

**Economic and Social Research Council: The Impact of Higher Education Institutions
on Regional Economies 2005/06**

Higher education's effects on disadvantaged groups and communities

**Report of an ESRC Network on cross-regional perspectives
on the transformative impact of higher education on
disadvantaged groups and communities**

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1. Introduction

Universities lie at the intersection of the global and the local. With the creation and transmission of universalistic knowledge as their central functions, they hold the potential for interchange between the localised concerns and aspirations of the communities in which they are situated – and of sub-groups within them – and the networks and drivers of the ‘global knowledge economy’. Or so it is often claimed!

From the World Bank to a Regional Development Agency to a local council near you, there is a growing emphasis given to the importance of investment in education as a cure for social and economic ills. However, as we reported in an international comparative study on *The Role of Universities in the Transformation of Societies*¹, the evidence to support such beliefs can be difficult to come by. It is necessary, at very least, to distinguish between the ‘intended effects’ of higher education’s engagement with its communities – the goals of the mission statements and the initiatives of its policy makers – and the actual and even unintended consequences of a university’s activities for its various local communities and groups. Knowledge of the former does not necessarily shed any light on the latter.

The international *Transformations* project posed a number of questions that are relevant to the work of the present Network:

Who gets higher education? (the access question). *What* do they get? (the curriculum question). And *where* does it lead them? (which is frequently seen as a labour market question but is also a political and status question – more generally, a placement question). To these three questions should be added the question of research and the balance to be struck between intrinsic and extrinsic drivers of its development. (Brennan et al., 2004, p17)

A further question that lay at the heart of the *Transformations* project was the extent to which questions about the transformative effects of higher education upon society could be answered without also asking the obverse question about the transformative effects of society upon higher education.

And so with the work of the present Network, we have found evidence about the ‘impact’ of higher education institutions quite hard to come by, but found much by way of good intentions and initiatives on the part of higher education. While we have found awareness of the need for internal transformation within many higher education institutions, there is less confidence that the levers and knowledge are in place to bring it about, and how the degree of change can be measured.

The ‘local’ role of higher education is frequently summarised – at least in the UK – by the terms ‘access’ and ‘widening participation’. The American sociologist, Craig Calhoun, has recently referred to

‘the coexistence of two different senses of access: making the hoard of knowledge produced or preserved within universities available to society more broadly, and opening the university to participation by previously excluded or under-represented groups’. (Calhoun, 2006, p9)²

While much UK policy and research has concerned the latter – how to open up higher education to relatively excluded groups – Calhoun’s first point is a reminder that the effects of a higher education institution reach well beyond those who enrol in it or who work for it.

Although much of the drive to extend and widen participation in higher education draws on economic imperatives for both the locality/region and the individuals concerned, the potential contribution to social cohesion, civic engagement and general quality of life is also likely to be considerable. Such social and cultural impacts of higher education are, arguably, inextricably linked to the economic impacts (for example, in terms of attracting inward investment). Thus, at the outset, this Network decided to examine the research evidence relating to the transformative impact of higher education on disadvantaged groups and communities within a framework of four sub-themes:

The four sub-themes adopted by the Network both embrace and extend beyond Calhoun’s two senses of access. They are:

- (i) Local and regional partnerships to extend participation in higher education to socially disadvantaged groups

¹ Brennan J, King R and Lebeau Y (2004) *The Role of Universities in the Transformation of Societies: An International Research Project*, Synthesis Report, London: CHERI/ACU.

² Calhoun C (2006) ‘The University and the Public Good’, *Thesis Eleven*, Number 84.

- (ii) The 'cultural presence' of higher education institutions in disadvantaged communities
- (iii) The civic role of higher education institutions and their constituencies
- (iv) Local employment opportunities provided by higher education institutions

The first sub-theme is explicitly about access and widening participation to disadvantaged groups and the role of partnerships in achieving it. 'Disadvantage', however, is a loaded term, assuming deficit in those to whom it is ascribed and advantage to participation in higher education, both of which can be critiqued³. The second sub-theme is more about Calhoun's first sense of access – making the hoard of knowledge available to society – although we need also to be aware of the possibility of two-way traffic with 'new' students challenging 'old' university values and assumptions, and providing a new 'cultural presence' within the university. The third sub-theme at first sight also appears to be about access in the sense of taking the knowledge base of the university out into society. However, this view assumes that university actors in the community – students or staff – are acting somehow on behalf of the university and exporting its knowledge and values. It may also assume that university actors do not consider themselves a part of the community (and such an assumption may be questionable). The fourth sub-theme appears to move away from access issues altogether. It addresses issues of employment, by the university and more generally in the community – the so-called 'multiplier effects'. At this point, we must ask if there is anything special about the impact on local employment of a university, compared with, for example, a hospital, a prison or a casino.

Although the focus of the Network's considerations has been upon the *local* effects of higher education on disadvantaged groups and communities, the questions that must be posed in order to investigate these effects are no different than the questions that must be asked about the societal impact of higher education more generally. We note, therefore, the conclusions of the Transformations project:

We have been struck many times during this project at how close the project's themes have been to ongoing debates closer to home: about both the role of universities in regional regeneration and about their contribution to the creation of knowledge economies and fairer and more socially inclusive societies. (Brennan et al., 2004, p58)

This is the final report of the Network. The Network set out to consider cross-regional perspectives on the transformative impact of higher education, and sought to explore the evidence of impacts of local, regional and national policies and initiatives relating to each of the four sub-themes. In the following section we consider the underlying policy drivers that may be shaping the claims made by, and expectations made of, higher education institutions in terms of their impact on society. Next we describe the results of the Network's activities, including literature reviews and workshops, in relation to each of the four sub-themes in order to consider what we currently know, the gaps in our knowledge and the research questions that need to be asked. Finally, we set out a possible future research agenda which could help answer the question 'what is the transformative impact of higher education institutions on disadvantaged groups and communities?'.

³ Watts M and Bridges D (2006) 'The value of non-participation in higher education', *Journal of Education Policy*, Volume 21, Number 3, pps 267-290.

2. Policy drivers

Current European, UK, national and regional policy maintains that higher education institutions (HEIs) can and do make a significant contribution to regional economic and social development and that, in 'an increasingly globalised knowledge economy', this role is growing in importance. However, there may be gaps between the expectations of policy makers (and even the claims made by HEIs themselves, e.g. Universities UK, 2006⁴) on the one hand, and the realities of regional engagement and impact by higher education (HE) on the other, and there are certainly variations between regions and among the nations within the UK which have yet to be fully investigated. This section identifies some of the key policy drivers that shape the context for the transformative impact of higher education on disadvantaged groups and communities in the UK.

2.1 Higher education and the regional development discourse

The discourse of regional development has become compelling for policy makers and HEIs for a number of reasons. Firstly, the expansion and creation of a mass higher education system alongside restrictions on public expenditure have required the transfer of a greater proportion of the costs of HE provision to students. This, in turn, has fostered a growing number of undergraduates studying at (or close to) home in order to reduce living costs, coupled with greater numbers of mature students studying part-time and employees attending short courses locally. Expansion in demand has also spread provision to parts of the UK that previously had no HE presence apart from the Open University, for example, the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Secondly, HEIs are having a direct economic impact as local employers in a wide range of occupations and, together with their students, are spending increasing amounts of money on local goods and services leading to the indirect generation of other regional employment to supply these (Universities UK, 2006⁵).

A third reason relates to transformations in the graduate labour market. The patterns of employer demand have changed as a result of the decentralisation of large corporations into smaller business units and their relocation away from the more expensive metropolitan areas. The increased role and importance of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) within the economy, especially at the local level, has also reinforced a regional focus. Coupled with frequent demands for new skills and updated knowledge, this has stimulated local demand for lifelong learning, including higher level education and training.

Fourthly, the different policies adopted within the devolved administrations have had an increasing impact on HEIs' relations with their 'territories', and the introduction of higher fees in England and Northern Ireland in 2006 and a year later in Wales, but not in Scotland, is likely to further exacerbate these differences, not least in cross-border flows of students and especially as they impact on English regions bordering Wales and Scotland. Finally, the growing emphasis on the 'knowledge economy' and the importance of research and development in sustaining competitiveness and market growth has resulted in higher education being perceived as central to regional, as well as national, economic success. Its role in providing analysis and interpretation of global, national and regional issues at the local level has increased, and enabled academics themselves to understand better the changing nature and modes of knowledge production (Gibbons et al., 1994⁶).

Increasingly, knowledge is claimed to be a valuable regional asset, and HEIs' role in 'regionalising' knowledge flows has been highlighted (e.g. Fitigawa, 2004⁷). However, the focus on knowledge and technology transfer, academic entrepreneurship and economic development tends to obscure the social, cultural and political - and even educational - aspects of HEIs' regional interactions. Exceptions to this trend are also apparent, though: for example, the recent OECD study of North East England (Charles et al., 2005⁸) found evidence of the impact of the universities on the regional economy, including social,

⁴ Universities UK (2006) *Universities: engaging with local communities*, London: Universities UK.

⁵ Universities UK (2006) *The economic impact of UK higher education institutions*, London: Universities UK.

⁶ Gibbons M, Limoges C, Nowotny H, Schwartzman S, Scott P and Trow M (1994) *The New Production of Knowledge: the dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies*, London: Sage.

⁷ Fitigawa, F (2004) 'Universities and Innovation in the Knowledge Economy: Cases from English Regions', *Higher Education Management and Policy*, Volume 16, No. 3, pp 53-75.

⁸ Charles D, Conway C, Pickering H, Tennant J, Chaudhury S and Allan P (2005) *The contribution of higher education institutions to regional development. North East England Case Study Report*, Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Institutional Management in Higher Education Programme.

cultural and creative enterprise; and the North West of England focus on the development of the cultural industries through its Manchester: Knowledge Capital project on socially inclusive wealth creation (www.manchesterknowledge.com), and *NetworkNorthWest* aimed at disadvantaged small to medium sized enterprises (www.networknorthwest.co.uk). On the other hand, it is recognised that higher education can also have detrimental effects on an area. Large-scale migration of students and staff to a rural district, for example, can change its character and increase house prices that young people on low rural incomes cannot afford. The phenomenon now unfortunately termed 'studentification' (Universities UK, 2006c⁹) highlights the diverse impacts of higher education expansion on different localities, which have to be understood and managed by a range of agencies. Other policies, for example on health and social care, culture and sport and sustainability, have tended to neglect the potential for higher education to contribute.

2.2 Widening participation in higher education

Higher education policy has both been influenced by, and contributed to, this overall policy framework for regionalisation and devolution. Government policy on the expansion of higher education in England, for example, has been closely linked with concern over the non-participation of young working class people, (DfES, 2003¹⁰) and funding incentives for HEIs were tied to attracting students from 'low participation neighbourhoods'. The introduction of higher tuition fees for students was seen, by some, as a potential disincentive for those on lower incomes and some ethnic minorities who were more likely to be debt-averse (Callender, 2003¹¹), and so HEIs were required by OFFA to specify their arrangements for financial support for these students and their plans for outreach work. However, the question now being asked is 'Access to what?' (Brennan and Shah, 2003¹²; see also Layer, 2005¹³), i.e. students from working class backgrounds and ethnic minorities are more likely to attend less prestigious HEIs with lower levels of resourcing, to be undertaking particular subjects and types of courses and to risk lower academic achievement as a result of working part-time during term time (Callender, Little, and van Dyke, 2005¹⁴).

In Scotland, the merging of the higher and further education funding councils into a Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council has created a unified context which, it is argued, could lead to more integrated strategies for post-school education. Strategic collaboration between the further education and higher education funding councils is a feature in Wales as well, where the Welsh Assembly Government has also been keen to promote collaboration between HEIs and the restructuring of the sector to reduce the overall number of institutions. Both universities in Northern Ireland have a majority of Catholic students - as Protestants are more likely to leave to study in Britain - and therefore have a high representation of those from lower socio-economic groups as a result of migration rather than a policy of widening participation. Nevertheless, such policies largely follow England and consist of funding for specific projects and a widening access premium based on exemption from paying fees rather the postcodes. An independent Expert Group recently recommended that a regional strategy was required for widening access, including the provision in further education and integrated with other programmes, and that students from lower socio-economic groups, especially amongst the Protestant community, must be a priority (Osborne, 2006¹⁵).

2.3 Funding policies

Concurrent with efforts to widen participation in England, a 'third stream' of funding has been established to encourage HEIs to enhance their interaction with business and the community generally and reward them for this. These policies are mostly supply-side driven and the Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration (HM Treasury, 2003¹⁶) identified the need to raise the overall level of demand from business for research from all sources as the main challenge rather than increasing the supply of commercial ideas from the universities. However, 'third stream' funding appears to reward the

⁹ Universities UK (2006c) *Studentification: a guide to opportunities, challenges and practice*, London: Universities UK.

¹⁰ DfES (2003) *The Future of Higher Education*, The Stationery Office, Cm 5735, January.

¹¹ Callender C (2003) *Attitudes to Debt – school leavers' and further education students' attitudes to Debt and their impact on participation in higher education*, London: Universities UK/HEFCE.

¹² Brennan J and Shah T (2003) *Access to What? Converting educational opportunity into employment opportunity*, London: CHERI, The Open University.

¹³ Layer G (ed) (2005) *Closing the equity gap: the impact of widening participation strategies in the UK and the USA*, Leicester: NIACE.

¹⁴ Callender C and Little B (2005) *Survey of higher education students' attitudes to debt and term-time working*, London: Universities UK/HEFCE.

¹⁵ Osborne R D (2006) 'Participation and Access in Higher Education in Northern Ireland' in McNay I (ed) (2006) *Beyond Mass Higher Education: Building on Experience*, Maidenhead: SRHE/Open University Press.

¹⁶ HM Treasury (2003) *Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration*, Norwich: HMSO.

more successful HEIs regardless of the regional context and it does not address the inequalities between regions or communities.

A central concern for HEIs is the source of funding for regional activities and how far existing budgets can be used to support them. They criticise external funding for being short-term, small-scale (especially when compared with teaching and research funding) and with terms and conditions that are constantly changing. Funders often require matched funding and the conditions of the funding – or even just the desire to strengthen a bid – may determine the other partners involved in consortia and the terms of their engagement. It is argued that such conditions tend to place HEIs in a responsive, supplier mode in relation to the funder/customer. As a consequence, operations established to manage regional partnerships are often located at the periphery of the institution and the activities fragmented leading to sub-optimal outcomes, rather than enabling broad-ranging, institution-wide strategic initiatives which are co-ordinated and prioritised by the centre. HEIs claim they are overloaded by new initiatives and changing policies, and that individuals are discouraged from experimenting and taking risks. In evaluating regional engagement, however, it is important to keep in mind distinctions between the activities, their outputs and the long term impacts of these.

3. Messages from reviews of existing literature

The Network set out to examine a body of higher education research, much of it linked to policy intervention initiatives at local, regional and national levels, that was concerned with widening participation in – and, increasingly, constructive outreach from – higher education, especially for groups typically regarded as socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged. It aimed to locate this research and these initiatives in a wider context of higher education's relationships with its various communities by drawing on wider international literatures and networks.

As noted above, the Network decided to examine the research evidence relating to the *transformative* impact of higher education on disadvantaged groups and communities within four sub-themes, viz:

- Local and regional partnerships to extend participation in higher education to socially disadvantaged groups
- The 'cultural presence' of higher education institutions in disadvantaged communities
- The civic role of higher education institutions and their constituencies
- Local employment opportunities provided by higher education institutions

Reviews of the relevant literatures were drafted and discussed at a workshop for researchers and practitioners at Salford University on 31 March (see Annex A for list of participants). The reviews were revised and developed further to provide the backdrop to discussions at a second workshop for researchers and practitioners at the Institute of Education, University of London on 30 June (see Annex B for list of participants). The purpose of the second workshop was to identify an agenda for future research into higher education's impact on specific communities and social groups and the ways in which higher education institutions might better serve these constituencies at regional, sub-regional and local levels. The four sub-theme reviews, together with a consolidated bibliography, are enclosed as Annexes C–G.

Although the Network set out to explore the current research evidence that might help to answer the question 'what is the transformative impact of higher education on disadvantaged groups and communities?', it is arguable that it should also have explored a more controversial and dangerous question, namely 'what has been the role of higher education in constructing disadvantage?'. But it is a feature of most of the research literature that it is set within generally benign assumptions about the social functions of higher education.

In considering our four sub-themes, we aimed to address three broad questions:

- (i) What are the local, regional and national policies and initiatives?
- (ii) What is the evidence of impacts – positive and negative - of these policies and initiatives and which groups/communities are benefiting from them?
- (iii) What are the gaps in the evidence about impacts and what are the methodological issues that will need to be addressed?

The annexes provide detailed accounts of the available research evidence. The following paragraphs summarise the main findings.

3.1 Sub-theme 1: Local and regional partnerships to extend participation in higher education to socially disadvantaged groups

Currently the participation rate in higher education of young people (18-19 year olds) in England is around 30%, but there are substantial regional differences (HEFCE, 2005¹⁷). Young people in some regions are 50% less likely to enter higher education than their peers in other regions. Those living in the most advantaged areas are five or six times more likely to enter higher education than those living in the least advantaged 20% of areas. Such inequality in participation has not changed substantially in recent times. Young women are now 18% more likely to enter than young men, and this inequality is further marked for young men living in the most disadvantaged areas.

¹⁷ HEFCE (2005) *Young participation in higher education*, Research report 2005/03, Bristol: HEFCE.

Continuing government concerns over non-participation of young working class people (DfES, 2003) have been reflected in policies on the expansion of higher education in England. An important element of these policies has been the encouragement of partnerships between different kinds of educational provider. The main policy initiatives relating to HEIs' partnership work in England are Aimhigher, funded (until 2006) by HEFCE and the DfES (and now incorporating Excellence Challenge and Partnerships for Progression) for outreach work and raising young people's aspirations, and curriculum initiatives, like Foundation Degrees and the Lifelong Learning Networks, to ensure appropriate provision and progression. In practice, most higher education initiatives to recruit from socially disadvantaged groups are undertaken with a range of partners, including schools, colleges, parents, employers, community groups and others.

As Allen, Osborne and Storan note in their review of the literature (Annex C), such widening participation initiatives can be understood as activities and interventions aimed at creating a higher education system that includes all who can benefit from it – people who might not otherwise consider learning at higher levels as an option, or who may be discouraged by social, cultural, economic or institutional barriers. Widening participation tends to be aimed at young people aged between 18 and 30. But it should be recognised that in different contexts, different groups may be under-represented (for example, according to type of provision and curriculum area), and target groups will vary locally and regionally depending on the make-up of local populations.

In Scotland, a number of initiatives have been promoted aimed at encouraging greater inter-institutional collaboration within and between higher education providers, and with other educational providers, advice agencies and employers (see Annex C for more details). For example, the establishment of wider access forums has brought together representatives of the universities and further education colleges in four regions covering Scotland. These aim to encourage co-operation between post-school educational institutions to widen access to higher education and facilitate progression from further education colleges to HEIs. It has also resulted in projects designed to address particular issues and problems, such as the transition from college to university (Gallacher, 2006¹⁸). This is in a 'universal' system of higher education in Trow's terms (Trow, 1974¹⁹), in which over 51% of under 21 year olds already participate in higher education, including 21% of full-time and 62% of part-time undergraduates studying in further education colleges, a high proportion of whom are older, do not have traditional entry qualifications and come from socially and economically disadvantaged areas. However, the skewing of transfer across the FE/HE boundary with students from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds moving to the less prestigious universities is still clearly prevalent (Osborne and Maclaurin, 2006²⁰).

In Wales, the National Economic Development Strategy (Welsh Assembly Government, 2002²¹) increased funding for innovative community based schemes to encourage able people, without a history of participation, into HE. It wanted the HE sector to think more broadly than just schools and FE, especially in 'Communities First' areas and other deprived communities, and work with a diverse range of partners on Wales-wide schemes as well as smaller collaborations. The Wales Spatial Plan, *People, Places, Futures* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2004²²) echoed this call for improved collaboration between schools, HE/FE Institutions, NEWI, WDA, training providers and business to identify opportunities to strengthen the knowledge economy and address skill shortages and low levels of educational attainment. A further driver for HE collaboration is in meeting the demand for teaching in the Welsh language, drawing on new technologies to extend opportunities (Welsh Assembly Government, 2002²³).

Despite the plethora of initiatives (outlined above), it is clear from Allen et al.'s review of the literature that research tends to be in the form of local evaluation studies carried out by practitioners although there are also some studies, mainly ongoing, of particular national initiatives, for example Aimhigher and Action on Access. But in the main these studies focus on the 'process' aspects of widening participation (for example, the nature and extent of partnerships) rather than on the outcomes and effects.

¹⁸ Gallacher J (2006) 'Differentiation and Stratification in Scottish higher education' in McNay I (ed) (2006) *Beyond Mass Higher Education: Building on Experience*, Maidenhead: SRHE/Open University Press.

¹⁹ Trow M (1974) 'Problems in the Transition from Elite to Mass Higher Education' in *Policies for Higher Education*, General Report on the Conference on Future Structures of Post Secondary Education, Paris: OECD.

²⁰ Osborne M J and Maclaurin I (2006) 'A probability matching approach to Further/Higher Education transition in Scotland', *Higher Education*, volume 52, No. 1, pp 149-183.

²¹ Welsh Assembly Government (2002a) *A Winning Wales: Economic Development Strategy of the Welsh Assembly Government*, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

²² Welsh Assembly Government (2004) *People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan*, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

²³ Welsh Assembly Government (2002) *Reaching Higher: Higher Education and the Learning Country- A Strategy for the higher education sector in Wales*, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

As reported in annex C, Allen et al. found evidence that in England Aimhigher has led to increases in partnership working between schools and higher education institutions and, to a lesser extent, further education colleges. However, so far the involvement of partners other than educational institutions – such as employers, local Learning and Skills Councils, Connexions, and the wider community – is limited and underdeveloped, though there are regional differences. For example, in the North East there are more developed partnerships with employers.

Allen et al. note that Aimhigher has also led to an improvement in working relationships between institutions from different parts of the education sector, and to an increase in the number and type of widening participation activities. But they also note that as yet, whilst there is some evidence that this work may have contributed to widening horizons amongst young people and their families, there is not conclusive evidence that this has led to increased aspirations or applications to higher education. However, they also acknowledge that many widening participation activities may well be working to long timescales in terms of tangible outcomes (for example, partnership work with pre-sixteen year olds in schools).

It seems that the widening participation focus within many higher education institutions is still largely on outreach, aspiration raising and recruitment, and less on retention, student success and employability. Thinking about local/regional economies and civic partnerships tends to be disconnected from thinking about widening participation.

Allen et al. also note that although broader policies and initiatives relating to issues such as community engagement, neighbourhood renewal and social exclusion do engage with education, such engagement tends to be in terms of schools, colleges and adult and community education, and there is far less engagement in terms of higher education. As they note 'there seems to be a 'glass ceiling' in place in conceptualising the community/learning axis that excludes higher education', though it is unclear why this is so.

Where are the gaps?

The above tells us something of what we 'do know' from empirical studies of local and regional partnerships to extend participation in higher education to socially disadvantaged groups. But, as is clear from the literature review, the focus of research is generally upon individuals rather than the groups/communities to which they belong. It also tends to focus on the kinds of efforts being made to widen participation but not on the effects these are having. There seems to be little research that highlights the experiences of *specific* groups/communities or makes comparisons between *different* groups/communities. There is little comparative research which looks systematically at local and regional differences. There is also little by way of research on long-term impact: whether on the groups/communities affected, on the regional economies of which they are a part, or on the partnership institutions themselves. Impact tends to be considered in terms of the achievement of contractual outcomes rather than in terms of the broader socio-economic context. Further, a lot of research is limited to the experience of particular English regions. Allen et al. suggest that Scottish, Welsh, Northern Ireland and wider international experiences need to be examined more fully.

Although the funding initiatives noted above tend to assume partnership working between a range of different players, there is little consideration of the relative effectiveness of different types of partnership – for example, community-led, employer-led, HE-led – and of the costs-benefits of these different types. Nor is there much by way of research on the unintended consequences of partnerships – e.g. on the institutions which form them or on the processes/conditions which are associated with successful (and unsuccessful?) outcomes.

Moving away from a focus on partnership working per se, there seems to be a gap in the research literature about the extent to which partnerships might be moving towards e-based higher education delivery mechanisms as a way of increasing engagement with disadvantaged groups and communities.

More generally in this area, research tends not to make links to other policy initiatives or to research on, for example, social exclusion or links between higher education and business. Much research is essentially descriptive, lacking in theory and reference to wider research literatures. Few studies integrate student, institutional and community perspectives or make comparisons across local/regional contexts. As with the widening participation research literature more generally, the focus tends to be on partnerships to get people into higher education rather than on the longer-term social and economic consequences, both for the people concerned and their communities. Examination of possible dysfunctions in terms of, for example, family and community break-ups, labour flows out of regions/communities, do not appear to have been addressed.

An additional gap concerns research into the policy process itself, how initiatives are decided upon and funded, how implemented, how evaluated, why there are 'peaks' and 'troughs' in policy.

3.2 Sub-theme 2: The 'cultural presence' of higher education institutions in disadvantaged communities

Doyle, McKay and Bogdanovic note in their review of the literature (Annex D) that there are large theoretical and policy literatures relating to 'culture' that can be referred to, although it is not always easy to link these to specific empirical studies of the activities of higher education institutions. The focus of their review is mainly upon the sense of culture as the 'arts and learning'. This has been where the policy emphasis has been. But, as they note, 'universities often claim cultural centrality, as places of learning and debate, of outreach and community involvement, but there are remarkably few academic studies which provide and interrogate evidence for these kinds of claims'. Moreover, the existence of universities within 'multicultural' settings (in terms of class as well as race) can suggest a more confrontational notion of 'cultural presence'. The cultural presence of students and their effects upon communities is one aspect of this. Cross-reference to some of the widening participation literature might be useful as cultural factors may be among the reasons for non-participation in higher education. The issues raised under this sub-theme may be an example of how the university itself needs to be 'transformed' before a wider social transformation can be attempted.

From Doyle et al.'s review of the literature, it is clear that there is a plethora of reports (mostly in the strategy/policy literature and publicity documentation but also in the academic literature) on outputs, but research on outcomes is more difficult to locate. They note that the nebulous 'buzz' that higher education institutions can add to a city/town is referred to in the literature but not analysed in any systematic way. For example, there is no consideration of aspects of cultural enrichment and cultural exchange engendered by the presence of higher education institutions. Further, although higher education institutions have been commissioned by particular agencies to undertake evaluations of aspects of arts and regeneration, social inclusion in their own localities, Doyle et al. note that they tend not to research their own impact on disadvantaged communities and do not collect data on their own cultural connections within the locality or region.

There is research on elements of the community who eschew formal channels of education and of funding but plough their own 'cultural furrow', for example, popular music – but the review questions whether they are disadvantaged, particularly if from poorer areas?

Doyle et al. note that the term 'community' itself, especially when used in phrases like 'community music' or 'community media', may be signifying that which takes place *outside* of formal education systems and institutions - in which case 'community' based culture is explicitly 'that which does not happen with/in universities'. Although we note there are examples of it being 'brought in' to higher education by students themselves.

Where are the gaps?

In this as in other sub-themes, a lot of research seems to be about universities justifying what they do, individually and collectively. Despite this, we do not appear to have a very comprehensive picture of 'what universities (and other higher education institutions) do', still less what the effects are upon disadvantaged groups/communities, the processes through which these effects are achieved and how they differ between regional and sub-regional settings.

Much research is driven by policy interests – e.g. metrics to justify funding – or practitioner interests – e.g. softer data to help development/enhancement of activities. And these may be relatively short-term, reflecting particular funding initiatives which may not be sustained when the funding source has been removed. The annex on this sub-theme notes that measures of 'outputs' (from higher education) may not provide insights into 'outcomes' (for the intended users).

As well as differences between settings and communities, there are differences between higher education institutions that might be explored through comparative studies. There also seems little existing research on attempts to target initiatives and services to particular groups or on their take-up by particular groups.

As already indicated, the use of local groups and communities as a 'cultural resource' by the HEI appears not to have been the focus of research. There is though some research in the widening participation literature which suggests that students from some groups and communities are regarded as presenting something of a 'cultural challenge' to institutions in certain locations.

3.3 Sub-theme 3: The civic role of higher education institutions and their constituencies

As Bogdanovic, Lebeau and Longhurst note in their review of the literature (Annex E), the issue of the civic and political engagement of higher education institutions with their environments is not new, and has had different meanings in different contexts. Over the past twenty years, debates about the civic engagement of universities have tended to be part of broader discussions about the relevance of higher education to local and regional economies. Such broader discussions have (in part) been prompted by debates about the demands of the so-called 'knowledge economy' and its consequences in terms of institutional differentiation, by pressures for more accountability of publicly-funded institutions, and by processes of political and administrative devolution.

We note that commentators tend to assume that the economic function will automatically have some kind of social 'spin-off' for a locality by virtue of enhanced prosperity, even though the benefits of the latter may be elusive and by no means universally enjoyed. Nevertheless, HEIs have always attempted to assert the broader social role they play beyond simple wealth generation:

Education is a vital component in creating a coherent civic society that resolves conflicts between communal and individual aims and aspirations fairly and in a way that transcends a financial transaction approach. Education forms a key component of the democratic process, producing common grounds for rational debate at all levels of society to answer those questions posed by political conflicts. Thus education contributes to overcoming social inclusion (*sic*) far more than just by providing individuals with the means to earn enough to move away from socially excluded communities. It instead provides strong leadership to transform those communities. (Charles and Benneworth, 2001: pp43-44²⁴)

In the UK, changes in the higher education landscape (including greater differentiation between institutions and greater diversity within the student body) have induced new types of relationships between universities and their environments, including (arguably) a weakening of the separation between higher education institutions and local communities, in some areas.

In policy terms, we have seen government's explicit desire to encourage higher education institutions to interact with business and community through a 'third stream' of funding (in England). The HE Reach Out to Business and the Community (HEROBC) was followed by the HE Innovation Fund (HEIF), which focuses largely on knowledge transfer, research and innovation and the HE Active Community Fund (HEACF) to support staff and student volunteering in the community. It is open to investigation whether this bifurcation in funding streams – together with the annual survey of HE-Business and Community Interaction – may, paradoxically, have served to inhibit innovation and the range of HEIs' engagement with communities.

Nevertheless, the existence of a separate HE Active Community Fund serves to focus attention on staff and student engagement with their local communities. But, as Bogdanovic et al. remind us, the distinction between the role of individuals (staff and students) and the formal role of the higher education institution is important within this sub-theme. The engagement of individuals in local activities is not an institutional responsibility but it is a clear consequence of the institution's presence in the locality.

However, it is clear from the literature review that ambiguities surround notions of personal engagement of individuals with local communities. Such 'civic engagement' combines enhancement of public understanding; a perceived accountability to the public; and instrumental reasons related to professional or financial gain (and hence align with a range of conceptual frameworks, including notions of social capital and public good). We note (in passing) that HEFCE's own web-site relating to the HE Active Community Fund (HEACF) states that 'volunteering helps promote a fairer, more cohesive society in which individuals feel they have a stake. It also helps to build bridges between communities and local organisations such as HEIs (*sic*)' (HEFCE, 2006²⁵), though it is clear from Bogdanovic et al.'s review that, in respect of activities funded through HEACF, there seems little research evidence to support such claims.

Within the UK there is evidence of a growing number of initiatives relating to student volunteering and active citizenship, which are usually embedded in the curriculum (i.e. serving the community while studying) and can be viewed as part of higher education's role of preparing students for future active citizenship roles in society. HEFCE's own publication show-casing good practice (HEFCE, 2005²⁶) contains many such examples: for example, all Goldsmiths' College Student Union volunteering

²⁴ Charles D and Benneworth P (2001) *The Regional Mission: The regional contribution of higher education – National Report*, London: Universities UK.

²⁵ HEFCE (2006) HE Active Community Fund, <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout/heacf> accessed 28 July.

²⁶ HEFCE (2005) *HEACF: case studies of good practice*. Report 2005/18, Bristol: HEFCE.

activities are linked to the College's widening participation strategy, and in one such activity, students are trained as official prison visitors. HEACF funding extends to staff as well – for example, at the University of Kent, Kent Union staff are allowed to undertake up to 25 hours per annum volunteering work (as part of their normal duties) – such work includes working with homeless people and refugees.

Where are the gaps?

On the policy front, Bogdanovic et al. note that higher education appears to have been relatively ignored in recent UK initiatives relating to Local Strategic Partnerships which aim to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. Yet the international research literature on higher education has given some prominence to the community/service functions of the modern university.

For academic staff, a civic role or responsibility may be international or national more than it is local. At whatever level, the review notes that there seems to be no systematic overview of the engagement of individual academics in such activities. National and regional differences, however, are suggested by the comparisons between England and Scotland, with somewhat greater levels of engagement in the latter.

Further, we note that the civic role or responsibility of institutional staff other than academic staff seems not to have been the subject of any studies.

Similarly for students, there appears to have been little recent UK research on civic 'activism' in any of its senses. Though there is some literature on the 'managed' civic engagement of students through initiatives such as volunteering (noted above) and further examples of 'managed initiatives' can be found in debates on the higher education curriculum (e.g. in the Dearing and other reports), there is very little evidence of studies examining the impact of such initiatives on the individual participant who 'volunteered'.

Further, such research as there is gives virtually no attention to whether activities are relevant to specific groups or communities. And evidence about impacts – intended or otherwise - on specific groups/communities affected is also lacking.

Looking beyond the higher education research field, broader-based research on social capital and community makes little, if any, reference to the role of higher education. This may be a sub-theme where the priority should be on drawing higher education into a wider international research literature on community and civic engagement. Within the UK, the general lack of interest by sociologists in higher education as an object of study may explain the existence of some of the above gaps and the failure to connect with the broader literature on civic engagement, social capital, active participation etc.

3.4 Sub-theme 4: Local employment opportunities provided by higher education institutions

Higher education institutions are major employers and contractors of staff, and Cochrane, Hudson and Hick (Annex F) note that their direct employment impact goes far beyond academic staff. They constitute local employers in a wide range of occupations.

A recent report compiled by HEFCE shows that some 284,000 people (academic, professional and support staff) are now employed in the English HEIs – this figure represents more than one per cent of the total workforce in the UK (HEFCE, 2006²⁷).

Cochrane et al. note that while there are a number of studies of the direct and indirect employment provided by individual or local groups of higher education institutions, there appear to be few comparative studies and the comparability of the separate local studies is limited (e.g. in the concept of 'region' that is used).

A rather different type of research question concerns the supply of labour within a locality or region and the part which higher education can play in its import and export, as well as its up-skilling. The review notes that while studies have examined labour flows (e.g. local students using higher education as an exit route from the region, students from outside the region remaining there after graduation), these have usually been of specific regions and comparison of differences between regional experiences has not generally been made.

²⁷ HEFCE (2006) HEFCE news, <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/hefce/2006/workforce.htm> accessed 27 July.

It is evident that the expenditure of universities and their staff (and their students) has a significant economic multiplier effect on the sub-regions in which they are located. For example, local housing markets have often been transformed by the growth of demand for private rental accommodation by students. More generally, staff and students are spending increasing amounts of money on local goods and services leading to the indirect generation of other regional employment to supply these (Universities UK, 2006c).

Universities have major estates which have often (although not always) been located in areas identified as disadvantaged and there is evidence that in some cases university investment has played a part in underpinning regeneration.

But Cochrane et al. note that research is generally quantitative and takes the form of an economic analysis of the direct employment effects of staff and student expenditure on local employment. They suggest that more qualitative and subjective studies would provide additional perspectives, e.g. from local employers, about the importance of higher education to the local economy and to the employment prospects of particular groups.

Where are the gaps?

Though there are some references (HEFCE, 2006c) to the breakdown of academic staff by gender, ethnicity, age, the review notes that in general there seems to be little or no reference to 'who' (outside of academic staff) is employed by higher education institutions – i.e. whether disadvantaged groups actually benefit – although the multiplier effect and impact on general local prosperity could be argued to affect all. The review identifies some isolated examples of institution's own practices (for example, a 'living wage' campaign) that suggests that these issues are beginning to be considered.

There seems to have been little research on the impact of student employment on local service economies/labour markets. With increasing numbers of students now engaged in part-time employment (during term-time as well as in vacations), in some locations they will play a key role in local labour markets. The practice deserves systematic exploration both to determine whether it helps to sustain local economies and whether it means that others (possibly from disadvantaged communities) find entry into employment more difficult.

While studies of the employment effects of higher education seem to pay little attention to the impact on disadvantaged groups, studies and policies on regional economic strategies – which do look at social disadvantage – tend to neglect the role of higher education. Further, the review notes that research on university expenditure has rarely been focused on how disadvantaged groups have been affected, except where the emphasis has been placed on the impact of universities on disadvantaged regions. More generally, although universities have increasingly been engaged in regional missions (with the main evidence for this being found in a series of institution-based case studies), there is little consistent external review and little by way of a coherent overview.

3.5 Change within higher education institutions: a cross-cutting theme

The discussions at the two workshops which involved policy analysts, academic researchers and practitioners were not 'bounded' by the chosen sub-themes. Rather discussions of research evidence and practitioner experiences often brought to the fore issues of institutional interests and experiences and their implications for institutional change. For example, the UPBEAT partnership project²⁸ (Powell, 2006²⁹) shows how universities who wish to support disadvantaged groups need to change and work differently.

The issue of institutional change – and indeed transformation – could itself constitute a further sub-theme. The international Transformations project referred to earlier reached a similar conclusion. Change within higher education institutions might be considered as a pre-condition for higher education to contribute to wider social change in general, and to reach out to and engage with particular

²⁸ UPBEAT is the University Partnership to Benchmark Enterprise Activities and Technologies - a consortium of some 20 UK universities with six overseas partners, funded by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council which aims to engage and empower disadvantaged groups through university outreach work leading to self-managed socially inclusive and wealth creating enterprises.

²⁹ Powell JA (2006) 'UPBEAT and experiences in deriving creative partnerships in academic enterprise', in Bakardjieva, T (ed) *Proceedings of the International Forum for Human Resources Development*, Free University of Varna, Bulgaria. www.projects@vfu.bg.

disadvantaged groups and communities. The UPBEAT project provides one interesting example of how institutional change can be engineered.

Consideration of change and transformation *within* higher education institutions is also a reminder of the interconnections between not only the sub-themes discussed above but between these and other higher education functions, policies and practices. It remains challenging to say the least for higher education institutions to respond effectively and equally to all external policy initiatives and environmental demands. Understanding of the interconnections between different areas of policy and practice within HEIs is both necessary in its own right and in order to allow any form of rational priority setting, whether at institutional, regional or national levels. It may also be anticipated that these interconnections will operate differently in different types of higher education institution and in different sub-regional contexts and settings.

The policy drivers identified in section 2 do not explicitly address the differences between HEIs and the diversity of higher education generally. Nevertheless, implicit distinctions are made and it is clear that policies impact on different parts of the sector in varied ways. For example, it is assumed that 'research-intensive' universities engage in research collaboration and technology transfer with industry, but that few have this as a major strand of their research strategy. On the other hand, 'less research-intensive' or 'teaching-focused' HEIs are expected to provide access for local students, meet regional skills and workforce development requirements and support SMEs. The concentration of research in fewer institutions and departments through selective funding in periodic Research Assessment Exercises has further reinforced the stereotype that HEIs with a regional mission are vocational and access-orientated, whereas research-led universities are international, including a few with aspirations to 'world class' status. The allocation of HEIF funding largely in favour of 'research-led' universities compounds this. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is scant compensation for the continuation of entrenched institutional inequalities.

These distinctions have recently received a further twist by a call from HEFCE for expressions of interest in the 'third stream as second mission (after teaching)' in which 'third-stream focused HEIs' are asked to help draw out latent demand in 'new users' that could impact on the productivity and growth of local/regional SMEs and public sector services in return for Strategic Development Funds (HEFCE, 2006³⁰). Such initiatives may fail to recognise the work of multi-partner projects such as *NetworkNorthWest* (funded by the relevant regional development agency), wherein a number of universities work together to offer new and creative forms of business support for small and medium sized enterprises that allow the SME rather than the provider to set the learning agenda so that learning is relevant and accessible to their own situation (see for example, Powell and Houghton, 2005³¹).

Stereotyped distinctions between types of institution do not adequately reflect the real differences in mission and practices across the higher education sector, but it is likely that this diversity can also lead to confusion over expectations. Should all regions expect similar levels of engagement from all HEIs? Can autonomous institutions with other demands and missions be expected to become wholly integrated with local and regional action plans? Furthermore, HEIs within a region or nation are expected to collaborate, for example through their Higher Education Regional Associations (HERAs, partially-funded and evaluated by HEFCE), and yet they are also in competition with each other and nationally for UK students – especially those from disadvantaged social groups – international students, research grants and contracts, and contracts for consultancy and education and training provision. Consequently, the potential for regional synergy may be thwarted by failures of communication between regional stakeholders and HEIs, weak or unclear policy signals and conflicting agendas within and between institutions. Finally, there are clear differences between regions and nations of the UK: in some areas there is a real, physical distance between HEIs and some disadvantaged communities. It would be informative to investigate other models of HE engagement, for example, the community outreach partnership centres in the US.

³⁰ HEFCE (2006) 'HEFCE strategic plan - Business and community: third stream as second mission', Circular letter number 05/2006, 30 March, Bristol: HEFCE.

³¹ Powell J A and Houghton J (2005) *NetworkNorthWest – Bouncing Higher, a facilitators handbook*, University of Salford and at <http://www.networknorthwest.co.uk>

4. A future research agenda

Much of the literature related to the transformative impact of higher education on disadvantaged groups and communities concerns policy initiatives and intentions, mostly at a local level. There are also some evaluation studies, also often local. Studies which are concerned directly with specific communities and social groups are quite rare. Studies are generally framed within a policy context with only limited conceptualisation or theoretical base. They are often more concerned with institutional practices and processes rather than the experience and use of these practices and processes by individuals and groups in the community. There are few references to the international research literature. Below is a list of types of research questions that appear to have been rarely asked and/or are difficult to answer:

- (i) Questions concerned with the impact of higher education, including the impact of specific policy initiatives. There is a particular lack of research into longer-term impacts and generally an absence of studies which take account of indirect or unintended impacts (including negative ones). Undue weight is often given to 'easy' and immediate metrics (e.g. increase in student numbers; increase in qualifications gained).
- (ii) Questions concerned with community (as opposed to individual) needs. In fact, this is part of a more general absence of demand side questions. The starting point for research is frequently a supply-side initiative rather than a demand-side need.
- (iii) Questions concerned with change within higher education itself. Following on from a greater concern with demand-side issues could be a need to 'transform' universities themselves if they are to impact positively on disadvantaged groups and communities. We know from the wider literature on structures and governance of universities that institutional change is difficult to achieve and that the gap between policy and its implementation can be considerable.
- (iv) Questions which recognise the multiple functions of universities and their interconnectedness. Research into higher education is frequently segmented with separate studies dealing with, for example, research processes, teaching and learning, quality assurance, management, widening participation etc. But within institutions, such matters are all interconnected. It is very difficult to isolate the impact of distinct policies. There is arguably a need for more holistic and longitudinal studies.
- (v) Questions which recognise the diversity of higher education institutions and their constituencies – local, national and international. A majority of studies focus on a single higher education institution or a single geographical region or sub-region. There is a need for comparative studies that can produce generalisable answers that take account of differences in both higher education and regional contexts. Within higher education, there are different institutional cultures and knowledge is also differentiated.
- (vi) Questions which set higher education policies and activities within a larger policy logic and theoretical context – e.g. knowledge economy, social inclusion – and locate them within international academic and research literatures. As we have already noted, studies tend to be under-conceptualised, somewhat uncritical and insufficiently informed by wider research.

In the reviews of the literature, five types of 'gaps' were also identified:

- Gaps of *substance* – e.g. how different types of partnership develop; why some 'communities' are more difficult to engage than others.
- Gaps in *methodology* (and research quality) – e.g. the need for more case studies and comparative studies.
- Gaps reflecting *different stages in the policy process* – e.g. policy implementation or policy development (using metrics for the former and qualitative studies for the latter).
- Gaps in the *generalisability* of findings – e.g. across community contexts, among regions and between types of higher education institution.

- Gaps in the *comparability and independence* of research – e.g. the need for critique as well as justification and legitimation. (The provider/researcher perspectives can easily become blurred with the danger of consequent ‘blindness’ to certain issues and in the interpretation of data.)

This analysis of the gaps and difficult questions begins to suggest the outline of a research agenda from the rather different perspectives of the ‘disadvantaged’ groups and communities themselves. Or, at least, it hints at an approach that is sensitive to the relations between higher education institutions and various communities, including the recognition that this dynamic is far more subtle and multi-dimensional than the term ‘impact’ implies. It also opens up a challenging question about the extent to which higher education has contributed to constructing disadvantage, by excluding certain groups and communities and – even when including them – restricting their options and placing limits on their success. Returning to the first of Calhoun’s two meanings of ‘access’ referred to in the introduction to this report, we might ask ‘How far has higher education made available to society more broadly the knowledge produced or preserved within its institutions, and how far has this been to the benefit (or otherwise) of disadvantaged groups and communities?’

So far this report has considered aspects of the transformative impact of higher education on disadvantaged groups within a framework of four sub-themes: partnerships to extend participation; the cultural presence of higher education institutions; the civic role of institutions and their constituencies; and local employment opportunities provided by higher education institutions. The second workshop held by the Network introduced three further cross-cutting perspectives: individual, group and place.

The individual

Whilst the cultural, economic, educational and social impacts of higher education on disadvantaged individuals and communities are inter-related, they may not always coincide. For the individual, higher education may be a means of ‘escape’ from the group rather than a source of benefit to it. It can be a route to upward social mobility and enhanced life chances through the acquisition of credentials and of knowledge /skills in demand in the labour market.

There is a need to tease-out the impacts of higher education on individuals (whether or not they ‘stay’ in their group or community) and the individual’s impact (having been ‘transformed’ by higher education) on the group/community, i.e. do individual benefits necessarily benefit the wider group/community?

The group

In any consideration of impacts on disadvantaged groups, we need to ask a prior question ‘Who is identifying the specific grouping and labelling them as disadvantaged, and for what purpose?’. Any notion of disadvantage is relative and may well vary, depending on the context and perspective from which it is considered. Groups/communities that are viewed as disadvantaged in one context (say, a region) may well not be considered disadvantaged in another context (say, within the region). Further, groups that were once considered ‘disadvantaged’ may well become part of the ‘advantaged’ group over time and new disadvantaged groups emerge.

Considerations of impacts should not only be seen as uni-directional (higher education doing something to ‘others’), but should also take account of the potential transformative impact of disadvantaged groups and communities on higher education itself. There seems to be a danger, in some current initiatives, of ignoring the cultural, social and educational capital that disadvantaged groups might already possess. Thus, rather than acknowledging and trying to build on this, higher education tries to impose its ‘own’ set of values, with scant regard to the groups’ existing strengths.

Relatedly, higher education’s impacts upon individuals may lead to tensions within the community or group if traditional values and culture appear to be undermined. And higher education may serve both to remove potential future group and community leaders (by providing them with an exit strategy to acquire roles in the societal ‘mainstream’) while, at the same time, providing others with the means to pursue leadership roles within the community/group itself.

The place

Higher education may enable graduate mobility and migration out of a region. But it will also be a source of both short-term and long-term migration *into* a locality or region through the inflows of both staff and students.

A university may impact on the local housing market, taking it out of the reach of many local people. The increasing numbers of international students and concentrations of one nationality on particular courses can lead to heightened (racial and other) tensions within the locality.

However, there are dispersed models of the university and e-Learning displaces the need for physical infrastructure with virtual places. So, higher education study may be a means of getting away from a place, but on-line study may bring dispersed individuals together, lessening the significance of place in everyday lives.

A general point to emphasise from all this is that the effects of higher education are not confined to those members of disadvantaged groups and communities who become participants in it.

Possible research questions

The Network generated an extensive list of possible research questions and we have employed the various categories and perspectives elaborated upon in this section to help group these, as follows:

Types of research question	Specific questions
Impact on individuals, groups and place	<p><i>Retention or export of local students.</i> What has been the impact on local and/or regional economies of the increasing recruitment into higher education of students from disadvantaged groups and communities, who study and live at home (full or part-time)? Do these students then seek local employment, contributing to an increase in local and regional skill levels, or do they leave the region and seek employment elsewhere – leading to a drain on local and regional economies? This question could be explored in relation to regions with low skill levels in the local labour market and relatively low proportions of graduates in the workforce.</p> <p><i>Effects on non-participants.</i> What work is being done in local and regional partnerships to identify those not participating in higher education, and the reasons for this? There is growing research interest and activity in relation to those that do participate but comparatively little about those that do not. The workplace may be a key site for such a study.</p> <p><i>Cultural presence.</i> What differential impacts does the cultural presence of higher education institutions, their students and staff in a town, city or region have on disadvantaged groups and communities? Does this vary according to the characteristics of the group and community; the type, location and history of the institution; the nature of the locality or region (e.g. metropolitan, suburban, rural), or other factors?</p> <p><i>Perceptions of engagement.</i> To what extent do local communities perceive a need for (greater) engagement with 'their' local higher education institution/s, and for what purpose (what benefits do such groups perceive might accrue to the local community itself)?</p> <p><i>Urban regeneration.</i> What role can higher education institutions play in urban regeneration? In what ways can higher education institutions positively contribute to the re-shaping of local labour markets? To what extent does the nature of higher education institutions' estates enhance or inhibit local communities' engagement with higher education?</p>
Institutional change	<p><i>Effects of institutional partnerships.</i> In mature partnerships between institutions relating to widening participation, what has been the impact on the partners themselves, both planned and unplanned?</p> <p><i>Partnerships with employers.</i> What evidence is there of the effectiveness of partnerships at a regional level with, for example, employers, Sector Skills Councils, professional bodies etc, in assessing skills gaps and needs, and their use of their findings to develop courses, curricula, progression criteria and modes of study that could assist wider access?</p> <p><i>Partnerships and innovation.</i> To what extent might partnerships engage with disadvantaged individuals and groups in ways other than conventional processes of teaching and learning, and so empower such groups to enhance their own situations in relation to work, rest and leisure?</p> <p><i>Institutional cultures.</i> Do the cultures of particular higher education institutions</p>

	<p>contribute to the disadvantage and exclusion of specific groups and communities? Even where the institution is making efforts to attract disadvantaged students, can there be a combination of contradictory influences?</p> <p><i>Civic roles.</i> How can higher education institutions (help to) build new forms of civic engagement, civil society or social capital? To what extent do higher education institutions have to change their processes and structures to facilitate interaction with communities with the aim of civic engagement?</p> <p><i>University as employer.</i> How might the employment strategies of higher education institutions be mobilised to benefit members of disadvantaged communities?</p> <p><i>Urban regeneration.</i> What can be the effects of various forms of urban regeneration upon higher education institutions ?</p>
Impact of partnership working	<p><i>Effects of different forms of partnership.</i> What has been the impact of partnerships for widening access on parents, schools, regional agencies, employers and further education and higher education institutions, including unplanned consequences? This could lead to a consideration of the opportunities that different models of working in partnership generate for the sharing of knowledge and practice. Regional, national and international comparisons could provide further insight.</p> <p><i>Who has benefited?</i> Have partnerships with employers led to improved local and regional employment and career opportunities for graduates from specific socially and economically disadvantaged groups?</p> <p><i>Effects of national policies.</i> What impacts are national policies (e.g. on increased tuition fees, access agreements, 'third stream' initiatives) having on local and regional partnership working? Are they facilitating or inhibiting participation by local disadvantaged groups and communities? Do they affect partnership work with particular groups?</p>
Conceptual issues	<p><i>Theoretical assumptions.</i> How adequate are theories currently used (e.g. social capital; activity theory, human capital) to explaining higher education's social and cultural impact? Are there alternative theoretical, conceptual and empirical frameworks that would enhance our understanding?</p> <p><i>Forms of disadvantage.</i> Is 'cultural disadvantage' distinct from, or related to, poverty and exclusion? Does it vary according to the group or community?</p> <p><i>Comparative approaches.</i> To what extent can international comparisons help research and understanding? (And how important is 'context' – historical, geographical, political, etc – to the successful transfer of ideas and activities from one context to other contexts?)</p>
Data issues	<p><i>Institutional monitoring.</i> What evidence should higher education institutions collect of their cultural interactions with local communities, including impacts, and what methods should they use? How can disadvantaged groups and communities contribute to this 'evidence-base'?</p> <p><i>Civic engagement.</i> How are the different needs for civic engagement of local disadvantaged groups and communities assessed (and their significance perceived) and what are the implications of current civic engagement by higher education institutions?</p> <p><i>Measuring economic effects.</i> What are the economic effects on disadvantaged communities of university and student spending? In addition to the quantitative economic analyses of the direct effects of staff and student expenditure on local employment, qualitative and subjective studies would provide additional perspectives, e.g. from local employers, about the importance of higher education to the local economy and to the employment prospects of particular groups.</p>

The above questions serve to illustrate the range of issues future research into the transformative impact of higher education on disadvantaged groups and communities could seek to address.

Bearing in mind our earlier observations about the types of research questions that appear to have been rarely asked, we would prioritise the following three broad areas for future research:

1. Under what conditions can higher education institutions maximise the benefits they provide (and minimise the costs) to members of socially disadvantaged groups and communities?
2. To what extent do the costs /disadvantages, as well as the benefits, to members of socially disadvantaged groups and communities vary according to the type of higher education institution or group of institutions 'serving' a community, the partnerships they form, and the social and economic characteristics of the communities and region in which the institution(s) are situated?
3. To what extent do the costs/disadvantages and the benefits vary between different types of socially disadvantaged groups and between socially disadvantaged individuals within the same group?

5. Conclusion

From the perspective of the concerns of this Network – the impact of higher education on disadvantaged groups and communities – the gaps in the research literature seem to be rather large. This final Network report has endeavoured to synthesize the issues raised by the reports on the separate sub-themes to present a research agenda through which both policy and theoretical questions can be addressed and located within wider research literatures.

At the second Network workshop in London, the attempt was made to consider the impact of higher education from the perspectives of individuals, groups and places. The idea was that real benefits to individuals do not necessarily benefit the groups or communities of which they are a part. They may be a source of conflict within the group or a means of exit for the individual from a community. Similarly, benefits to cities, localities or sub-regions do not necessarily contribute to tackling inequality and relative disadvantage between different groups and communities. Even where absolute benefits appear to reach all, relative disadvantage between groups may be unaffected. At a time when issues of social cohesion are of growing concern, higher education's impact on group and community identities and values is surely of some importance.

The theme of this Network appears to be more researched in other European countries and this may be partly due to the closer links between universities and regional authorities. In countries like France, Spain and Germany, universities are more accountable to regional assemblies (France and Spain) or Lander (Germany) and there is more pressure on universities to deliver on regional matters.

That said, policies should provide the backdrop for research questions rather than their starting point. There are many issues raised for higher education by contemporary theorising and research on such concepts as 'knowledge societies' and 'globalisation'. These are currently being addressed by a 'Forward Look' sponsored by the European Science Foundation³². The results of this and other similar initiatives³³ will be valuable in providing a degree of independence, objectivity and theoretical underpinning to issues which are, in the main, currently being addressed largely by interested practitioners and framed within relatively short-term policy and institutional frameworks. More critical social science contributions may sometimes make for rather uncomfortable reading from within the higher education community but they are probably essential to developing a better understanding of the complex interactions between higher education institutions and the communities in which they are situated.

A lot of the current research and evaluation effort is perhaps over-anxious to find evidence of higher education's successes and of its potential for even greater achievements if greater funding and support could be provided. Yet other perspectives could point to more difficult conclusions – about how educational credentials are used to reproduce social advantage intergenerationally, about how universities fail to recognise sources of knowledge and learning outside their walls, about how growing obsessions with reputational hierarchies serve to devalue the achievements of students within 'less noble' institutions. We have hinted at the disadvantages, as well as the benefits, at several points in this report. These require that at least some recognition is given to the possibility that higher education institutions may sometimes maintain and exacerbate social disadvantage as well as alleviate it.

It follows from the above that there is a need to develop a greater research capacity in this field and to locate it firmly within related social science fields of inquiry. A critical social science perspective need not be in opposition to the concerns of policy and practice nor to the interests of groups and communities who stand to benefit from the existence and activities of higher education institutions. Indeed, we would argue that it is essential to the achievement of the potential for social transformation which we believe higher education to possess.

³² European Science Foundation: 'Forward Look' on Higher Education in Europe Beyond 2010: Resolving Conflicting social and Economic Expectations, www.esf.org/social.

³³ OECD, University Futures project (CERI), www.oecd.org/edu/universityfutures.

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Annex C: Literature Review. Sub-theme 1: Local and regional partnerships to extend participation in higher education to socially disadvantaged groups

Prepared by Liz Allen, Mike Osborne and John Storan

BACKGROUND

Currently the commonly used way of describing work to extend participation in HE to socially disadvantaged groups is “widening participation” (WP). Although the term widening participation can be used in a number of ways, in this context it can be understood as activities and interventions aimed at creating an HE system that includes all who can benefit from it – people who might not otherwise view learning as an option, or who may be discouraged by social, cultural, economic or institutional barriers. In the context of government policy widening participation has been particularly aimed at young people between 18-30, and has focused on the need to improve the proportion of working class students – particularly young men – who progress into HE. However in different contexts different groups may be under-represented – according to type of provision and curriculum area, for instance – and target groups will vary locally and regionally depending on the make-up of local populations.

Widening participation in HE is an area of political, social and economic importance. In both the Dearing Report into HE (NCIHE, 1997) and the White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (2003) widening participation is a key objective that has been brought into sharp focus by the setting of a target of 50% participation in HE, of young people between 18-30, by 2010. The introduction of variable top-up fees from autumn 2006 has necessitated institutions making agreements with the office for Fair Access (OFFA) that set out, as a minimum, arrangements for financial support for students, aimed at widening participation, and plans with respect to outreach work.

In Scotland parallel policies have been developed in *Opportunities for Everyone, a strategic framework for Further Education* (Scottish Executive, 1999), and in *Scotland, the Learning nation* (Scottish Executive, 2000), although there are significant differences, not least in that there is no currently no intention to allow universities to charge top-up fees.

Whilst OFFA agreements are institution specific and don't require reference to partnership working, in practice most work to recruit amongst socially disadvantaged groups takes place with a range of partners, including schools, colleges, parents, employers, community groups and others. The main policy drivers for HEIs in England in relation to partnership work, are Aimhigher (now incorporating Excellence Challenge and Partnerships for Progression) in relation to outreach and aspiration raising, and curriculum initiatives like Foundation Degrees, and the Lifelong Learning Networks, in terms of provision and progression.

Simultaneously, there are policy initiatives encouraging HEIs to engage with regional/local communities (for instance the HE Active Community Fund, HE Innovation Fund, HE Reach out to Business and the Community,) but these focus largely on knowledge transfer, research and innovation, and staff/student volunteering and do not specifically make the link with student recruitment, outreach and WP work. One is input, the other output. This is reflected in research literature.

Adults in British Higher Education (Osborne, 2004) describes the Scottish context:

“... the publication of *Opportunity Scotland* (SOEID, 1998a) was a significant policy document that outlined a number of key changes, such as the introduction of *Higher Still* (a new framework for the education of 16-18 year olds), and a ten-point action plan including the launch of the University of the Highlands and Islands Project to address the perennial problem in Scotland of geographical remoteness..... Key themes in *Opportunity Scotland* are familiar ones and include the economic imperatives created by global competition, technological change and the challenge of the knowledge economy, individual responsibility and self-improvement, employability, flexibility of institutions and individuals, social inclusion and citizenship.

A number of specific policy initiatives were launched following publication of *Opportunity Scotland*. Those of particular relevance to FE and HE are: the funds (Widening Access

Development Grants) allocated since 2000 to both sectors by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and the Scottish Further Education Funding Council. These funds have been allocated to promote wider access initiatives (including widening access through part-time study). Other important initiatives include the encouragement of new forms of partnerships between educational providers, advice agencies and employers through the aegis of LearnDirect Scotland (launched in 2001) using information and communications technology (ICT) as an important vehicle to do so; and the establishment of a national qualifications framework based on the Higher Still and SCOTCAT frameworks.

A number of policy documents (Scottish Executive, 1999; Scottish Executive, 2000) emphasise inter-institutional collaboration within and between sectors and the most recent Higher Education Review (Scottish Executive, 2003b) puts particular stress on links between FE and HE. The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council is about to offer an incentive for collaborative provision within its funding model.”³⁴

LITERATURE SEARCH

The search has primarily been done as a www search. It has identified national policy documents, evaluations and research reports from government and agencies; some academic literature; conference papers; some completed and other ongoing evaluation especially at local/institutional level; descriptive material in relation to projects and partnerships. The local references are illustrative in that there has not been time to search at the level of individual HEIs. In searching the nine regional Aimhigher websites it appears that research/evaluation is still largely in the planning stages, with some work underway but not yet complete. Some examples of planned evaluation have been given.

The search has largely concentrated on England, with some evidence from Scotland.

It has focused on bringing together the following elements: local and regional partnerships, higher education and widening participation, with an emphasis on impact evaluation. A strict interpretation of results that sifted out only those that incorporated all these elements would have yielded a rather sparse field. However some illustrative material is included that covers some but not all of these factors. For instance a couple of examples of work looking at HE/FE collaboration have been included, and reference has been made to significant policy initiatives around regions and communities that include work with schools, FE colleges and other education providers, but not specifically HE.

Whilst the major policy documents on WP from HEFCE are referenced, as is the recent research reinforcing what we know about the gaps in participation in HE by young people from different regions and different socio-economic backgrounds, the more general literature on WP in HE has not been included. This is extensive and includes all aspects of the student lifecycle, WP policy, finance and barriers to widening participation. At the end of the bibliography two specific databases are referenced that give links to WP research.

RESEARCH SCOPE AND TYPE

Research and evaluation of WP work primarily focuses on success in terms of the student and prospective student - who has been reached, recruited, supported etc – and how. Partnership evaluation tends to focus on process – how partnerships operate, the problems and the solutions – and the stand-alone success of events and initiatives (how many attended, participated and so on). Where studies comment on the processes of partnership it tends to be in descriptive terms:

This reports a three part survey of HEIs, FECs and work-based providers. It concludes that Aimhigher has led to increased partnership and collaboration and, for FECs in particular, there has been a growth in partnership working. Data on engagement suggest that Lifelong Learning Networks were viewed positively, especially by post-1992 universities. FECs and post-1992 universities saw Aimhigher as playing a supportive role in recruitment to their foundation degrees. Work-based learning providers were mainly involved in Aimhigher partnership working at a local level.

Aimhigher evaluation: strand 4 – Survey of higher education institutions, further education colleges and work-based learning providers (2006) (Centre for Research and Evaluation, based at Sheffield Hallam University)

³⁴ Subsequently, in 2003-04, a formulaic banded grant for FE/HE articulation was introduced, and recent allocations can be found online at <http://www.sfc.ac.uk>. Knowledge Transfer Grants, similar to those disbursed via the HE Reachout to Business and the Community initiative in England, also exist.

Much evaluation is relatively short term. Longer term evaluations of the impact of individual events and initiatives on overall participation and subsequent student success are only beginning to emerge (Aimhigher Evidence Programme, five strands – of which two interim reports are currently available). However it must be remembered that the policy emphasis on partnership work to widen participation is relatively recent. Much WP-oriented partnership work is fairly new and may involve working to a long timescale in terms of success (for instance partnership work with students pre-16). It is therefore too early in many cases for much substantial impact evaluation.

Much of the available partnership evaluation is based on interviews and survey questionnaires. Aimhigher is developing some data tracking and there is research in place using UCAS and HESA data. Additionally much of the local and project level evaluation is in the form of self-evaluation and peer evaluation. Below is an example from the Aimhigher South West website:

The area and regional partnerships in the SW are using three types of data to assess the impact of the Aimhigher interventions on the target groups. We are looking at:

- Secondary data such as UCAS applications and GCSE results.
- Qualitative and quantitative indicators collected from participants at events.
- Tracking study data on the educational progress of a sample of young people.

Some of the headline indicators from the Annual Monitoring Report 2003-4 are detailed below to indicate the progress we are making.

SECONDARY DATA:

- Between 1999 and 2002, UCAS accepted applicants from the SW rose by 9.4%.
- In the Aimhigher West area, the improvement in GCSE results for those schools targeted for intensive interventions was above average. GCSE performance improved in 65 per cent of high priority schools targeted for intensive interventions compared to improvements in only 52 per cent of non-priority schools.

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

- 34,000 participants took part in Aimhigher events between August 2003 and July 2004.
- Participants included young people with little HE in their background, disabled learners, those from minority ethnic groups, those on vocational pathways or in employment, parents, carers, youth workers and community groups.
- 2590 school students in the Peninsula took part in 96 HE awareness sessions.
- 30,000 people heard about Aimhigher when the LIFE partnership took part in an Imagineering event.

TRACKING STUDY DATA

- 94% of participants intending to remain in post-compulsory education.
- 40% intending to progress to HE (baseline for SW is 29%).
- 64% had found events 'helpful' and 72% thought they were 'fun/interesting'.
- Participants from manual backgrounds were keen to discuss HE with their friends, teachers and to seek out other sources of information.

Are we making a difference? Aimhigher Southwest, (2003-04)

One of the academic articles referred to deals with forms of research and evaluation in WP and argues for the engagement of a range of stakeholders in the evaluation of partnership work.

Thomas, L (2000) "Bums on seats" or "listening to voices": Evaluating widening participation initiatives using participatory action research (Studies in continuing education 22(1))

However the basis for most of the studies identified is to evaluate whether or not projects and partnerships are being successful in their own terms, in the meeting the objectives set out for them, rather than any intention of questioning underlying assumptions, or in other ways problematizing concepts such as partnership (or widening participation), and exploring the extent to which partnerships add value, or their unintended or wider consequences. Some academic studies reflect on these limitations:

Discussions of the 'what works' variety, on the other hand, sometimes ignore questions of purpose, offering only normative accounts of access practices which do not facilitate a greater understanding of motivations and purpose in practice or the development of analytical categories for understanding access in action.

Adults in British Higher Education (Osborne, 2004)

Promotional discourses of 'collaboration' and 'partnership' are prevalent in public policy, particularly education, but research of these issues is theoretically limited and often framed normatively and uncritically within prevailing discourses. This paper uses an 'interventionist' research approach (cultural, historical activity theory, after Engeström, 2001) to access data at the boundary of collaboration between partners on initial conceptualisations of an emerging curriculum (a Foundation Degree), and how they prioritise and oversee its subsequent development.

Partnering Practices and Complexities of Collaboration (Doyle, 2004)

WHAT IT TELLS US

Available research reinforces what we know about the stubborn persistence of gaps in attainment and participation in relation to socio-economic and regional indicators (which pertain in comparable systems around the world). For instance the report *Young participation in higher education* (HEFCE publications 2005/03), which looks at young participation in higher education, that is the proportion of young people who entered higher education over the period 1994-2000. The report found substantial variation in regional participation in HE and that young people living in the most advantaged 20% of areas are five to six times more likely to enter higher education than those living in the least advantaged 20% of areas. The "participation gap" between the richest and poorest students had not changed significantly over the period studied.

Nonetheless, there are indications of increasing participation, and engagement of potential students, on a small scale through local projects. However much of the work focuses on relations between a fairly limited number of partners. In particular HEIs largely focus on work with schools when they are addressing outreach for widening participation. This is not uniformly true, and the OECD case study on the North East is interesting in this respect – where a compact region, with well-developed partnership work and a particularly challenging profile in terms of both the economy and educational participation, has developed targets that extend beyond work with schools, to work with employers and young adults in work.

Supporting the contribution of HEIs to Regional Development: the OECD Programme on Institutional management in HE North East England Case Study report (Charles D. et al., 2005).

The recent report from the SFEFC (Scottish Further Education Funding Council) and SHEFC (Scottish Higher Education Funding Council) Widening Participation Review group is positive about the impact of HEIs and FE Colleges in widening access whilst recognizing the uneven development both in terms of institution type and geography, looking to regional collaboration as key in the way forward:

Our view is that the further and higher education sectors have done much to widen access supported by the Funding Councils' policies, funding methods and initiatives. There is evidence that most of these initiatives are beginning to bear fruit, though some have been less effective than others and we suggest some refinements that could beneficially be made. More people from all parts of society are accessing further and higher education and participation at HE level by people from the most deprived areas has grown. But progress is slow and people from the most deprived areas are particularly unlikely to attend HEIs.

Regional collaboration matters. Many of the ways forward we suggest in the report rely on the wider access regional forums working effectively because some of the under-participation is concentrated in particular geographic areas and because many issues are best tackled by the HEIs, colleges and schools working together locally on aspiration raising, on transitions, on access courses. We need to broaden the forums' missions to include all post-compulsory education, to put them on a firmer footing and to enable them to contribute to the national campaign we advocate in this report. We note that not all of the widening access forums have been equally successful to date – we need to work to make sure they are in the future

Learning for All (SFEFC/SHEFC, 2005)

In the English literature there are persistent references to work with local learning and skills councils and local employers being as yet under-developed in relation to WP. There is some evidence that where these wider partnerships have developed they are welcome and productive – for instance in the findings of the Aimhigher Strand 4 survey in relation to Lifelong Learning Networks as well as Aimhigher itself. However most evidence suggests that while partnerships between HEIs, and between HEIs, schools and FECs, have increased, those with employers and the wider community remain limited and underdeveloped, for instance:

Evaluation of AimHigher: The Views of Partnership Co-ordinators 2004
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR650.pdf>

Evaluation of Foundation Degrees, Final Report. (York Consulting for DfES, 2004)

Developing partnerships between HE and FE institutions are seen as key in relation to outreach and also to flexibility in terms of the geography, mode and curriculum on offer to students, although it is also noted that these partnerships are not developing evenly across the system:

There is a less comprehensive coverage of institutions when out-reach and flexibility are considered. Certainly there is concern that, if new demand is to be stimulated, then direct links should be made with communities and workplaces. Despite the considerable emphasis on workplace learning in the 1990s, however, there has been relatively little progress in this area at the access level (see Reeve et al., 1995). Similarly, there are few community-based initiatives although the 'Open Road' programme run by the Open University in Dumfries and Galloway provides a useful example of the approach.

Flexibility is best demonstrated by the large number of universities that now have established links with FE colleges. In what might be described as the strongest of such models, some universities are moving to complete unification to create single institutions, an example being the network involving the University of Bradford and a number of colleges in its region. However, the linkages between the United Kingdom's Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector (i.e. the FE colleges) and the universities is rather patchy with clear skewing of links towards the post-1992 institutions (Osborne et al., 2002). There is danger here of a 'ghetto effect' with less wealthy (though not necessarily less able) students progressing to less elite institutions.

Adults in British Higher Education (Osborne, 2004)

This is also an issue of "direction of flow". Evidence of impact of WP initiatives is sought in terms of the recruitment of students and, to a lesser extent, their subsequent HE experience – are they going into HE, who are they, are they successful – and not in terms of what impact their recruitment into HE (and success) might have on the communities, regions and local labour markets from which they come. The "transformative impact" of HE, in this case, will be in the immediate term on the individual student rather than on their community or region. Some evaluations are planned to consider the impact on parents and other communities which may yield interesting information about the wider impact of WP over a longer timescale. Considerations of employability and skills surface more in the FE-HE relationship, in relation to Lifelong Learning Networks and the development of provision such as Foundation Degrees. However it appears that work around the identification of regional and local skill needs, and the requirements of local employers, is not necessarily considered in the same conceptual or strategic framework as work to widen participation.

For instance, the evaluation of the Foundation Degree initiative sets out the following aims:

- to provide an early understanding of the nature and range of Foundation Degrees in order to inform short-term policy development;
- to investigate the characteristics and attitudes of current Foundation Degree students;
- to provide a clear assessment of the extent to which the Foundation Degree activities that have been developed and are being delivered are contributing to the achievement of the Foundation Degree objectives.

And within this context identifies high levels of collaboration between HEIs and FECs, but mixed levels of employer involvement, concluding that:

The role of key stakeholders and partners and programme design and development can be improved. It is crucial that RDAs and SSCs do as much as possible, with the help of institutions, to better understand their respective and collaborative roles in relation to HE/Foundation Degree Development

Evaluation of Foundation Degrees, Final Report. (York Consulting for DfES, 2004)

The possible tension between the needs of disadvantaged learners and the needs of local/regional economies is picked up in a number of places, although it appears equally that the two threads simply run in parallel in many cases. The report *Learning and skills for neighbourhood renewal* (Taylor, S. and Doyle, L., 2003) picks up this point in relation to further education when it suggests that whilst there may be two strands, they are not necessarily in opposition or isolation:

“The evidence from our study suggests that widening participation and specific skills and knowledge for neighbourhood renewal are not watertight categories of provision. Rather, learning provision and its relevance to neighbourhood renewal can be viewed as a continuum”

However the Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration (2003) whilst addressing “skills and people” does not do so in terms of widening participation and extending access to higher education, although arguably it is implicit to some extent in consideration, for instance, of foundation degrees. Nonetheless this means that discussion of processes and structures drawing together HEIs with RDAs and other regional partners takes place without reference to WP and the Aimhigher partnerships. The HEFCE *Higher Education business and community interaction survey* (2005) articulates this point in a specifically institutional context, and apparently arguing for the separation between community and student-focused activities:

Some uncertainty about the boundary between third stream SCC activity and widening participation activity was evident in responses: essentially the former is generally HEI staff-related, while the latter is very much student/prospective-student focused, including related aspirations. While the same activity may, in a few cases, serve both causes, they should be distinguishable in terms of which strategy they support.

The Lifelong Learning Network initiative is clearly designed, in part, to address some of these issues, in tackling curriculum and progression opportunities for students, including in the context of workplace and vocational learning. Evaluation of the networks will be valuable. The HEFCE is in the process of setting out the evaluation strategy:

We are currently developing a full evaluation strategy, which will focus on assessing the effectiveness, quality and impact of LLNs. The first stage in a formative evaluation will be an independent external review, building on the information that LLNs supply in their monitoring reports. This information will help us to identify good practice and to ascertain how LLNs, the practitioners’ group, HEFCE, LSC and other stakeholders can best support future developments... Following this, we have agreed that the LLN practitioner group will facilitate a process of peer evaluation during the second year of LLNs.

Lifelong Learning Networks: progress report and next steps (HEFCE, 2006)

The progress report goes on to distinguish between the roles of different partnership initiatives, and identifies the need for the LLNs to engage further with Sector Skills Councils (whereas their current links between HEIs and FECs are already strong):

Aimhigher and LLNs have shared interests but separate and distinct purposes and tasks. Focused organisations are effective; those that try to do everything are not. There is obviously scope for joint work in areas such as mapping, and information, advice and guidance. But shared tasks – as against shared interests – are fewer. Aimhigher partnerships and LLNs have an interest in the emerging 14-19 reforms and opportunities for more robust progression opportunities. Aimhigher’s task is about raising aspirations and attainment among learners, including those on vocational programmes; LLNs focus on the decisions by institutions about entry requirements and progression opportunities.

In view of the potential benefits for learners, we and the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) would like to facilitate stronger links between LLNs and the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).

(HEFCE, 2006)

GAP ANALYSIS

Some gaps have been touched on, or implied above. To expand:

Scale

There are a limited number of national studies of particular national initiatives – most notably the Aimhigher evaluation. Local and project-based studies may take the form of self-evaluation. Whilst local and regional partnerships are being encouraged to undertake evaluation this may not be independent of the projects themselves. However it needs to be noted that there is a considerable amount of evaluation work planned through Aimhigher – some already underway –and more information on wider impact will be forthcoming.

Focus

Evaluation of HEIs' partnership work with local and regional partners to widen participation (local and national Aimhigher, largely but not solely) is evaluation in terms either of success with target groups of students, and/or the partnership processes. Evaluation of impact on local communities/regions is at the margins, and there is little research highlighting the impact of partnership initiatives on comparative groups of students/communities.

Timescale

By its nature, WP work is long term. Whilst Aimhigher is building in a process of research and evaluation there is no guarantee that this will be funded and supported over a sufficiently long timescale to show the impact of work that is taking place over a number of years, such as work with primary-age children and their families. Individual HEIs may also not have funding to track and evaluate this kind of initiative. There is little research on long-term impact, whether on the groups/communities affected or the regional economies of which they are a part – or on the institutions and partnerships themselves.

Scope

National policy initiatives and research projects dealing with issues of exclusion, poverty, renewal, business and the community, such as New Deal for Communities, Learning Towns and Cities, The End of Parallel Lives, and Learning and Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal, either touch on education in a very broad brush way, or address schools, FE and adult/community education. The report on widening participation in HE that forms part of the national evaluation of New Deal for communities, for instance, notes the lack of work in HE, in this initiative, and that the education focus tends to end at FE. Higher education seems to get left out of thinking about local/regional communities in relation to issues of exclusion, skills development and the workforce. There seems to be a "glass ceiling" in place in conceptualizing the community/learning axis, that excludes higher education.

It also appears that where HE considers itself in relation to business and the community it thinks in terms of applying research, consultancy and knowledge transfer – less in terms of relationship between widening participation and local/regional skills needs. However in other contexts – planning foundation degrees or establishing partnerships to open up vocational routes to HE, for instance, the WP/local employer links are obvious.

It would be interesting to have research that "closed the loop" by looking at the inter-relationship of WP initiatives with other local/regional partnership work, for instance on employer needs and skills gaps. Evaluation of lifelong learning networks might address this. This approach is also needed in relation to social initiatives addressing issues of exclusion and race. Whilst, for instance, there are specific initiatives within Aimhigher addressing low participation amongst certain BME groups, in certain discipline/curriculum and/or geographical areas, there is relatively little work in this area, particularly in relation to the regional agenda.

Annex D: Literature Review. Sub-theme 2: The ‘cultural presence’ of higher education institutions in disadvantaged communities

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INTRODUCTION

This review begins with an attempt to provide some parameters of the meaning of the terms ‘culture’ and ‘cultural presence’ and what ‘disadvantaged’ might mean in these contexts. The policy context at EU, UK, local authority and city level is summarised. Some examples of the grey literature on HEIs’ activities characterised as knowledge transfer and community engagement, and more specifically on their ‘cultural presence’ are presented together with the identification of related strengths, weaknesses and gaps. Examples of academic literature follow, specifically related to cultural presence, social exclusion, the arts and their transformative effects on disadvantaged communities, the ‘town-gown’ divide and community and non-formal education. Again strengths, weaknesses and gaps are identified.

The review is derived in the main from a web based search. It largely excludes sport and leisure, though some references are made to them.

SOME EXPLANATIONS OF TERMS

Culture

It is useful to think about ‘culture’ in order to be clearer about just what it is universities might be expected to do to develop a ‘cultural presence’. Raymond Williams (1958), an early pioneer in the field of ‘cultural studies’ wrote: We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life - the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning - the special processes of discovery and creative effort’. Whilst our focus tends to be on the second of these, as noted by Duke et al. (OECD 2006) there is a sense in which the cultural presence of universities can enhance and invigorate the former, what Hamilton and Sneddon (2004) refer to as a ‘buzz’.

Examples of cultural presence/provision

For the purposes of this review of the literature on the cultural presence of HEIs it may be useful to provide some examples which are illustrative of the kinds of activity taking place:

- Museums and gallery provision and activity; university music and theatre; literature events public lectures
- Student work placements and projects; student/graduate exhibitions and shows
- CPD courses; continuing education including Easter/summer schools
- Collaborations with the cultural sector; work with the wider community and schools; collaboration with cultural industries

(Hamilton and Sneddon, 2004 p9)

In an extensive report on the role of universities in regional development, Duke et al., the OECD’s (2006) North East of England team had this to say about culture:

‘Culture’ as an agent and arena of ‘development’ takes three forms. First, there is direct pay-off when the media and creative industries for example become significant, mainly SME, areas of investment, growth, productivity and employment, as was demonstrated to us in the North East. Secondly there is indirect economic benefit – culture as a way of attracting to and retaining in the region what Richard Florida calls the creative classes, these being seen as essential drivers of the new economy and the knowledge society. Thirdly there is culture as an end in itself, enhancing the quality of life and richness in living to which economic development might be thought to be a means. Straddling the second and third of these, the universities play a role in reflecting the (North East) region’s history, culture and identity back to itself and to newcomers, as a place of interest and a place to be.

Disadvantaged groups and communities

The Poverty and Social Exclusion Team of the Department of Social Security (DSS) (now the Department of Work and Pensions) first annual report in 1999 expressed the view that there is 'no one single measure of poverty or of social exclusion which can capture the complex problems which need to be overcome'. The DSS recognised that there are complex, multi-dimensional problems that create a cycle of disadvantage. Amongst the problems it identified were:

- lack of work
- lack of opportunities to acquire education and skills
- barriers to older people living active fulfilling and healthy lives
- inequalities in health
- poor housing

There may be a sense in which communities, whilst not being disadvantaged socially or economically nonetheless culturally speaking do not have access to the full spectrum of cultural activities – are in effect culturally deprived. Arguably this may apply to any group in respect to their relationship with other cultures but here the focus is likely to be more on class. There should be literature on this phenomenon but unfortunately none could be located in the time available.

POLICY CONTEXT AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

UK government policy

UK government policy is made largely in the context of European goals and directives:

At its meeting in Lisbon in March 2000, the European Council launched the Lisbon Strategy – aimed at:

- Preparing the transition to the knowledge-based economy;
- Promoting economic reforms for competitiveness and innovation;
- Renewing the European social model by investing in people and combating social exclusion; and
- Keeping up with a macro-economic policy mix for sustainable growth.

UK culture policy

In 2004, 'inspired by a seminar, held in Oldham in March 2004, to discuss ways in which culture and sport can create a sense of local pride and belonging', the DCMS (2004b) published *Bringing Communities Together Through Sport and Culture* with the promise that as the lead department for sport and culture, it would build on the work with its agencies and key departments to support grass roots initiatives and local needs more flexibly.

In Scotland, the Cultural Commission set up by the Scottish Executive (2005) carried out a major consultation on the impact of culture and future directions although the SE's own response to it on 19.01.06 led to this reaction from the Commission: 'Today's long awaited and much trailed announcement holds no surprises for the cultural sector but provokes a sense of disappointment'.

UK social exclusion policy for disadvantaged groups and communities

The Poverty and Social Exclusion Team of the Department of Social Security (now the Dept of Work and Pensions) in 1999 produced *Opportunity for all - Tackling poverty and social exclusion* and stated:

In every part of the UK, we are determined to deal with the problems of social exclusion and its causes. The Scottish Social Inclusion Strategy sets out a programme of work which is being taken forward by action teams, including development of a package of indicators covering devolved areas as a basis for monitoring success. The policy statement Building an Inclusive Wales sets out plans to produce an annual report monitoring changes in the key indicators of exclusion in Wales. In Northern Ireland the New Targeting Social Need initiative aims to tackle social need and social exclusion by targeting efforts and available resources on the most disadvantaged people, groups and areas. The Social Exclusion Unit in England is tasked with improving understanding of the key characteristics of social exclusion, and the impact of government policies, promoting solutions and making recommendations for change.

Examination of the indicators might be a useful exercise although they are more likely to refer to widening participation in higher education than the role of universities within their communities.

The socially excluded and culture and leisure

One of the key initiatives from Social Exclusion Policy designed to overcome social exclusion outlined in the programme was:

Action to improve access to cultural and leisure services such as libraries, free access to museums and galleries and to extend opportunities for voluntary work. (DSS, 1999)

Local authorities

The Audit Commission's (2006) performance indicators for local authorities uses Key Lines of Enquiry (KLoE) for Service Inspections and one of these areas is Culture, providing another opportunity for universities to exploit in their development of cultural/ community links at a local and at a regional level. For example, 'How good is the service: What has the service aimed to achieve in terms of: community and user needs? regional and national priorities?

Another relevant policy is the Local Strategic Partnerships (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM, 2001) designed to encourage public, private, community and voluntary sectors to work together in a more integrated way.

In 2004, the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2004a) produced *Leading the Good Life* which argued that integrating cultural and community planning can strengthen the ability of local authorities and their partners to respond to community needs. Edinburgh is one city, among a number, which provides an example of an integrated cultural policy in *Towards the new Enlightenment* (The City of Edinburgh Council, 2005) which aims to enable all of Edinburgh's citizens and visitors to participate in, and enjoy, the widest cultural experience, including targeting initiatives to combat social exclusion; to foster partnership working with organisations throughout the city which are involved in working within, or supporting, cultural activities, such as higher and further educational establishments.

City development

The *State of the English Cities* (ODPM, 2006a) UK government report by a consortium of research organisations builds on the work of the Sustainable Communities Plans (2003). It provides a comprehensive assessment of urban conditions and drivers of urban change in England. One of the conclusions of the report is that universities are crucial to urban regeneration. According to the report, there has been a sea change in how cities are regarded. Many governments are developing policies to improve the international competitive position of their major cities. (Van den Berg et al., 2006 forthcoming). Cities are becoming again 'the wealth of nations' (Boddy and Parkinson, 2004; Buck et al., 2005). They have great capacity to promote community development, social cohesion, and civic and cultural identity and the conclusions of the report include the need for cities to:

- encourage university and city links in which universities see the importance of their economic contribution to the local economy;
- develop their cultural infrastructure and improve their quality of life.

Four countries have formulated extensive explicit national urban policies – the UK is one of them. Two of the key foci of these policies are particularly relevant to our theme:

- Cities are important as sources of identity, culture recognition and *connection between communities and cultures*. Cities are more than economic market places. They can encourage social integration, community engagement, and cultural recognition. This points to a wider set of policy goals than simply economic ones.
- *(The adoption of) a wide territorial focus which links the social challenges faced at neighbourhood level to the larger metropolitan or sub-regional economy where the problems are often created*. The economic problems of deprived areas cannot be solved in terms of the opportunities within those areas. Neighbourhood-based policies need to be linked to wider regional economic processes.

Regional development

In 1998 Regional Development Agencies were created across the UK 'to promote economic development within regions and coordinate regional regeneration plans'.

A *Framework for City-Regions* (Robson et al., 2006) envisages 'enlarged territories from which core urban areas draw people for work and services such as shopping, education, health, leisure and

entertainment. They reflect 'the 'geography of everyday life' rather than administrative boundaries. The report is particularly relevant for the universities' potential for cultural presence:

'An extensive definition of City-Regions is even more strongly supported by the pattern of cultural and recreational flows to the major cities. It is clear from the range of examples from the Bristol and Manchester case studies that the 'cultural' catchment area of major cities can be very extensive. ... The density of social networks and informal contacts emerges as critically important across a range of economic activity.....The social capital provided by the scale and density of contacts in big cities is a key ingredient in achieving competitiveness and market edge for many businesses'.

Despite this, in the Greater Manchester City-Region 'the creative industries'³⁵ sector has fewer linkages with universities and other educational institutions than other businesses. Only 25% of businesses (of the 400 surveyed) had some links with educational establishments, mainly through teaching and placements.

GREY LITERATURE

HEI knowledge transfer and community engagement

In the literature search on the 'cultural presence' of HEIs, few dedicated documents were found for the UK. Universities UK (2006) have produced a short report on the impact of universities in their localities and the need to reach wider communities. It is useful for further enquiry using the data presented, especially on the cultural, sporting and lifelong learning contributions of universities, and for the interesting categories it uses to divide up what universities do. HEFCE's (2002) publication on *Evaluating the Regional Contribution of HEIs* is the development of a benchmarking tool 'designed to help HEIs assess the contribution they make to their region using indicators, a combination of outcome statistics and more qualitative assessments of inputs and developmental potentials' (p8).

Universities Scotland's (2002) leaflet *A Space to Create: The cultural role of higher education in Scotland*, highlighted the lack of data collection on universities cultural links with the community and suggested that statements on the worthiness of the cultural presence of universities generally, and for disadvantaged groups and communities in particular, may not be as rooted in research findings as would be beneficial. Universities Scotland pledged to undertake 'a range of research to develop both our understanding of the sector's contribution and ideas on how that contribution could be enhanced' and it will be interesting to see if these have come to fruition.

Also in Scotland, a scoping study on *Cultural Engagement and Knowledge Transfer* (Hamilton and Sneddon, 2004) was commissioned by SHEFC's (now the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) newly established Knowledge Transfer Taskforce. The driver was the need for output measures of cultural engagement for the purposes of grant allocation from their Knowledge Transfer funding stream. The definition of knowledge transfer for the purposes of the study was 'activity which takes place within higher education in Scotland, in teaching, research or as outreach/community activity, and which has a benefit externally'. The data was collected with a survey of HEIs, interviews with key individuals and a more in depth study of three institutions. The key point for our theme is that the study issues a 'health warning' that 'While our approach has uncovered the range of activity taking place in HEIs, we have not verified the size or significance of any individual project or range of activities. This report reflects the view of the HEIs themselves on what they do. We have not audited or externally validated any of this activity.'

Most notably for the purposes of this review the scoping study could not be specific on the 'huge role (of HEIs) in the cultural life of the community' because 'in early interviews... it was made clear that this data was not easily available and was not part of the management information collected by HEIs.' Thus, the report cannot provide data or analysis the transformative impact on disadvantaged groups and communities.

The study commented that Scottish Enterprise's (Regional Development Agency) view is that: 'HEIs across the board make a huge contribution to the 'buzz' of a place - both in what they do in the way of public access and also in the role their staff and students play in the cultural life of a place ... (e.g.) taskforces or working groups in culture'. So for example, the University of the Highlands and Islands is

³⁵ 'The creative industries is a diverse sector comprising of many activities, productive and service based, which harness the artistic and creative skills of those working in the industry. The official definition of the creative industries is provided by the ODPM as 'those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the opportunity for wealth and job creation through the generation of intellectual property.' State of the English Cities (2006).

seen as potentially contributing in two distinct ways to the regional culture: the provision of a cohort of intellectually engaged people who will be involved in the shaping of the cultural agenda through involvement in committees debates etc. And the arrival of researchers who are themselves artists who will provide a context and intellectual underpinning for the development of contemporary visual art and theatre in the region'. However, there was no data available to substantiate these views.

So Universities UK and the SFC, produced *Cultural Engagement: An Imperative for Scotland's Higher Education Institutions* (2005) and, with the Arts and Humanities Research Council's involvement, instigated a consultation process and set up a working group. The group has just completed development of metrics (specific indicators that can be measured in order to assess a university's impact on the physical or social environment) for types and levels of cultural engagement.

These metrics themselves have their limitations, according to Charles Marriott, Research Policy Officer for Universities Scotland: 'The measures of *outputs*, however, will not address *outcomes* e.g. performance art: can count bums on seats but it is more difficult to come up with measurements of the quality and even more difficult of the impact on the general community. That doesn't mean we should let the perfect chase out the good so we will use what data is available.' To further identify the impact of different sectors of the community clearly presents further challenges. He continued: 'The SFC and Universities Scotland have begun with the existing knowledge transfer measurements but they wanted the knowledge transfer grants on a more formulaic basis than the crude measures of staff involved etc - they wanted to cover spin offs, secondments, income derivation etc'.

The Role of the Arts in Regeneration (Blake Stevenson, 2000) found that 'All the case studies (which the report reviewed) collect "hard" and "soft" data. The hard data is generally used to justify the arts activities to funders and in other formal evaluations. The soft data is valued greatly by arts practitioners but is not used in any systematic way. There is a need for arts projects to have the confidence to present the soft data alongside the hard data, but also there is a need for funders and policy makers to understand more fully the importance of soft data. There are links between hard and soft data but these need to be made more apparent'. And on evaluation: 'There is room for improvement both in the approach arts projects take in evaluating their own activities and in the way in which the arts are included in wider regeneration evaluations'. Evaluations are not effective or comprehensive enough, do not create the space for the soft indicators and qualitative data to be valued. Finally, the arts are not separated from sports and leisure with the result that the contribution of the arts to the regeneration of an area is often not visible in the final evaluation.

The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) is a source of grey and academic literature and reports. Their focus is on improving access to knowledge about best-practices in public support for the arts and culture and they are therefore interested in the impact of the arts including on disadvantaged groups and communities as well as the contributions of arts organisations to the economy, community and sustainability of the arts in general. For example, they publish a report from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI): *A Study of the Economic and Social Impact of the Subsidised Theatre Sector in Northern Ireland* (2005) and also list relevant academic papers from the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* and other relevant journals. A further example, authored by an academic (Oakley, 2004) is *Developing The Evidence Base For Support Of Cultural & Creative Activities*, commissioned and published by the South East England Cultural Consortium (SECC) and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). The report is part of an initiative from those two agencies to develop evidence based practice in the use of culture to achieve Regional Economic Strategy Objectives and published as a discussion paper in order to stimulate debate.

An example of a detailed study of the role of universities as employers and attractors of highly educated and skilled workers to their region is Harvard University's report (2003) on the impact on the regional economy of the eight universities in the Boston area. The report includes details of the numbers of students coming into the area thus making available to the region's employers a steady stream of well-educated, highly-skilled workers and the high percentage of the residents of the region who have four-year or higher degrees. In spite of the immense amount of detail in the report measuring the universities' impact, including a section on 'Helping Communities Respond to the Demands of a Changing Economy', their cultural presence is not included, perhaps because of the problem of quantifying this less tangible aspect of knowledge transfer.

The strengths and weaknesses of the literature

The disadvantages of the Hamilton and Sneddon (2004) study is that it has an economic rather than social focus, although evidence that the UK government is shifting its 'policy emphasis from social, problem-led policies to economic, opportunity-led policies. Many governments are developing policies to improve the international competitive position of their major cities (Van den Berg et al., 2006 forthcoming)' (Robson et al., 2006a), this distinction may not continue. Nonetheless, there is little to be found in the study on the effects of cultural engagement. Its remit is knowledge transfer and whilst, as

the study explains, this is not the same as cultural engagement, they do overlap. The up to date verbal information from Universities Scotland is worth pursuing further with Charles Marriott as, again with the proviso that there is a specific driver here (funding allocation) nonetheless his work is highly relevant to this theme as are his reservations. *The Role of the Arts in Regeneration* (Blake Stevenson, 2000) whilst not directly on the theme, helps to pinpoint some difficulties with data collection. The others references help provide a wider perspective.

Gaps

There is little evidence in the literature that universities have mechanisms in place for the purposes of gathering evidence on the benefits of what they do with their community. This would seem to be a gap not just in the literature but in universities own systems and procedures. For example, is evidence collected on where universities film and media departments engage with local communities?

HEIs and cultural presence

There are many policy and strategy documents available from relevant organisations, including ones for creative and cultural industries, public health (leisure and sport), civic engagement, that include HEIs.

For example *The Regional Mission* of Universities UK can be downloaded from: bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/regionalnw.pdf Section 6, *The Cultural agenda*, outlines the contribution made by the North West HE institutions to both “cultural successes” and “economic developments”.

Through a series of examples the documents seeks to outline/*describe* HEIs involvement in the provision of cultural activity (arts venues and related activities, arts projects and involvement with ‘disadvantaged’ groups within the community, citizenship projects, libraries, sport, regional cultural research groups and centres).

Section 6.3 may be of interest since it outlines research groups and centres across regional universities (those would need to be contacted individually, document published in 2001, so may need updating). However, it appears that the emphasis here is on description of ‘outputs’ rather than evaluation of ‘outcomes’. For example, we are told that “university of Salford provides venues and resource for community theatre and music groups” but no mention of relevance, transformative effect or measurement of impact is included.

North West Development Agency (NWDA)

Amongst other initiatives there is Culture North West:

“Culture Northwest champions the whole spectrum of cultural and creative interests in the region, including tourism, sport, arts, heritage, museums, libraries and archives and creative industries.”

www.englandsnorthwest-culture.com/cultural/ with *Cornerstone Agencies and Creative Industries Partnerships*:

“In Manchester, CIDS provides an information, diagnostic and signposting service to creative businesses, supports a number of industry networks in Manchester, brings together a support agency network across Manchester and facilitates *an HE/FE forum*.”

“CIPS (Creative Industries Partnerships) will bring together a partnership of Business Links, Learning & Skills Councils, Chambers of Commerce, *HE and FE Institutions*, Sector specialist agencies and projects to deliver a streamlined service to the sector.”

Manchester City Council’s cultural strategy (www.manchester.gov.uk/regen/culture/index.htm)

The Manchester HEIs are all cited as core strategic partners in the delivery of the city’s cultural strategy: www.manchester.gov.uk/regen/culture/strategy/app4.htm.

The strengths and weaknesses of the literature

As can be seen from above, there is a good deal of strategy/policy, and publicity documentation about culture, knowledge transfer, civic roles and community involvement both from local and regional government and from universities themselves. This often translates into concrete and funded activities: museums, art centres, galleries, sports centres, extra-mural cultural programmes, supported by HEIs and accessible to the wider public. We suggest that less clear are mechanisms for measuring the

cultural impact of HEIs, let alone for the discussion and evaluation of the 'soft' impact of university culture on social transformation and urban regeneration (from café culture to informal cultural cluster). Universities often claim cultural centrality, as places of learning and debate, of outreach and community involvement, but there are remarkably few academic studies from within which provide and interrogate evidence for these kinds of claims.

Gaps

As noted there appears to be relatively little methodologically sound and critically informed work from within individual universities and cross-regionally about their cultural impact on local communities. This may be the case in areas including the following:

- Impact on 'disadvantaged' communities.
- Historic study: HEI social transformation over a period of time (post 1960s, or post 1992, for instance).
- Critical studies of cultural impact of universities.

ACADEMIC LITERATURE

Cultural presence

While we found that the majority of directly relevant publications tends to be in the form of strategy/policy documentation, and publicity-style materials, it is the case that some academic research is undertaken in the field, as we outline tentatively below.

Matarasso (1997) in a study funded by Comedia, an independent research centre, offers a comprehensive account of the social impacts arising from participation in the arts because this is where social benefits are most commonly attributed in policy discussion. To meet the political demands of the time, the economic benefits of the arts had been researched in the UK but this was the first large scale study of their social benefits. It offers a wealth of understanding from a large research project with sound methodology on the value of social participation in the arts and a wealth of data on how this can be made effective. It does not consider the role universities might have to play.

Delanty (2001) views the university as a key institution of modernity and as the site where knowledge, culture and society interconnect. He assesses the question of the crisis of the university with respect to issues such as globalisation, the information age, the nation state, academic capitalism, cultural politics and changing relationships between research and teaching. Arguing against the notion of the demise of the university, his argument is that in the knowledge society of today a new identity for the university is emerging based on communication and new concepts of citizenship.

Silver (2003) asks how do academic staff, including innovators in teaching and learning, perceive the reality of a 'culture' in their organisation? The concept of 'organisational culture', commonly used from the 1980s, is discussed in the context of evidence from a research project and other sources, suggesting that the concept has failed to reflect the dual position of academics in their disciplinary and institutional contexts, the former of which is generally the determining factor in most academics' conception of their identities. Although 'culture' and 'subcultures' can be used with disciplines and departments acting as their proxies, 'organisational culture'--that is 'culture' applied to higher education institutions as such--has no basis in the day-to-day operation of most academic staff in most institutions. The paper includes study of four UK universities, including Salford.

O'Connor (1999) *The Cultural Production Sector in Manchester, research & strategy* is an influential report, much cited for its work on the urban creation of cultural and creative industries sector, especially in Sheffield and Manchester.

The Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (www.cresc.man.ac.uk) is an important initiative within the cultural research arena. At Manchester University, CRESC 'is a £3.7 million Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) -funded major international Research Centre analysing socio-cultural change. It is the first major Research Centre in Britain to develop a broad, empirically focused account of cultural change and its economic, social and political implications'. We have scanned some of the working papers and found no evidence to date of research on 'cultural presence' of HE institutions. Yet, the very fact that such research is based at HEIs is an indicator of HEIs involvement with the issue of socio-cultural change. CRESC affiliate research includes: Manchester's Cultural Institutions (www.cresc.man.ac.uk/research/otherres/heif2.htm), a HEIF2 project linking academic research with other sector interests.

There is a large literature on the economics of culture with the *Journal of Cultural Economics* particularly fruitful but as Throsby's (2001) book from the same field indicates, the use may be too tangential. It considers the relationship between economics and culture both as areas of intellectual discourse, and as systems of societal organisation. Adopting a broad definition of culture, it explores the economic dimensions of culture, and the cultural context of economics. Likewise, Casey et al. (1996) on culture as commodity O'Hagan (1998) on an analysis of key economic policy issues in Europe and the United States in relation to the arts.

On the role of universities in the economy the Cambridge-MIT Institute is a source of research which might help with the gap analysis by way of contrast with what is going on in science and technology e.g. Summit in October 2005 on *Enterprising and Creative Places*, at which Richard Florida gave a keynote speech and Richard Lester, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, delivered on *Regional Competitiveness in the Global Economy: Innovation and the Role of the University*.

Likewise, the Lambert Review 2003 on business-HEI relations www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/EA556/lambert_review_final_450.pdf and HEFCE's www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_07/ *Higher education-business and community interaction survey 2002-03* are highly relevant for the general theme of HEIs interaction with business.

Riaz (2004) has produced a useful *Literature review of the evidence base for culture, the arts and sports policy* www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/lrcas-00.asp and Selwood's (2001) book on the UK cultural sector includes a section of funding and considers how much support goes to the sector from both public and private sources, piecing together where that funding came from, comparing it to amounts received previously, and examining how it was distributed, what it was intended to achieve and what possible difference it might have made.

On the role of the arts in regeneration, Evans and Shaw (2004) write on the *Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: a Review of Evidence* for a report to the DCMS and Schussman and Healy (2002) provide an *Annotated Bibliography of Selected Sources Culture, Creativity and the Economy*.

The Centre for Cultural Policy Research in Glasgow (www.culturalpolicy.arts.gla.ac.uk/site_resources/frame_set.php) was set up with funding from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, the Centre for Cultural Policy Research (CCPR) at the University of Glasgow is a leading institution in cultural policy research in Scotland. Based in arts and humanities, but working collaboratively across the disciplines, CCPR has developed of a critical and self-reflexive research culture that contributes to the development of the discipline in the UK and beyond. With the creative arts in Scotland as its point of departure, CCPR also plays a leading role in developing cultural policy through the provision of rigorous, independent and high quality applied research and commentary. Major research interests include: Cities and culture; cultural data; culture in rural areas; major events; the role of culture in social inclusion and health; cultural economics and culture in society.

An example of their work (Galloway and Bell, 2006) is *Quality of Life and Well-Being: Measuring The Benefits of Culture and Sport: Literature Review and Thinkpiece* (with a useful bibliography still to be mined) www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/01/13110743/20.

Also in Glasgow is the Glasgow Caledonian Heritage Futures research programme (www.heritagefutures.net/research/index.html) which has the aims of creating 'a dynamic and unique new interdisciplinary research partnership which is relevant to Scotland's economic and social needs and building bridges between academic researchers, policy makers, industry stakeholders and community groups through developing a strategic and responsive approaches to research planning and dissemination

Social exclusion, the arts and their transformative effects on disadvantaged communities

No literature was found which was directly related to the transformative effect of HEIs' cultural presence on disadvantaged communities. On the arts and social inclusion there is Jermyn (2004) *The Art of Inclusion* and *The Arts and Social Exclusion: a Review Prepared for the Arts Council of England* (2001) and Reeves (2002) also for the Arts Council England *Measuring the Economic and Social Impact of the Arts*.

Whilst Belfiore (2002) questions the strength of the connection between the arts and social inclusion, Jermyn (2001) concludes: 'Many claims are made about the impact of the arts and, on a wider level, of culture. Some of these are well supported by evidence, others are less well-supported. This does not mean that these impacts do not occur, but that some have been more rigorously researched or evidenced than others. There are still many gaps, particularly in the area of social impacts'.

Jermyn's (2001) review is extremely helpful, providing a wealth of definitions and relevant data and a good basis for looking at social exclusion in the context of HEIs' cultural presence.

The Role of the Arts in Regeneration (Blake Stevenson, 2000) is also very helpful. It states that:

The arts could have a pivotal role to play in regenerating areas of social and economic exclusion. They are seen to be able to operate in a number of different ways. They can: attract people who otherwise might not be attracted to participate in arts activities; increase individuals' personal development; improve an area's image; attract economic investment; they can help in the process of community development; and they can lead to training and employment.

- It is important that arts projects and programmes are an integral part of an overall regeneration programme. If not they will remain on the periphery of the development process and their full potential will not be realised. This will require a change in attitudes for local people, regeneration specialists, arts practitioners and policy makers.
- Community involvement is essential as arts projects specialise in the people development aspect of regeneration.
- There is a need for a national arts strategy and regional and local strategies which set out what the arts hope to achieve and how they will link in with other development aims.

For an AHRB funded project on the 'Social Impact of the Arts', Belfiore (2004) writes that 'The notion that engagement in the arts can produce deeply transformative effects for the individual and society has a long and complex intellectual history'. The Arts and Humanities Research Board are currently funding a fellowship to undertake a critical reformulation of the current debate over the social impacts of the arts and to develop a rigorous procedure for the evaluation of these impacts. According to Belfiore (2004) 'The socio-economic impact of the arts has become an increasingly important rationale for public investment in the cultural sector over the last two decades. However, current literature shows that neither the funding bodies and their clients nor academics have managed to establish a methodology robust enough to be accepted and consistently applied across a wide range of publicly-funded arts organisations. With the growing demand for evidence-based policy making, and in the context of the competition the arts world has to face for limited resources, there is clearly a need to elaborate an impact assessment procedure that is methodologically sound and that can inform the claims made by and for the sector'.

Reeves' (2002) *Measuring the economic and social impact of the arts: a review* for the Arts Council found that while there is now a wealth of arts impact research, there is also a recognition that the robustness of research methods and the quality of evidence gathered across the literature is variable. The review includes a very useful brief commentary on each research study to draw out particular strengths which can be used to inform the development of methods and techniques which others can build on and adapt for their own use for future research. The commentary also endeavours to highlight gaps in information and aspects of methodology where greater clarity or explanation would have helped the reader to gain a better understanding of how the methodology was carried out, and any attendant limitations of the findings. The literature is presented in tabular form and is divided into two main areas: research which aims to add to our knowledge base about the economic characteristics and contribution of the arts and creative industries and studies exploring the social impact of the arts.

Gaps

Reeves (2002) concludes that although there have been initial explorations into longitudinal research, there is a real need for further work in this area. There are further issues concerning to what extent the impacts of short-term arts and cultural interventions are sustained over a longer period, and how can conceptualisations of social impact recognise the different rates of maturation of impacts, within different projects? Establishing additionality and the relative effectiveness of different interventions and services are also areas warranting further exploration. The main body of studies of social impact have focused on community-based arts practice and participative activities and there has been no research to date comparing the outcomes of community-arts projects against other arts interventions, or which has attempted, through the use of control groups) to explore social outcomes where there are no arts interventions. It is also significant that there have been no attempts to test the impacts produced by arts projects or programmes against other types of interventions, both in or outside the sector. At the same time, there is policy interest in exploring ways of establishing the cost-effectiveness of projects in relation to their objectives.

Both this earlier Arts Council report and the AHRB on-going work and the identification of the gap in appropriate methodologies are significant also for the transformative effect of HEIs. The AHRB project has as its starting point a systematic review, analysis and classification of the claims made over time for the impact of the novel, theatrical performance and related academic research on both the individual

and society. The review will include a critical assessment of the basis on which these claims have been made. The next step will be to consider whether other claims might also be made and to determine which claims can be satisfactorily tested and which are of primary importance. The articulation of what can be and what cannot be measured will be an important element of the research. Finally, the study will move to the development of methodologies, which will be tested out in a series of pilot projects.

The literature in this section does not mention HEIs as in any way relevant to the impact of the arts but does offer some excellent starting places for approaches to take with the institutions and their cultural partners. The less tangible impact of the HEIs cultural presence is not the subject of the work on disadvantaged groups and the arts.

HEIs' alienation from the local community and cultural aspects of the so-called 'town-gown divide'

We thought it useful to identify some of the critical areas for HEIs and their community interaction, and some of the boundaries or critical, potentially antagonistic relations: 'town-gown' divide and 'community' arts/media are two areas we looked at briefly.

In particular with reference to the USA, there is a number of evaluative and academic research projects and publications looking at 'town-gown' divide.

Askew (2001) argues that opportunities for outsourcing abound, and explores several possible partnership models that could be developed to enhance both campus and local communities [in the US context] while improving the bond between the two, working to bridge the town-gown divide.

Adali et al. (2002) in 'Connected Kids: Community Information System Design and Development' provide an analysis of an ICT community project in New York State. Connected Kids is a collaborative project bringing together social science and computer science researchers from Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute with representatives of city and county government in Troy, NY, and a wide variety of not-for-profit youth service agencies to develop a community wide information system.

MacLeod et al. (1997) describe an experiment to discover processes by which marginalized, economically distressed communities can use institutions of the "knowledge economy" to foster the social and technological innovation necessary for their survival. Joins the University College of Cape Breton with universities in Mexico to form structured relationships with communities on Cape Breton Island and with a Mayan community on the Yucatán Peninsula. Argues that economic regeneration among marginal groups requires: access to improved production and organizational technologies; that universities can provide this access, especially in distressed communities; a transfer system usually has to be established; specific steps must be taken to establish new community businesses; and a maintenance system with specific characteristics must be established.

Holland (2001) explains that '[M]any campuses [in the US] are implementing new or revised interpretations of faculty roles, student learning experiences, organisational structures and values, and town-gown interactions.... This paper focuses on the growing community-based academic work across all HEIs, and the potential for integrating this new range of activities and priorities into current classification and rating systems. The external dimension of the academy has many different labels: public service, outreach, civic engagement or civic mission, community service, professional service, and others'.

Boucher (2000) 'Unireg Regional Case Study Report: The Shannon Region' looks at the regional impact of the University of Limerick, ROI, including a section on 'cultural impact' of some of the university's initiatives, precisely for linking the university with the local community.

The strengths and weaknesses of the literature

Much of the literature is focused on two areas in particular:

- a. on policies, structures and organisations charged with *bridging* the gap between town and gown
- b. on contemporary refigurings of the questions in the context of ICT. Other cultural manifestations or projects seem not to be analysed with the same level of scrutiny.

Gaps

While there is research dealing with the town-gown divide—notably around its history, as well as issues of health and housing campaigning, community finance, information technology, education outreach, particularly with reference to the north American context—this often seems more focused on projects

aimed at *bridging* it. We have found less research looking at critical moments of tension, antagonism, or even alienation between HEIs and local communities. Nor have we found much evidence of research on cultural aspects of this. What we have in mind here is research on the town-gown divide as expressed through everyday culture or cultural capital: class distinctions, semiotic of clothing, accent, property, social mobility and access. (UK press reports on, e.g., students and housing, residential areas being dominated by students—Leeds, Belfast—students' disturbances, the excess associated with graduation celebrations, may be worth looking at.)

'Community music' and 'community media', non-formal education and production

There are both arts/media advocate-style publications and a relatively small number of academic research projects and materials. This field is of interest and relevance as it shows some of the educative cultural movements of recent decades that have developed (largely) outside HEIs, often originating outside official funding and formal education systems too (though in both the case of community music and community media formally funded today).

Cahill (1998) charts the rise of community-based music education in Australia. Everitt (1997) provides an outstanding report on music-making in the community, UK and wider, including focus on non-formal music education.

Higham (1990) the founder-director of Community Music East (est. 1985) offers a personal philosophy of music education from a regional SE focus.

In Moser and McKay (eds) (2005), McKay's chapter on the development of community music in UK, emphasises its countercultural and free jazz origins, non-formal education practices, and reluctance--perhaps occasionally refusal--to work with formal education networks and organisations. This has a regional NW focus.

Hewson's (2004) report for the Community Media Association suggests that the digital environment creates the opportunity to reconsider the role of Community Media in the promotion and enhancement of citizenship - a vision of 'media literacy' distinct from the notion of television viewers as mere 'consumers' of broadcast content www.commedia.org.uk. The UK Community Media Association website has a section on 'learning and skills', though no mention of HEIs here: 'Driving the work of the Learning & Skills department is the vision that all people have the right to communicate, participate, create, influence, express, change, organise, entertain, learn and receive information freely. The Learning & Skills department addresses these needs as well as developing strategic links and ensuring the sector is represented and feeds into national learning & skills initiatives'

Strengths and weaknesses of the literature

'Community' itself becomes an important (but slippery) signifier of arts and media organisations: consider the recent rise of 'community media' in its various manifestations (radio, internet, TV, but also way in which 'community' may mean radical, social, or the soft end of capital):

Gaps

These gaps are interesting for HEIs because they so often, as with community music, do not include engagement with or support from the university sector. Is it possible to argue that the label 'community', as used in e.g. 'community music' or 'community media', means in part 'extra-curricular', outside the established educational systems and institutions? (Coming in part from the counterculture of the 1960s, the archetype of such deschooling in HE terms was the Anti-University based in London in the 1960s.) If so, 'community' used in this way may in fact signal the limit case of (in this educative instance) HEIs' cultural contribution: 'community' based culture is that which *does not* happen with/in universities. (Salford is organising a conference in this area later this year.)

Theoretical frameworks

Apart from the evident lack of data on the cultural activities of HEIs there would seem also to be a lack of theoretical work underpinning their cultural presence. This is despite the research being carried out, by HEIs, on cultural activities in the (rest of the) local community (e.g. at the Centre for Cultural Policy Research, University of Glasgow).

To begin with, it would be useful to fill these gaps by examining the value of existing theoretical frameworks for developing an understanding of HEIs' transformative impact through their cultural presence. Some frameworks have developed models.

Social capital

John Field's work on social capital offers an opportunity to theorise on the role of HEIs' 'cultural presence' in a general sense in respect of disadvantaged groups and communities and in particular to consider the reciprocal nature of the 'presence'. He writes 'What is new about the concept of social capital is that it asks us to view a whole range of social connections and networks as a resource, which help people to advance their interests by co-operating with others.' He cites Coleman's research (1988) which demonstrated that school children's performance was influenced positively by the existence of close ties between teachers, parents, neighbours and church ministers.

Drawing on Coleman's work, researchers into schools attainment and social capital (Field, Schuller and Baron 2000) have concluded that shared norms and stable social networks tend to promote both the cognitive and social development of young people, to the extent that social capital may at least partly compensate for other environmental influences such as ethnicity and socio-economic deprivation. Applied to the 'cultural presence' of an HEI, this approach may identify not only similar relational factors but also demand a reappraisal of underlying cultural assumptions and consider the impact of a 'two-way' flow that may result from more actively pursued cultural interaction between HEIs and their communities

Culture and civic renewal

Bourdieu and Passeron's concept of cultural capital (1977) may also provide the basis for an examination of how the HEI impacts on its community but also a consideration of its role as part of the community, rather than existing outside of it. Lamont and Lareau (1988) saw Bourdieu's concept as dividing between three different types of cultural capital:

- *Embodied or Incorporated* represented by practices that are internalized during the socialization process.
- *Objectified*, or transmittable goods such as books, computers, paintings, etc., that require embodied cultural capital to be appropriated.
- *Institutional*, which is evidenced by degrees, diplomas, certificates, or other markers that certify the value of embodied cultural capital.

Zweigenhaft's later definition of cultural capital, "various forms of knowledge, dispositions, and skills" (Zweigenhaft, 1993, p.211) and Pinkett's (2002, p.34) notion of *community cultural capital* as various forms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests, which have particular relevance or value within a community may also be worth pursuing.

This approach to cultural capital allows for a two-way (at least) transmission.

Learning regions

There is a growing literature on learning cities and regions which provides another avenue for theorising about the HEI's relationship with its regional connections. Goddard (2005) explains that the process of identification of a regional identity for HEIs is a controversial one and can be seen as both parochial (in the context of international research) or over extensive (for example, where cities have a long history with their town of origin). Goddard writes about the learning economy, but the term learning culture might be substituted for experimentation. He writes: 'One approach to understanding this new economic environment can be found in the concept of the learning economy which emerges from studies of national systems of innovation (Lundvall, 1992; Lundvall and Johnson, 1994).' Goddard continues: 'Lundvall defines the learning economy as an economy where the success of individuals, firms and regions, reflects the capability to learn (and forget old practices)....The learning region depends upon network knowledge which refers not only to the skills of individuals but the transfer of knowledge from one group to another to form learning systems.' Goddard creates a model to demonstrate what he calls the 'university/region value-added management process'.

Another approach might be through the development of indicators. The international Observatory Pascal, based at the Institute of Education at the University of Stirling is currently running a six country European project on Learning in Local and Regional Authorities (LILARA). Using indicators in the form of an audit, the aim is to engage employees across a range of businesses and institutions in the development of regional authorities. Through the audit, the employees identify their own learning needs to enable them to play an active role in the development of the learning region. This is work in progress.

Differential impact of HEIs

It would be difficult to adapt Goddard's (2005) model to demonstrate the differential impact of HEIs. More helpful in this respect might be Engestrom's (2001) third generation activity theory, which with some adaptation could provide a means of configuring complex relations and the differences between

them, including individual components. Archer's (1996, 2000) theory of morphogenesis and morphostasis is another approach which arguably allows for the treatment of culture, structure and agency as equally important in understanding complex interactions where change is occurring. Both of these models would provide the opportunity to fill a gap in current literature and in particular to analyse the differences in impact of different institutions.

Reeves (2002) discusses Landry et al. (1993) who, in their discussion document, *The Social Impact of the Arts* define 'impact' as: 'a dynamic concept which pre-supposes a relationship of cause and effect. It can be measured through the evaluation of the outcomes of particular actions, be that an initiative, a set of initiatives forming a policy or set of policies which form a strategy'. A distinction is made by the authors between the notions of 'impact' and 'importance', where they argued that the latter is a static concept which can be measured through the qualitative or quantitative description of the characteristics of a particular problem, phenomenon, resource or set of activities. It is emphasised that these differences suggest a need for different methodologies. Lingayah et al. (1996) put forward a practical way of understanding the concept of 'impact' as it relates to arts processes and projects. They identify inputs, outputs and outcomes as the three basic components of performance used to measure the '3Es' of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, respectively. According to Lingayah et al. (1996), the differences in measurement of inputs, outputs and outcomes can be viewed in terms of a spectrum, where measurements at one end are relatively easy and 'objective' and move gradually to the other end where they are much more difficult and subjective. It is the measures concerned with outcomes, with their notions of quality and quantity, which concern us when we talk about impact. They suggest that the starting point for measuring outcomes must begin with an acknowledgement of the purpose of cultural activities, against which their effectiveness can be judged. They therefore have developed a 'measurement spectrum' for the measurement of inputs, outputs and outcomes, which Reeves (2002) reproduces. This approach might be useful for considering the differential impact of HEIs.

Annex E: Literature Review. Sub-theme 3: The civic role of higher education institutions and their constituencies

Prepared by Danijela Bogdanovic, Yann Lebeau and Brian Longhurst

BACKGROUND

Theme 3 of the literature review is concerned with *The civic role of higher education institutions and their constituencies*, including the involvement of higher education staff in local institutions and organisations – school governing boards, leisure and recreation organisations, political parties and council etc – as well as the more formal engagement of the higher education institutions in civic development initiatives and issues including local research on marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

The theme

For the purpose of the review the theme has been divided into two main areas:

1. the personal involvement of higher education staff and students in or engagement with local institutions and organisations
2. more formal engagement of the higher education institutions in civic development initiatives

The questions

The theme will be approached in terms of three broad questions:

1. What are the local, regional and national policies and initiatives?
2. What is the evidence of impacts – positive and negative – of these policies and initiatives and which groups/communities are benefiting from them?
3. What are the gaps in the evidence about impacts and what are the methodological issues (for example, measuring and monitoring) that will need to be addressed?

The method

Due to time constraints the primary method of research was the exploration of the information available on the world wide web, with some of the information obtained as a result of telephone and e-mail contact with relevant agencies.

INTRODUCTION: ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

The issue of the engagement and interactions of universities with their environment is, from the narrower perspective of a civic and political engagement of university constituencies, not new, and has had different meanings in different contexts. Expressions such as ‘citadels of learning’ and ‘ivory tower’, used to characterise universities (and their spatial and symbolic demarcations) have tended to convey contradictory images of universities, as shelters providing a conducive environment to research and teaching but also as privileged institutions, indifferent to the needs of their immediate environments despite being largely publicly funded. In Europe over the past 20 years, the debate about civic engagement of universities has largely been an offshoot of broader discussions about the “relevance” of Higher education to local and regional communities sparked by the new demands of the so-called “knowledge economy”, by increased participation in HE and its consequences in terms of institutional differentiation, by processes of political and administrative devolution and by pressures for more accountability of public and publicly funded institutions.

Academics in the “outside world”: civic engagement and participation in the public sphere

The starting point of the research was to explore the existence of information on *the involvement of higher education staff and students in the public sphere*.

No such data are systematically captured by institutions as the engagement referred to here remains private. However, the field is being researched locally and internationally within broader frameworks of engagement, citizenship and the public sphere, as illustrated by the documents reviewed below. Bond

and Paterson (2005) define this form of civic engagement as “ those activities which individual academics undertake which in some way involve interaction or engagement with the non-academic community and are related to academic expertise” (338).

Bond, R. and Paterson L. (2005) Coming down from the ivory tower? Academics' civic and economic engagement with the community, *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 31, No. 3, September 2005, 331–351

Abstract. This paper examines the degree and nature of universities' interaction with their communities from the perspectives of individual academics. It considers whether academic values and practice tend toward a 'detached' or 'universalist' perspective in which location is largely redundant and any perceived 'community' has a global character, or whether values and practice in fact indicate a significant perhaps substantial degree of community engagement at a local, regional or national level. Findings are based on a postal questionnaire administered to a sample of academics, and a series of follow-up interviews with a smaller sub-sample of respondents. The paper concludes that academics exhibit a strong commitment to engagement and interaction with their communities both in principle and practice; that such interaction often takes place at a variety of geographical levels; and that it is often accomplished under less than propitious circumstances. No reference to specific disadvantaged groups. Notion of engagement is taken in a broad sense.

Bond, R. and Paterson L. (2003) Nations and Regions. Constitutional Change and Identity. Academics and National Identity in Scotland and England. Report to the Leverhulme Trust.³⁶

This is the research on which the above article by Bond and Paterson is based.

Summary of relevant findings (extracted from the report):

- In both Scotland and England, locally-oriented research is rare and it is most common to see one's research as being universal in terms of its nature and applications. The striking difference between the two countries relates to the *national* dimension. In Scotland, national discourses are common: a Scottish national element may be highlighted, denied, or a more complex balance and reconciliation of national and universal demands and interests may be negotiated. In England, any such discourse(s) are conspicuous by their absence.
- Academics' tendency to occupy networks at various geographical levels problematizes a simplistic dichotomy in which academics and their employing institutions are considered to be either 'of' or merely 'in' their local or national communities. Academic institutions and their personnel can be and are in some respects 'rooted' in their more immediate communities while at the same time occupying a much broader, international academic community. While international networking is most prominent, once more Scotland is distinct in that academics often occupy 'dual' national networks at both a Scottish and British level, whereas in England specifically English organizations and groups are not prominent.
- A clear majority of academics in both Scotland and England are committed, both in principle and in practice, to the sharing of academic expertise for the benefit of the non-academic community. Engagement with this non-academic community is widespread and varied in form: for example, with schools, business, the media, governmental or non-governmental bodies at a national level, and community groups or organizations at a sub-national level. Civic engagement of this type is deemed to be necessary or worthwhile for a number of reasons: to enhance public understanding; a perceived accountability to the public; for instrumental reasons related to professional or financial gain; for the prestige or social benefit related to the sharing of one's expertise; due to factors in one's own background or education; or merely for personal fulfillment.

Bond and Paterson identify a range of ways in which academics engage with the community as well as the forms in which academics feel they should engage. However, while of interest on a number of levels, their work focuses much more on the academic community than on the groups academics are engaging with and is relatively detached from the wider debates on civic engagement as debated via the idea of social capital. There are many texts on social capital. For some key references see the Saguaro Seminar website where there also is a section on civic education (www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/civic education. Two current overview texts on social capital are D. Halpern, *Social Capital*. Polity, 2004 and J. Field, *Social Capital*, Routledge, 2003. These debates have a range of sources, but have been conducted around a 'storm centre' represented by the work of Putnam. The most detailed expression of Putnam's arguments can be found in *Bowling Alone*.

³⁶ Paterson, L. and Bond, R. (forthcoming), *Higher Education and Critical Citizenship: a Survey of Academics' Views in Scotland and England*, in "Pedagogy, Culture and Society".
Paterson, L. (2003), *The Survival of the Democratic Intellect: Academic Values in Scotland and England*, in "Higher Education Quarterly", Vol. 57, pp. 67-93.

Putnam, R. (2000) *Bowling Alone: the collapse and revival of American community*. (New York, Simon and Schuster).

Abstract (from publisher): Putnam shows how we have become increasingly disconnected from family, friends, neighbours, and our democratic structures-- and how we may reconnect. Putnam warns that our stock of [social capital](#) - the very fabric of our connections with each other, has plummeted, impoverishing our lives and communities. Putnam draws on evidence including nearly 500,000 interviews over the last quarter century to show that we sign fewer petitions, belong to fewer organizations that meet, know our neighbors less, meet with friends less frequently, and even socialize with our families less often. We're even bowling alone. More Americans are bowling than ever before, but they are not bowling in leagues. Putnam shows how changes in work, family structure, age, suburban life, television, computers, women's roles and other factors have contributed to this decline.

Putnam's arguments have led to debate on practical implementation and concrete initiatives. The key representation of this is the Saguro Seminar and *Better Together*, an initiative of on civic engagement at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government at [Harvard University](#). www.bettertogether.org/.

Presentation (from website): "The [Saguaro Seminar](#) issued the report *Better Together*, in December of 2000, calling for a nationwide campaign to redirect a downward spiral of civic apathy. Warning that the national stockpile of "social capital" – our reserve of personal bonds and fellowship – is seriously depleted, the report outlined the framework for sustained, broad-based social change to restore America's civic virtue. Launched by Harvard University's [John F. Kennedy School of Government](#), the Saguaro Seminar drew its 30 participants from academia, the arts, clergy, business and the top leaders and policymakers of both major political parties. Saguaro members studied the essential character of public participation in their effort to develop remedies to redirect a decades-long decline".

Better Together in its published version (Putnam, Feldstein with Cohen (2003) contains a number of case studies of local initiatives that are building social capital. A more 'academic' intervention can be found in comparative work edited by Putnam, *Democracies in Flux* (Putnam ed., 2002). This considers 'the evolution of social capital' in Britain, the USA, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Australia and Japan and evaluates the applicability of Putnam's decline thesis to these societies. Hall's discussion of Britain in this edited text is sophisticated and influential.

While Putnam's thesis and applications of it have much to say about education in the generation and expansion of social capital, there is little specific reference to the role of HE as an active force. There is an important potential gap here. There are other sources identified, which remain to be further evaluated. They include:

Voice and Equality Civic Voluntarism in American Politics by Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry Brady (Harvard University Press 1995)

This analysis, based on an original survey of 15,000 individuals, shows that some individuals have a greater voice in politics than others, and that this inequality results not just from varying inclinations toward activity, but also from unequal access to vital resources such as education. The authors focus on the central issues of involvement: how people come to be active and the issues they raise when they do. They discuss the differences they find amongst various populations.

Johnnella E. Butler, *Democracy, Diversity, and Civic Engagement*
<http://www.aaup.org/publications/Academe/2000/00ja/JA00Butl.htm>

The American online journal *Academe* produced a special issue in 2000 on civic engagement and higher education. The introduction suggests that today in the US, " many students participate in co-curricular activities with a civic purpose, some faculty members conduct community-based research and incorporate civic content into the curriculum, and several universities promote public engagement as an integral part of their institutional missions", but also reveals that , contrary to a common view from Europe, "these efforts are isolated; they are not part of a serious strategy to renew the civic mission of our institutions".

The paper by Butler elucidates the role of the faculty member as public intellectual, particularly in the context of multicultural societies. She also warns that in America the word "civic," which denotes citizenship and democracy, has resonated just as much with nativist intent, discriminatory Americanization, racism, and denial of full citizenship as it has with the promise of democracy and social justice. This leads us to discussions of the role of academics in the public sphere, of universities as public spheres and logically to Craig Calhoun's view on University and the Public Good.

Calhoun, C (2006) *The University and the Public Good, Thesis Eleven*, Vol. 84, No. 1.

Abstract (from publisher): Universities have flourished in the modern era as central public institutions and bases for critical thought. They are currently challenged by a variety of social forces and undergoing a deep transformation in both their internal structure and their relationship to the rest of society. Critical theorists need to assess this both in order to grasp adequately the social conditions of their own work and because the transformation of universities is central to a more general intensification of social inequality, privatization of public institutions, and reorganization of the relation of access to knowledge. This is also a pivotal instance for asking basic questions about the senses in which the university is or may be 'public': (1) where does its money come from? (2) who governs? (3) who benefits? and (4) how is knowledge produced and circulated?

The concept of engagement at individual and non institutional level of analysis rarely refers in the UK to specific local communities or targeted populations, while it takes a much more radical and normative tone in contexts of political transitions where academics are expected to use their freedom of speech and their knowledge to challenge authoritarian regimes and empower communities (Brennan et al., 2004, Lebeau and Ogunsanya, 2000).

In Their Leverhulme report mentioned above, Bond and Paterson (2003) note that if the vast majority of academics claim to be involved in some sort of engagement with the communities "outside the walls", they tend to still consider this engagement (usually taking the form of expertise related communications on local medias, presentations in think tank sessions or local schools, etc) as part of their academic activity and therefore predominantly consider in both an instrumental (enhancing personal prestige) way and an expression of the public accountability of HEIs and their staff (38). There is no evidence from this report of a particularly pronounced individual political engagement among academics, resulting for instance in activist actions with local "disadvantaged" communities.

The review has not been able to identify other studies in this area, and remarkably nothing was found on student non university political or civic life. This contrasts with the vast literature from the US (see for instance Wollenberg, 2002 about Berkeley) and some European countries (Finland, Norway, France) covering the multiple facets of the concept of "university town", including the involvement of student and academics in the local public sphere.

Higher education institutions in civic development initiatives

In the above referred paper, Calhoun suggests that the diversification of higher education fields under effects of massification and globalisation have generated diverse forms of engagement. In the UK too, changes in the HE landscape, particularly in "new universities" have induced new types of relationships between universities and their environments. The notion of civic engagement – meant to give real life experience - takes a different meaning for a mature student returning to school after 10 years of work and entering university through an Access course than for an 18-year old middle class A level school leaver.

As already mentioned above, the search for academic texts on 'civic engagement' in the UK has not been very fruitful so far. This may be due to time restriction and lack of access to academic journals and article databases. In terms of 'grey' literature our impression is that the information available is fragmented, unstructured and produced by a wide range of bodies and agencies with different agendas and where higher education institutions do not appear to be leaders.

In terms of exploring the three broad questions mentioned above several issues have arisen through preliminary research. First, there are no clearly defined national policies on civic role and engagement of HE institutions which are translatable into regions. The labour government has developed what might be considered as a distinctive strategy on social inclusion based on the Third way concepts of cosmopolitan pluralism and civil association but with limited references to the civic role of universities, while its regional regeneration approach (including the role of HEIs) does not seem to differ significantly from the broader European economic-led trend towards devolution. The reference to the local engagement of universities in the DFES white paper on Higher Education (2003b) emphasizes the economic links with regional development agencies but remains vague on other contributions that HEIs are expected to make to local communities:

"To improve, institutions should increasingly be embedded in their regional economies, and closely linked with the emerging agendas of Regional Development Agencies. The nature of the role will depend upon each institution's mission and skills: for some it will be mainly national, for some closer to home. But in all cases, universities and colleges are key drivers for their regions, both economically and in terms of the social and cultural contribution they make to their communities"

A number of the initiatives identified within the UK, touching in a way or another on the issue of civic engagement, were in fact linked to community regeneration, knowledge transfer and HE institutions' involvement with the industries.

The gaps in evidence could be due to the fragmented and temporary nature of initiatives. Yet, effects of an initiative will probably take time to be felt. There remain issues concerning the baseline, and measurement which are broad relevance.

Urban and regional renaissance

HEFCE

“Higher Education Active Community Fund round 1 (HEACF 1) March 2002 to August 2004 and Higher Education Community Fund round 2 (HEACF) September 2004 to July 2006 are parts of the Government's wider Active Community initiative, and are packages of measures designed to encourage greater involvement of students (and staff) in voluntary and community activities. They follow on from the objectives of the Higher Education Reach-out to Business and the Community Fund (HEROBC) and proposals in the paper on 'Urban Renaissance' from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions”.

“In the HEACF 1 initiative, HEFCE is a partner alongside the Department for Education and Skills and the Home Office. HEACF 1 complements existing HEROBC projects, and promotes social and cultural development where this will improve the health of the social economy. It funds institution-wide co-ordination and generation of volunteering opportunities and activity within HEIs, and encourages collaboration with established volunteering organisations”.

“HEACF 2 is intended to enhance the key role played by higher education institutions (HEIs) in their local community. The initiative follows on from the objectives of [HEACF 1](#). It also parallels round two of the [Higher Education Innovation Fund](#) (HEIF 2) to contribute to a coherent, full spectrum of third stream activity. This spectrum will recognise the HE sector's key role in wealth creation, the health of the **social economy and civic engagement**, adding to local communities' quality of life”. (our emphasis)

“Extension of HEACF into its second round will further embed volunteering within the ethos of individual HEI's missions, and complement their widening participation initiatives, while benefiting community groups and organisations. New generations of volunteers will develop generic employment skills as well as an awareness of civic and social economy issues”.

In North West region the universities with successful bids are mainly establishing volunteering initiatives (see also below) and the groups who are benefiting are local schools, young offenders, hospitals, councils, community groups, homeless people, refugees and so on. The examples of the activities conducted by the universities in the North West are included in the appendix.

Currently, there is an invitation and guidance for institutional plans and competitive bids under the third round of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF 3) designed to support a broad range of knowledge transfer activities which result in direct and indirect economic benefit to the UK.

Further information on HEIF initiative, as well as the case studies (some are attached in the appendix) and examples of best practice are available from HEFCE website at www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout/heacf/volunteer.asp.

Possible gap: measuring impact of the initiatives on the communities in regions/local areas where the initiatives are taking place.

The Home Office

A wealth of information is available on www.communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/ under the three main headings:

1. The Active Communities Directorate– “responsible for the government's work to strengthen the voluntary and community sector and support greater participation in society through volunteering and giving”.
2. Civil Renewal – providing information on “how public bodies, people working in the voluntary and community sector, and active citizens can work together to improve their own communities”.
3. Race, Equality, Faith and Cohesion – with information on “ethnic societies living in the UK and statistics about faith and policy surrounding current equality issues”.

Probably the most significant initiative for the purpose of this review is The Active Citizenship Centre established by the Home Office in 2003 with the aim of bringing together research findings and case studies to “inform policy and good practice. “

Its website, www.active-citizen.org.uk, is envisaged as a meeting place for “policy leads, practitioners, academics and think-tanks to share lessons and carry out research.”

The University of Manchester oversees and manages its research programme with a promise of its findings being published at the end of 2005.

“It is tracking the progress of initiatives led by the Home Office’s Civil Renewal Unit including:

- Civic Pioneers;
- Active Learning for Active Citizenship pilots in seven parts of the country;
- Guide Neighbourhoods: residents organisations who have successfully improved their areas and are now sharing their experience with others who want to tackle similar problems; and the
- Citizen Governance Initiative: a study on how to encourage more people to take part in public governance.”

Further information as well as the report *The benefits of community engagement* is available from www.communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/civil/learning-research/.

Active Learning for Active Citizenship, Greater Manchester Hub

“This hub is based on the premise that active citizenship should be learnt through actual participation. It will provide accredited education for community members to carry out an audit and evaluation of a group or community of their choice. The hub forms part of outreach and widening participation work at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)”

Possible gap: As well as the Home Office initiative, in the past few years there have been a number of ‘interventions’ in the area of civic education focusing on young people and the development of knowledge and practice of active citizenship (introduction of citizenship education at different pre HE levels).

A recent review by the University of Cardiff for Cardiff University for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (The Civic Education and Local Government: A Literature Review, February 2005) looked at links between local government, social capital and effective citizenship, and proposed the key issues to address in supporting community engagement without reviewing or suggesting any significant initiative involving HEIs beyond.

It is therefore not clear that there are any such ‘interventions’ taking place within HE institutions or whether there an assumption that by the time young people become students they would have ‘graduated’ as citizens? Anti social behaviour by students is an issue discussed on the UUK website. Generally UUK has a number of pages on the issue of students links with local communities, impact of residential policies, etc. See www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/events/community/

In the United States there is a national report on higher education *Measuring Up*³⁷ which “consists of the national report card for higher education and fifty state report cards. Its purpose is to provide the public and policymakers with information to assess and improve post secondary education in each state”. One of the categories is the “civic returns” category which includes information on voting, which offers a data on only one of a wide range of civic activities. As far as we are aware the UK universities do not collect information on any civic activities of their students within the annual HESA (Higher Education Statistical Agency) submission. The only information available at university level concerns the student volunteering schemes.

Student volunteering and service learning partnerships

Volunteering in the US is since the 1960s³⁸ commonly embedded in the curriculum through service learning:

“Service learning is defined as an experiential learning program where students learn through engaging in service in partnership with a local community. It involves reflective learning

³⁷ Further information on *Measuring Up* and civic engagement:

<http://measuringup.highereducation.org/2000/articles/ThomasEhrlich.cfm>

³⁸Paternalistic versions of student volunteering existed in the US and the UK right from the 19th century as a way of enabling privileged students to provide a philanthropic service to poor people in the surrounding community.

activities which enable a student to develop key skills and capabilities, and a greater sense of civic awareness and active citizenship. The experience should be of sufficient length to enable students to benefit fully from it, and they must be challenged to be reflective and to link their learning to their college curriculum" (Annette, 2001)

In the UK too, since the Dearing Report, higher education is meant to contribute to a democratic, civilised and inclusive society. According to Annette, "The emphasis on civic engagement highlights the need for the higher education curriculum to prepare graduates to become active citizens and to participate not only in formal politics, but also to play a leadership role in civil society". In this respect, the Dearing Report follows the various recommendations made to provide an academic framework based on the acquisition of critical knowledge, in line with the new citizenship curriculum in schools which strongly encourages the establishment of service learning programs. There is however no such national pedagogical framework for these programmes as the pedagogy of service learning programme of the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) or even the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC), in the US³⁹. Nevertheless, in response to demands for formal recognition, a volunteering award has now been introduced by Student Volunteering UK, the coordinating and training body for Student Community Actions:

"This award requires self-reflection by students on their actions and learning, to provide accreditation for the contribution made by students, and the skills they have developed. Increasingly, student volunteering is also being incorporated into the academic curriculum, as a form of experiential learning which is particularly appropriate for social science students" (CSAP)

NUS and the Russell Commission

In December 2004, the National Union of Students submitted a response to the Russell Commission's consultation on Youth Action and Engagement.⁴⁰ The Commission has now reported, with recommendations on how a national framework for youth action engagement might be implemented. The main objectives of this proposed framework are to:

- Raise the number of young people volunteering with a formal organisation at least once a year from 41% to 51% by 2010
- Establish a baseline for the volunteering rates of different groups of young people and show a measurable decrease between those groups less likely to volunteer and the average age of volunteering.
- Establish a definition and baseline for young people-led opportunities and show a year-on-year increase.

The key recommendations of the commission as far as higher education is concerned were as follows:

It should be commonplace for young people to volunteer whilst they are at school, college or in higher education. All education institutions should have a volunteering ethos. This will require:

- *better information on volunteering opportunities through access to the "portal" and targeted awareness campaigns;*
- *a stronger emphasis on volunteering within the citizenship curriculum*
- *and training for citizenship teachers;*
- *making the most of the opportunities for volunteers within extended schools, community schools, and their equivalents, providing leadership on new volunteering roles for the schools sector as a whole;*
- *a new role for young volunteers working with local advisors to link schools, sixth-forms, further education colleges and higher education institutions with volunteer centres and local opportunity providers.*

Active citizenship

There is untapped potential for young volunteers to give additional help within the public sector, for example in hospitals, schools, parks and sports, leisure and arts centres, to gain valuable experience and deliver tangible community benefit. There are particular opportunities to involve young people in shaping local services and as active citizens in local democracy.

In response to the notion of 'studentification', and as a challenge to it, NUS has recently published an online survey targeting students' involvement in their local communities on their website. The aim is to

³⁹ On the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC), visit <http://www.learnandserve.org/>.

⁴⁰ The Russell Commission report is available at: <http://www.russellcommission.org/>.

feature good practice examples and initiatives the best of which are to be published on the NUS website (www.officeronline.co.uk/campaignsupport/welfare/272093.aspx)

Further information on NUS involvement in volunteering is available at:
www.officeronline.co.uk/stadia/volunteering/270330.aspx

CSAP (Higher Education Academy subject centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics)

Apart from a comprehensive review of literature on Student volunteering, the CSAP website introduces the Voluntary Action in the Sociology Curriculum, established at Liverpool to share course ideas, develop forms of assessment and assess the learning opportunities of volunteering for students and for placement organisations, and a resource pack produced as a training aid for seminars on voluntary student learning.

www.c-sap.bham.ac.uk/resources/project_reports/overviews/ShowOverview.asp?id=7 (notably in Liverpool)

All the above references about student volunteering tend to emphasise the impact of student volunteering on learning outcomes rather than its immediate contribution to the needs of local communities.

Local Strategic Partnerships

Even though LSPs relate to 'knowledge transfer' rather than 'civic engagement' we include some information below, as again it suggests that 'civic engagement' can be seen as a gap per se in this activity.

"A Local Strategic Partnership (LSPs) is a single non-statutory, multi-agency body, which matches local authority boundaries, and aims to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

LSPs are key to tackling deep seated, multi-faceted problems, requiring a range of responses from different bodies. Local partners working through a LSP will be expected to take many of the major decisions about priorities for their local area".

"LSPs are central to the delivery of the New Commitment to [Neighbourhood Renewal - National Strategy Action Plan \(National Strategy\)](#) (Acrobat 1,581kb). Further information relating to LSPs can be obtained from the national policy document - [LSP Government Guidance \(DETR, March 2001\)](#) (Acrobat 180kb) and associated [Appendices to the Guidance](#) (Acrobat 112kb)".

"LSPs are being set up across England, but in [the 88 most deprived local authority areas](#), they are receiving additional resources through the [Neighbourhood Renewal Fund \(NRF\)](#). LSPs are about new ways of working and improving the delivery of services to local people across the whole of England and not just the most deprived areas".

The Northwest Regional Development Agency is responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of England's Northwest and has 5 key priorities: Business Development, Regeneration, Skills & Employment, Infrastructure and Image

Knowledge North West (www.knowledgenorthwest.com/) has been established as a link between research provided by the region's Higher Education institutions and business. Listed below are regional HE institutions, and any regional gap analysis of initiatives and evidence of their impact could involve research on those institutions. .

Miscellaneous/General

A number of initiatives on the promotion of the idea of university engagement with the society, and particularly on its mission to promote democracy have seen the light following the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe, and also in South Africa where the conceptual literature on issues of HE transformation, and higher education and the public good (Singh, 2001; Cloete and Maassen, 2002) has largely contributed to the reinvention of the World Bank and UNESCO discourses on the multifunctionality of higher education.

The Open Society (Soros network) has played a key programmatic role in this area in Central Europe through funding independent institutions, scholarship programmes on research into the role of higher education in the transformation of societies, etc.

The Social Science Research Council (New York) has also developed since 2001 a research programme on the role played by universities in post conflict situations in Africa. Based on case studies in six countries, the programme aimed to understand the complexity of relationships between universities and institutions of the civil society. Although the methodology of the project reflects the peculiarities of African universities, its broad conceptual framework raises issues relevant to the UK context.

Information on this programme, including a conceptual paper, available from:

www.ssrc.org/programs/africa/african_higher_education/

Annex F: Literature Review. Sub-theme 4: Local employment opportunities provided by higher education institutions

Prepared by Allan Cochrane, Tony Hudson and Rod Hick

Direct employment

Universities are now major employers – usually among the largest – in the cities and regions in which they are located.

Although academic staff make up a relatively high proportion of those employed by HEIs (around 45%) – drawing in people from national and even international labour markets – the broader workforce stretches across a wide range of categories, from administrative, clerical and secretarial to technical and manual (see HESA statistics). Many universities also sub-contract to others for a wide range of activities, from catering and cleaning, to construction and maintenance.

In principle, this means they are likely to have a significant impact on local labour markets and on the income of local residents, including disadvantaged groups. Work has been done (Carter et al., 1999) on the (changing) ethnic mix of academics and on the way in which it varies sharply both between academic disciplines and institutions. The report indicates that progression for members of black and ethnic minority communities is still slow, but also suggests that for some people higher education institutions have the potential to offer one route through which access to better paid employment is possible.

Limited work has been done on the wider impact of direct employment, particularly at the lower paid end of the labour market. However, it has been suggested that the growth in contracting out has contributed to a shift towards casualised and low paid employment (Wills, 2001 pp. 14-15). In April 2006 the College Council of Queen Mary University of London committed itself to making the institution a 'living wage campus', with the implication that this would cover contracted as well as directly employed staff.

The regional multiplier

Most of the research on the employment impact of Universities has focused on the multiplier effect of their activity or on aggregate impacts of that activity (Goddard, 1997). In other words, the emphasis has been on issues of economic development and competitiveness, rather than any impact on disadvantaged communities, except indirectly in the case of disadvantaged regions.

There are a number of pieces of research aimed at estimating the impact of a certain Institution on the local economy. These typically deal primarily with the financial impact, but often also look at the numbers of jobs in the local economy that are supported by the presence of a HE Institution. There are examples of this type of study in both academic and grey literature and the approach in these, taken together, is broadly similar (see, e.g., Harris, 1997 on the impact of the University of Portsmouth; Charles et al (2005), p. vi, on the impact of universities in the North East of England; Chatterton, 1997 on the impact of the University of Bristol; GLA Economics, 2004 on the impact of higher education institutions in London; Armstrong, 1993 on the impact of the University of Lancaster, McNicoll, 1993 on the impact of Strathclyde University on the Scottish economy; Robson et al., 1995 on the impact of Greater Manchester's Universities). Drawing on similar (although not identical) methodologies each of these posits a more or less significant multiplier effect which ranges from 1.26 in the case of Lancaster to 1.98 in the case of London.

Allen and Fentem (2005) have noted that more work needs to be done on improving the Input-Output models used in many of these studies, in particular to make them more accurate at the local level. In particular, tracking the fine detail of the 'spill-over' effect is crucial to achieving an accurate estimate of an institution's impact (2005).

The softer 'multiplier' effects of university activity are rarely explored systematically (but see Robson et al., 1995 and Robson et al., 1997 for exceptions). So, for example, the impact of students in local labour markets may be significant and it is widely recognised that in some cities housing markets have been dramatically (and not always positively) been transformed by student demand for rental housing (Rugg et al., 2000. Plus see, for example, University of Leeds 2003 for one university's response to the challenge of managing student demand for rental housing.). It is often implicitly assumed that

universities have a positive effect on local economies, but it would also be worth exploring the extent to which the impacts may be negative (distorting the structure of local economies).

Regeneration and property development

Higher education institutions own significant amounts of land and are responsible for major investments in estate of one sort or another and this has been identified as one means of contributing to regeneration projects (Charles and Benneworth, 2001, p. 62). There have been some interesting engagements with particular investments and their impact (which may go beyond the direct impact of investment in the development of property) but there has been little systematic (for one valuable review of a particular institutional development see, e.g. Butler, 1999).

There are major concentrations of university provision and investment in the major city regions such as Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield (within which some forms of disadvantage are concentrated). However, it has been strongly argued that this has not been accompanied by appropriate investment in research facilities, so that what is needed is more investment in state backed research and development in such places (following a model of regional equalisation closer to the German model) (CURDS 1999).

The regional mission

A wide range of individual projects have been identified as contributing to regional economic growth, sometimes with the claim that it particularly helps disadvantaged groups (see, e.g., the series of reports prepared by Universities UK on the *Regional Mission* of universities in 2001 and summarised in the national report prepared by Charles and Benneworth, 2001a). The reports describe some of the schemes of collaboration with local industry that HEIs have developed and provide examples of Science Parks, technology transfer and spin-off firms, without, however, providing any systematic overview of impact. Claims are also made about the extent to which higher education institutions can respond to fill particular skills gaps, identified by business (Robson et al., 1997, paragraph 4. 21), as well as to contribute to the building of the infrastructure necessary for a 'knowledge based economy' (see Charles, 2003 on the potential role of universities in developing human capital at regional level), 60% of HEIs identify regional economic development as a high priority within their institutional missions, and the rate is still higher among post 1992 universities (86%) (Charles, 2003, p. 15).

Buried in the UUK reports on the *Regional Mission* there is some (sometimes ambivalent) evidence of the effect of higher education of disadvantaged communities. In the case of the North East, for example, the evidence suggests that graduates leaving the region tend to be from more privileged backgrounds, most of whom moved to the North East to study. Those that remain in the region tend to be from the least affluent backgrounds, many of whom were originally from the North East. In fact, no other UK region retains a higher proportion of those graduates who chose to study in their home region. However, the weak state of the regional labour market means that graduates remaining in the North East are less likely to be in full-time employment than their counterparts from all other regions. In addition, those that do find work in the region are less likely to be employed in graduate jobs than graduates who locate in most other regions (Charles and Benneworth, 2001b). In the South West it is suggested that a similar drift of graduates away from the region might be countered by Universities encouraging the growth of small and medium sized enterprises and encouraging graduates to work in them (Allen et al., 2001. 'See also Charles et al, 2005 for a discussion of strategies being developed in the North East).

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