

What does the literature tell us?

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Outline

- 1) Four central themes in the general discussion of the university's position and future
- 2) The regional role and third strand activities
- 3) The diverse landscapes of regional engagement
- 4) General lessons

Setting the scene

The discursive framework of both scholarly and policy debates:

- Globalization (intensification and extension of all kinds of connections and flows)
- Knowledge society (the development, diffusion, validation, appropriation, application of knowledge)
- Innovation (systemic, evolutionary, based on interactive learning)
- Constructed advantages

Theme 1: The importance and centrality of the university

The university as the rising star

- Knowledge is the vital resource
- The institutions of higher education and research are the main knowledge providers and asset holders
- They will see a bright future
- The world will be recreated in the image of the university and the academic ethos

The university in ruins:

- A victim of its own success
- A proliferation of new knowledge centres
- The spread of post-positivistic epistemologies and the dwindling status of science
- New modes of knowledge production
- McDonaldisation of higher education
- Budgetary constraints and New Public Management
- The university is becoming obsolete and irrelevant or colonized and crumbling

Assessment

- More challenging and competitive environments
- Expenditures and performance are scrutinized in new ways
- Dynamic changes are taking place
- The institutions must justify and demonstrate their value and contribution
- An unsettled situation or a new pact with state, market and society?

Theme 2: The meaning and purpose of the university

Competing visions (aims, foundational principles)

- a) A self-governing community of scholars
 - Autonomy, free inquiry, truth seeking, meritocracy
- b) An instrument for national political agendas
 - Loyal instrument, effective and efficient achievement of national purposes, responsiveness to political decisions
- c) A representative democracy
 - Participation, interest representation, work-place democracy
- d) A service enterprise embedded in competitive markets
 - Community services, entrepreneurial, efficiency, flexibility, source of competitive advantages

Assessment

- Partly reflecting historical stages in the evolution of universities, but all institutions of higher education have a mix of constitutive principles and logics
- The limitations of rational design and reform
- New demands and expectations have been met by differentiation (specialization, added functions, intermediaries)
- In search of identity and *raison d'être*
- How to reconcile excellence/relevance, knowledge as public good/proprietary good, unity/fragmentation?

Theme 3: The level of mission and operation

Oriented towards:

- Local/regional (in the region and for the region)
- National (in the region but not for the region)
- International (cross-border alliances, consortia, regional blocks)
- Cosmopolitan (advancement of science, universal aspirations)

Assessment

- A movement towards the sub-national level: The third task, regional engagement
- A growing preoccupation with elite universities, centres of excellence, critical mass, R&D investment targets
- Concentration of efforts at the international level, joint research facilities and programmes, standardization and harmonization, building of the European Research Area/European Higher Education Area
- Is participation at the various levels competing or complementary?

Theme 4: The innovation agenda and new modes of governance

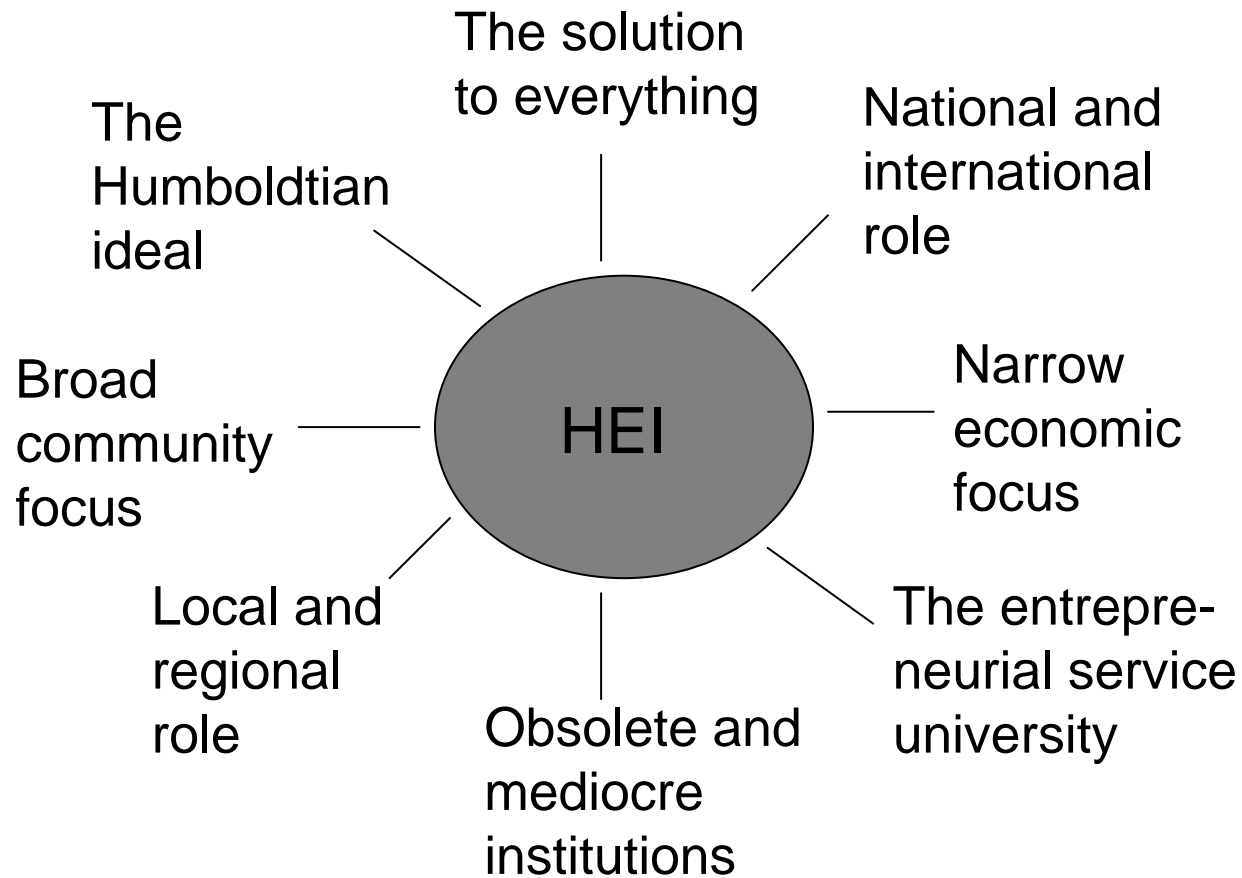
Narrow or broad concepts of innovation

- The narrow one: Economic competitiveness and value creation, instrumentalization of education and research, IPR/spin-outs/return on investment in human capital
- The broad one: Community development, employment, social welfare, inclusion, cohesion, sustainability, cultural vitality, democracy

Assessment

- Science, technology and innovation policy a more encompassing scope: a multi-sector policy
- Increasingly a multi-objective and multi-level policy
- Critical issue: Co-ordination, compatibility and coherence both horizontally and vertically
- Governance by partnership arrangements
- Open method of coordination: Common goals and objectives, statistical indicators, benchmarking, peer review, exchange of good practice
- How are stakeholders mobilized and selected and what should their roles be?

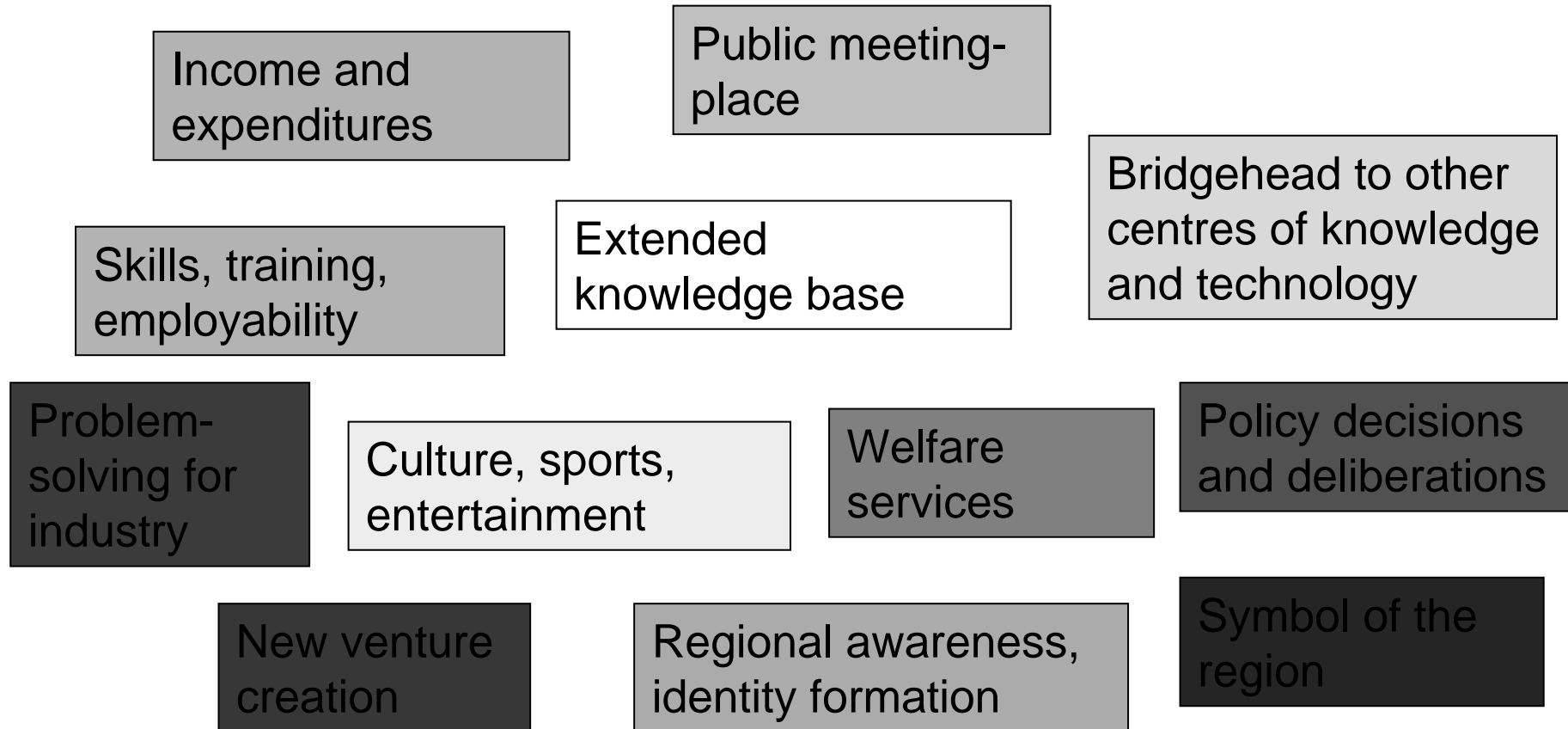
Clearing a path in a contested terrain



The regional dimension

- HEIs have always had an impact on their cities and regions
- The spread and decentralization of higher education as part of state-led modernization and nation-building
- Research and innovation as engines of growth and regional development
- The third task expected to be integrated into research and education, not an additional activity

Many roles



- Few other institutions are so deeply involved with their regions

A multitude of new outreach functions, interfaces and other initiatives

- Liaison personnel
- Centres for commissioned research
- Science parks/research parks
- Innovation centres
- Incubators
- TTOs
- Career centres
- Flexible and distant education
- Mobility programmes
- Cluster and RIS initiatives
- Regional service centres
- Entrepreneurship and business start-up programmes
- Regional foresight
- Regional development strategies
- Partnership agreements, etc.

An ecology of projects and boundary-spanning activities

Barriers and hindrances

- The institutions are loosely coupled and fragmented
- Many regional effects are largely non-intended by-products
- Key individuals, local initiatives and informal networks are of great importance
- Hard to involve the core of faculty on a regular basis
- Funding systems and incentives hamper regional engagement
- Competition and division of labour between institutions
- Weak academic leadership
- Ambiguity and ambivalence

Regional variations in collaboration across institutional boundaries

- Nature and type of institutions
 - Comprehensive universities/specialized universities, business schools, technical and engineering schools, public/private, old/new institutions
- Regional characteristics
 - Knowledge bases of dominant industries, metropolitan/non-metropolitan, branch plant/entrepreneurial
 - Local and regional authorities
- National institutional context
 - Centralized/devolved, general research and educational systems, corporate governance, forms of competition
- Different institutions and parts of institutions have responded differently to changing circumstances
- Converging systems or “Varieties of capitalisms”?

Regional partnership development

No “one size fits all”, but some general requirements:

- Legitimate and identifiable partners
- Acknowledgment of different institutional contexts
- Mutual recognition and respect
- Shared basic understanding
- Regional identity and feeling of obligation
- Crisis background or perceived common external threat
- Complementarities
- Available resources
- Room of manoeuvre
- Leadership role and procedural routines
- Agenda setting and structuring of attention
- Actor mobilization and participatory structures

Regional trajectories

- The dynamic, interacting and learning region with increasing governance capacity
- The region with flourishing industry and/or universities, but without important regional links
- The region with close co-operation between industry, higher education and government, but which is locked-in and losing out
- The failing and non-coordinated region