has a place within their missions. This would be the case of Strathclyde and Heriot-Watt which have moved furthest from their foundation as technical colleges. Both retain a focus on science, technology and business, with a more limited coverage of the arts and social sciences, both emphasise their ambitions as international research universities in their mission and make only selective reference to their community role.

So whilst Strathclyde describes itself as a place of useful learning in its vision statement, it makes no reference to its local community except in a final bullet point which says it will fulfil the vision through 'Contributing to the development of, and quality of life in, the City of Glasgow, Scotland and the international community'[7]. Heriot-Watt's current strategy, '*Focus on the Future*'[8] aims to place it 'at the forefront of research and research-led education in the UK and internationally'.[9] And, 'similar to that of other research-led institutions' its mission emphasises fulfilling student

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[7] http://www.strath.ac.uk/strategicplan/visionandmission/

[8] http://www.hw.ac.uk/reference/focus-on-the-future.pdf

[9] Ibid, p4

potential, enriching 'the communities with which it engages' and the creation and transfer of knowledge.[10]

In both keeping with its applied history and reputation and in response to policy demands that universities 'play a greater role in knowledge exchange and developing human capital to improve the economy's productivity growth'[11] it aims to apply its strengths in business, engineering and the sciences to the challenges of the 21st century. Heriot-Watt's engagement with socially excluded communities has tended to relate to its widening access and participation programme. Furthermore, its niche role as a provider of business and technical learning has long reaffirmed an institutional focus on research and the global market place. Yet Heriot-Watt has experience of the perils of a lack of community engagement, in its case when considering the relocation of a long-standing college of textiles from the Borders region.

Many of the newer universities, from the former polytechnics have a clearer focus on their local community, at least partly through their importance as universities with a strong widening participation role, but also through a desire to diversify away from a dependence on funding council grants. Having originated within the local authority sector, many of these universities initially sought to distance themselves from their background and reinforced a national presence and reputation, with those in the larger cities often best placed to stress their national role as teaching-led institutions. Those in smaller cities though such as Teesside University or Central Lancashire in Preston often express a stronger commitment to their city, as one of the most significant public institutions in the city and with a particular responsibility for enhancing local education and skills.

So whilst Northumbria's vision is 'to be one of the world's leading learning and teaching universities, renowned for the excellence of the student experience, innovative research-based practice and high quality research and enterprise, together transforming the communities it serves', this and the accompanying mission and aims say nothing about a specific local community, but refer to communities in generic terms, including the international community. Others, such as Teesside focus on 'contributing effectively to the economic, social and cultural success of the communities that we serve' but are more explicit in identifying with the local community.

Finally there are the two rural networked universities in Cumbria and the Scottish Highlands. Both have been established at the behest of the local community from an existing set of small dispersed institutions and to varying degrees both have a sense of righting a wrong. This is perhaps most keenly felt in the Scottish Highlands where long term depopulation has gone hand in hand with an absence of higher education, and a view that waves of new universities were created in the lowlands with no provision for the highlands and islands. There is additional a linguistic dimension here with some of the UHI colleges being Gaelic speaking. In Cumbria also there has been long concern at the relative absence of HE and several satellite campuses have now been brought together under the new university. The university mission specifically stresses its role in accessible lifelong learning through its campuses in

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[10] http://www.hw.ac.uk/annual-review2006/accounts07.pdf, p5

[11] '*Focus on the Future*', p7

Cumbria, and its wider role in supporting 'economic regeneration and the development of diverse and sustainable communities' within its region.

Community engagement in the small, research-intensive sector

The two Greenfield universities would perhaps be expected to have less of a community focus, especially as they are both campus universities slightly outside their local towns, yet in both cases their foundation was a response to local needs. Lancaster's founding VC was a prominent Quaker and was very committed to establishing an institution which was socially responsible and would make a positive contribution to its community. Consequently the University has at various times looked to build bridges to the local community through engagement projects, notably through volunteering , access programmes, and cultural activities. Stirling also has from the outset taken an active position on widening access, as well as developing cultural and sports facilities on campus which are open to the wider public, thereby seeking to overcome the physical separation of an out of town campus.

Table 4 below summarises the relationship between the origin of university and its approach to community engagement, both in terms of the primary institutional strategic focus as well as the impact that this has on the most valuable form of community engagement.

Table 4 The relationship between university type and approach to community engagement.

University type	Universities in sample	Primary focus	Role of university-community engagement
Ancient universities	Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh, St. Andrews	Building a critical mass of research and developing international excellence profile	Very limited/ instrumental
Civic universities	Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Durham, Dundee		Establishing legitimacy of local commitment
Technical-vocational universities	Northumbria, Teesside, Sunderland, MMU, JMU, UCLan, Chester, Edge Hill, Bolton, Hope, Abertay, RGU, GCal, UWS, Napier and Queen Margaret	Recruitment of sufficient students to maintain financial stability	Enrichment of the curriculum related to taught and research degree awarding powers, unique offer for recruitment
Plate-glass universities	Lancaster, Stirling	Development of research profile in distinct niches	Accessing funding streams to support niche development
Rural network universities	University of Cumbria, UHI Millennium Institution	Providing education opportunities in remote rural areas	Activities naturally close to local community, few rivals

5.1.3. Universities identification and description of community in their missions

There are relatively few universities that have a specific commitment to engagement with excluded communities in their strategies and missions; commitments tend to be much vaguer. The most common is that the university is committed towards contributing to a 'global community' and making contributions wherever it is most sensible to do so. Likewise, when there are geographically specific commitments, they tend to be made towards to particular cities or regions rather than to specific groups within these regions. At this point, it is necessary to acknowledge that universities have many documents which purport to be strategies, implying that there must be an internal hierarchy within these documents, with some being demonstrably more strategic than others.

One common finding within the research was that the *framing* of community engagement as a university strategy tended to emphasise its peripherality. This was visible in that it tended to be placed low down within strategies, as the penultimate or last mission, or even as a sub-mission within wider knowledge exchange strategies. In such cases, because of the difficulty in identifying suitable indicators for community engagement (*qv*), there is a tendency for community engagement to be focused upon things which are more readily measurable, such as HEIF and KTG indicators.

There can be a question over which community it is that a university engages with. This is most evident in the case of Liverpool Hope University, which has a campus in an extremely deprived part of the city, namely Everton, and at the same time, Hope is striving to build a global reputation and to create a sense that its knowledge has consequence for a much wider set of partners. Manchester Met University is currently consolidating its campuses onto a large site in Hulme, a former inner city slum area that has been subject to a wide range of largely unsuccessful regeneration efforts since the 1960s, and one with which the university has many connections through its education programmes for the various professions dealing with such places, including in education, social work, health and the built environment. There is clearly a tension for MMU in pursuing this project in that MMU will become seen as university for Hulme rather than for the city, the city-region and the North West, and that is a pressure of which the project managers are clearly aware.

5.1.4. The technologies of managing community engagement: objectives and targets

One of the key features of the introduction of the new public management to the higher education sector has been the wholesale introduction of the technologies and techniques of NPM, including the use of performance management. There are two key elements of salience here, the setting of objectives, and the pursuit of targets. Institutions will typically set a number of objectives and measure progress towards those targets through a number of complementary strategies and key performance indicators. However, because universities operate in constrained environments, there is a natural tendency under such circumstances to focus on objectives which are more easily expressed in the language of NPM, and it is widely acknowledged that this can be very difficult for community engagement. This raises the question of how successful have universities been in developing KPIs and objectives for the pursuit of community engagement?

Those universities that do have substantial strategic commitments to Community Engagement have great difficulty expressing them in terms of KPIs. In some cases, they express an intention to later develop appropriate performance indicators, and one institution had a blank page in the KPI section under their community engagement objective. The result of this is that it is very difficult for universities to be held to account for their actions, and in particular for universities to take community engagement seriously in an environment of multiple overlapping targets. This means that it is difficult for community engagement to become a strategic priority; although some universities are committed to Community Engagement, it is often *ad hominem* and does not easily survive a change in personnel.

Community Engagement is oriented towards qualitative reporting of outcomes rather than outputs, and it is not always easy to get direct financial impacts for Community Engagement. Likewise, although HEBCIS has some questions which relate to community engagement, there are no accepted indicators for engagement, and that can make it difficult for institutions to report back on progress. Again, given that universities are highly sensitive to the need to report back on progress, a failure by funders to demand that universities report on community engagement certainly suggests that the mission has a lesser importance within institutional settings than other more easily-measured and urgent goals.

There are some examples of good targets for Community Engagement, so Abertay, for example, has a target for 2010 of 60% of undergraduates to have the option to gain credit on their degree for a community placement; conversely, in a wide range of other institutions, Community Engagement is largely invisible at a strategic level.

It is important to emphasise at this point that NPM is not perfect, and things that are identified as strategically important for institutions, and for which KPIs are identified, are not always pursued perfectly by those institutions. Alongside identifying that there are problems in the development of strategic frameworks which support community engagement, it is also necessary to understand how those missions are translated down to lower levels within the institutions.

5.2. STYLES OF ENGAGEMENT – FITTING WITH THE GRAIN

5.1 suggests that there is strong evidence that universities are not able to affirm their commitment to community engagement at a high level in anything other than the most general terms, and as an adjunct to the key strategic objectives of building research mass and recruiting sufficient students. This raises the question of the kinds of circumstances under which university-community engagement can become strategically significant to the university, by having a strategic fit with the other core activities of the universities. Although there were some institutions which claimed that community engagement was an intrinsic part of their history, it was much harder to identify institutions whose contemporary community engagement practices matched as closely to

5.2.1. Formal approaches to university-community engagement

Many of the universities approached had a formal structure for community engagement, encompassing potentially key positions such as Pro Vice Chancellors responsible for community engagement, special offices and units for engagement as well as engagement strategies. The key question, which will be addressed more thoroughly in chapter 6, is the extent to which these activities can really be said to

involve excluded communities. One answer to that question is that these activities appeared more salient when they were more formally integrated into the institutional management structures, and did not operate as stand alone activities. There was no single institutional model for community engagement across the institutions surveyed – in some institutions, it was something left to Schools, departments and faculties, whilst in other places, there are high level strategies (with varying degrees of higher level commitment sitting behind those strategies).

In a majority of universities a generic 'community engagement' is being tasked to senior management teams (Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow Caledonian, Napier, West of Scotland) with leadership the responsibility of specific Deputy and Vice Principals (Aberdeen, Napier, Robert Gordon, West of Scotland) and Deputy/Pro Vice Chancellors (Northumbria, Glasgow Caledonian); although tending to be included in a range of other tasks such as Culture (Aberdeen), the region (Northumbria), Research, Training and Community Relations (Edinburgh), Student Experience (Glasgow Caledonian, Robert Gordon). In some universities this recent focus is the consequence of newly appointed Principal (Glasgow Caledonian, Napier) and Vice-Chancellor (Northumbria) instruction.

Over time, the key actors involved in managing the university engagement activities could build up relationships with particular community groups, and help to increase the level of formal involvement of the community in the management of the university. The issue remained that this manner of governance (involving a few well-known community partners) created a tension between community engagement as a general commitment towards societal benefit and working with selected partners to achieve particular shared projects. The fit within the institutional mission does vary, so some places have a separate plan, and in Scotland, cultural engagement is a big thing (SFC provided funds for strategies), some places have Community Engagement strategies, Glasgow Caledonian and Strathclyde have that within their mission

There has been a tendency to drive activities towards commercial things, so commercialisation and student enterprise, whilst saying that other things are possible as part of that; they are both seen as being things where academics get their hands dirty. Community Engagement often then has to fit into pre-existing structures for business engagement which can make it hard for community engagement to pursue activities which are intrinsically interesting rather than those which help to deliver an overarching university strategy.

Several universities have created dedicated support activities which at least allow some experimentation, so the Bolton Enterprise Fellowships, UCLAn and Salford's URMad Community Engagement vouchers, Newcastle University's Beacon Fellowships and discretionary engagement scheme, and Sunderland creating a promotion infrastructure for the third stream/ BUT there is a risk that Community Engagement falls between the gaps; Community Engagement that is rolled into large projects starts to follow the project logic (qv) whilst other activities fall between the institution structure, between senior management, court, senate, committees and KPIs so that no one has a good overview of what is going on.

5.2.2. Unselfconscious community engagement

In Cumbria, the presence of UCLAN at Carlisle added an additional dimension to the engagement with the Cumbrian partners because that campus had been set up by a university in another region, in a county where they were desperate for partners, and

so worked willingly with Cumbria. At Edge Hill there are differences, although not necessarily well managed, between official partners (in partnerships), corporate partners (stakeholders) and individual (personal) partners.

There are some activities that fit well with the institution, and have emerged out of a genuine sense of mission rather than either opportunistically or in response to funding drivers, so things like the JMU Foundation for Citizenship or the Service and Leadership Award at LHU function on their own, but they tend to be relatively small. They also get away from the 'payment for a service' view of Community Engagement, but again, they tend to be relatively small.

Another element of this is that there are many former practical/ vocational colleges who are now universities recruiting from non-traditional backgrounds, and so Community Engagement helps with the recruitment and retention of those students, and hitting the targets that they have to reach. These kinds of institutions have typically been trying in recent years to construct a narrative for their distinctiveness built on a historical background, so the idea is that they have a unique offer.

Community Engagement helps these institutions to distinguish themselves within a very competitive market for HE. Therefore, community engagement helps universities to stand out in some way, in a variety of different forms. This might be that the course offers prospective students the chance to undertake work in the community (such as the Community Medicine course at Queens Campus, Stockton). It might be that the staff teaching the course have extensive experience of undertaking work in the community, or a scholarship built on Community Engagement. Community engagement can also help with employability, as there was a sense that one route – particularly in the arts – was in winning funding to run community arts groups, and engagement with these groups and learning the softer skills of bid writing to help to contribute to the employability skills of these groups. The net result is that engagement becomes a contemporary expression of the longer-term historical situation.

5.2.3. Institutional management of university community engagement

The institutional management of university engagement had a number of impacts on what could realistically be achieved in terms of engagement. There were two core issues at stake, namely firstly that universities are extremely complex institutions, and secondly, that universities are path-dependent and have their own cultures, structures and infrastructures. In terms of institutional complexity, the interviews backed up the issue that because of that complexity, the issue of community engagement is almost always unknowable for senior managers, which has led to the adoption of simplifications necessary to manage engagement. The other issue is that universities' capacities are determined by their infrastructures and, and the reality that whilst business engagement has been strongly pushed for a decade, with universities receiving funding for business development offices (BDOs), has seen much community engagement activity be concentrated within these offices, which in many of the cases reinforced the sense that it was subordinate to the needs and pressures for (income-generating) business engagement.

This reflects a reality that in the last decade, universities have been encouraged to regard income generation as an end in itself. The corollary of that is that consultancy and knowledge exchange activities have focused on income generation, reinforced as

previously mentioned by government attitudes and targets to engagement activities. Here the old adage is applicable, that "what is measured, matters", and what is measured is income generation. Communities often do not have the resources to pay for university activities directly and consequently, engagement with those communities is peripheralised. The systems which exist are also geared towards a particular view of the engagement process, namely the definition of a problem, allocation of intellectual property, milestones and a fee, which may not necessarily correspond to the needs of communities. The fact that a lot of 'third mission' type engagement takes place in research centres rather than business engagement offices highlights the inappropriateness of BDOs for community engagement.

In Scotland, there are two other drivers influencing the institutional management of community engagement, with very different results. One pull has been the Widening Participation and lifelong learning agendas, which see universities as being a means to create structures linking schools, colleges and HE to encourage non-traditional students to attend universities. There is an established national infrastructure of Regional Access Forums within which many of the Scottish HEIs are involved. A number of the interviewees suggested that the existence of such well-configured users demanded significant university attention which crowded out visions of and activities in community engagement beyond a lifelong learning agenda.

One other significant difference between Scotland and England is the devolution of economic development powers to local authorities, who are increasingly interested in the direct benefits which universities can bring to them and the support they can offer in delivering their local development strategies. Some interviewees suggested that for particular types of institution, in particular those who felt local economic development funding to be significant, this led them to adapt their behaviour towards the demands of the local authority sector. This was not necessarily negative, because with the case of Queen Margaret, they had encouraged the university to create a new campus in Musselburgh as part of an institutional expansion. However, clearly in a situation where universities are already listening to a number of strident voices (Scottish Government, SFC, RAFs and local authorities), at an institutional level there is much less attention institutionally paid to community voices and interests.

5.2.4. Institutional leadership and creating opportunities

One issue that clearly emerged in the course of the interviews was a lack of consensus on whether universities could seriously develop an engagement mission. What was striking was that it was often those institution which had chosen more of default community engagement missions (Widening Participation, Corporate Social Responsibility, business consultancy) which argued that the pressures they faced made serious community engagement possible. Other institutions which had more successfully engaged tended to make the point that whilst their key stakeholders often had rather simplistic visions of universities, their complexity and diversity allowed them more scope to engage in creative ways. Universities do have a degree of latitude in how they define their core stakeholders, and whilst it is clear that excluded communities are unlikely ever to be the most important groups to universities, many universities choose to define their responsibilities to them in relatively light-touch ways, which in turn creates institutional environments where there is a presumption against community engagement.

There were a number of examples of where universities had gone counter to the prevailing wisdom of the day and successfully delivered engagement activities. A number of research universities withstood the erosion its lifelong learning provision in the late 1980s and early 1990s by accommodating demands for more employer engagement, and using that to sustain lifelong learning activities. The issue was of accommodation – universities do operate in extremely restrictive public management (accountability and funding) systems which did restrict their latitude for manoeuvre, but some institutions chose to use system flexibilities (often experimental funding) to reaffirm their community facing missions.

A key issue here was the role of senior managers in the definition and consolidation of community engagement within institutional missions, and ensuring that it could be driven home. There were a number of Vice Chancellors who had created a new engagement approach in their institution, including Simon Lee (LHU), Michael Harloe (Salford) and Pamela Gillies (Glasgow Caledonian). There were often new VCs appointed with a mandate for institutional change and able to undertake the necessary institutional changes. However, these leaders were also important in changing stakeholders' demands on those universities, arguing that experimentation in community engagement served their needs (for example Widening Participation needs) allowing experimentation to take place, and providing the free resource for community engagement currently largely absent (see 1.3).

Universities do operate in a range of partnership networks and can mobilise those networks for wider benefit. One issue for community groups as opposed to the voluntary and community sector is that they often lack the audit & accountability frameworks to participate influentially in such networks. There were examples of universities being approached by other partners to oversee activities with community benefit (such as sports centres or Surestart centres). In doing so they may access new capital facilities or benefit from the gentrification or development of their local campus environment. Urban Hope at Liverpool University was exceptional in delivering a number of large capital projects for community groups drawing on its financial infrastructures.

6. RESOURCES: FUNDING AND MOBILISING A COALITION

In chapter 5, the concern was primarily with how the 'idea' of engagement can be made to fit within the university in a way that allowed it to have some kind of concrete implementation. As well as this cultural and conceptual dimension, university engagement with excluded communities also has to be made to fit within the structures and practices of the university. There is a relationship between university cultures as well as structures and practices, but one of the unavoidable consequences of the marketisation of higher education in recent years is the responsiveness of HEIs to financial stimuli. It is as important therefore for financial room to exist within universities for engagement as the conceptual room for the idea to take hold.

The story of this chapter is that – in the absence of definitive, long-term and substantial funding for university-community engagement – the financial room for this activity must be constructed. There are several elements to this construction, and 6.2 sets out the general financial environment for universities within which financial room has to be constructed. It is important to offer something which ties with strategic thinking, and in which senior managers can have confidence (6.3). At the same time, it is vital that the university makes enough real resource available for the changes at the various levels of the university. This raises two interesting corollaries for community engagement: the first is that engagement tends to be an emergent activity on the basis of what is possible rather than desirable. Secondly are the importance of the stories that universities can tell about their engagement, and the way that small activities can have a life of their own, and become more important within internal decision-making and external negotiations.

6.1. THE ROLE OF FUNDING IN SHAPING UNIVERSITY THINKING AND ACTION

Universities are very effective at responding to neo-market mechanisms and there is no exception as far as community engagement is concentrated. Universities are highly sensitive to the external environment, where that environment comes equipped with substantial resources, and universities have likewise undertaken particular community engagement activities to win more resources. But part of the problem is also that universities receive substantial resources already for third stream work, and this has tended to be focused on business engagement, which brings an immediate return. Universities do have – or at least in recent years have had – influence over higher education policy, so their own attitude to community engagement is important in shaping those funding streams. The net effects are two-fold; firstly, community engagement has remained extremely peripheral within universities, and then secondly, what can be delivered has tended to be dependent on specific, separate, hypothecated funds which have had little opportunities to refashion the universities' own internal cultures.

6.1.1. External policy drivers and environmental volatility

The reality for universities is that the main driver to which they respond is the various funding streams that they receive. With the majority of those being provided from

state sources through the Funding and Research Councils, universities are very sensitive to the needs of those key stakeholders (*cf*. 6.1.4). Universities have been very effective at responding to those drivers as expressed through key performance indicators and targets, and part of this has come through a capacity to anticipate and to shape what those most salient funding stakeholders are seeking. Other key funders vary by the type of institution, so for the research intensive universities, charity and industrial research funders were important sources of income, and their needs were important; a number of other institutions prioritised winning significant funding from a large number of relatively small consultancy contracts. External pressure is very important in terms of Community Engagement because external pressure can make universities behave in different ways –

- John Moores reported awareness of the need to demonstrate a return on public regeneration investment,

- Abertay University Dundee were persuaded by the Frank Buttle Trust (and other partners interested in Care Leavers) to go for Quality Mark status,

- the University of St. Andrews are aware that public support for the Open Association makes it 'untouchable', and

- Manchester University acknowledged the public support for the merger of Manchester University and UMIST by having a set of regional impact targets.

One of the issues for community engagement is that there are very mixed messages given concerning community engagement. By contrast, for a decade now in the UK there has been a very clear message that business engagement should be a priority for universities. This has allowed universities to develop an infrastructure and a culture of business engagement appropriate to their institutional needs. This has not always been a simple process, and a number of institutions have tried approaches and then later had to modify them. But at the same time there has been a relatively consistent position from government around the importance of this activity. Awards can be quite useful for stimulating engagement and giving the sense that it is something worth doing, so the *Times Higher* award has been quite valued by some recipients (Napier) as have things like the Freedom of the City (the three Liverpool universities).

With community engagement, there has been much less consistency in the message given to universities. This lack of consistency can be decomposed into a number of distinct elements. The first is that community engagement is not a meta-narrative at the heart of government, whilst economic impact (the basis for business engagement) and competitiveness is. The figure below sets out the competing policy agendas to which universities are subjected, which are in a very diverse range of policy areas. Partly, there has been an issue that all these areas have sought to articulate their demands in terms of commercial impacts, so lifelong learning has become reduced to employer-relevant training rather than a wider, more emancipatory vision.

Figure 7 The various (inter-related) policy drivers on universities as institutions
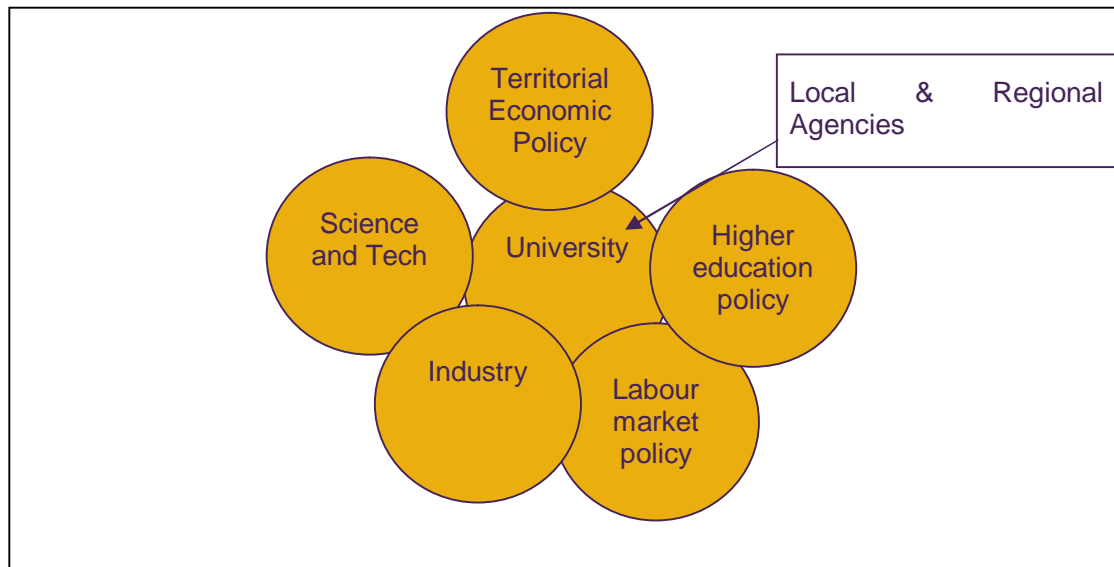
Source: Goddard & Chatterton, 2003

Secondly, policy pressures for community engagement have tended to be rather tentative, short-lived and experimental, such as with HE-ACF, and always at the same time of much more coherent pressures for commercial engagement. In part that is because of the difficulties of articulating community engagement outcomes in a series of measurable impacts. But equally, because there is a general view within government of university benefits being produced in fairly simple linear processes (investment in sciences produces business innovation) the fact that community engagement does not produce benefits in such a simplistic manner reduces the attractiveness of community engagement as a policy push.

One good example of this is the way that community learning activity has evolved within universities. Most universities are involved in some manner of community learning activity, either as a lecture series or as something leading to accredited outcomes. This has happened despite a tendency for funding regimes to drive out these community-centred learning in favour of directly accredited courses. Lifelong learning and community learning has been one of the consistent losers of HE funding in the last decade, with an increasing tightening of requirements towards only funding accredited courses in strategic areas that are at a level higher than the furthest level of the student.

A third element of this was the fact that universities tried to anticipate what would be the future pressures to which they would be subject, almost a 'reading of the tea-leaves' to determine what their key stakeholders would want in the future. This led to a kind of 'Kremlinology' of policy pronouncements to build an understanding of "what the funding councils want", and positioning the institutions to be able to exploit those future Funding and Research Council agendas. The RAE was clearly a big driver, although many of the strategic decisions had been taken in the early 2000s to produce benefits – there was a degree of uncertainty over how the REF would work, although a degree of unanimity that however impact was measured it would not measure – and implicitly value – community engagement.

There is a sense within the market regulators that institutional size is important. As a consequence of this, the key governance challenge for universities is about building a

large institution with a strongly centralised governance structure. The effect of this, is that where Community Engagement is not driven centrally, but operates in an empowered environment, this can mean that it is much harder to promote, and that in the difficult choices around corporate investment, Community Engagement is insufficiently visible to either be a priority or even to be permitted as something that they do. There is a real problem with the HEBCIS survey in terms of the way it has channelled thinking about engagement into a very limited number of indicators very closely linked to commercialisation rather than impact in its wider sense.

It was interesting to observe the difference between Scotland and England; in England there is a strong rhetoric about producing economic benefits, without a territoriality ever being defined for the economy. In essence, commercialisation was seen as a general good, even if the benefits of that commercialisation arose outside the UK In Scotland, interviewees spoke of much more direct pressure from their Funding Council and Government to justify their funding in terms of the benefits to Scotland. This did encourage universities to think beyond their business impacts (which were often outside Scotland) and construct a narrative around Scottish benefit which also had community benefit.

The situation is distinct in Scotland because of its separate HE system, although there are strong pressures for homologisation in the system already alluded to. The problem with HEBCIS in England is even worse in Scotland, because the Knowledge Transfer Grant is allocated against a very limited set of measures. This led to dissatisfaction in all quarters with KTG, and a number of experiments were carried out to identify where the KTG could be used to extend beyond commercialsation. One of these was the Cultural Engagement strategy grant, which has subsequently been expanded and mainstreamed as a consequence of the most recent evaluation of KTG in Scotland. A third area in Scotland where community engagement is emerging is around employability, Lifelong Learning and Widening Participation.

6.1.2. Main drivers influencing university community engagement

The reality of 'Business and Community Engagement' for universities is that universities emphasise engagement with their core (funding) stakeholders, whether industrial/ charity research funders or business consultancy universities. A recent phenomenon has been (*cf.* 6.1.2) that engagement is undertaken through offices who assemble large investment projects funded by multiple investors, including funding councils, RDAs, European Funds and other local partners. In this case, engagement is seen as managing the relationships necessary to deliver those large projects, and where they include significant new building development, managing the relationships with those communities affected by the building processes.

There are however examples of where universities have managed to create large projects with integrated funding streams that have prioritised community development. A number of institutions are developing new community campuses, including Liverpool Hope, Queen Margaret, Manchester Metropolitan, Napier and Durham. All these examples have at their heart a serious intention to create benefits (of some kind) for the host community, and to involve (in some way) the local community in the life of the university. This involves a serious commitment from senior managers within the institution as well as being able to persuade a range of stakeholders, including Funding Councils, that these will help deliver their core targets.

There have been relatively few successful Community engagement funding streams, but what is noticeable is that they have had a disproportionate impact on the behavioural environment for universities. In England, the fact that the Higher Education Active Communities Fund effectively supported the development of volunteering activity has seen the majority of universities actively promoting volunteering as a mainstay of community engagement. In Scotland, the Cultural Engagement Strategy provided a relatively small amount of funding (£20-53k) to every institution to develop such a Strategy. Despite those strategies being introduced into already overstretched institutional management environments, with institutions often having fifteen strategies, our interviews suggested that the CES had the effect of raising institutional managers' awareness of what they were doing, as well as giving the signal that it was important to their Funding Council.

One funding issue which a number of interviewees raised although it was never to the fore of universities' considerations was the fact that partners' funding was important. Because of the transactional nature of a lot of engagement activity, communities who could win funding were much easier to engage with that those that did not. There were examples of universities which created schemes which addressed this, by providing community groups with funding or paying for the buy-out of staff to work on projects and activities of community interest. The issue for universities is that if partners lose their funding, then universities may be committed to deliver the activities without the participation of the community groups. If universities have written those community group participations as outcomes of their own activities (as Hope did with Phase IV, for example), then that can create *ex post* pressures and a reluctance *ex ante* to involve community partners in projects.

A clear issue for universities here was that the absence of clear KPIs for Community engagement created difficulties for them. Part of that came about because HEIF has such clear metrics and so there were pressures to focus on delivering those outputs. A perverse outcome was the fact that those institutions which needed to invest them strategically (often new institutions or those seeking a change of direction) were pushed by HEIF towards short-term gains to ensure sustainability of the funding stream rather than building longer-term internal capacity and external networks to ensure more effective future engagement. Finally, some institutions, primarily teaching-intensive institutions, had identified knowledge exchange and consultancy as a significant source of income generation, and so any engagement had to be profitable in order to be acceptable. Conversely, research institutions were keen to create links between their research and consultancy in pursuit of critical mass; however, despite examples of successful engagement campuses like Queens Campus, Stockton, there seemed to be entrenched perspective of a simple excellence/ engagement binary.

6.1.3. Universities as HE policy actors

The final issue concerning the role of funding streams in shaping university decision-making was that universities are not just takers of policy. Because there are around 150 universities, they are a politically powerful group, and have the opportunity to shape the decisions that policy-makers make. At least one senior manager related the example of the neutering of the QAA in response to the elite universities' threats to withdraw from the public sector as an example of how the sector could shape its policy framework. There were other examples of softer power, how universities collectively had shaped funders agendas and interests, and made particular kinds of engagement – of interest to the HEIs – simultaneously more interesting to the funders.

In England, one manifestation of this is the Strategic Development Fund which provides a means for universities to experiment and for HEFCE to rebalance the higher education system. We found it significant that the SDF was mentioned on a number of occasions as a source of funding for community engagement projects. Of course this reflects the absence of any recurrent community engagement funding, but also the fact that community engagement is seen as being both experimental, but also that it is not out of tune with the way that HEFCE could envisage the future development of the sector. SDF was usually integrated into larger flagship projects which had more significant impacts on the university as a whole, drawing on a range of third stream activities.

The experimental nature of this engagement activity meant that there were experiments that did not work, and what it has not been possible to gauge is the response of key stakeholders to that failure, whether to learn the lessons or to become more set against Community engagement. One university for example tried to develop – with core funding – a CSR accounting model for community engagement, based on the Business in the Community framework. The lesson from this could be drawn that universities are extremely complex institutions whose aggregate societal impacts are extremely hard to measure. Yet the disjuncture between this and the emphasis in NPM on measurable outcomes for manageable processes suggest that community engagement remains some way from the realms of what might be an acceptable core mission for the university sector as a whole.

6.1.4. Peripheralisation of university-community engagement

There is a bureaucratic reality of engagement in that it has to fit within the university, and universities are diverse communities held together by a set of structures, so Community Engagement must fit in those structures. There is a tendency for community engagement activities to become crystallised into projects, and so the university allocate staff to them on that basis, with no real interest in capacity building and no co-operation with the communities themselves, more a concern with drawing down the funding.

The big risk here is one of 'peripheralisation', namely for community engagement to emerge as a stand-apart activity with its own logic, supporters, clients and funding streams. The corollary of this is that this leads community engagement to make a relatively small impact on the key university communities themselves. This can result in a lack of internal supporters for the projects, and in the tight financial environments which universities have become in the last two decades, this means that community engagement projects lack internal supporters and connections to the core university business. This can lead to these projects being discontinued when the core direct funding for them runs out, and even where institutional entrepreneurs manage to generate sufficient core funding to sustain them in the medium term, it leads them to be 'peripheral' and un-influential, in their own institution.

As already noted, there has been a tendency to place university-community engagement activities within existing 'engagement' offices, often with a strong slant towards commercialisation rather than empowering societal knowledge exchange. Despite this common outcome, there are very different reasons across different kinds of institutions. In older universities, they have tended to place it in standalone offices out of choice, whilst in newer universities, there has been more of a necessity because of the lack of free resources and the need to cross-subsidy community engagement

positions with core commercialisation activities. In both types of institution in England, where HEIF has been invested in community engagement rather than business engagement, this has further driven a compartmentalisation of engagement.

There are a range of universities which have sincerely developed effective projects which have tried to build capacity and relationships: good examples of this are the four university project *University Regeneration Making A Difference*, sports engagement at Bolton and West Everton Community Council at Cornerstone – the fact that these have survived beyond the project phase suggests that they are good projects, and those that have not been mainstreamed highlight that it is hard work, and also that capacity is not simple. These successes are dependent on having good project champions and managers at all levels of the institution, and this in turn means that these activities are dependent on these people, who may move on within the institution or within their careers.

The critical problem that this raises is that community engagement is not readily scaleable because it is not always possible to find sufficient effective champions to increase the scope of activities which are seen as successful. A further risk with upscaling engagement is that this can play into the instrumentalisation of engagement as commercialisation and business engagement. If community engagement is seen as something that is undertaken in return for a payment (which can seem perfectly rational if community engagement is undertaken by business development offices), then this can serve to exclude many of the communities that might naturally be the constituency for this engagement activity. Indeed, it risks driving out the voluntary and ethical dimensions that seem important for its longer term success.

As well as peripheralisation being manifested in a lack of internal supporters for community engagement activities, the fact that it is not a core activity can lead to personnel and HR management activities having very negative unintended consequences. A number of institutions noted that in going through the HERA (Higher Education Roles Analysis process), which attempted to place all university employees on a single and comparable core job descriptions. Even where community engagement is part of a job description, the introduction of short-term target driven management can discourage people from doing things which are experimental, and from following their ethical instincts. Liverpool Hope University addresses this by having a cadre of 'heroes' recognised by senior managers as doing community engagement well, well in the sense of being both valuable for those communities engaged with, but also in line with the institutional goals and aims of the university.

6.1.5. The funding tail wagging the engagement dog

In the absence of significant internal interest in using core resources to fund engagement activity, there was a strong reliance within institutions on using external resources tied to a particular engagement activity. This led to the 'projectisation' of engagement, with an acronym, a set of targets, a life span and a budget, setting outside the mainstream of academic activity. As already noted, universities are very effective at doing what they are funded to do, and with engagement, projectisation has shaped universities' engagement activities – in England, HE-ACF has raised the profile of volunteering in many institutions, whilst in Scotland, the Cultural Engagement Strategy – as the only free resource for community engagement – has become a displacement for community engagement activity. A number of institutions were aware of the risks of game-playing that this encouraged – one English institution told

us that they had to be careful not to align their staff volunteering scheme so closely to their Widening Participation mission that all staff volunteering was in 'mentoring' A-level students in target schools to apply to that institution.

There are problems with that approach, in that many of the projects which are funded are relatively prescriptive and do not necessarily play to existing university strengths and capacities. We speculate that the UHI Millennium Institute would not necessarily have chosen for itself to develop a Cultural Engagement Strategy as one of its earliest strategy documents had resources not been made available from SFC. There is the risk – as previously noted – that these activities are displacing strategic concern with developing the kinds of engagement that both better fits with the existing portfolio as well as helps to strengthen university internal infrastructure and competency in engagement. There indeed appears to be problem in a reliance on project funding in that it does not help to develop longer-term cultures of engagement in universities.

The reliance on short-term peripheral funding prevents engagement being mainstreamed, whilst a failure to mainstream engagement in turn means that the only resources available for engagement are short-term and peripheral. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that their limited life encourages them to be thought of as disposable within the institution, and so any energy which is not taken up with engaging with extremely hard-to-reach and excluded communities is taken up by justifying the position within the institution. The closest we saw to the mainstreaming of community engagement was where teaching activities included a compulsory social placement activity devoted to solving a problem for an excluded group. Once this happened, and engagement figures within teaching resource allocations, then infrastructures built up to arrange and oversee placements within an established resource envelope for costs and credits.

6.2. CATCHING SENIOR MANAGEMENT'S ATTENTION BY WINNING BIG PROJECTS

6.2.1. The unknoweability at the heart of Community engagement

Underlying the importance of catching senior management's attention is the unknoweability of community engagement within universities. We heard the opinion voiced a number of times that there was no easy way to know the kinds of engagement activities, relationships, networks and connections the universities had. For some universities, particularly those teaching the professions, engagement was fundamentally built into teaching. Many universities also were actively engaged through their research activities. This difficulty in understanding what was meant with community engagement made it extremely difficult to effectively manage it within the context of much more clearly articulated and better-understood missions.

The argument is that there were examples where community engagement actually delivered successes for the university of which senior management were aware and this influences their attitude to community engagement more generally. So in the case of Herriott-Watt, it managed to construct a relationship with local colleges in the Borders as part of its expansion, and this levered in additional SFC and SG funding, something obviously visible and attractive to senior managers. In the absence of clear KPIs for community engagement, the fact that it was able to deliver something that was measured and valued by universities helped to increase its visibility institutionally.

This makes the more general point that it appeared that university managers interpreted community engagement through the lens of what they knew about. Those institutions which had managers who were appointed to undertake specific engagement portfolios, even where that was not their own area of expertise, were invited to attend committees and address meetings in ways that led to them build up their background in that. The VC of Manchester University was involved in developing and delivering the *Manchester Leadership Programme*, a post-experience high level training programme, which was subsequently incorporated into the university's HEIF 4 bid, demonstrating how awareness can lead to inclusion.

A key area for senior managers acquiring knowledge about community engagement came about through their involvement in local committees. In England, the increasing importance of LSPs as a mechanism for influencing local authority income has seen pressure on universities to provide high-level input to their LSPs. Through those bodies, external relations managers become aware of the kind of activities that their institution is involved with, and those activities which their external stakeholders place value on. The impression received in the interviews was that senior manager perspectives on community engagement was very much an emergent property of the experiences that they had in the discharge of their function.

There were two other consequences in the nature of university community engagement that arose from the unknoweability of engagement at an institutional level. The first was that university managers required a great deal of reinforcement when dealing with the kinds of activity that were remote from core management practices of reporting and KPIs. Managers were supported when they were told – particularly by external stakeholders – that they were doing well with their engagement activity. This was related to the second consequence, which was the way that engagement was viewed depended on how successful it was delivered, and in particular the way that scientific community within the university engaged with and accepted the success of community engagement.

6.2.2. Tools for dealing with uncertainty

These pressures on university managers, and the allure of big projects as a way of short-circuiting some of these pressures, led to interesting experiments in reducing the uncertainty of engagement activities. This issue has been picked up in the previous chapter in the area of the strategy process, but it is worth reiterating the point, that managers were after clear and eye-catching examples of how engagement delivered towards the core aims of the universities. A number of universities were engaged in substantial campus redevelopment activities which became rolled up in the sense of community engagement as the community mission. Some examples of recently developed campuses with engagement missions are listed below:-

- Manchester: £150m redevelopment of the Oxford Road campus with better links to Longsight, Hulme and Rusholme.

- Manchester Metropolitan: £250m campus rationalisation from 7 to 3 including an entirely new campus in Hulme.

- Liverpool Hope: the Hope@Cornerstone campus in Everton, £30m redevelopment of church and church school building to create an arts & community campus in the second poorest ward in England.

- Salford: £150m campus redevelopment to improve its civic impacts including engaging Salford with the BBC move to the Quays.

- Napier: £100m redevelopment of inner-city Sighthill campus

- Robert Gordon: redevelopment of inner-city Garthdee campus

- Queen Margaret: the new Musselburgh Campus

- Northumbria: the £136m Manors campus creating a new gateway from the city centre into Shieldfield and extending the knowledge crescent to East Quayside and Gateshead College; £18m Coach Lane development in Benton for Health campus

- Sunderland: St Peters Campus developed by Tyne & Wear Urban Development corporation to revitalise derelict riverside areas, now with Metro light rail connection.

- Durham: waves of investment in Queens Campus, Stockton, originally from Teesside Development Corporation, but increasingly through internal first and second stream funding, now anchored in wider Stockton regeneration with opening of North Shore bridge link.

The preceding convoluted formulation makes the point that community engagement was around the idea of these developments, but without the relationship being as straightforward as universities developing particular campuses to improve community engagement. In some cases, often around existing campuses, community engagement was a means of improving at the margins or dealing with resistance to the disruption that new developments entailed. With new campus developments, there was often a rhetoric of community engagement, but it often remained at the level of communications and allowing campus access rather than a more transformatory and co-productive form of engagement.

The value of the campus is that it provides an immediate and straightforward demonstration of the resultant benefits of community engagement for the core missions, new buildings after a prolonged period of underinvestment in campus estate. For MMU, community engagement and the Hulme campus have helped to realise the long-term vision of rationalising and simplifying the estates map to generate additional efficiences. Durham has used Queens Campus, Stockton as a means of creating Medical Education provision, which it has sought since its loss of King's College to the new Newcastle University in 1963. But these campuses are not the only tools that university managers use to create a sense of certainty guiding what they are doing in terms of community engagement.

There was a trend amongst senior managers to create or import tools to help with the management of engagement, and to help tie it more centrally to core university missions. Robert Gordon had what it called the Business Integration Framework, which it used to (successfully) stimulate business engagement, and Salford introduced the UPBEAT tool (University Partnership to Benchmark and Evaluate Activities and Technologies) to evaluate proposed ideas as well as to stimulate wider cultural change. Northumbria adopted a tool from Michigan State University to provide a means of understanding community engagement, whilst Aberdeen has gone down the road of defining engagement in terms of corporate social responsibility.

What all these various activities and developments provide for senior managers is a lens through which to understand and make knowable what is essentially and

extremely complex situation. These approaches can be understood as an attempt to highlight the strategic lines of force within what universities are doing, and from that to provide the basis to develop a strategy. The third method for doing this was through the use of named projects which provided defined benefits for defined community partners – notable was the University Regeneration Making a Different (Ur-MAD) project but there were a range of other activities which were badged, branded and reported as community engagement as managers tried to make sense of all of this complexity.

6.2.3. Focusing on satisfying clients'/ stakeholders' needs

An alternative approach to dealing with the complexity of community engagement, although somewhat less in evidence – was in looking to the needs of clients and stakeholders – including community stakeholders – and then responding to those needs. A clear problem with this was the privileging of the more salient stakeholders with resources, influence, knowledge and legitimacy, and excluding less well mobilised stakeholders, into which category many community groups fell. Partnership arrangements were helpful in this in providing a clearer sense of what the universities' responsibilities within particular activities were, and a range of local authorities had set out plans to create Knowledge Quarters as a means of shaping university campus developments; likewise, it is clear that the promise of the opening-up of the North Bank of the Tees encouraged Durham to continue to think about future opportunities and phases for the development of Queens Campus, Stockton.

One mechanism by which clients needs helped to capture manager attention was through the outputs which clients could impose on projects. In talking about their large community engagement activities, managers interviewed were aware of the requirements they had to meet, which included a significant set of demonstrable outputs. Whether physical campus regeneration or outreach projects to marginal groups, the presence of these targets helped to focus managers' minds. Managers hinted at positive and negative benefits of these targets. In some cases, they helped to bring projects to the fore and shape future strategic developments within the institution. In other cases they either encouraged too limited, short-term and constricted perspectives on engagement, or even a withdrawal from particular projects because of the onerous kinds of targets imposed. Most universities, for example, had withdrawn from European Social Fund projects around 2003 because of the changing nature of audit requirements imposed.

6.2.4. The problems with engagement strategies

A third approach which universities used to drive through change was through the development of strategies, but it is clear that the role played by community engagement strategies was not straightforward. Indeed, there were a number of cases where strategies were used as exercises in data gathering, building legitimacy, public relations and self-reassurance, rather than in an attempt to give coherence and a common direction to change within the university. In the previous chapter, we have highlighted that a very wide range of institutions had attempted to develop Community engagement strategies, often getting to the point of a strategy, but then finding it difficult to have the strategy make any kind of difference to the institution.

There were occasions where the strategies did become significant, although as we have said, this was through a rather orthogonal influencing route. The first

mechanism was that strategies helped with the process of educating senior managers in their mission. The process of drawing up a strategy forced managers to begin to articulate what they wanted from engagement, and to place it within a broader institutional context. For example, Manchester University created its Strategic Goals 9 ("XXX") relating to community engagement, in the absence of easy metrics of KPIs, forced its faculty deans to report qualitatively on their contributions in this area. This kind of discipline was seen in a range of institutions to help senior managers to resolve between the abstract issue of an engagement mission (for example as a competing mission with excellence) as against the practice of engagement embodied in the teaching and research activities already undertaken.

The second influence mechanism came about through the fact that many strategies also involved an audit or analysis of existing institutional activity. This meant that one of the effects of drawing up a strategy was to create an engagement narrative which was owned by the manager, along with a set of examples for the functioning of that narrative. All of the institutions interviewed had at least a set of engagement activities, and it is interesting that there was a correspondence between those activities and the ways that institutions defined their mission. In particular, there were institutions with very little commitment to engagement with excluded communities that were perfectly satisfied with community engagement missions that reduced effectively to volunteering and lifelong learning respectively, justified by institutional restrictions in the competitive marketplace for higher education (see 6.1.2).

A third influencing factor was that strategies created a demand for activities to populate strategies and so there were a number of institutions who followed up the development of a strategy with the creation of a number of engagement projects. What it has not been possible to ascertain in this research, and is a question clearly for phase 2 of the research, is whether the projects that were created complemented or worked against existing strengths and activities in engagement. Ur-MAD appeared for example to complement existing strengths and activities in urban regeneration in a set of universities that were significantly redeveloping their campuses and who also had strong research and teaching traditions in the built environment. Strikingly, other institutions had a set of strategic projects with very little purchase on core teaching and research, but were around volunteering, lifelong learning, and facilities access.

The final influencing factor – related to the first – was in creating a group of individuals within the institution with the capacity to assemble projects and drive forward change. The process of developing a strategy was in reality underpinned by a process of community-building, bringing together the group of people within the university who knew what kinds of engagement took place, and how that fitted with other university activities. This helped with the issue raised in 6.2.1 for the need for experts to reassure and reinforce engagement as an appropriate mission within the university. One drawback arising from this was that by bringing together institutional enthusiasts, there was a tendency in strategies to underestimate or downplay resistance to engagement.

6.2.5. The human dimension to community engagement

The final element of the role of senior management comes through the human dimension from the various engagement activities that universities undertake. One position articulated by several universities was that community engagement was a matter of conscience, so ensuring that big projects did not just work to their own logic

to their own end-points. Despite that point, however, it was clear that when large strategic projects were operational, they did acquire their own momentum which made it very difficult for community interests to have much influence in their implementation. There was a kind of 'attention gulf', so communities were involved in the early stages, as potential end users, but then often excluded during the development process as a means of simplifying variables, and then when they re-engaged after the project completion, they were rarely significant to senior managers, and we think that this is in part an explanation why the narratives that managers construct rarely accord significant roles to community groups (*cf.* 6.6).

The other main human dimension to community engagement was the fact that large projects could act as a rallying point which created a cadre of engagers in the university. Being linked to the project helps to provide an explanation of why that is successful, and by representing what engagement means in the case of a particular university, they can help to bring the idea of engagement to life within that institution. However, one of the major wicked issues for university-community engagement was the fact that it was very difficult to stimulate people to become engaged, because of the lack of free resource for engagement (*cf.* 6.3), and in particular making the bridge between visible, special-project engagement and routine, T&R focuses engagement was not always possible.

6.3. INTERNAL RESOURCE ALLOCATION FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

6.3.1. Underestimating the true costs of community engagement

There is a wide acknowledgement that with the limited external resources available for community engagement by universities and the current tight public funding environment, that internal resources are necessary for its effective development. Yet, it was reported amongst a large number of the universities that they were not investing their strategic headroom resources into community engagement, even where community engagement was regarded as a critical part of what universities do. There were a number of universities, notably in Scotland, who were quite sanguine in reporting that the barriers to effective community engagement were such that it was almost impossible for it to become a strategic university priority.

Part of this is the fact that all the institutions regarded business engagement – with its potential rewards – as a better use for investment of scarce resources than community engagement. For research intensive universities, the existence of significant business offices created internal norms which disincentivised community engagement. For newer universities, the pressures to develop critical mass around research ensured that they largely allocated their activities with significant market potential. There were relatively few examples of where this was in areas related to social exclusion. One example of where this did happen was Edge Hill University, with significant nursing and teaching education activities, and which invested its HEIF 3 funds into engagement activities.

But it is important not to reduce this problem to a simple capture by universities institutional imaginations by a bald business rhetoric, because an equally important factor appeared to be the very high (real) costs of effective engagement. Business engagement infrastructure was very costly to develop, although HERO-BAC and EU structural funds allowed universities to develop good infrastructures. Likewise,

developing effective community engagement infrastructure is very expensive. However, because of the cycle we identified where senior managers create steering committees and design strategies, these high costs are internalised in the first instance, and therefore hidden. Engagement is incredibly resource intensive, and when the initial euphoria of promoting an engagement agenda passes, and the idea transforms from the strategic to the operational level, these costs are much more evident, because they are either direct costs in terms of employing new staff, or opportunity costs in terms of operational staff members using time on activities which are not directly remunerated – such as teaching and research.

The direct costs of engagement can therefore appear very low, but the full costs necessary to create a set of ongoing relationships with community partners can be very high, just as it is very expensive to maintain relationships with SMEs. This has had a damping effect on the instruments used to try to deliver engagement – there were several examples of well-designed engagement tools which provided resources for staff to engage. However, they appeared to greatly underestimated the network-building dimension of community engagement, and consequently, although good engagement activities were delivered, what often characterised these is that they did not add up to more than the sum of their parts, creating an engagement infrastructure. It is clear that any kind of investment to build up community engagement has a much higher real cost than habitually accepted.

6.3.2. Tensions in university resource governance mechanisms

A recurrent issue within the interviews was the fact that community engagement continually lost out in resource allocation decisions to other activities, and this meant that there was no way to pump-prime or kick-start community engagement which in turn transformed the nature of the university. The reality of the modern university is that there is an internal resource allocation model, which devolves autonomy to financial units, and links resources provided from the centre to outcomes produced by the unit. The key issue for community engagement is that it is invisible to both those variables – community engagement is not an outcome, and it is extremely difficult to link it to particular resources that come in. Community engagement has neither a cost nor a price recognised within RAMs, and that contributes to the absence of internal resources for engagement.

The common way to deal with this has been to leave engagement to activities that bring their own resources to them, and ensure that those activities cover the full costs of university participation. We have seen the plethora of large university engagement development activities which bring in all kinds of funding streams to universities, and likewise, many universities have placed peripheral engagement projects in their lifelong learning or business development offices. Whilst this resolves (or at least finesses) the conundrum of a lack of a definition for particular outputs, it ensures that engagement retains peripheral to the university, and hinders the mainstreaming of engagement, by maintaining it as a special activity within the university. Without a strong connection to the university centre via the governance instruments of the university which mainstream engagement as a core activity, then there is very limited scope for small experiments in engagement to build up into a more comprehensive engagement culture.

A further problem is that in the main income models that universities work to, community engagement is also invisible; neither the RAE nor the HEIF/ KTG

acknowledge community engagement as something with a price. Whilst in the course of the RAE it is possible to work out the value of a world-class paper, the fact that CE is not included in these models means that Community engagement has no value. Once there is no value to an activity, then it is extremely difficult for universities to develop business plans for those activities, nor to allocate capital between competing investments, because community engagement plans have either no return-on-investment or they produce outputs and values in a highly artificial way, thereby reducing transparency. Indeed, one university in Scotland told us that they were not 'convinced of the business case for community engagement' – which is indeed an entirely reasonable position given the high levels of uncertainty associated with engagement.

It is important to stress that the RAM is not the only resource allocation mechanism within universities, although it is the most financialised. Many universities employ some kind of workload allocation model, and many universities have been through a HERA process to define jobs and tasks. The indications in the universities who mentioned these activities was that as with the RAMs, WAM & HERA had a great deal of difficulty incorporating community engagement rooted in difficulties articulating it as a core higher education mission. Several interviewees noted reservations in making allocations for engagement in their WAMs because of the uncontrollability of engagement, and the risks that this would increase soldiering by staff. With volunteering activities, many universities had a 'see no evil' policy whereby staff who wished to volunteer could negotiate with their line manager for a certain amount of time release.

It is important not to make an artificial divide between staff, management and systems within universities. Pre-1992 universities have governance structures within which academics have a formal representative and oversight role, and even within newer HEIs, managers had to maintain an awareness of staff attitudes to decisions being taken. However, it was interesting to observe that this rhetoric played out very differently around business and community engagement respectively. Many universities had created quite strong infrastructures promoting business engagement and felt that more academics should be entrepreneurial. Conversely, concern with 'engagement not being something for everyone' led to much more moderate measures being taken to promote community engagement.

6.3.3. Misfit of community engagement to university cultures and norms

There is a final set of issues which arise in relation to the fact that universities have cultures and norms which are geared to a particular core set of concerns, primarily teaching and research, and which run to their own timescales and with their own logic. Because the kinds of activities which take place within engagement do not fit with those cultures, norms and cultures, they are either rejected, or they do not develop to their full potential. An example is the student placement scheme – the concern for the university is in finding sufficient safe placements for its students rather than developing long-term relationships with those who accept its students.

One area of culture and norms where community engagement does not fit particularly well concerns the issue of public relations and stakeholder management. Universities are intensely political creatures in the UK system and are well-developed at managing relationships to achieve particular ends, and are equally used to being enrolled by

their partners in a similar manner. All three Liverpool universities were involved with the Capital of Culture process from the award, and previously in the Liverpool 800 Celebrations, and were in return all granted the honour of the Freedom of Liverpool. This can mean that the default setting for community engagement is indeed public relations, either in framing the community in ways that reflect well on the university to key public bodies or in managing their image amongst their neighbouring communities (for example around campus enlargement).

We have already pointed out the mismatch between university resource allocation models and community engagement, and this is exacerbated by the timescales which the development of relationships can take. Universities are very good at taking long-term investment decisions where there is a clear and demonstrable need or benefit, as the very significant campus redevelopments taking place do demonstrate. However, the lack of clear tangible benefits in community engagement beyond neighbourliness and a sense of corporate responsibility do not provide a strong rationale for universities to top-slice core resources for teaching and research and reinvest them in the nebulous and ill-defined world of community engagement.

A final element concerns the relationship between engagement and career development. A relatively limited number of institutions had taken the necessary steps to allow community engagement to count towards promotion and thereby creating pathways for engaged scholarship for its staff. Another fairly small share of institutions said that community engagement could conceivably be used by its staff in promotion applications, just as business engagement could be. However, there were very few staff who had been promoted for their community engagement activity as distinct from the way that they had managed to leverage their engagement into research activity (as a number of professors in Community subjects had indeed achieved). However, it was also reported that there was a very limited number of staff who were promoted on the grounds of their business engagement activity, whilst that was also possible.

6.4. OPPORTUNISM AND PROBLEM SOLVING FACED BY THE UNIVERSITY

6.4.1. The reality of an orphan/ emergent mission

A professor from Manchester Metropolitan University with a long track-record of engagement with excluded communities wrote a paper with an immediately eye-catching title, "We don't believe you want a genuine partnership"[12] which sums up management of the challenges in engagement. As we have documented already in this chapter, there are almost no incentives or resources for universities to engage with excluded communities. Universities find themselves criticised for tokenism when they do seek to engage for altruistic reasons, and also criticised for opportunism when they manage to identify benefits to themselves in engagement. There are few structural pressures or opportunities to engage, and so universities have to be opportunistic and reactive to find ways to make engagement work within the complex systems and economies within which they function. Opportunism helps to explain

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[12] Duggan, K, & Kagan, C. (2007) "'We don't believe you want a genuine partnership': University work with communities" paper presented to Community Work and Family Conference, Lisbon, Portugal, 12th-14th April 2007.

why volunteering and Cultural Engagement have become popular – funding was provided which allowed universities to construct narratives and activities and those are used to fill the institutional 'engagement space'.

At the same time, universities are very powerful actors, particularly with respect to excluded communities, which can in turn leave the universities with the lion's share of the benefits from engagement activities, and communities wondering whether they have been used for ulterior motives. In cases where universities provide their staff with resources for engagement, communities may criticise the universities for not spending resources on the communities themselves, and preventing the communities from meaningfully engaging with those collaborative activities. However, as we have already highlighted, in the absence of core engagement funding streams, any resources for engagement have to be top-sliced from core funding, and are judged against their ability to deliver core outputs for the university.

This opportunism means that the reality of engagement missions is that they are not dreamed up in a vacuum, but are substantially delimited by what can be or has already been achieved. It is notable that we found examples of universities who experimented with engagement activities and these did not work for those universities, but were passed to others who were able to make them a success. In Carlisle, for example, Northumbria had a long-standing presence, which they passed in 2002 to Central Lancashire, and which merged with other Cumbrian activities of Lancaster and UCL to form the new Cumbria University. Likewise, the original idea for what is now Queens Campus, Stockton was for a federal college between Teesside and Durham. When it passed into Durham's ownership, they sought activities to make it work, and located the Wolfson Research Centre there, making it their 'engagement campus', helping to set out the benefits which community engagement can bring to a research-intensive university such as Durham located in a poor industrial region.

6.4.2. Non-altruistic community engagement by universities

There were a range of reasons why universities engaged in community engagement which were not grounded in some kind of benevolent perspective on their duties to these communities. We have already pointed to the fact that some universities engaged with communities as part of their campus expansions, often being located in inner city areas where expansion could generate significant opposition to their plans. However, in the case of Manchester Metropolitan, their choice of a new campus in Hulme was in part a response to the near impossibility of further campus expansions in the green south Manchester suburb of Didsbury as a result to local opposition to the impacts of that development.

The fact that so many universities had developed inner-city campuses that could be regarded as engagement campuses might be seen as a problem. Certainly, a number of these campuses were created to meet some deep-seated institutional need, whether Durham's desire for medical training, Napier's interest in redeveloping its Sighthill campus, or Liverpool Hope's need to sustain student numbers for survival. This raises the question of whether the success of community engagement by that institution was also predicated on the success of that campus. A sense of that dilemma can be seen with the case of Queens Campus, Stockton, where it has indeed become successful. One can argue that one of the side-effects of Queens Campus, Stockton is to sideline community engagement in Durham University. However, the counterfactual is not necessarily that Durham University would be an engaged

institution, and it must be borne in mind that by having a senior manager responsible for regional & community engagement and the Stockton campus helps to create a senior manager with a good knowledge of the practicalities of engagement at that institution (*cf.* 6.2).

In a number of other cases, community engagement was closely related to Widening Participation, although the relationships did vary between institutions. In Scotland, because of the hard division made between business engagement (and KTG) and community engagement (and social/ educational policy), it was common for institutions to think about community engagement as Widening Participation. The idea behind building bridges into communities was to improve recruitment from those communities. However, this downplays another significant split, between the newer universities who tended to have already high levels of recruitment from non-traditional backgrounds, and the established universities whose professional courses tended to include a degree of interaction with these communities. There were relatively few cases in Scotland of community engagement becoming entirely conflated with recruiting from target communities.

In both Scotland and the two English regions was a longer-term recognition that changing demographics necessitated a general change in attitudes to higher education. The opinion was regularly voiced that there were communities that were so antipathetic to higher education that it was simply not possible to cherry-pick their brightest students as part of Widening Participation, but that efforts to improve recruitment had to start at a much earlier age. A range of universities were involved in things like summer schools to more generally encourage children into higher education, without any kind of guarantee that those children would necessarily go into their course. Abertay usefully made a distinction that the key challenge for them around Widening Participation was in retaining non-traditional students once they had been recruited, and put therefore far more of their effort into retention. They ran special induction courses, provided special tutors and skills training to help students make the leap from an access course or school to university life – this, more than recruitment, was the main focus of their Widening Participation effort.

Part of the difficult with a perspective of universities as being highly opportunistic is the fact that they are subject to so many intense and competing pressures at once that opportunism emerges as a sensible response to those pressures. When community engagement is presented in a neat, simple target that can be dealt with, this encourages universities to follow that approach directly. This is very neatly illustrated with the case of the UHI Millennium Institute, and the way that it has developed a cultural engagement strategy. UHI had a rather difficult inception period, and since its successful launch has had to negotiate between the competing visions and emotions invested in it by its key stakeholders. To attract students, it has had to offer higher education (with a research component) that is in some way unique. To satisfy local promoters, it has had to use ICTs, be based throughout the Highlands and Islands, and have close community links. The Cultural Engagement Strategy provided a point of stability around which a discrete task could be undertaken, helping to build up UHI without becoming entangled in the other tensions facing UHI.

One indicator of opportunism could be the impermeability of universities institutionally. There were very few universities that had community representatives on their various governance institutions. In part this reflects the use by universities of these institutions as a means to bring particular experts into the university orbit to help

them deal with the key challenges facing them, which have primarily been around increasing commercialisation and marketisation. In the absence of a case where excluded were significant stakeholders and partners for universities, they were unlikely to be represented on university boards. This was related to the fact that universities tended to have relatively weak infrastructures for working with their community partners. A causal link could not be demonstrated between business board members and strong business engagement infrastructure and the much weaker position of community partners in both those arenas. Nevertheless it is suggestive of the problems which community groups face in engaging with universities.

Figure 8 The funders' partnership for Kensington Life Bank, Liverpool

There were some universities which had built up linkages with communities in response to approaches from those institutions. Urban Hope was one example of this, where the university had been approached by public funders to help configure projects to meet the needs of (unruly) community partners. Liverpool Hope University was able to bring the interests of several public bodies together to mobilise large capital projects which were then handed back to the community. Likewise, in Sunderland, the Department of Computing Science was approached by community partners for students willing to undertake social placements, and so over time as the relationships built up, they have become more normalised within the institution. They are now a regular part of the curriculum, and for a time it was possible for staff to have their community engagement activities be counted towards their promotion activities.

6.4.3. The public life of universities

A third area of opportunism emerged from the increasing involvement of universities in public life. It is important not to create a simplistic dichotomy between a past of universities as home to dispassionate experts and a present situation of universities as highly politicised network players. Nevertheless, a series of parallel pressures have driven universities to become increasingly active in local and regional networks, and to use those networks as a means of achieving their own ends. The main drivers for this appear to have been the historical under-resourcing of universities, Scottish devolution and English regionalisation, and increasing emphasis on governance partnerships. In both England and Scotland, it is important for universities to be individually and collectively written into strategy documents which shape future spending. In the North East, a number of institutions pointed to how they had

managed to become key partners for the regional development agency by working closely to have a chapter of the Regional Economic Strategy relate entirely to universities' contributions.

More opportunistically, universities are seeking to get their priorities written into a range of strategy documents so that they are able to access other partners' funding. Universities are fundamentally aware that they are often key players in their host cities and localities, with the exception of London, because of the numbers of jobs and their total budgets they command. Many of the institutions interviewed noted that they had attempted to measure their local impacts, contributions and benefits in these more quantitative terms as part of trying to condition local partners to understand their significance to local economic systems. A number of universities interviews acknowledged that this was part of a wider strategy of relationship management with key public-sector stakeholders, demonstrating their (eye-catching) public benefit in order to ensure that they were perceived as good partners and citizens. There were a few candid interviewees who suggested a link between that and a desire to ensure continued external funding for their core developmental activities.

Despite differences in what has been devolved and regionalised (with English regions predominantly having powers for physical development, skills and competitiveness, and Scotland having far wider powers), all three regions have invested very heavily in their science bases. We have elsewhere documented the rise of regional science policy in all three regions, but the justification for that has come through the contribution that universities can make to their regions' competitiveness. What we observed with community engagement was that universities were likewise seeking significant investments from regional agencies justified in terms of universities' contributions to social inclusion. In Manchester, the RDA have contributed core funding to the redevelopment of the Oxford Road campus in return for Manchester University reporting back to them quarterly on their community engagement activities. Because of the difficulties identified in measuring and targeting community engagement, NWDA have chosen a pragmatic, scrutiny-based approach for accounting for public funds, which seems to offer an interesting model for how any community engagement promotion instrument might function.

6.4.4. Gulfs between altruistic aspirations and opportunistic realities

Perhaps the greatest signifier of opportunism around university behaviour came in their unwillingness to commit to their localities. Many of the institutions were willing to state that they were institutions with international, national and regional relationships and impacts of significance. However, it was striking the way that a range of universities (by no means all elite research universities) used this multi-scalarity to evade their responsibility for particular local communities or regions. A number of institutions argued that communities they worked with were lucky to benefit from that activity, and they could be working with other similar communities anywhere (even globally). This seemed to be used as a strategy to avoid being held to account for these activities and to prevent local community stakeholders having any kind of say over the development of particular projects.

The net effect of this was that it reinforced a kind of 'detached benevolence' relationship between universities and their local communities. This made local activities seem 'small' next to the global connections and networks within which

universities operated. This therefore downplayed the extent to which the universities themselves benefited from these activities, to the general benefit of the universities, and by reducing community involvement in decision-making, the capacity of the university activities to meaningfully contribute to the development of social capital in those communities.

There were situations where engagement went beyond this detached benevolence – in the case of Liverpool Hope, Hope became involved in a project between the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and West Everton Community Council to introduce the Venezuelan Simon Bolivar Orchestra methodologies (improving educational attainment through a musical curriculum) to a local primary school. This very local, Liverpool activity (initiated as part of Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's own community engagement requirements) fitted with Liverpool Hope's desire to engage with world-class activities to improve its own profile. The example perhaps suggests that some universities have chosen to define community engagement in ways that allow relatively few opportunities for genuine benefit from university funds. This is backed up by the number of engagement funds which pay for staff buy-out without funding community participation.

There are many institutions that we spoke to that claimed to be committed to community engagement, but what was striking was the number of ways that this was caveated in practise. This had the effect of saying "we are committed to community engagement…"

- BUT it will never be something appropriate for all staff

- BUT we could be engaging with excluded communities anywhere, not just here

- BUT we will only introduce KPIs for it once we are back on a sound financial footing

- BUT it has to fit with our core teaching and research activities

- BUT we are an international research institution and our institutional profile is critical

- BUT we have to control large capital projects to ensure their successful completion

- BUT the main challenge within that is increasing the number of non-traditional students

- BUT we have to be concerned with our performance in the RAE, and so community engagement has to fit with research,

- BUT we have to ensure that we hit the HEIF targets and so we are reinvesting our HEIF4 in activities which demonstrably hit those targets.

- BUT as a newer university we do not have many opportunities to earn additional income and so all our efforts are focused on business engagement.

In framing community engagement in this way, it was not just engagement with excluded communities which was downplayed but a range of other public engagement activities. In the long-run, this of course raises the question of whether this will undermine the social compact by which universities enjoy a privileged place in society, because meeting exclusively the needs of business, and self-interest, may undermine popular support for the institution of university. Despite the magnificent

edifices conjured up in strategy documents, visions and mission statements, community engagement was invoked in a highly selective and opportunistic manner.

6.5. TELLING STORIES ABOUT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

6.5.1. Narratives universities tell about community engagement

In the course of the research, it was striking the number of stories that were told about universities about community engagement and how it fitted with the core activities with what universities were doing. There has not been scope within this research project to undertake a detailed analysis of the discourses through which universities frame and position their community engagement. By narratives here, we are talking in the concrete ways in which the interviewees in the institutions told 'general' stories about the essence of the institution, and the ways in which they described the relationships between the 'essentials' of the institution, and the particular events and decisions in which those institutions were involved.

Nevertheless, an overview of the narratives which universities tell about engagement with community engagement helps both to shed light on the way that key actors within universities regard the activity, and also about the comparative priority that it is given within institutions. We are not here claiming that the narratives represent a reality, and indeed there are places where there is significant dissonance between the way that universities portray their activities and what they are actually undertaking – this is not only overplaying community engagement for functional reasons, but also downplaying community engagement for a variety of reasons we have not been able to entirely pin down.

There were a range of university narratives which mentioned community engagement as a key element of what the university was doing and seeking to do. Queen Margaret, which had begun as a single-sex Cookery college and which now has many allied heath subjects, positioned itself as a feminine and caring institution. The University of the West of Scotland, a merger between Paisley and Bell College, made a strong case for the economic benefits which it continued to bring to all its localities. Glasgow Caledonian University which has a wide range of professional subjects and a very high 'natural' level engagement, has created a narrative around promoting social justice. In Cumbria, a university created from a merger of four existing providers, seeks to raise the aspirations for and increase the benefits from one of the poorest performing sub-regions in Europe.

Figure 9 The front façade of the Victoria Building annex, Liverpool University

Salford, Strathclyde and Newcastle Universities all identified themselves as 'civic' universities in some manner, and argued that they drew strengths from, and were shaped by, their involvement with their host city. In the case of Liverpool, there was a very neat narrative evolved that the university had been created and funded by key merchants and philanthropists to benefit the city and create a new technical class to raise the locality's competitiveness. This civic mission was literally built into the fabric of the Victoria Building (pictured above), in the lettering detail. As the Victoria Building is reputedly the inspiration behind the naming of the large English civic universities as the 'redbrick universities', a narrative could be constructed – and seemed to be implied by some interviewees – that community engagement is 'built into the fabric' of these red-brick institutions.

It is interesting that very few universities actually ruled out community engagement as a core mission. The largest research university in the sample, Manchester University, as we have seen, had a Strategic Goal (no. 9) relating specifically to university engagement. Even St. Andrew's University – which appears to conceive of itself as an ivory tower for Scotland – admitted that its large size in a small town meant that managing community relationships were important, even if its community engagement strategy focused rather more on alumni and fund-raising than engagement with excluded communities (strategic mission no. 6). Lancaster University, which was attempting to develop itself into a 'Princeton-upon-Ribble', noted the importance of local and regional relationships for achieving its strategic goals, as well as having a deep-seated commitment to societal contribution in its origins as a quintessential democratic mass university of the 1960s.

The essence of a good institutional narrative for community engagement appeared to be in bringing together four elements. The first is to argue that community

engagement is something that the institution has always done, for reasons of subject mix, because of founders' inclinations, because of societal or sponsors' demands, or institutional evolution. The second is arguing that engagement has always been important to the institution, in the past as well as now, creating a sense that engagement is timeless and independent from contemporaneous pressures. The third element is in explaining how current projects are a contemporary manifestation of that timeless societal engagement mission, and continuing to make a positive difference. The final element is that this will continue, strengthen and even deepen into the future, suggesting that engagement has an alluring future promise for potential investors or funders of that engagement.

6.5.2. The functions served by university-community engagement narratives

In 6.5.4, we will explain how that university-community engagement narratives are a weak form of public relations, because they are not effective at overcoming conflict. The argument is instead that they have two main functions for universities, to consolidate past activities and make sense of them, and to promote future development by helping to make sense of the institution around a particular view of its function. Where community engagement was evoked in its most functional form, to directly win funding bids, institutions were able to create retrospectively some kind of narrative to justify the bid and explain why it would deliver its intended impacts. This appeared to us to be quite separate from the way in which community engagement was woven into the more general narratives that universities told about themselves.

One important element of these narratives were an attempt to build an internal constituency for engagement. We were struck by the number of people – in the full diverse spectrum of institutions – that reported saying that there were groups that remained to be persuaded of the value of engagement. This suggests that there was indeed a debate around the value of engagement to the particular institution, and the role of the narrative appeared to be to articulate the positive position, that community engagement could bring benefits to the institution, and was in tune with the 'institutional grain'. This appears to be why the historical element of the narrative was so important, making the point – in the language of Kellogg – that engagement represented a return to the institutional roots.

Related to this was where institutional narratives evolved and community engagement became an increasingly important part of that process. In the case of Manchester Metropolitan, this appears to have happened as a rational response to the decision to concentrate on a new inner-city campus in Hulme. In other cities, however, community engagement could be regarded as almost a rallying cry to help the university deal with difficult times. In several of the institutions we spoke to, community engagement was evoked as one of the 'higher purposes' for higher education, and those higher purposes were in turn evoked as a justification for (potentially unpopular) reforms undertaken to secure long-term institutional survival.

Part of the narrative-building process also appeared to be related to a desire to build image and brand in a very crowded institutional market-place. Universities appeared to be under pressure to develop unique features, to distinguish themselves from the idea of a 'bog-standard' HEI offering 'bums-on-seats' courses, and in some cases, community engagement was evoked in this. This is returned to in the following

section where the audience for this narrative was considered, and the relationship between community engagement narratives and student recruitment. What appeared to be important in these narratives was the sense of change and evolution, and community engagement was evoked to highlight the intangible uniqueness of that institution.

One very specific value attached to community engagement came for colleges seeking powers to award either taught or research degrees. After 2002 in England, the funding council significantly raised the threshold for institutions to be considered for university title, to preserve the research relationship with university teaching. The argument has been developed that in scholarly activities including outside partners there is sufficient distinctive and excellent to merit the extremely restricted university title. A number of institutions used community engagement activity as examples of scholarship and enrichment in the curriculum to help in their negotiations for these powers, including Liverpool Hope, Chester, Edge Hill and Bolton.

6.5.3. Who is the audience for these narratives?

Given the superficiality of the possible analysis of the narratives of engagement possible in the nature of our survey, it is difficult to say many definitive things about how the audience for those narratives responded. Interviewees reported candidly on who their key stakeholders were, and there is a correspondence between those key stakeholders and their interests and the kinds of narratives that were being told by those institutions. In some cases, universities had made explicit commitments to engagement in return for particular funding, and in those cases, perhaps unsurprisingly, those activities featured significantly in the narratives they told. The narratives could be interpreted as indicative of the wider governance networks within which those institutions assembled resources for strategic projects, and the relationships with which they functioned in those networks.

A key element of a good narrative appeared to be in suggesting future promise to be brought by further investment in those activities, recognising the importance of external funders as an audience for these strategies. In part this relates to universities' desires to be written into a wide range of social and economic development strategies locally and regionally. At least one institution was quite explicit in arguing that its selection of eye-catching projects was deliberately shaped by a desire to create 'good stories'. The intention of these good stories was to encourage other stakeholders and partners to considering investing in future activities in these institution. One note of caution with too bold (functionalist-Machiavellian) an interpretation of this is that as we argue in 6.5.5 that narratives were not an alternative to PR, in that they could not readily challenge bad experiences. A more nuanced reading of this was made by a different institution who argued that sometimes the institutional challenge was in getting the credit for the impacts already delivered but not immediately visible to partners often bound up in their own silos and with quite one-dimensional university contacts.

In Scotland, it was notable that there was a clear split in the narratives which were told between older and newer institutions. Older institutions tended to emphasise the community benefits that they brought, whilst newer institutions (with some exceptions) tended to emphasis their competitiveness and business benefits. This could be a question of clearly different audiences for their institutional narratives. Older universities in Scotland are under pressure to justify their contribution to

Scotland (through recruitment of Scottish students, for example), whilst newer universities face the challenge of demonstrating their benefit to the knowledge economy.

One audience mentioned by a few institutions was local newspapers. One institution mentioned that it decide on which activities to pursue based on how well those activities would play in the press. Another institution argued that it was always very mindful of its local press profile, and the resistance which would meet any abolition of its lecture series in the local letters pages ensured that that was never seriously considered as an option. There was a sense in some institutions that they were quick to claim credit retrospectively for successful activities, that generated a positive press profile or which won awards, which had not been evident when those activities were being built up.

6.5.4. The relationships between narrative and reality

It is important to emphasise that the engagement narratives told by universities are not the same as reality, although it is possible to gain an insight into institutional situations through considering those narratives. There are examples of institutions in which a community engagement narrative was downplayed at the same time that actual levels of community engagement were increasing. In one case, community engagement was seen as unhelpful in attempting to rebrand the institution as more research-active, yet its past investments in community engagement continued coming on-stream, increasing the opportunities for better community involvement and impact.

Conversely, telling 'nice stories' about community engagement is not the same as it being embedded within the core of the university in terms of the institutional vision and mission, the activities promoted and supported by the HEI, and the infrastructural configuration of the university. There were examples of institutions where the institutional narrative became embedded in others' narratives– so support from local partners for Bolton's university status are reflected in the way that Bolton's evolution is evoked to build an argument for 'city' status for Bolton. In this way, the telling of the institutional narrative is bound up with community engagement – and in those institutions which are developing new inner-city campuses, engagement may well in the future become a more intrinsic and 'built-in' element of those institutions.

This does raise questions about the validity of constructed narratives, particularly around issues of selectivity and framing of narratives. It has not been possible to determine the reasonableness of the narratives we encountered, whether the narrative has been constructed *ex ante* and then examples slotted in, with juxtaposition replacing causality, or there has really been institutional continuity. Have the various institutions with Christian backgrounds that we encountered really developed an engagement mission out of a sense of Christian values, or has that been used to create a more convincing narrative more attractive to other potential funders?

This question can be finessed to some extent by noting that narratives have shaped management practice and decisions, with the consequence that even *ex post* recognition and valuation of these traditional activities can have contemporary influences. In constructing institutional narratives within which community engagement is mentioned, this may help to create the conditions where particular forms of community engagement can flourish. There is an iterative relationship between the narrative and the reality, and so the narrative becomes a moment in the

evolving institutional trajectory which may later influence the destination for that institutional evolution.

The Queens Campus, Stockton campus is a good illustration of the iterative relationships between narrative and reality, and how particular projects can drive larger institutional change. Queens Campus, Stockton was created as a stand-alone campus with two colleges and a research centre, and became the focus for Durham University's engagement activities. This was responding to an expectation from regional partners that this new campus would produce local benefits, and efforts were made to ensure that community partners had a degree of access and involvement. At the same time, Durham were able to win blue chip research funding around the idea of 'translational research', using their community connections to translate a range of research into real-world solutions for excluded communities. The success in winning large bids justified further campus investments, and led to a narrative of 'excellence and engagement'. The narrative evolved dynamically, and was involved in shaping decisions which ultimately shaped the wider institutional narrative, where Queens Campus, Stockton is now an accepted part of the institutional story.

6.5.5. Tensions and problems in institutional narratives.

The main set of issues with the narratives told about community engagement was that universities were not completely in control of those narratives. We have already seen how they intended other partners to use those stories to understand the universities and to view them more readily as partners for collaborative projects. Yet, there were cases where universities were not completely in control of those narratives. At its most basic, that could take the form – as one institution remarked – where they felt that they were not accorded credit for their engagement because they did so much and yet it was so diffuse.

Narratives did not have much in the way of public relations value in dealing with conflicts, because they were difficult to sustain - and persuade others to accept - if they deviated too far from the underlying reality. One inner-city campus, for example, attempted to portray its arrival as a decisive moment turning around the fortunes of the existing community. The existing community were highly resistant to – and indeed infuriated by – that narrative. In response, the university modified its approach to make the point that this new campus had a degree of permanence which many previous public investments had not had, and was the bulwark for a new wave of regeneration.

There was a perception within many of the institutions that there was a conflicting narrative community *within the university* who did not regard engagement as a suitable task for an institution. The perception of this grouping was a strong motivation for activities undertaken by managers, and in particular for caution, in attempting to slowly transform the opinions of this community. In this research it has been impossible to gauge how significant this community really was, and how prevalent this opinion was. But we note that in one of the sister projects within this Initiative, Kitson (2009) have surveyed UK academic staff extensively and have reported that around 40% of all academics are active in engagement of some form, which suggests that this narrative grouping might be less pervasive that believed by university senior managers.

One possible explanation for this perceived perception was that it was in reality very difficult to motivate people to undertake engagement. But as we have noted in 6.3, it

has been very difficult to create good systems for managing engagement because of its long-term nature and unquantifiability. This raises the question of whether there really was a strong resistance to engagement – framed as a belief in the incompability of excellence and engagement – or that engagement had difficulty in emerging within the crowded institutional environment.

A final problem relates back to the paradox and the tensions between collective aspirations and individual targets within HEIs. Community engagement missions tended to be expressed collectively, without stipulating precise beneficiaries, in some cases allowing a slippery elision between scales, with the consequence of avoiding being held too tightly to account by local communities (*cf.* 6.4.4). However, as noted, it is extremely difficult to manage community engagement by a target system based on individual outcomes.

It could be argued therefore that there is a disconnect between the institutional narratives told and the management practises by which institutions decide what is important. However, it could also be argued that these narratives might also be important (*cf.* 6.2) in giving senior managers the uncertainty to try to promote something which does in fact appear unknoweable and unmanageable. This raises the question of whether in fact one audience for these narratives are institutional senior managers themselves, and whether these narratives acquire the status of artefacts in the ongoing search for certainty in this highly uncertain activity.

6.6. THE PUBLICISATION OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

We have noted that universities often shape their engagement activities to be able to meet the needs of their most salient stakeholders. We had therefore anticipated that the recent professionalisation of the voluntary and community sector would have had significant impacts on the ways that universities chose to engage. In recent years, particularly in England but also in Scotland, the VCS has become increasingly regarded as an alternative to public modes of delivery. At the same time the voluntary and community sector is incredibly heterogeneous, and we therefore appreciated that there would be a similar situation to the way that universities have managed business engagement.

Although universities have a huge infrastructure for engaging with businesses, the practicality of engaging with large businesses which have similar kinds of world-views often sees that kind of high-value activity privileged over much smaller, but more numerous, engagements with SMEs who are not particularly skilled at innovation. One example might be that universities worked with sectoral interest groups for the voluntary and community sector in developing new foundation degrees and post-experience courses, and focused primarily therefore on training experienced groups of voluntary sector professionals rather than meeting the much messier, diffuse and less (cash) rewarding needs of the community sector.

However, we appear to have over-estimated that risk. Although there are examples of where universities are working with large charities in delivering CPD, this does not appear to have crowded out their attention for smaller voluntary and community sector organisations and interests. Those universities which were delivering VCS CPD tended to be those already delivering it to those public sector activities which were partially being taken over by the VCS. In one institution where this was quite common, Chester, the university could not then be accused of complacency to the

needs of VCS. It had created a 'science shop' for the needs of small VCS activities, and also ran a large placement programme into which around a hundred students annually were placed into local organisations including in the VCS sector.

Another explanation for this could be the fact that much university interaction with the voluntary and community sector comes through volunteering activities. Much of this volunteering activity depends on the prior inclinations of participants, so there is a relatively limited scope for 'capture' of those schemes by voluntary and community sector interests. In Liverpool, the three students unions did organise a careers' fair for working in the VCS sector, which emphasised the career opportunities offered by these larger charity organisations. However, this made sense in terms of the desire to provide students with the widest array of future career possibilities, and it was hard to see that this 'crowded out' smaller community organisations.

There was a risk identified in one institution that volunteering reduced to recruiting sixth-formers under the guise of mentoring, but again, the reliance on individual motivation and the relatively peripherality of engagement institutional suggests a relatively limited scope for that kind of manipulation. In another comparable institution, it was an acknowledged problem that there was a disconnect between the kinds of organisations in which people volunteered and the organised groups, so the institution worried that it did not fully appreciate this potentially important community.

7. TENSIONS IN UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In chapters 5 and 6, we have sketched out how the 33 universities examined in the North East, North West and Scotland have sought to define, manage, stimulate and develop their community engagement activities. On the one hand, a large number of the universities have attempted to make community engagement a strategic agenda for their institutions, by creating strategies, plans, structures and mechanisms for the stimulation of university-community engagement. On the other hand, universities have also faced the reality that delivering effective university-community engagement entails having effective and permissive environments where university staff can engage with external partners in ways that generate substantive benefits for both groups of participants. What this analysis so far has not been able to do is to identify why community engagement is such an effort for institutions, other than the fact that it is simply not as important as other key drivers facing universities.

In chapter seven, the focus lies specifically on the tensions which undermine effective university-community engagement, and which good university-community engagement approaches and policy specifically address. There are three distinct types of tensions which hinder effective university-community engagement. Firstly, there are external pressures, which relate to the fact that engagement is one outcome in a higher education system that is systematically disadvantaged with respect to teaching and research. Secondly, there are internal pressures, which derive from limitations within universities seeking to promote engagement with excluded communities. Thirdly, there are stakeholder pressures, which we define as limitations in what is possible in terms of community engagement because of the nature of those communities with which universities are seeking to engage.

7.1. EXTERNAL TENSIONS IN UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The first set of constraints on universities which create tensions for those institution seeking to improve their engagement performance arise from systemic pressures on universities. It has already been noted that public management systems characterised by new public management (which certainly describes the UK's higher education systems) are target-driven, and there are competing pressures; teaching and research are the core institutional mission, and there is an additional third mission that tends to be defined in terms of commercialisation plus a vague societal benefit. In the case of research, a defining institution has been the Research Assessment Exercise, which specifically excludes community engagement except insofar as it contributes to excellent journal articles. This actively undermines those committed to such work as well as hindering the diffusion of such expertise into the university, and given universities are funded on the basis of their RAE performance, this actively discourages the recruitment of future community engagement expertise.

7.1.1. Policy Drivers

It is curious to observe that national policy (in both Scotland and England) is driving university-community engagement by demanding that HE contribute to economic, cultural and social development and wellbeing in general and employability,

knowledge transfer, lifelong learning, skills and widening access and participation in particular. Universities are found themselves being drawn into an increasing number of partnerships seeking to deliver these wider societal missions, critically delivering them by demonstrating delivery of pre-specified performance indicators. Funding regimes have in many cases forced community engagement onto the university corporate agenda through these partnerships. But this has come at a cost, namely the remaining confusion in the defining and delivery of community engagement, the diversity of responses at corporate level, the lack of delivery and reward infrastructure outside of specific faculties, departments or campuses as well as persistent suspicion among academic staff and managers, especially those without social or vocational remits, of the intellectual limitations even detriments of engagement

The marketisation of HE has produced a context of competition for students and funding that has forced universities to reconsider their future functions and roles. This competition is compounded by declining student demographics and thus the necessity to widen future recruitment pools. For the post-1992 universities in particular, reconfiguration/repositioning has brought communities to the forefront of both policy and practice. For many the community focus builds on histories and existing disciplinary strengths in vocationally applied education that can now be re-packaged as 'unique selling points' to both a greater diversity of student/learner and external funding bodies. Unable to compete with research-intensive institution for funding council resources, community engagement offers the promise of alternative and even independent income streams.

Competing interests and policy drivers, in which research and teaching missions are still viewed as superior to third strand activities, is assimilating community engagement into existing research and teaching interests and strengths or funded programmes such as widening participation. Even in universities celebrating their community engagement focus, such activity is not on an equal footing with research and teaching responsibilities. This inequality of purpose creates difficulties for staff having to account for their time when engagement is not part of a formal workload model. In the majority of cases community engagement has to both add to and comply with research and teaching priorities.

- At university A (small, teaching intensive), community engagement has to fulfil two conditions: (1) that it fits with core institutional missions (adding something beyond teaching); and (2) contribute to the institutional financial needs, although acknowledging community engagement is important to its growth strategy.

- At University B (large, research intensive) an identified responsibility to communities must balance 'appropriate' collaboration with positioning itself as a world-class university. World-class excellence on the one hand and responsibility to the local and region on the other can be contradictory and must therefore be managed. Staff are free to pursue community engagement activities subject to the proviso that it does not interfere with research (and teaching) activity.

- At University C (large, teaching intensive) engagement activity must contribute to the 'sustainability of the business base'.

There has been a trend enhanced through new public manage to encourage institutions to focus on courses which lead to qualifications increasingly closely aligned to those demanded by the government. This has, as noted in chapter 5, also created a very volatile context for adult education activities as community engagement; In Scotland,

there has been the withdrawal of funding from non-accredited courses and a shift towards community-based low-level education and skills rather than progression. This is a shift that reinforces the marginalisation and secondary status of such community engagement activities, and reduces the scope for the development of links between universities and community education.

The volatile context of HE provision and survival is likewise encouraging many universities to play to their strengths, which in the case of such as St Andrews and Robert Gordon is to reassert their positions as world class institutions. Community engagement is not viewed as integral to such a position. In St Andrews attempts to diversify its funding base away from the state is placing a focus on attracting high-quality research funding as well as maximising its share of public funding and performing well in the RAE; all sites of funding that reinforce its elitist approach to the production of 'world-class' research. It is elitist with a purpose; to ensure its long-term institutional survival in the face of a great deal of uncertainty, volatility and increasing competition. Yet it is aware that it needs to show that being elite does not mean it is not an asset to Scotland

7.1.2. Funding Regimes

Policy drivers and subsequent funding opportunities have an implicit bias towards business over other forms of community engagement, not least because there is a consensus around the validity of business engagement and the expected outputs from the process. There is thus an inequality between commercial and community engagement in funding regimes. Hence, there is a dislocation between government demand that universities should engage with communities on the one hand and the institutional resources and support provided on the other.

Commercial engagement is further reinforced by government's 'vocationalisation' of universities; applying pressure to work with firms and investing what resources they do have into responding to employer interests/needs via targeted employer short courses from which they can generate income. Hence the pressure to prioritise certain types of engagement at the expense of activity that does not carry the same kind of returns. In England the LSC has down-graded community education in favour of vocational employability courses that hit government targets for basic literacy and numeracy, alongside school-leaver performance. In Scotland policy has shifted towards community-based low-level education and skills rather than progression from community courses into further and higher education, reducing its value to universities as a means of ensuring recruitment. Both shifts have a similar effect in reinforcing the marginalisation and secondary status of the respective community engagement activities.

Funding opportunities for community engagement have both changed (HEIF 3 to HEIF 4) and become more complex to access. There have also been complex rules surrounding the European Social Fund (ESF), which suffered from problems in the 1990s relating to fraudulent provision. ESF funded adult education provision, and prior to 2000, was a significant funder of university-based community education programmes. After 2000, the rules for funding eligibility, progressively tightened to the point that it was almost impossible for universities to draw it down. Thus, the experience of University D (small, teaching intensive) was in common with many of the universities in the sample that it was effectively forced to abandon ESF and its attached engagement activity.

Government funding in Scotland has created Widening Access and Lifelong Learning (LLL) as a central government priority, which has driven a strong alignment between definitions of community engagement and these programmes. Funding for lifelong learning activities have been handed to 4 Regional Access Forums comprised of local education authorities for compulsory education, further education colleges and universities. These seek to raise university participation and stimulate partnership across of all arms of learning (FE, HE, voluntary and community).

Central government has also failed to adequately articulate an effective role for universities in urban development and regeneration activity. In the United States, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has a specific set of programmes to encourage universities to invest in inner-city areas, and provides subsidies and funding support for universities that do so. Although universities have reactively been able to benefit from regeneration funding, there has been no attempt by government to use universities as strategic drivers of territorial/ urban regeneration apart from the somewhat ill-fated science city programme, which was far more concerned with university contributions to urban competitiveness rather than community inclusion and cohesion.

External funding bodies (NHS) also demand community engagement activity in both undergraduate and professional curricula, whilst local authorities in Scotland look to incorporate universities into their education delivery responsibilities. Whilst offering benefits to both communities and students community engagement definitions and activity are again restricted to the confines of specific programmes and in response to those funders who have the resources to make demands of university curricula.

7.1.3. Opportunism versus Idealism

A third issue is the sense from our survey that it could be that universities are more attracted to community engagement from a sense of self-interest rather than a genuine recognition of the mutual benefits of such activity can provide for university and community. Certainly, the financial pressures facing universities are well documented, in the form of adverse student demographics, the decline in alternative funding streams and the need for campus development. These pressures appear to be encouraging universities to recruit students from a wider pool to maximise their numbers, as well as seek direct material support from community and consultative partnerships.

Likewise, underpinned by business models and the marketisation of education any value placed on community engagement may be limited to its contributions to not only the core missions of the university (teaching and research) but as a source of income generation. If money is the key motivator then this may ignore both community need and potential input in favour of 'chasing the money'. Community engagement has helped universities become credible amongst targeted audiences (Edge Hill) and in return local partners have supported struggles for university status (Bolton, UHI) and the building of mutually-beneficial facilities (Aberdeen, Bolton, Robert Gordon). In return, universities gain access to additional income streams as part of community partnerships.

An emphasis on community engagement at times of institutional change has been viewed as an important selling point to both students (recruitment) and local communities (expansion). For a number of newer universities, community engagement is viewed as crucial to their future survival in terms of recruitment (five

teaching intensive universities). A number of institutions are marketing community engagement as integral to the institutional 'brand' (*cf.* the Heriot-Watt, Napier, UCLan, and UHI websites) or as a 'unique selling point' (Abertay). At Chester, community engagement is central to the university's identity in the North West educational landscape. Likewise, Napier aims to 'become the market leader in Scotland for Community Engagement'.

Community partnerships have been useful in fulfilling a range of funding criteria in which a commitment to public participation is required; both funding council (HEIF, SDF, HEACF, Beacon) and regeneration income. This is especially evident in the capital build of cultural and sporting facilities (Aberdeen, Edge Hill, Liverpool, Robert Gordon,) as well as participation in wider regional initiatives (John Moores, Liverpool, Liverpool Hope, Manchester, MMU, Salford). Likewise community engagement has been vital to the inclusion and improved reputation of universities in publicly acclaimed and visible city and regional initiatives such as Culture Quarters, Innovation Zones, the Liverpool Capital of Culture, Manchester Commonwealth Games, Manchester Knowledge Capital, Salford Quays and Mediacity.

HEIF 3 did open up opportunities for community engagement work and allowed some universities to reward their staff for their commitment to and expertise in such work. For example at one (small teaching intensive) university, HEIF 3 income allowed both corporate and individual commitment to come together in the dissemination of corporate monies to individual research. The aim was to remove short-term funding restraints from particular activities in favour of a more strategic approach to community engagement work. Undermined by the external shifts in HEIF requirements. Yet at this institution, HEIF projects have been closer to 'pure' community engagement because of the relatively limited output targets demanded by HEFCE. Another (small teaching intensive) university is using the shifting HEIF agenda to develop more business-oriented engagement.

A third (small teaching intensive) university used HEIF income to develop enterprise and engagement activities and so the development of an enterprise office which supported various Schools in their own attempts to reach out to businesses and the community. A number of Enterprise Fellowships were awarded to individuals in each School to support the development of engagement work. However, in all cases, the universities have had to face the reality that HEIF is formula-funded and therefore they need to ensure their HEIF investments deliver sufficient outputs to maintain the funding stream. A number of interviewees (at a range of institutions, not merely small, teaching intensive universities) observed that the need to comply with the metrics used by HEIF has clearly restricted the type of engagement supported by those activities.

One funding instrument, HEFCE's Higher Education Active Community Fund (only applicable in England) has encouraged volunteering partnerships, and therefore building links, with the voluntary and community sector (Liverpool, Manchester, MMU, Salford, Teesside) without the need for matching or meeting externally set targets. More worryingly was a number of cases where the core funding became mainstreamed and the institutions were forced, or chose, to reduce volunteering activity and increase an emphasis on business engagement.

For some external engagement (not necessarily community engagement), is viewed as a means of generating an income stream independent of funding council resources. Tending to be organised as 'academic enterprise', it is not a required responsibility

equivalent to research and teaching but in some universities it is placed on an equal footing so long as the activity is generating income. One interviewee at a large, teaching intensive university noted that "a pound's a pound wherever it comes from, it kind of doesn't matter what work you're doing as long as you're bringing in money".

At a mid-sized teaching-intensive university , the 'academic enterprise' mission, central to the championing, delivery and reward of community engagement, emphasises projects that are 'wealth creating' and therefore its engagement is likewise underpinned by income generation objectives despite its aspirations for socially inclusive principles.

Community engagement may also be judged against institutional goals that have nothing to do with community benefit. For example at a number of institutions which have gone through applications for research and taught degree awarding powers, engagement has been used in those applications to demonstrate how the university has a scholarly and engaged atmosphere and has progressed beyond further education pedagogies towards teaching informed by reflective practice and scholarship.

7.2. INTERNAL TENSIONS IN UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A second set of tensions which affect universities attempt to engage with excluded communities are those which arise internally, i.e. within the institution. In part these constraints do overlap from the pressures from external funders, but they also arise because of the choices, decisions, perceptions, norms, cultures and institutions prevalent within universities. They do not reduce the capacity for university-community engagement, rather, they are tensions which have to be negotiated by universities seeking to engage, and critically, by universities seeking to increase the scale of their engagement from individual activities to a more institutional scale. Echoing the findings of chapter 4, there is a huge amount of engagement work going on; the challenge is in embedding this within institutional behavioural norms and increasing its value to excluded communities, helping to embed them more fully in their local political economy.

7.2.1. Limited Resources

There is a dislocation between policy and resources surrounding community engagement. Hence, despite embedded demands for community engagement across policy, universities are not given resources in return for community engagement, and there is therefore a reliance on external funding, which can lead to opportunism rather than idealism (*cf.* 7.1.3). As one interviewee stated, 'idealist ideas that cannot be externally funded cannot be delivered'. The pressure to generate income for community engagement continually holds community engagement as peripheral and prevents a more strategic approach being adopted. Funding is also piecemeal and project based, with the majority of engagement research confined within self-financing research centres and units.

The resulting funding model provides limited if not scarce resources with little flexibility of resource spending in amongst a range of financial pressures (redevelopment, salaries). It is a model of support that provides relatively few opportunities to develop community engagement initiatives that are not driven by external funding opportunities. Yet community engagement (as out-reach, widening participation, cultural engagement) can be costly both in terms of direct and indirect

costs (*cf.* 6.3). And since a lack of resources is a key feature of social exclusion funding opportunities are unlikely to come from communities themselves.

The result of this is often an institutional focus on areas of work that generate income streams. In one mid-sized research intensive institution, community engagement was set out in terms of a number of headings which related to existing core missions, including knowledge transfer, international recruitment, taught PG courses, research training and PhDs. The result, acknowledged internally, was that community engagement ends up as a 'side activity, a sub-activity or given a relatively low profile' (Dundee).

It is a model of funding that undermines the sustainability of community engagement activity. This is especially the case for engagement research. Chasing money can lead to piecemeal projects that do not make a real difference to the communities at which they are targeted. One large teaching-intensive university reported facing such problems especially in the delivery of revenue-funded skills development and training programmes operating marginally to core university activities. This experience has shifted emphasis to working with community entrepreneurs already active and organised and dovetailing activities to support and build-up existing activities to ensure the survival of specific projects.

At a small, teaching-intensive institution, despite senior management support, funding opportunities and demands remain the prime drivers and limitations on continuity and sustainability. Yet if tied too closely to funding streams, there is the danger that community engagement will be regarded more as the delivery of a service in return for payment rather than the discharge of an obligation to a wider set of social stakeholders. It is thus a funding model that can prevent or undermine a critical mass of activity and capacity as well as stifle enthusiasm and relation building.

Funding council regimes largely fail to acknowledge the length of time it takes to build up successful community relationships. Where such relationships have been successful they have relied on individuals (both inside and outside the university) committed to working together beyond the scope and timescales of funded projects and research. Funding can also drive engaging academics towards particular organised sections of communities. Income generation as an end goal creates a tensions with regard to an engagement ethos that has community benefit as its objective. Engagement can thus reinforce inequalities between organised and unorganised communities and voices. In such cases partnerships will be partial even though on paper it may appear that the university is involved in significant community engagement.

7.2.2. Limited Infrastructure

Effective community engagement can be well-facilitated by an integrated infrastructure of delivery, promotion and reward. External-facing infrastructure likewise has to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate engagement with business, public sector, research councils and the voluntary and community sector. Whilst amongst all types of university in the majority of cases have some kind of aspiration to developing an infrastructure to support community engagement, universities are at the early stages of grappling with both the concept and practice of community engagement. The development of strategies and infrastructures have therefore been strongly influenced by the universities' past experiences and assets, which are typically in the field of business engagement. It is unsurprising that many universities

have sought to promote community engagement through creating 'business development officers', where the business development activity involves creating contracts with external partners that generate university revenue.

Even when community engagement is either explicitly expressed in strategies or linked to a range of objectives and missions it is not formally incentivised. Even the largest and most research intensive universities, the majority of work with communities comes from individuals, both staff and students, giving up their own time. Even when there are delivery mechanisms in place, individuals are key to both pushing the community engagement agenda within the institution and developing relevant research and teaching activity, acting as community engagement champions.

At one mid-sized teaching intensive university, for example, funding pressures led to the university reconfiguring and repositioning itself as a "leading enterprise university" with formal structures put in place to build a robust support infrastructure that includes the creation of a range of senior posts to support activity at School level, reward and incentive mechanisms to encourage staff participation in enterprise activity, an evaluation framework and a central University Enterprise Committee to oversee activity. Enterprise, whose broad definition includes 'socially creative wealth creation', is thus a core activity, fully embedded in teaching, learning and research rather than as an additional third strand and reinforced by HERA. Even at Salford the community engagement agenda is being championed by individuals at senior management level (PVC and Associate Deans and Heads of Enterprise in Faculty and departmental structures) and yet there persists a feeling that they form a "heroic resistance movement" in which "maverick" academic entrepreneurs are doing battle with an "entrenched academic culture". As elsewhere questions of sustainability arise when there is a disproportionate reliance on individuals. What would happen, for example, if the current responsible Pro Vice Chancellor left the post? Are the delivery and reward mechanisms so embedded in the culture of the university that no one person is key to its future success?

At corporate level engagement is aligned with other delivery priorities or marginalised within such as business engagement, continuing education or lifelong learning units, widening participation programmes and specific teams:-

- At a large research-intensive university: Communications and Marketing, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Estates and Building, Student and Academic Services

- At a small, teaching intensive university: Public Relations

- Separate campuses at Durham, Dundee and , Liverpool Hope

This can add to the sense that community engagement is an add-on, peripheral, or more perniciously, a means of selling the university and its plans to both the general public as well as to targeted stakeholders. Beyond these more negative narratives, there is clearly a strong message from these activities, that the universities themselves discount community engagement from their core missions.

7.2.3. Academic scepticism, unfamiliarity and in some cases opposition

A common tension in the incorporation of community engagement raised by senior management was the perceived opposition across the wider academe, especially by

academics outside of the social sciences. A common argument was that the need for academic excellence was more pressing than all other activities, but also that research excellence stood as separate to and threatened by community engagement. In one small, teaching-intensive institution, a number of staff questioned whether it was ever possible to reconcile between these two pressures, likening them to do cultures which could never be brought together, redolent of tensions between what is perceived as 'high culture' and 'community arts'. However, publicly-funded cultural organisations have their own community engagement targets from national government, and it is interesting that one of the most advanced areas of university-community engagement came in partnership with a large elite culture organisation.

At one small, research-intensive institution, some interviewees were suspicious that engagement was a political programme favoured by some senior managers and not a real goal or activity of value. These perceptions reinforced a sense of inertia around issues of engagement. Even within a favourable climate towards community engagement at one large teaching-intensive university, there was a pervasive notion that community engagement was a distraction from 'core' activities. Ultimately, research and teaching involving community engagement is somehow regarded by core academic constituencies as lacking in intellectual quality and real substance. This is despite the fact that a number of the universities do have substantive research centres and activities which are engaged in both world-class research in community problems as well as community engagement programmes and projects.

In one small research-intensive university, for example, it was reported that 'the battle for the legitimacy of community engagement and other third strand activity remains to be won', whilst at a mid-sized teaching intensive university, there was a feeling that engagement championed form a "heroic resistance movement" in which "maverick" academic entrepreneurs are doing battle with an "entrenched academic culture".

Of course, there is the question of the extent to which the dismissal of community engagement as an unsuitable activity for universities and academics derives from the fact that many university staff do not have direct experience of community engagement. It is possible to regard concerns of a dilution of academic standards brought by engagement with the fact that engagement is also outside the 'comfort zone' of some. UC's engagement is therefore constrained by its reliance on a relatively small cohort of enthusiasts who have been willing to experiment with its delivery

At one large research intensive institution, questions were raised about the competing pressures of research and teaching and community engagement. The question was posed in terms of a question of should or indeed could the university divert resources away from the former to the latter given its ultimate role as the site of world-class education, knowledge and research? The institutional discussion made a frequently recurring point, namely that as there were other HE providers in its host city, with their own contexts, histories and skills, it might make sense for other institutions to focus on community engagement whilst it provided opportunities for staff and students to progress into a world-class educational institution.

Recent debates at another research intensive institution on the future of the University reaffirmed a majority view that all activities should be reorganised in pursuit of being a world-class leader in research. Those that argued that education should also 'be for a purpose' were in the minority. The sustainability of its main site of community education, the Department of lifelong learning (DLL) may now be threatened. It was

suggested that the only interest the University has in DLL is (1) 'does it make us money?' and (2) 'does it help us to meet quotas?' Staff at DLL reported wanting to work outside an academic remit with community organisations and charities, but had to do that in their own time. All non-academic work had to be independently resourced and conform to Full Economic Costing (FEC) requirements to meet University targets. This further deters staff from working with local communities.

7.2.4. Diverse definition of community engagement

In the absence of a clear policy steer, community engagement in the universities across the three regions surveyed can be characterised by a diversity of activity and purpose. Hence, community engagement is often understood and placed within wider social responsibilities, including:

- civic duty, 'moral obligation' (Sunderland),

- 'public good' (St Andrews),

- 'community relations' (Edinburgh),

- 'being a good neighbour' (Edinburgh, John Moore's, Queen Margaret),

- 'wider responsibilities', corporate social responsibility (Aberdeen, Lancaster, Manchester),

- continuing professional development (St Andrews),

- business engagement (Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Napier, Robert Gordon, Strathclyde),

- cultural engagement (Aberdeen, Manchester, St Andrews, UHI),

- 'enterprise' (MMU, Salford, Teesside),

- 'outreach' (Teesside),

- 'stakeholder engagement', 'regional engagement' (Northumbria),

- volunteering (Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Napier, Northumbria,),

- widening participation, professional and vocational teaching, employability (Glasgow Caledonian, John Moore's, Lancaster, Liverpool Hope, Napier, St Andrews, UWS).

All are engagement activities from which identified community audiences will benefit alongside the universities concerned. But clearly in these cases it is the university who determines both the form of engagement, and who gains access to those benefits. The university is in effect both the judge and jury for its own engagement activity, as there are no mechanisms for excluded stakeholders to hold the university to account for a failure to include them in their engagement activities. By having a broad commitment to engagement, the universities could be argued to also have allowed themselves of having a binding commitment to no one, with no community groups having interests that *must* be taken account of by the universities.

There is a further practical problem, in the sense that being aligned to a range of different policy objectives and practices can undermine coherency. Whose voices are heard in the defining and implementation of such diverse engagement activities? At one mid-sized teaching intensive university, community engagement is central to its

'enterprise' mission. Thus community engagement is viewed as a 'subordinate mission'; permitted as long as it benefits teaching and research and attracts or is driven by funding regimes.

There has been an encouragement in some Scottish universities, particularly the ancient universities, to equate community engagement with cultural engagement. In 2005, the Scottish Funding Council provided resources for the institutional to develop cultural engagement strategies, and these have moved to fill an institutional void in how these institutions seek to manage their community engagement activity. There is an evident displacement of community engagement across Scottish universities to the restrictive confines of culture (typically defined as elite/ 'high' culture) as well as business engagement.

7.2.5. Top-down versus bottom-up

Although a majority of institutions do have individuals or committees responsible for community engagement, implementation and thinking is often fragmented resulting in either the adoption of simple frameworks to manage engagement or the subordination of engagement activity into existing structures. In the latter case management are interpreting engagement through the lens of more familiar activities and hence a continued lack of understanding of community engagement as well as a dislocation between senior management strategy and academic and research centre application. This can contribute to a sense of dislocation between senior managers seeking to promote community engagement and more sceptical academics.

At one large teaching-intensive university, for example, senior management do not impose an overhead on external funds. Whilst providing a stimulus for bottom-up engagement activity it remains largely invisible to senior managers. There is also a clear split in some cases between a handful of central projects funded and tightly managed (including volunteering units) and the plethora of grassroots activity given space to flourish, although left to their own devices to finance such activity, through central policies.

At a mid-sized teaching-intensive institution, despite decades of managerial championing and a delivery infrastructure that places 'enterprise' on an equal footing with to research and teaching there persists a feeling that these champions form a "heroic resistance movement" in which "maverick" academic entrepreneurs are doing battle with an "entrenched academic culture". It is in large part being driven by a PVC, described in interviews as both "charismatic" and "evangelistic", rather than a grass roots development.

At one Scottish institution, concern was raised over the lack of leadership at senior management level of any policy. For example, its Strategic Plan was relatively new but there was very little awareness of its existence far less of how it relates to the general staff. There appeared to be a lack of communication between senior management and other staff, despite the Strategic Plan supposed to inform all departmental and operational plans as well as staff appraisals. A senior interviewee also noted that the 'wide consultation' merely involved the 'usual faces' that didn't need to be 'won over' by senior management, with. There was a vacuum of input by a majority of staff. Whilst the 'appraisal route' was selected as a key vehicle of delivery across staff, at the time of the research (mid 2008) it had not been effectively rolled out across the university nor did academic staff take it seriously. Concern was

expressed that community engagement activity was limited to activities for which the university sought media coverage.

At a different Scottish institution, senior management attempts at developing and co-ordinating a Stakeholder and Community Strategy were planned to be underpinned by 'a duty' placed on staff to engage. However, at the time of the research there were no targets with the Resource Allocation Model for community engagement and no plans to roll-out the engagement model to the Schools. Those tasked with the Strategy reported still being 'trying to 'get their heads around community engagement' beyond widening access and lifelong learning. It was likewise noted that the community engagement being considered by managers tended to be linked to stakeholder engagement, and even stakeholder management.

There is evidence to show that successful community engagement is being maintained by committed individuals, as in the past, *in spite* of institutional support. For some universities, community engagement was what specific academics already were doing and expected to continue such work without managerial interference. It was often thought by such managers that any managerial steer would interfere with academic independence or at least ran the risk of disrupting effective activities. One small teaching-intensive institution reported tension between staff with their own community concerns and contacts and the institution who wanted to use engagement to configure and support particular stakeholders. Many academics sought to both inform and help empower communities to challenge other actors and decision-making processes that could include the university. There was clearly a tension between this work in the community and the wider interests of the university in having community acquiescence.

At that institution there was also a problem with placing extra demands for the delivery of community engagement on those already successful in such work, increasing both their workloads and individual expectations of institutional delivery. An overburden on individuals can undermine the very work they have built their reputations on as well as limit their ability to share their knowledge as strategy on behalf on the institutional. In such circumstances "institutional narratives of engagement" are prevented. Close ties with individuals can also tie the reputation and sustainability of community engagement to such individuals and as a consequence the degree of support and tolerance of senior management, particularly when other institution-wide pressures are focusing attention on core activities, as was experienced across a range of institutions.

Finally, universities looking to outreach work through remote campuses to access and overcome sceptical communities paradoxically can reinforce a sense of community identity or 'seige mentality' amongst staff and students on campus.

7.2.6. Student Focus

It is common practice across universities to seek to place students in community engagement activities as part of their course work. It is accepted by most as a benefit for the student and the curriculum as well as the external communities involved. Engagement is especially relevant to those universities with vocationally-oriented disciplines. It is likewise viewed as beneficial to extend CPD to activists, practitioners and professionals. Service learning or volunteering can be the first experience of community activity for a lot of students. It can be a formative process as well as contributing to employability.

However, there is a risk that students do not take this work seriously; that it is tolerated because of the attached credits or its compulsory nature, the student may under-perform and thus undermine the engagement activity and/or future relations with the community in question. Whilst accreditation can be aligned with the needs of professional bodies, there is also the question of how closely those activities can be aligned with needs of less organised or resourced voices? . Likewise volunteering programmes may be closely tied to recruitment of students from excluded communities. One interviewee at a large teaching-intensive university articulated a fear that the staff volunteering programme might evolve into sending staff into 6th form classrooms ostensibly to act as learning mentors, but in reality to increase the numbers of pupils progressing from those classes into their specific institution. Pressure from HEFCE to relate income to performance merely reinforces such instrumental practice.

The focus on engagement through education and learning is overwhelmingly student focused; a focus that may limit engagement and input to academic requirements and timescales rather than community need. For example, at Chester time scales of work-based learning is limited to 5 weeks. Attempts to extend the placement time to help deliver larger projects were not successful, it being felt that the effort involved outweighed the value of the projects to both the organisations and volunteers. But the attempts showed a commitment to engagement despite being unsuccessful.

7.2.7. Community Engagement as Non-Quantifiable

It has already been noted that the absence of effective performance measures has hindered the development of substantial policy support for university-community engagement. This is also a problem for HEIs, particularly given the emphasis there has been in recent years in adopting business management practices, and in particular in ensuring that resources flow to deliver outcomes and generate returns. In that context, community engagement can only thrive when its business case has been proven, and yet quantitative measurements (student, volunteer, CPD numbers) are much easier to determine and assess than qualitative impacts (social well-being, regeneration).

Thus the difficulty in enumerating community engagement prevents was cited by at least three institutions as a substantive constraint on it having a high profile within universities. One small, teaching intensive university noted that they were not able to measure impact in the same way as KPIs on reach-out and knowledge transfer. They have attempted to undertake impact surveys and used them to persuade stakeholders of the benefits the university brings to the local community. One question for many managers is how to manage something that cannot be measured, and for which it is difficult to objectively understand whether performance is good. At one large teaching-intensive university, community engagement is only visible as part of 'enterprise', and there are no effective measurements for it. Consequently, community engagement is not directly monitored by senior management nor is it something regularly discussed as a discrete agenda item; it was referred to as more of a cross-cutting theme arising in the course of other discussions than something the university was able to directly target.

There has also been a tendency to align community engagement with quantifiable outputs, such as employment creation and safeguarding, which may or may not bear some real relation to what the university is really attempting to do with particular

engagement activities. Funding bodies – including Funding Councils, Regional Development Agencies and local authorities also require quantifiable and often economic outputs. One large research-intensive institution noted that funders 'like to buy things that they can put a plaque on'. At a second large research-intensive institution, a substantial restructuring fund had been provided by the RDA with the requirement that the agency be kept informed of all community engagement activity through quarterly reports. The question is what is the impact of these second-best measures for community engagement, which certainly miss a significant amount of work undertaken of which senior managers are not aware. It was reported as frustrating for a number of universities that benefits for both the university and communities had to be ignored if they did not fulfil a 'Treasury view of the world'.

There are examples of institutions which have attempted to develop their own community engagement measures using alternative methodologies such as benchmarking. Manchester University has taken a lead in this in piloting more formal benchmarking models (London benchmarking Group and Business in the Community Index). but reported that the translation of business engagement models to the higher education sector was not entirely unproblematic. Even Salford University, which has made considerable progress in terms of developing its proprietary enterprise evaluation matrix (UPBEAT) there are a number of intangibles arising from social enterprise that cannot be quantified.

Likewise, a large number of institutions reported that there were difficulties in producing even partial snapshots of what they were doing in terms of community engagement. As noted in 6.3.1, mapping community engagement within universities is discouraging because it requires a huge amount of effort and the results are inevitably outdated by the time they can be analysed. At one large, teaching-intensive institution, finding meaningful measurements for community engagement became an ongoing concern, particularly for activities outside of income generation targets or inappropriate to business engagement.

7.2.8. The rising trend of vocationalisation

The vocationalisation of HE can be summarised as the trend paralleling accreditation, in which universities are encouraged to focus their extra-mural teaching effort on the provision of mass courses for well-defined and sophisticated purchasers of short courses and post-experience qualifications. On the one hand, this can create opportunities for community learning, particularly where formal frameworks are set up for the recognition of prior experience and for experiential and work-based learning projects. Where these are driven by a desire to allow recognition by health and community based professionals, these can create structures within universities that allow students from excluded communities to come to universities, have their past learning accredited and acquire new skills and qualifications.

But from a community perspective, and particularly when viewed in the context of community benefit, there can be significant opportunity costs from universities developing strategic partnerships with large, well-organised and often public sector funders. CPD relationships can be underpinned by or paralleled by research and evaluation collaborations, and implicitly exclude community groups, without the resources to develop these relationships, from becoming universities' strategic partners. A failure amongst the voluntary sector to pay full economic costs for research limits the amount of partnership research which universities can pursue, and

a number of universities with medical schools reported that the need to chase underfunded but blue-chip charity funding (such as Wellcome) effectively precluded the possibility of doing loss-leading research with community groups except where funded by other projects.

One medium sized research intensive university with a Medical School noted that their community engagement was strongly framed by medical perceptions of community engagement, which had mixed benefits. On the one hand, the NHS had a very good patient consultative infrastructure and were much better at doing engagement than universities. However, on the other hand, medical sociologists were at the fringes of medical community engagement, and that it was almost impossible to research subjects like the impact of class or housing on propensity to take medicine (i.e. subjects falling outside the very narrow therapeutic research) because they were seen as being anecdotal and partial rather than conforming to the 'research gold standard' of the double-blind randomised trial with control.

Some universities, do not have a vocational curriculum and therefore lack the pressure of preparing students to work with communities that face such problems. One such small, research-intensive university also lacks the incentive to work with these communities to recruit students because its benchmarks for recruitments from non traditional backgrounds are so low. The lack of urgency for working with excluded communities means that community engagement is at best tolerated activity providing that it does not compromise the overall institutional missions of international research excellence, the recruitment of overseas fee-paying students and plays to one of the government agendas such as employability, innovation and skills. For other universities, a lack of social science provision was cited as a barrier to a necessary mind-set of community engagement. One mid-sized teaching intensive university argued that its senior management were professors of engineering lacking an interest or understanding of community-based knowledge exchange.

7.3. STAKEHOLDER CONSTRAINTS

In the first working paper of this project, we highlighted a set of tensions or barriers which potentially hindered university-community engagement through the characteristics of the communities themselves (*cf.* Working Paper 1). These theoretical tensions highlighted the fact that stakeholder groups within excluded communities tended to be fragmented, to lack resources and the organisation necessary to compel universities to respond to their agendas. As a result, excluded communities were not salient stakeholders for universities, and so such communities were restricted to passive receipt of the benevolence endowed by universities. This gave universities sweeping powers to define 'the public good', and as a consequence provided communities with limited opportunity to attempt to influence that definition.

Table 5 Stakeholder constraints in promoting effective university-community engagement

Absence of leaders to sit on boards/ committees	Communities lack knowledge absorptive capacity
Lack of capacity to mobilise around issues	Individual activists not repeatable learning

Misunderstanding of university capacities	Exclusion from professional engagement discourses
Invisible barriers put communities off engagement	Absence of individuals wanting to engage
Formal structures exclude communities	Engagement helps cleverest to leave community
Engagement projects have high staff turnover	Engagement driven by experts not local learning
Community skills mismatch with project demands	Absence of individuals with 'feet in both camps'

Source: Working Paper 1.

Exploring these empirically, it was clear that the largest barrier to community engagement was an underlying suspicion of universities by communities, often not unfounded. Examples were cited of where voluntary and community sector organisations and groups had invested significant amounts of time in developing relationships with particular universities, and these had been swept away in the period changes to senior management to which universities are subject. This left those communities apparently suspicious of involvement with the university,

One remark definitely worth making is that the empirical data did not back up the theoretical suggestions that excluded communities lacked the capacity to engage with universities. There was one example of a university creating a campus in a multiply-deprived community which set up a community forum, not knowing of a long-standing community board. The community forum became a focus for malcontents who had been incapable of working constructively within the community board and consequently left it. This meant that the community forum ultimately failed, although the university thereby learned of the long-standing community board and attempted to build relationships with that organisation, and make good some of the oversights which had happened when dealing with a vocal but unrepresentative part of the community.

One of the problems for a number of institutions was that community engagement had a tendency – as part of its internal peripheralisation – to become dependent on particular individuals within institutions. There were relatively few examples of university-community engagement becoming institutionalisation in ways that could outlive particular enthusiastic individuals, although a number of campus locations physically placed the university where community engagement was to a degree unavoidable (such as Liverpool Hope, Queens Campus, Stockton, Salford or Napier).

One of the clearest explanations of the tension here is identified by by Duggan and Kagan (2007) in their evaluation of community involvement in the *Urban regeneration making a difference* project (*qv*). They noted that rhetoric surrounding community engagement reinforces notions of partnership and yet universities and communities do not occupy the same economic and official status. Power is still seen to reside with the university whilst the contribution of the community is potentially undervalued. Without a deliberate policy of mutual respect as well as benefit community engagement can fall into the more traditional trap of the university as expert and communities as passive receivers or laboratories of university expertise.

Figure 10 The internal complexity associated with community engagement – the case of an urban regeneration project
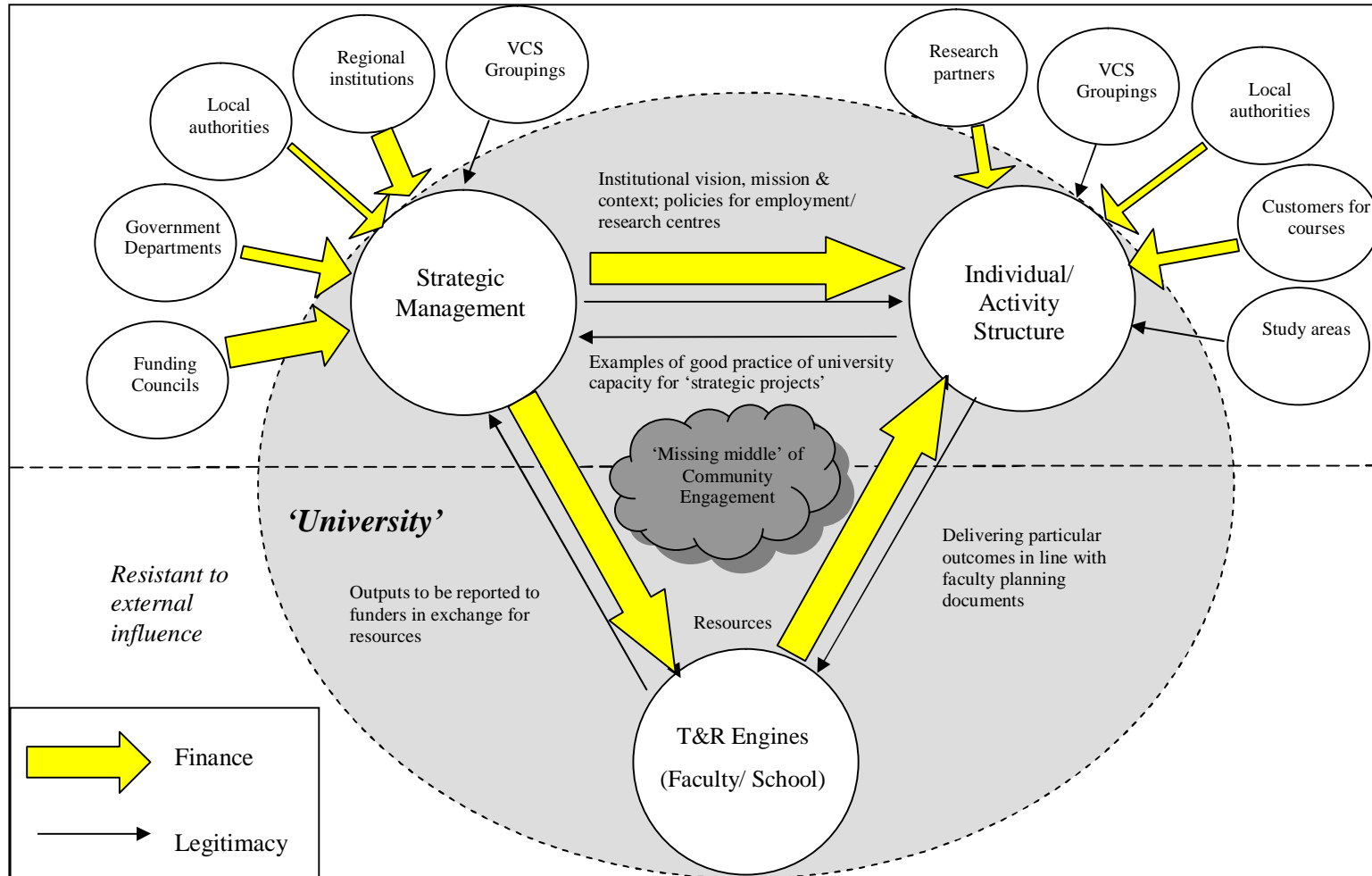
Figure 10 above attempts to map this stakeholder relationship network in a university seeking to mobilise a substantial urban development project, and to explain why community voices tend to be marginalised in these processes. The main stakeholders from the university perspective are the senior managers, the faculties or schools, and the individual academics and research centres, the strategic, bureaucratic and community centres of the university respectively. These are linked through a web of relationships. Two sets of the internal stakeholders have their own set of external stakeholders. University managers face pressure particularly from local-regional-national governments whilst individuals and research centres seek to satisfy a set of clients for their work.

However, the organisations which drive the core activities of the university, teaching and research, have very little exposure to external stakeholders. Thus, it is not just that community organisations and partners can be one of many external stakeholders, and competing voices for university attention. There is also debate within the university regarding whether external pressures are significant, or whether the dominant decision-locus should be what is best for teaching and research.

There is also a resource issue for voluntary and community sector actors in that it can be costly to develop relationships with universities. This is also acknowledged in the business sector, where it is much easier for large organisations with stand-alone R&D activities to create a web of contacts and exchanges to underpin effective knowledge transfer. Regional development agencies have begun to pioneer instruments such as innovation vouchers, and in Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council provided start-up funding of $100,000 for community partners to work with universities in developing full proposals for Community-University Research Alliances (CURAs). Academics interviewed noted that it was difficult for community organisations that did not have a well-resourced partner standing beside them to engage effectively with universities.

There was also an issue of representation within the sector, particularly where universities were forced by circumstance to choose to work with one group rather than another. On a number of circumstances, universities felt themselves to be unfairly accused of favouritism because they became dragged into what were essentially within-community disagreements which nevertheless threatened to hinder the activities the universities were promoting. The sector was not well-mobilised in terms of lobbying: even in Liverpool, where the voluntary and community sector is generally acknowledged to be extremely well-mobilised, the sector lacked the cohesion to make specific recommendations or changes to universities.

One question raised by some respondents, and it is a rather controversial one, is that professionalisation in the voluntary and community sector had made some VCS groups into competitors for universities. This was not only in providing training for the community sector, but also for public sector organisations. It was hinted that this might lead VCS groups to feel threatened by universities, and to denigrate them and their community capacity as a competitive strategy to ensure their organisational survival. It must be stressed that this was only raised rather implicitly, and it is impossible to gauge the validity of the assertion, yet it highlights the fact that there is not automatically a shared public interest between universities and voluntary and community sector organisations.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A DRIVER OF COMMUNITY LEARNING PROCESSES?

In this final chapter, we look at how these pressures, tensions and activities come together within institutional settings to define the environment within which community engagement is pursued. In chapter 5, we noted that effective community engagement depended on building a coalition within the university with a formal commitment to engagement, but also more than that. The community needed leadership, cultural agreement, structures and policies as well as good management to create an effective environment for engagement. Chapter 6 noted that such a coalition could not exist without the resources necessary for engagement to be important within the university. To some extent, senior management commitment was necessary but then those senior managers had to large scale changes within the university which could create losers and winners.

All this together made engagement a risky and uncertain undertaking, and Chapter 7 set out at some length faced by universities in establishing the coalitions and the necessary resources for them to achieve a set of outputs. In total, risk avoidance measures ran the risk of leaving engagement peripheral within universities, and compartmentalised within discrete activities which quarantined any potential losses. The problem seems highly complicated by the fact that universities face internal and external tensions, as well as the fact that deprived communities are difficult to engage with.

But, we place those difficulties against the fact that there is substantial amounts of engagement taking place within the sector, as demonstrated both by our more intensive survey, but also via Kitson (2009) in their parallel project. Clearly, there is not a *terra nulla* as far as engagement goes. The question is how to guide a coalition of enthusiasts through structural difficulties and barriers to create an effective, multi-level style of engagement within the institution level. This is the subject for the final chapter, both conceptually but also more practically. 8.1 offers a synthetic model for university-community engagement bringing together the main stylised facts from the three preceding chapters. 8.2 reflects on what this means for community engagement, and in particular constructing and extending outcomes in a complex institutional environment. Finally, 8.3 concludes with a set of practical measures for promoting university-community engagement in concrete institutional settings.

8.1. CHARACTERISING UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The research has shown that there is a fundamental tension within university-community engagement, which is that on the one hand, universities are all undertaking many engagement activities, whilst on the other, it remains very peripheral and has failed to become core to the 'idea' of a university as has business engagement. There are four elements to the characterisation we would offer of university-community engagement, namely:

- There is a lot of university-community engagement activity taking place

- Universities have found it very difficult to make community engagement a substantive institutional mission

- There are many staff within universities that have become personally and professionally committed to engagement, and

- These individuals have developed personal links with community groups that appear to offer them

8.1.1. Universities are undertaking many engagement activities …

The central message of chapter 4, which fits very closely with the message emerging from Kitson (2009), a sister project within this research initiative, is that there really is a great deal of community engagement activity taking place within the contemporary higher education sector. There are many linkages through universities into excluded communities, and in Chapter 4, we offered a typology of these, distinguishing between universities ensuring such communities benefited from their presence, providing services directly to those communities, making facilities available to those communities, and involving those communities in the life of the university.

Of course, not all institutions are active in all areas, but we did find that of all the 33 surveyed institutions, all were active across a majority of these areas (i.e. at least seven of the twelve in the classification). What was slightly more discouraging was the fact that in terms of the scope of these activities, there was a huge variation between institutions. Although the three surveyed regions do not really have any 'ivory tower' institutions, there were a number of universities which had a number of engagement activities which appeared more to be about promoting the university's image than benefiting particular communities.

However, this immediately raised the quandry of 'who' is the university, and what counts as university engagement under these circumstances. Large research-intensive universities with significant numbers of professional departments were, as we saw in chapter 5, host to many individuals who were intensely involved with the problems of such communities in pursuing their own research agendas and in providing suitable educational opportunities. Therefore, even for a number of institutions which were not widely committed to community engagement at the level of the institution, there were many which hosted individuals who were very actively engaged in universities.

We also encountered the problem which faced a number of universities, particularly the older and more established institutions, was that it was extremely difficult to capture all the activities of a university. The effort we were able to devote to each institution empirically (1 day planning, 1-2 days interviews, 1 day follow-up reading) was insufficient to really gather information on community engagement beyond that which was known to our interviewees. When one starts to map university participation in expert boards, platforms, commissions, inquiries and partnerships, then it is clear that on both an individual and institutional levels, there are strong linkages from universities into their communities.

8.1.2. …best described institutional as benevolent detachment…

Chapters 6 and 7 began to highlight the point that despite the proliferation of connections between universities and their communities, there is at the same time a peculiar framing of those connections. University-community relationships are described by many within universities as 'specific-particular' examples of useful things that universities can do, in contrast to the more 'abstract-general' institutional missions of teaching and research excellence. The effect of this is to frame

community engagement as a residual, something which universities can and ought to do only after their core demands and pressures of international excellence and maximising recruitment have been addressed.

The tensions that this raises for institutions are charted through chapters 5 to 7. Because community engagement can never at an institutional level be a primary purpose for the universities, this has the effect of making it a very dismissable activity. There were relatively few examples of institutions which were able to resolve tensions between community engagement and their other missions in ways that recognised the community partners as having some kind of intrinsic right. In a sense, they were not recognised as authentic and legitimate partners within university decision-making structures both internally and externally.

But there is an issue here with expectation and circularity of argument. We have here been concerned with socially-excluded communities and have defined that as those that have problems in mobilising in ways that construct themselves as authentic and legitimate partners in wider governance networks. It is important not to define the only acceptable successes as those which immediately make community partners into core stakeholders for universities well-networked within their decision-making structures. We argue that that is an unreasonable demand, and indeed one that is unlikely to be fulfilled. We agree that the situation has long been that universities have an attitude of 'benevolent detachment' towards community engagement, that is they make contributions which they can afford, which they choose for themselves and which they regard as being beneficial, all without reference to the interests and needs of the ultimate beneficiaries.

What is more interesting is to ask whether there has been a shift away from benevolent detachment towards attitudes in which excluded communities are more salient. If 'committed engagement' (in which excluded communities are key university stakeholders) lies at the other end of the spectrum to detached benevolence, the question then becomes does this engagement activity add up to a situation where universities are <u>more</u> committed to engagement than previously. Certainly, in 4.4 we were able to identify at all three levels of the institutions interviewed that there were both opportunistic and committed versions of the stories that people told about the engagement they undertook. Even senior managers made a distinction between engagement as a requirement of social responsibility and the societal compact, and engagement undertaken to satisfy the demands of funders. This suggests that the issue of engagement is a complex one, and there are tensions not only between actors, but also within actors, and it is an activity which in which compromises are continually being drawn.

8.1.3. …alongside many individuals committed to engagement …

The third element was that there were indeed tensions in the narratives told between different actors at different layers and their own desires in undertaking engagement. By way of illustration, it is possible to take an urban development and engagement project organised across a number of different institutions in different regions. The activity had been funded by the Funding Council as part of the Strategic Development Fund, successor to the Mergers and Collaboration fund, seeking to find new methodologies for universities contributing to solving societal problems. Although not formally rationed, universities are only eligible for limited numbers of projects from the SDF, and by committing to this project, the participating universities were

effectively closing off the opportunity that they could receive SDF for a merger or institutional restructuring, making a statement that engagement was important to them.

The business development offices of these institutions took different and differing views of the funding; their main requirement was that the funds would be spent in ways that fitted with but also developed their expanding systems. But to say that the Business Development Offices had singular and indeed simplistic, processual rather than content-led roles is to ignore the fact that this project did have a high profile both within the institutions, but also within the 'Engagement' community more generally. The Business Development Offices were keen to produce projects that strengthened their valuation internally and externally, through delivering activities that contributed to core institutional missions but also were recognised by their peers, and also by the ultimate funder, as having value.

The academics involved were able to use the project in a variety of different ways, but what was interesting about those encountered is that all used the funding to augment what they were already doing. In that sense, the academic users were quite entrepreneurial with the funding, identifying activities that met the needs of external agents but which also contributed to their core interests. At one conference we attended within the project, for example, we saw a number of papers presented from institutions active within the institution, and it was clear that the activities that they were talking about were serious committed community engagement. They were also high quality research (they were in the process of being published in internationally peer reviewed journals) and we were told how they also provided case study and partner material for teaching activities.

The project was not without problems (for example it funded academic rather than community group time) and for that reason we have chosen to anonymise it, and it is important to note that in the preceding section what we have presented is very much a 'happy families' version of the engagement. But that engagement took place within institutions which were also mentioned within chapter 7 as suffering profoundly from tensions undermining their opportunities to make engagement a strategic activity, and that it became pigeonholed and peripheralised within particular engagement projects. The reality was that substantive engagement projects did take place, they did influence strategic, bureaucratic and community tiers of the university and the tensions around community engagement were negotiated between these tiers and addressed by individuals.

8.1.4. … and drawing excluded communities into their networks.

Clearly, universities have run a series of activities which have engaged with excluded communities in such ways that have exposed those communities to universities' wider networks. There are suggestions that this has meant that these communities have both benefited by building bonding capital internally as well as building connections with external agents to raise their own position within wider political-economic networks. There were a number of examples of activities in which excluded communities participated as groups working towards collective ends, itself indicating the development of increased social capital. This contention is explored in more detail in three case studies presented in Working Papers 3 to 5 (*qv*).

But what is notable is that the network connectivity between universities and these communities takes place at a micro-scale, at the level of particular projects and

activities, and university representatives involved in those activities are typically themselves outside senior management, with idiosyncratic networks, meaning that communities have a random opportunity to build new connections. The university partners often could not connect community partners within the university – which is a highly complex institution – so the excluded communities were unable to develop connections to a wide range of external partners. There were examples of where senior managers were involved and able to create connections within the university, but the capacity of engaged academics often fell somewhat short in signposting within their own institutions.

The corollary of this was that university senior managers were not learning about the engagement process as a co-learning process, but their emphasis lay on learning about managing internal issues around staff, strategies and performance indicators. We saw very little evidence that university senior were themselves actively engaged in learning with excluded communities and translating that back to the university experience. There were some university managers who were already inclined towards community engagement, and certainly in those cases, there was more learning about engagement activities, and also a deeper penetration by excluded communities into university networks. Those institutions that provided seed-corn funding for community engagement, for example, were characterised by such managers.

The reality is that community engagement remained highly peripheral to university activity, and in particular, the idea behind engagement shifted as one moved closer to the centre of the university. Whilst a particular project or academic might have a highly enthusiastic perspective that a piece of engagement was life-changing for the participants, individual projects were rarely significant to the centre of the institution, whose concern lay much more with ensuring productive fulfilment of external stakeholders' demands for the delivery of particular targets.

8.2. UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN A COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT

The narrative emerges of a kind of 'two-speed' approach to university-community engagement, namely that either university staff run ahead and are let down by unrelenting university procedures, or universities attempt to initiate strategic change and staff refuse to respond to novel incentives and procedures. We argue that this effect is an artefact of the way the research has been undertaken, which has implicitly assumed that the various levels of a university – the senior managers, the business universities (faculties/ schools) and the activity communities research centres and groupings – have to be aligned in order to achieve effective outcomes. This assumption is made by new public management literatures, but is contested by a number of authors, *inter alia* Baumunt (1997), May (2007) and Greenwood (2007).

What chapter seven highlights is the fact that there are so many tensions in university-community engagement, between those setting the rules of the game externally, the HEI sector and its internal stakeholder communities, and those excluded communities, that it would be remarkable if there was ever a serious alignment between these different communities. We therefore wish to step away from the idea of an 'engaged university', because there is little evidence that strategic commitment to 'engagement' is a precondition for community learning. Effective engagement appears to be an emergent property coming from particular activities which are allowed to take place within the university in the absence of serving core university missions clearly. The

issue is that for any new engagement idea within an institution, an institution faces competing pressures which pull the particular trajectory between opportunistic responses and delivering a broader institutional culture change.

Figure 11   Competing pressures and responses on university approaches (to community engagement)
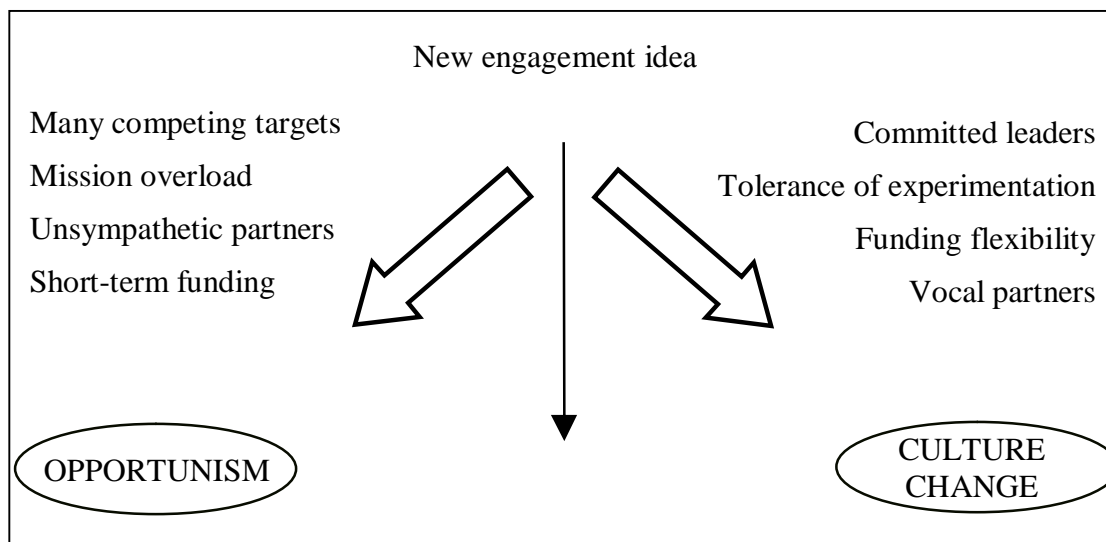
Universities are complex institutions, and engagement can thrive when it is able to insert itself between the interstices of the various pressures under which universities find themselves. In this section, we explore the kinds of complex relationships which exist into which engagement activities have to be stabilised, to understand the trajectory of engagement through the university. It seems on the basis of our research that given current stakeholder pressures, there is no reasonable prospect of community engagement being a core university activity in a way that would give such communities co-determination over university. Effective community engagement therefore depends on the trajectories through which these peripheral activities which support community learning develop through the university, and establish their niche within universities' organisational ecologies.

8.2.1. Complexity in university relationships with policy actors

The university core – senior managers who design the strategies, mechanisms and structures which increasingly govern university life – can be regarded as largely impervious to the opportunities for community engagement. This is a consequence of the increasingly complex funding environments within which universities operate, and the sense that there is a need to ensure that there is a minimisation of wasted expenditure. Part of the reason for the invisibility of excluded communities in the perceptions of university senior managers is that there are no urgent university stakeholders who encourage universities to engage with these groups or demand their inclusion in university decision-making as is the case with – for example – business engagement.

We reiterate the finding that universities were relatively unwilling to allow themselves to be pinned down territorially and held accountable for their contributions to excluded communities where they did not involve high quality research. Universities already inhabit a complex world of accountabilities, and that approach, using what you might think of as "slippery scalar strategies" is a manner for

universities of reducing the number of pressures. In none of the institutions visited were communities seen as key stakeholders in a real sense of having a right of co-determination with the university in areas of activity. Universities are typically thought of as different from firms in that they rarely relocate between cities and countries. But that does not mean that universities are not looking to extract the best 'deal' from their location through negotiation; that negotiation process requires that universities reduce the number of binding commitments they make to those that allow them to advantage themselves in negotiation processes.

The consequence of this is that from a central university management perspective, it appeared in the course of the interview that universities liked community engagement activities that were pliant and manipulable. That is to say, good engagement activities were those which clearly met the university's own needs, were clearly demonstrable as delivering outcomes for their most salient stakeholders, and which placed the university under as few obligations as possible to third parties. The place of engagement activities in the university ecology was therefore very peripheral, at the edge of the institutions. They needed only to be sufficiently close for the most successful examples to be lauded as proof of effective engagement performance, and delivery of a higher purpose alongside the fulfilment of the social contract.

There remains a question of how enduring this particular position is, and the extent to which it is merely a function of contemporary policy decisions. Certainly, there were institutions which in the 1990s positioned themselves much more aggressively as teaching-led institutions, and engagement offered an apparent alternative to research as well as stimulating widening participation. In the context over current debates around funding – which involve substantial cuts to university funding (BIS, 2009a; 2009b), all UK universities are staking claims to research intensity in some form as the basis of minimising the individual damage from those claims.

8.2.2. Complexity in university relationships with excluded communities

The risk in taking the top-down perspective on opportunities for engagement with excluded communities is that there was clearly and paradoxically a great deal of interesting activity taking place around universities. There were people within universities actively engaging with excluded communities, and critically, with the structures and organisations which spontaneously took root in those communities. University activities contributed to the development of those structures and organisations, they helped to augment the development of social capital in excluded communities, and yet at the same time, it was clear that the university at the centre placed very little value on engagement activities in a meaningful sense. Even those institutions which placed great emphasis on being engaged found it hard to articulate – centrally – a vision of engagement which corresponded to the activities taking place.

The activities which made a different appear to have been those, as indicated in 8.2.1 above, that exposed the university as an institution – and sometime to the intervening organisational structures such as faculties – no additional risks and still delivered core tasks. There appears to have been an issue that it was individual staff who often bore the costs and the risks of community engagement which took outside of clearly delineated and segmented markets. The individuals involved were responsible for configuring the activities to ensure that they still fitted within the university. As indicated previously, engagement at the level of the activity does seem to have been

largely the responsibility of individual enthusiasts, with particular policy support from university centres playing to existing enthusiasts rather than driving more fundamental organisational change.

The paradox can be understood as a dissonance in the ways that community engagement was understood within the different groupings within the university as a whole. Good community engagement activities were those which could act as a point of agreement for several different perspectives on community engagement. But fundamentally, what limited the scope of community engagement activities to spread upwards and into universities was the basic unwillingness of universities to have uncontrolled activities at their centre. Therefore the kinds of things which were able to influence universities' structures were typically a campus development. To a senior manager, a campus development in a excluded community represented a solution to space problems, to academics a place to work and to undertake engagement, and to community groupings could be a site of shared learning.

The ways that these activities dealt with complexity was that they became sites which could be imbued with multiple meanings, in ways that were seen as meeting the needs of diverse and important coalitions of decision-makers within universities. The paradox then with community engagement can be restated as that for activities which help to build social capital within excluded communities, they are not really activities which universities need to tell stories about. Therefore those activities do not 'travel' through the institution, and remain at the periphery, and at the same time, are subject to control, management and regulation that reduces their capacity to stay in the university. It is clearly unrealistic to expect universities to weaken themselves to allow excluded communities to achieve their own goals.

The key issue is under what kind of conditions can universities remain tightly in control of their own assets whilst at the same time be as open as possible to community learning activities. That is indeed a difficult situation, with the university acting as a 'bridging institution' hosting activities which bring it benefits, rationalised in particular ways, whilst also allowing the community to derive the benefits. The essence of this is that there are linkages between the different levels, and so the engagement activities have properties which help the activity to assume different meanings in each levels of the university. It is these various properties which allow the university to fulfil its role as a complex bridging institution, and allow at the same time communities to have access to novel learning arenas at the same time as allowing universities to retain the tight control they desire over their core assets.

8.2.3. The university as a complex bridging institution

From the basis of the universities observed, we can reflect on the kinds of things that characterise engagement where the university acts as a complex bridging institution. That is to say it is capable of assembling a community engagement activity where the university senior managers feel that it is in control and delivers their core missions, which harnesses the enthusiasm of academic staff, and allows genuine socialised learning processes between excluded communities.

The first implication of this is that there is an axis of engagement within the university, and that activities and projects are nested within a supportive strategic environment. Although we noted that strategies themselves did not make a difference, higher level support for the idea of engagement by what could be considered as 'engagement promoters' in institutions were critical for creating an

environment within which engagement activities could thrive. The next level necessary for an effective engagement axis was a clearly identified set of supports for the kinds of activities which could reach out to activities, such as teaching or research. The third level were structures which permitted enthusiastic engagement entrepreneurs to work with excluded communities as part of their jobs. The fourth level was a set of loosely coupled vectors which worked with these communities around learning activities without building up a commitment from the university to the community, such as project workers, volunteering staff or students on placements. The final level was that the community itself was broadly supportive of the engagement activities and prepared to work with these fourth tier of activities.

A second element of this was that good engagement activities helped to build up and strengthen corporate university support for them by broadening beyond the institution themselves ad becoming a means to anchor other institutions to the university. An important element of this was incorporating other formal partners or institutions, and their assets, with stronger demands on the university than the community themselves. The activities therefore became embedded within shared solutions to problems between a range of institutions that they were prepared to work together on. This had the advantage of addressing the power relations between university and community, because there were multiple stakeholders in these activities, with each making a set of contributions and each having a set of rights to the benefits arising from the situation.

A third element of this was that effective engagement did in some way change the university in a way that made those activities more central. This was extremely difficult to achieve, because of the enduring perception of a conflict between excellence and engagement. Durham had partially resolved this by making Queen's Campus Stockton a research infrastructure for research into excluded communities and their problems, thereby making a case for engagement which strengthened Durham's own strategic position, and winning several multi-million pound research grants. But engagement also appeared to be something of a pendulum within institutions, in part because of its high direct costs emerging at a time just when enthusiasm was waning.

8.3. SEVEN 'WICKED ISSUES' FOR WORLD CLASS UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

The challenge then for a university seeking to become engaged is to balance these tensions in engagement, and allow a loose coupling of activities at a variety of scales to anchor community engagement activities loosely around a much more tightly controlled and managed core. In effective engagement, universities are able to build up a vision for engagement centrally which relates it to the kinds of education and research they should be involved in, which in turn influences policies and structures for education and research. Staff then develop concrete engagement activities, and very peripheral elements of the university then help to sustain shared community learning forums. Communities learn in those forums through socialised processes, and what then flows back and up into the university feeds more directly into those core teaching and research processes than the learning activities themselves; they contribute to teaching and research, strengthening institutional profile, enhancing the learning experience, and ultimately allowing the university to make the case that it is contributing effectively to societal development, helping it to meet the demands of the societal compact.

The question is then how can university central strategy and government policy help to support this within institutions. What should be noted is that as a consequence of the 'axis of engagement', what universities are in direct control of is actually remarkably limited, and instead they are reliant on an increasingly loose coalition to help manage and run learning activities. Effective engagement requires managing engagement mindful of the different control which institutions can exert over the process; universities can tightly control strategies and staffing policies, but have much less control over (and critically, liability for) what their students do in the course of placements and volunteering.

So the question is raised of how can a university reflect these different management styles and tightness of control in an otherwise highly crowded environment, and manage to achieve effective community engagement that satisfies key stakeholders and helps to fulfil the societal compact? The conclusion to the report seeks to provide a practical answer for university managers and policy-makers who might typically seek to develop engagement strategies. To tease out some of the issues which arise in managing the tensions and conflicts around engagement within a single institution, the final section of this chapter looks to seven 'wicked issues' of which those developing engagement strategies for universities should be mindful.

Seven wicked issues for developing a world class university engagement strategy:-

1. Engagement opportunities are shaped by university policy and cultures at all levels

2. Multiple internal groups within the university must be satisfied by 'engagement'

3. You must not lose sight of the mundane whilst chasing the exciting

4. External pressures and shocks will influence what can successfully be achieved

5. External societal actors are not the only stakeholders that to whom universities are accountable

6. Engaging is experimental, and some experiments will unavoidably fail

7. Engagement must not be a back route for approving undeserving projects

8.3.1. The implicit drivers of university engagement

Any university involves a wide range of strategies and policies which are drawn up in response to a range of external demands and drivers. These strategies and policies can which can affect the capacity of individuals and units within a university to engage in ways that might not necessarily be anticipatable at the outset. One of the most obvious issues is the question that in a university with many strategies, which are those strategies which really set the tone and context for what the university achieves. For an engagement strategy, which potentially may remain peripheral, this raises the question of how can that strategy achieve a profile and positive attention within the university.

Another set of issues appeared implicitly within chapter 5 such as policies for room use by community groups or promotions policies. These policies can make impossible engagement by all but the most committed individuals, which in turn makes increasing the scope – and hence the level – of engagement very difficult. A rationale underpinning a room-charging policy (to take one example) of avoiding

unfair competition with other conference facilities might make it unduly difficult to bring excluded communities onto campus. Policies and exceptions take time to create, and the delays that this may bring can disrupt building a cross-institutional sense of progress that engagement is achievable. Yet, addressing these issues will be necessary if the university is to achieve its potential in terms of engagement.

8.3.2. Holding multiple groupings together within one institution

The preceding point raises the issue that it is important that engagement is accepted by staff at all levels as something that they firstly should be doing (morally/ ethically), and secondly, that it is something possible for them to do. This can be made more difficult by the fact identified in 6.3, that universities are comprised of different communities, which might have different ethical perspectives on appropriate roles and missions of universities. Another way of thinking it is that different internal groupings within the university will have different tolerances for engagement, and what is important is the identification of engagement activities which do not broach the limits to internal tolerance, but at the same time encourage people to be more generally supportive or tolerant of, or at least less apathetic to, engagement activity.

Engagement often falls within debates around relevance and excellence – with some assuming that relevance precludes excellence whilst others assume it is a precondition. These kinds of ethical tensions can make it very difficult to retain the different communities within a single institution, and can lead the losers in those debates being pushed to the peripheries of universities' institutional structures and potentially even expelled.

There are issues around managing tensions between the various communities, particularly where they have very different views of the role and purpose of higher education. The role for management and strategy in such cases is to actively make the case that diversity of opinions strengthen the university as an institution, and are to be encouraged, rather than falsely choosing one particular side of the divide to favour. 6.3 highlights the point that there will be individuals and activities that span the communities, and one solution is to construct solutions that span different communities, and create benefits which are appreciated more generally. This is not merely a question of perceptions – the cleavages within communities in an HEI can be very real and very difficult to reconcile, and part of this issue is sustaining a constructive ambiguity around engagement (something which the university institution has been very effective at doing through the ages), thereby allowing the way it is defined in a single institution offer something to everyone.

8.3.3. Balancing the exciting and the mundane

An important part of the evolution of a university's culture of engagement is in preserving the niches where those lower level activities take place, those which may be seen as more functional and symbolic in nature, such as press releases and the exercise of academic freedom. It is only natural that strategic documents focus on the new activities and structures which are being proposed. But the corollary of this is that strategies may thereby potentially fail to support – and as a consequence of this to unthinkingly disrupt – those lower-level activities. Staff in university engagement offices (where they exist) often complain that they are forced into projects, and when those projects end, those staff are redeployed to unrelated areas. The result is the activities – and the learning those staff have of *how* to engage – is lost to the

university, precisely at a time when the university may wish to build up its knowledge base around engagement.

Universities' post-modern nature is a consequence of the fact that they are loosely coupled communities with different kinds of interests. This loose-coupling is often underplayed by financial visions of the university which stress the inter-changeability of units and competition for internal resources, rather than their networked interdependence and complementary roles. This means that in reality, a university with world-class engagement will involve a mix of communities and levels engagement. Whilst some academics may restrict their engagement to a functional and information level, in the world-class engaged university, other elements will be widely networked into societal partners working together to co-develop new academic and societally useful knowledge. It is strategically challenging to place these different kinds of activities on the same strategic level, but it can be highly destructive to subordinate the smaller-scale modes of engagement to new, high-level alluring projects.

8.3.4. Managing external pressures on engagement activities

Although it has not been possible to deal systematically in this review with the impacts of variations in external policies and cultures on engagement, it is clear that there is huge variation between countries in what can be achieved in terms of engagement. The wider context within which engagement takes place shapes what universities can achieve, but this context evolves over time as well as being subject to disjunctures. The general predisposition – the culture – of engagement has changed markedly since the 1970s, when it was seen that commerce had no place inside the campus, with the rise of the entrepreneurial university (Grit, 2000) replacing what he terms the critical university.

In the last five years, there has been a divergence of engagement performance within the territories of the UK arising from the differing accents that the four UK funding councils have placed on universities' societal roles and the place of university contributions. The implication from this is that effective engagement strategies must both play to the grain of cultural change as well as retaining a flexibility to adapt to external shocks.

8.3.5. Satisfying core university stakeholders

Implicit in the idea of the university as a complex and post-modern institution is the sense that universities have a range of communities to which they have responsibilities and must demonstrate accountability, within the general set of relationships comprising the social compact. This has very much been taken as a foundation for this review. Yet as Jongbloed & Salerno (2007) point out, not all stakeholders and communities are equally powerful, and universities have some 'critical' stakeholders: those providing universities directly with money, legitimacy and knowledge. If engagement is to succeed, it must take place in such a way that the interests of these stakeholders are not neglected, compromised or damaged.

In most situations, the most imminent stakeholders are research & funding councils alongside government ministries and parliaments. Fortuitously, these bodies have in recent years been increasingly supportive of university community engagement, particularly with the business community. Yet, certain types of engagement may remain implicitly discouraged or explicitly forbidden by these regulatory regimes; it is

currently very difficult to find funding for non-accredited community education, for example. Strategies must recognise the environment in which they operate and the need to satisfy certain core stakeholders' requirements.

As an aside, it is true that stakeholders' perceptions of what is important are not static, and do evolve over time. Policy-makers do use concrete examples of success which can act as role-models and inspirations for new policies and instruments. Successful examples of engagements which challenge regulatory barriers can lead to stakeholders removing those barriers. There may be occasions where there is value in confronting these core stakeholder interests. However, these occasions are in all likelihood very limited, and a university choosing such an approach under the guidance of an external promoter has a greater certainty that the approach does not threaten disaster.

8.3.6. Accepting the experimental nature of evolving practices

Building capacity in community engagement by universities is an experimental activity, and involves taking risks appropriate to the desired level of outcome. One dimension of this is that it is inevitable that certain activities will fail, not least because of their dependence on external environments which may adversely shift in the course of a project. A sign of institutional weakness is to completely abandon failures, and draw exclusively the lesson that the risks of failure associated with new modes of engagement are not worth taking. A more sophisticated view of a failure is that there will be elements worth continuing, lessons to be learned, and people who have learned new skills that might usefully be deployed (*cf.* 6.4.3).

These problems – which are part of a more general class of problems around institutional changes which arise because they challenge particular sets of vested interests – are magnified because of the sensitivity of engagement as an activity, and the fact that there will be communities that see engagement as contrary to excellence. Failure of engagement activities may precipitate a back-lash from more recalcitrant elements who use those failures to develop a stronger institutional narrative urging the abandonment of engagement, possibly arguing engagement undermines excellence. This issue of the need to take risks and learn lessons needs to be dealt with explicitly at the outset to allow subsequent evolution to consolidate on what is achieved.

8.3.7. Avoiding special interest pleading

The final issue in designing a strategy for engagement is to avoid the situation where 'engagement' becomes a mechanism that short-circuits regular decision-making and governance procedures. Given the pressures that exist from core stakeholders, from sceptical internal communities and with risky projects, there can be the temptation to avoid proper scrutiny of proposals for engagement. This is commonly experienced in the field of innovation policy, where there is often a risk that when it is decided to adopt an innovation approach, partners come to the table with formerly unsuccessful proposals 'dressed up' in a language of innovation; in order to preserve the unity of the coalition, bad proposals are reluctantly accepted, with the result that the approach is set up to fail, and the concept is discredited (*cf.* 6.4.6).

This is very problematic in the field of engagement because of the need for genuine experimentation and learning about what works and what can be done better. It is useful to recall that there is no silver bullet for engagement, and that large flagship projects and charismatic leadership will not in themselves make a successful engaged institution. Although it can be time-consuming and long-term, building up capacity in

an evolutionary manner should give all those involved in university decision-making around engagement activities and structures the knowledge and confidence to select a portfolio of engagement activities that ultimately rebuild the university as an engaged institution.

9. OTHER PROJECT OUTPUTS

9.1. RESEARCH PAPERS

Benneworth, P. S., Charles, D. R. & Madnipour, A. (2010) "Universities as agents of urban change in the global knowledge economy" *European Planning Studies* (forthcoming).

Benneworth, P. & Jongbloed, B.W.A (2009) "Who matters to universities? A stakeholder perspective on humanities, arts and social sciences valorisation" *Higher Education* DOI 10.1007/s10734-009-9265-2

Benneworth, P. & Sanderson, A. (2009) "Building institutional capacity for HEI regional engagement in a sparse innovation environment: a case study of Knowledge House" *Higher Education Management and Policy*, March 2009.

9.2. CONFERENCE PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS

Benneworth, P. S., Charles, D. R. & Humphrey, L. (2007) "Universities and excluded communities" *Paper presented to ESRC "Regional economic impacts of Universities" programme launch*, Strathclyde University, Glasgow, 10th October 2007.

Benneworth, P. Humphrey, L., Charles, D. R.; & Hodgson, C. (2008) "Universities and community engagement: addressing the causes of social exclusion" Paper presented to *Regions: The Dilemmas of Integration and Competition, International Conference of the Regional Studies Association*, Prague, Czech Republic 27th-29th May 2008

Benneworth, P. Humphrey, L., Charles, D. R.; & Hodgson, C. (2008) "Universities and community engagement: addressing the causes of social exclusion" Paper presented to *Bridging the divide, celebrating the city, 3rd Joint AESOP/ACSP Congress*, Chicago, USA, 6th-11th July 2008.

Benneworth, P. Humphrey, L., Charles, D. R.; & Hodgson, C. (2008) "Excellence in community engagement by universities" paper presented to " Excellence and Diversity in Higher Education. Meanings, Goals, and Instruments" *21st Conference on Higher Education Research (CHER)*, Pavia, Italy, 10th-13th September 2008.

Benneworth, P. & Jongbloed, B.W.A (2008) "Excellence in the third mission: valorising the humanities, arts & social sciences paper" presented to "Excellence and Diversity in Higher Education. Meanings, Goals, and Instruments" *21st Conference on Higher Education Research (CHER)*, Pavia, Italy, 10th-13th September 2008.

Benneworth, P. S., Charles, D. R., Conway, C., Hodgson, C., & Humphrey, L. (2008) "*How the societal impact of universities can be improved both conceptually and practically*" paper presented to the UNESCO Global Research Forum Seminar , "Sharing Research Agendas on Knowledge Systems", Paris, France, 28th-30th November 2008.

Benneworth, P. Humphrey, L., Charles, D. R.; & Hodgson, C. (2009) "University engagement with excluded communities", paper presented to *Edge Hill University Research Seminar Series*, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, Lancashire, 13th January 2009.

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