DOI: 10.24193/tras.SI2022.6
Published First Online: 12/17/2022

UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY: AN ESSENTIAL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

Călin E. HINȚEA
Roger E. HAMLIN
Bogdana NEAMȚU

Călin E. Hințea

Professor and dean, Public Administration and Management Department, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Tel.: 0040-264-431.361
E-mail: hintea@fspac.ro

Roger HAMLIN

Professor emeritus,
Michigan State University, East Lansing, US

Associated dean for international affairs, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Bogdana NEAMȚU

Associate professor and chair, Public Administration and Management Department, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Tel.: 0040-264-431.361
E-mail: neamtu@fspac.ro

Abstract

The last three decades have witnessed a growing body of literature on the changing role and functions of universities. Concepts such as the 'engaged university' 'multiversity' and 'university as a complex enterprise' have been discussed and evaluated by academics and practitioners. More recently, scholars have also turned their attention to the role of universities within the framework of local innovation ecosystems. The current research investigates how, through a variety of engagement related functions, universities can foster social, economic, and technological development in the cities that host them. The analysis is based on qualitative research conducted in both U.S. and Romania with key respondents from universities. In addition, for Romania the authors have also included main findings from their experience as consultants for the city of Cluj-Napoca for strategic planning activities.

Keywords: multiversity, cooperation, engaged university, Romania, U.S., higher education.

1. Introduction

The last three decades have witnessed a growing body of literature on the changing role and functions of universities. Concepts such as the 'engaged university' (Watson *et al*., 2013), 'multiversity' (Kerr, 2001), and 'university as a complex enterprise' (Rouse, 2016) have been discussed and evaluated by academics and practitioners. More recently, scholars have also turned their attention to the role of universities within the framework of local innovation ecosystems (Cai, Ma and Chen, 2020; Heaton, Siegel and Teece, 2019), where universities interact with, grow and coproduce innovation alongside or in partnership with the other relevant actors in these ecosystems. Thus, the current research investigates how, through a variety of engagement related functions, universities can foster social, economic, and technological development in the cities that host them. The article also evaluates strategies that U.S. universities use as engaged actors in their communities and inquires whether these best practices from the U.S. can be transferred and adapted to the context of other countries, including Romania. Our research is based on the assumption that this transfer is not always unidirectional. Indeed, by focusing on two jurisdictions in different national contexts and where university engagement is currently at different levels of maturity, we offer a comparative perspective that we hope will enhance universities' community engagement everywhere.

While at the international level the concept and practice of the engaged university is more than two decades old, Romanian universities have developed completely separate from the community and in relative isolation from other local and regional stakeholders. This separation has often produced inter-institutional tensions and a climate of distrust. In the last several years, case studies have featured large Romanian cities where innovation and economic development has become closely linked to nearby universities (Cluj-Napoca is probably the best known example) (Profiroiu and Briscariu, 2021). These few success stories suggest that universities constitute significant community assets for local and regional development, for fostering social and technological innovation, and for making cities more tolerant and inclusive. Given the growing importance of the knowledge-based economy, where highly educated individuals drive innovation, it follows that universities are key sources of added value for their communities. This is highly relevant because cities are now considered the growth engines of national economies (Polèse, 2005; Dobbs *et al.*, 2011; United Nations, 2018). This interdependence is complicated however and depends on numerous variables. Our research strives to add to the state of the art in this field not only by broadening the theoretical understanding of the evolving role of universities in city development from a comparative perspective (US and Romania), but also by endeavoring to equip universities from Romania and worldwide with practical recommendations for becoming more engaged in the future.

The article proceeds as follows: section two analyzes the changing role of universities and the connection with the communities which host them. Section three offers an overview of the US and Romanian higher education system. Section four describes the methodology of the two empirical studies conducted in the US and Romania concerning

university engagement, section five presents the main findings while section six offers a brief discussion of the main findings and main conclusions.

2. The changing role of universities and their connection to their communities

The evolution over time of higher education institutions is closely linked with cities (Harris and Holley, 2016; Muro *et al*., 2008) and a sizable body of research has already examined the specific effects of universities on economic growth (Shahid and Kaoru, 2007; Valero and Van Reenen, 2016; Geuna and Rossi, 2015). Less attention has been paid however to the non-economic benefits generated by universities on cities (Harris and Holley, 2016) and to how these institutions interact with city governments and local businesses within sophisticated networks that are currently characterizing modern city-regions worldwide (Melhuis, 2015). Our research will examine not only the evolving role of universities but also how universities are intricately linked to some of the major trends currently shaping the evolution of cities globally.

A significant shift for cities in the last decades has involved the transition to a knowledge-based economy (van Winden, 2009). Historically, the economic growth of cities was associated with industrial production (Hospers, 2003). Currently, however, the cities which thrive in a global competitive arena are those that foster economic innovation, develop collaborative partnerships not only with the business sector but also with the academic community, and enjoy certain territorial assets such as a healthy transportation infrastructure, and demonstrate strong links between academia and businesses (McKinsey Global Institute, 2012). Capacity to sustain a high living standard for residents is equally important (Huggins and Johnston, 2009). Smart cities, another popular concept used in connection with rapidly growing city regions (Kourtit and Nijkamp, 2012), includes an emphasis of the public-private partnership as a way to engage non-traditional actors, including universities, in promoting innovations for urban prosperity and livability (Goodman, 2015).

Cities are currently described as political actors sharing unique qualities when compared to national states and supranational organizations. Thus, it is cities rather than nation states that tend to be pragmatic and creative, and that engage in broad partnerships. Nor must cities attend to the delicate international issues associated with borders and sovereignty. Because of these qualities, city mayors, alone and in partnership with other actors, respond to transnational issues more effectively than nation states (Barber, 2013). Cities thus arguably become the perfect locus for innovation, social and economic development and partnership with other actors, including universities, for advancing lofty global goals such as environmental protection, inclusion of migrants, and safety.

But not all cities are created equally. While some have been able to evolve into competitive city regions of the global economy, others are lagging behind (Cunningham-Sabot and Fol, 2009; Rink, 2006). Cities which have traditionally depended on one industry are less resilient and able to reinvent themselves in light of new opportunities (Glaeser and Saiz, 2003). Cities experiencing challenges usually encounter not only the loss of traditional jobs

but also degradation of urban settings and vacant properties, population loss, and a variety of negative social problems associated with poverty and urban decay (Pallagst *et al*., 2009). In their case, the presence of strong and committed higher education institutions may be the only available option for city redevelopment (Glaeser and Saiz, 2003).

Against this backdrop, the main question is whether universities should actively engage in economic and/or social change, or they should instead focus on their traditional functions, namely research and teaching (O'Mara, 2012). Altbach (2008) points out that there is a mismatch between the increasing roles universities are being called upon to fulfill and the resources given to them. In order to capture the evolving functions of universities and their incredible diversification Kerr (2001) coined the term 'multiversity'. Traditionally, teaching and research have been the two main functions performed by universities. This goes back to the early 19th century Humboldtian model of higher education. According to this model, teaching and research are closely interlinked, with teaching being guided by current research. Research was however to be initiated and conducted in complete separation from the broader society, with the aim of keeping it unbiased and independent from ideological, economic, political or religious influences (Kwiek, 2006). This meant complete separation of universities from community and the market (Anderson, 2004). These German educational and scientific principles have been recognized as a solid foundation for higher education institutions worldwide. American universities could be perhaps described as early adopters of these principles compared to other jurisdictions (Berman, 2012). However, starting with the 1970s, first in the U.S. but also in other countries, new functions were assumed by universities. The crux of these functions is what Tödtling (2006, p. 2) calls 'economic utilization of publicly funded research'. This may take the form of knowledge and technology transfer to industry and the commercialization of knowledge. Moreover, universities were also called upon to play a more active role in national and regional innovation systems. This new type of university, acting as an economic engine, diverges from Humboldt's principles (Nybom, 2003; Scott, 1993). Another departure from these principles is represented by the land-grant universities in the U.S. The Morrill Act establishing these universities endeavored to make universities responsible for providing practical education to broad segments of population in fields such as agriculture (Brown, Pendleton-Jullian and Adler, 2010).

The role of universities as active stakeholders in their communities rather than unengaged ivory towers is analyzed, mostly in the U.S. context but also elsewhere, in close connection with the concept of the 'anchor institution' (Taylor and Luter, 2013; Benson and Harkavy, 1994). Anchor institutions include universities but also hospitals and museums, and they have several characteristics which differentiate them from other organizations (Harris and Holley, 2016). These characteristics transform anchor institutions into community assets in terms of development potential (Harkavy and Zuckerman, 1999). Because anchor institutions are spatially immobile they have a strong interest in the health of the community in which they are located. Anchor institutions are non-profit organizations in the sense that their main mission is not profit generation. Most anchor institutions are also of considerable size. Even when they are more modest in size, their multiplying

economic effect in the local economy is significant. Finally, anchor institutions must hold a social-purpose mission. The concept of social responsibility is currently paired with universities' efforts to achieve sustainability (Weiss, 2016).

Universities as anchor institutions perform a variety of functions within their communities, including 'real estate developer, purchaser, employer, workforce developer, cluster anchor, a core service/product provider, and a community infrastructure builder' (Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, 2011, p. 5). In addition, other authors mention that universities bring the 'good neighbor' mentality into their neighborhoods/communities (Harkavy and Zuckerman, 1999). Interestingly enough, during the 1990s, higher education institutions seemed to suffer less from broader economic decline compared to other industries (Parrilo and De Socio, 2014).

Cities and universities/anchor institutions are interconnected and a sound partnership needs to be in place in order for mutual interdependencies to reinforce each other. City administrators and municipal leaders currently need to reconsider their traditional partners in city growth. A recent survey of 70 mayors in the U.S. showed that elected officials see businesses and not universities as their most reliable collaborators (Kleiman and Poethig, 2015). Similarly, an edited book on strategic planning based on comparative national chapters (Hințea, Profiroiu and Țiclau, 2019a) found that, in countries such as Romania and others from Central and Eastern Europe, university-city hall cooperation is lagging behind compared to the partnerships between city hall and local businesses. In this study the authors conclude that city halls seem to trust the expertise of the business community and of international organizations (such as World Bank) more than they do the expertise found in universities (Hințea, Profiroiu and Țiclau, 2019b). On the other hand, universities and other anchors depend upon the public amenities and infrastructure for growth, as well as public safety services provided by cities. For universities, being located in cities with a high quality of life allows them to better attract scholars and students. Webber and Karlstrom (2009) argue that universities would play a more prominent role in the community if they better understood the costs, benefits and range of strategic options available to anchor institutions.

Often scholars tend to focus on either cities or universities, but more rarely the intersection of the two. Sometimes the focus is on the partnership between these two actors but somewhat in isolation from the broader local and regional context. Recently, the focus seems to have shifted towards the concept of local innovation ecosystems. One of the first authors to make reference to innovation ecosystems was Moore (1993). He described these systems as 'loosely interconnected network[s] of companies and other entities that coevolve capabilities around a shared set of technologies, knowledge, or skills, and work cooperatively and competitively to develop new products and services'. Adner's article, published in the Harvard Business Review in 2006, however, catapulted the term into the mainstream. He defines an innovation ecosystem as 'the collaborative arrangements through which firms combine their individual offerings into a coherent, customer-facing solution' (Adner, 2006, p. 2). Gobble (2014, p. 55) refers to innovation ecosystems as 'dynamic, purposive communities with complex, interlocking relationships built on

collaboration, trust, and co-creation of value and specializing in exploitation of a shared set of complementary technologies or competencies'. Ding and Wu (2018, p. 2) defined innovation ecosystem as 'a network system consisting of the communities of governments, product enterprises, complementary products enterprises, and customers, which interact, communicate, or promote innovation in order to create valuable new product'. While each of these definitions focuses on slightly different aspects, authors conducting meta-analyses in this field (Granstranda and Holgersson, 2020, p. 3) conclude that 'there are three recurring entities in the reviewed definitions [of innovation ecosystems], namely actors, artifacts (products and services, tangible and intangible resources, technological and non-technological resources, and other types of system inputs and outputs, including innovations), and institutions'. In addition, argue the cited authors, their own 'conceptual review identifies activities and relations, especially including collaborative/complementary and competitive/substitute relations, as well as the co-evolving nature of innovation ecosystems' (p. 3).

What is the role of universities in these communities and ecosystems? If the university is the main partner for the community, rather than one partner among many, then it produces an ecosystem in which the partnership between the university and the city acts as catalyst for the entire local ecosystem. Determining the importance of the university in the ecosystem can be done developing the following scenario: if one simulates the functioning of the ecosystem without the university and the effects are small, then the university is not the main partner. If the effects of removing the university are critical, then the local ecosystem is built around the 'communiversity'. From this standpoint, it is not so important what the university does from an operational standpoint but rather how it is strategically positioned in the local ecosystem, and its interdependencies with the other actors.

While numerous studies on innovation ecosystems are silent about the role of place, others (Hasselmayer, 2019) now refer to how 'around 20 years ago innovation ecosystems started to change physically. They began to move from greenfield technology parks into cities and towns by combining physical, economic and networking assets into creative places'. In this context city governments have started to realize that urban planning can support the growth of knowledge economy. The quality of urban spaces, their safety, walkability, and proximity to wider city economy are among the benefits derived from physically locating these ecosystems in an urban setting. In the context of our research, the concept of place-based innovation ecosystem incorporates the idea that place, including physical proximity matter together with elements that are embedded in a geographically-bounded space (Rissola *et al.*, 2017).

3. Overview of the U.S. and Romanian context of higher education

This section tries to provide a brief overview in a comparative manner of the U.S. and Romanian higher education system and provide an international comparative view on how different elements describing the higher education system (hereafter HES) in a jurisdiction play a role into the engagement of universities worldwide. We take this focus

because interviews conducted for this research (see next sections) revealed that the local context in which HESs operate is critical. We refer here to the supranational level (the EU context is discussed only in the case of Romania) and the national/federal, state/regional, and local levels for both countries. It is important to understand how HESs evolved over time in connection with broader developments from society. The relevance of this section is also derived from the fact that our research tackles policy transfer in the field of university engagement. In this context it is important to clearly assess which triggers and drivers for HESs reforms can be (re)created in other jurisdictions/contexts.

3.1. U.S. higher education system

The U.S. higher education system is difficult to describe because, as in the European Union, it is different in every state. In the U.S. case very little top down pressure from the national level attempts to push states to organize their HES in a certain way. However, there are commonalities across state. Several types of HE institutions exist. They include:

- Private small colleges;
- Private universities;
- State owned and operated universities;
- School district operated community colleges;
- Post-secondary vocational institutions.

Private small colleges and private universities may have extensive interaction with their community, but such interaction is seldom formalized. These institutions often have religious links and roots, but often operate with little visible religious orientation. They are often located in small towns or smaller cities. Prestigious private institutions are often located in the older eastern states of the U.S. and have more European style traditions which do not support formal partnerships. School district operated community colleges often have governing boards elected by the local population and therefore may have strong political ties to the local community. Some are started and may continue to be operated by local public school districts. Community colleges are not necessarily small. Many are large with a few having more than 100,000 students. It may seem unusual to a reader from another part of the world that community colleges are included in this discussion, but in the U.S. community colleges are a major part of the HES. Community colleges offer academic courses similar to what is offered at a university during the first two years of university study and often, credit earned by the completion of community college courses can be transferred to a university by students completing their baccalaureat at a university.

The state-owned and operated university systems are varied and complicated, but a common thread is to be devoted to helping their community. In some form or another most states have the following types of universities:

- A flagship research university;
- A land grant university;
- An urban university;
- A tech university;

– A system of teacher preparation (normal) universities;
– A historically black university.

Some states combine these categories such as putting the tech or engineering emphasis in the land grant university (e.g., Purdue). Large states like California might have an entire university system for nearly every category listed above. (e.g., UCLA, Berkley and others under the first bullet. Cal Tech Universities under fourth bullet, and the Cal State system covering others, etc.). In most cases universities have grown dramatically from their historic roots and have become comprehensive universities, while keeping somewhat their historic emphasis.

Land grant universities are perhaps the most interesting for this research. The previously mentioned Justin Morrill Act of 1862 provided resources and legal conditions for such universities to be granted large amounts of land if they promised to stay focused on helping communities grow, prosper and solve problems. Many states have Extension systems, funded by a combination of federal, state and local resources in which extension agents, as university employees, assigned to communities throughout the state, have a specific mandate to connect knowledge created by university research with the solution to their local community's problems and opportunities. Extension services were originally agriculturally focused when the country was primarily rural, but, in many states, extension services have migrated to solving urban problems.

So this very brief description of the complex university structure in the U.S. seems to point out the strong historic roots for a university-community partnership. A question arises as to whether this partnership is growing or declining as universities face multiple pressures. In some parts of the country a combination of pressure to cut taxes and a general feeling that universities have an ideological bias has caused states to both reduce funding and the role of the university in public affairs. The percent of funding of state institutions by the state budget has been declining and in some cases now represents a small percentage of the total university budget. Universities increasingly dependent on grant money feel enormous pressure to be highly ranked by the various university ranking regimens. Most ranking systems put little emphasis on how much time a university faculty spends helping local governments and businesses resolve local issues. Most ranking systems rely heavily on counts of research output and visibility, and prestigious journal are suspicious of applied research. Even in land grant institutions, faculty are reluctant to reach out to extension agents who operate on a different mental time frame and have a different reward system.

Internally, university faculties continue to debate whether becoming emersed in local community issues and the people involved, reduces the objectivity of research. Some universities have tried to walk this tight rope by defining an 'engaged scholar'. It is yet to be seen whether engaged scholars will get the respect they need to succeed from ranking services, professional peers and journals.

3.2. Romanian higher education system in a European context

Popescu (2010) argues that the evolution of the Romanian HES after 1930 can be divided into three stages or periods, each of these corresponding to major and distinctive shifts in the educational policy, with the first stage from 1930–1944, the second one from 1940 until 1989, and the third one starting with the fall of the communist regime and onwards. Prior to the Second World War, Romanian universities were created by foreign powers, modeled after Western universities and the Romanian elite trained abroad (Damian, 2012). During the communist regime, universities had almost no autonomy. Therefore, HES in Romania was described by OECD (2000) as the most centralized in South Eastern Europe. The communist party interfered with the functioning of universities. Professors' accession to the highest positions within the Romanian universities required political affiliation and there was 'restricted upward mobility of staff and non-existent outbound mobility of students and staff within the European Higher Education' (Iacob, 2015, p. 65). As observed by Iacob (2015, p. 65) it is important to note that there was a close link between the purpose of higher education institutions (hereafter HEIs) at that time and the process of forced industrialization in the country championed by the communist party. The role of HEIs was also influenced by the fact that despite rapid industrialization and urbanization, Romania was still an agrarian society. This has resulted in a focus on technical programs and, at the same time, a severe reduction in the number of humanistic and social sciences programs.

After the fall of the communism, most of the formerly communist countries had started a profound reform process of their tertiary educational systems. Matějů, Řeháková and Simonová, (2003, p. 302) argue that reforms were driven by two major objectives: to give autonomy and freedom back to HEIs and to facilitate the development and expansion of the tertiary education. In Romania, the reform process has been slow. Reisz (2006) *apud* Iacob (2016, p. 66) refers to four main objectives of the educational reform agenda: '1) developing a coherent framework for education policy; 2) attracting foreign partners to co-finance education reform; 3) enacting new educational legislation and related regulations; and 4) restructuring the higher education system to meet the new economic, social, and political needs'. With regard to the latter function mentioned by Reisz, other scholars argue that in practice there was little attention paid to the newly emerging functions of universities beyond teaching and to a lesser extent research (Nicolescu, 2003).

One interesting question is whether or not there is some function diversification/differentiation taking place in the modern era (Reichert, 2012), and if yes, if it includes engagement with the local community. Reisz (2006) refers to an initial period of 'psychotic' and uncontrolled diversification, with private universities experimenting with questionable practices (Andreescu *et al.*, 2012). After this initial period, the trend has been toward homogeneity due to institutional isomorphism (Andreescu *et al.*, 2012; Miroiu and Vlăsceanu, 2012). Miroiu and Vlăsceanu (2012, p. 802) argue that 'their mission (as codified in the university Charters) is quasi-identical, their organizational structures, types of study programs and their organization, as well as content, procedures and practices re-

lated to teaching and research, the internal regulations are all similar (...) and at most incrementally different'. Analyzing diversification versus isomorphism goes beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, it needs to be acknowledged that all these processes are closely linked with the national accreditation system as well as with university ranking systems that force universities to measure quality using uniform metrics.

It is important as well to look at several statistics measuring (HEIs) in Romania, among which the most significant ones involve financing. The total number of HEIs is slightly declining from early 2000, with 46 public universities; 34 private universities plus 5 private universities which are temporary accredited; and 7 military universities in 2020–2021. The total number of enrolled students for the same academic year is 560,187 students (out of which 491,640 are enrolled in public universities) (Ministry of Education, 2022). However, approximately 50% of all the enrolled students are concentrated in three cities, Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, and Iași. Significantly, Romania has the lowest percentage of university-educated citizens in the European Union (around 26%), while the EU average in 2017 was roughly 40%. At the end of the 2019–2020 academic year there were 132,731 graduates, a slight increase from the previous several years (Ministry of Education, 2022).

From 2020 to 2021, the institutional financing for higher education increased from 4.96 trillion lei (1.003 trillion Euro) to 5.04 trillion lei (1.019 trillion Euro) (Ministry of Education, 2022). Despite this increase, HEIs are chronically underfunded in Romania, with less than 1% from GDP going to this sector. There are three types of financing: Basic financing which is based on the number of students for each cycle, with no distinction between universities based on their performance; Supplementary financing, which is based on quality indicators (30% of basic financing), and is further divided into Research – 40%; Teaching – 30%; Internationalization – 10%; Regional orientation and social equity – 20%; and Complementary financing, which goes towards meals and dormitories for students; and infrastructure investment.

While universities have clearly evolved and transformed over the last 25 years (Dragoescu, 2013), the debate regarding their social role is for the most part still absent in Romania. Some large city governments have begun to recognize that universities contribute to their economic growth (Cluj-Napoca and Timișoara for example). Others (such as the capital city of Bucharest) pay no attention to the universities and do very little in terms of partnering and collaboration. Several recent studies document Romanian universities impact on the local economy (Chirca and Lazar, 2021), but there is little debate about other impacts, mostly due to the difficulty of quantifying them and the lack of publicly available data. Moreover, the business sector is dissatisfied with universities, which allegedly do not create the skills required by the market, but at the same time they are unwilling to invest in higher education or to initiate partnerships with HEIs (Serbanica, 2011). Thus, in Romania, there is insufficient cooperation among these three key actors — university, city, and businesses.

In a study from 2013, Hințea (pp. 299–306) refers to a set of challenges universities in Romania will face in the future. They include: the changing profile of students (more mobile, with expectations shaped in comparison to what European universities can offer

them); a dynamic and ever changing job market, where distinctions between public and private sectors are no longer relevant; the relationship with the community — universities need to decide (strategic choice) how to position themselves vis-à-vis the community; the relationship with decision-makers who need to be convinced that the academic expertise is a relevant and important asset in a community; and academic management, which needs to embark upon new functions and approaches such as to become more entrepreneurial. All these challenges are connected both directly and indirectly with universities becoming more engaged.

For the Romanian HES (similar to the HES from all EU member states), it is important to mention that its development is currently influenced not only by policies put in place by the national government but also by those imposed by the EU. In 2022 we have the first European strategy dedicated to universities. One significant dimension is that the Strategy recognizes the changing role of universities and the importance of their being active within local innovation networks. The language of the strategy is very close to the language of the literature talking about universities as complex enterprises. The European strategy for universities emphasizes how universities should be central nodes of local innovation hubs and should employ a living lab approach towards creating skills more in line with current socio-economic transformations of communities and of the job market (European Commission, 2022).

4. Data and methods

This research strives to investigate two different experiences concerning university engagement in the U.S. and Romania, with the aim of identifying strategic directions that can be relevant at international level for both HEIs and community stakeholders in local ecosystems. This research employs a qualitative approach based on interviews and focus group discussions with key experts in this area, as well as content analysis of strategic policy documents. It employs a comparative perspective in the sense that it investigates engagement in two jurisdictions, the U.S. and Romania, and tries to combine the findings from these two countries in a way that can be valuable for other HESs worldwide, which find themselves at various levels of maturity vis-à-vis engagement. This comparative analysis is based on two separate researches which are not perfectly identical.

The U.S. research consists of interviews with key informants from 18 public universities, including both land grants and non-land grants, operating primarily in urban settings and located in Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, and South Carolina. For each university, the authors conducted between 2-5 interviews with key informants including the following: university leadership; university staff working for extension offices, economic development offices, and community outreach; faculty conducting and publishing research that included some level of community engagement; and faculty teaching courses with a service learning component. A total number of 46 interviews were conducted from March to July 2019. In certain cases, some face to face interviews were then supplemented with email conversations. The universities in the sample

were chosen mainly based upon access considerations, as the interviews were conducted by one of the authors during a Fulbright senior fellowship at the University of Georgia. In addition to interviews, for each university the authors looked at strategic documents such as university charter, mission/vision, and application reports for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

The Romanian research evaluates the state of engagement in higher education in one university from Romania, namely Babeș-Bolyai University, based on the perceptions of university leadership (vice-rectors, deans and vice-deans, members of the University Senate) and regular faculty. The research was conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews. Babeș-Bolyai University was selected for three main reasons. First, all three authors of this study are familiar with the university and its practices, and because access to interviewees was easy. Second, it is the first university to introduce community engagement/involvement as a special function of the university, allowing for community engagement hours to be included among the activities which count toward teaching load, and for rewards and promotions. Some of the schools in the university are also recognized in the broader academic community and beyond for being models of community engagement. Third, the city of Cluj-Napoca, where the university is located, is nationally recognized for its vibrant innovation ecosystem, with universities playing a crucial role in the development and transformation of the city from a declining community back in the early 2000s to a booming knowledge-based economy. These interviews were conducted both face to face and over the phone from September 2018 to January 2020. The total number of interviewees is 36 (9 in leadership positions, 27 regular faculty).

The semi-structured interviews conducted both in the U.S. and Romania covered the following general topics, with specific nuances for each jurisdiction:

Q1. What is the state of university-community engagement in your country and in your university (if any), are there recent developments taking place, and is engagement connected in any way with the city/region in which the university is located?
Q2. Describe/discuss main values underlying engagement.
Q3. Do you perceive engagement as a clearly defined concept, with the same meaning for all categories of stakeholders inside and outside the university?
Q4. Is engagement an overarching organizing principle or a relatively separate function?
Q5. What are the main purposes of engagement? Who should primarily benefit from engagement?
Q6. What is the level of differentiation among universities in terms of engagement and does location count towards differentiation?
Q7. Which are the main forms of engagement practiced by your university?
Q8. Which are the drivers and hindrances for university engagement?
Q9. At which scale does engagement take place?
Q10. How is success/impact of engagement quantified?
Q11. Please describe your interactions with peers from other HESs/HEIs in different countries with respect to transfer of best practices in the area of university engagement.

In addition to the interviews with experts in the two jurisdictions, in Romania the research also included participatory observations made by the authors in their capacity of consultants/experts for the municipality of Cluj-Napoca in the process of drafting its strategic development plans for 2007–2013 and 2014–2020. The local administration together with the universities worked towards drafting the strategic development plans in a very unique and innovative collaborative process. University experts put together a model for strategic planning, consisting of several stages — preliminary analysis, visioning, sectoral strategical analysis, and the drafting of the strategic profile. The process was designed to be expert-driven, with more than 20 working groups coordinating sectoral areas of the strategy. Also, it relied heavily on participation of all interested stakeholders, despite the additional challenges involved by broad community involvement. The role of university participants was to provide expert advice and to coordinate the entire strategic planning process.

5. Main findings

5.1. State of engagement in the two jurisdictions, recent developments, and main values underlying engagement

Most interviewees strongly believe that U.S. universities' engagement with their communities is constantly evolving, and is shaped by several factors. First, external factors include broader societal trends, including economic and demographic factors, as well as specific requirements imposed by funding sources and government agencies, the nature and scope of research, etc. Internal factors include changes in leadership and in leaders' visions, and pressures from staff and current students. According to interviewees, context differs in U.S. not only at national/federal level but also by state/region. Perhaps the most notable aspect of the responses involved the existence of competition versus cooperation among universities (University of Georgia versus North Carolina State University, for example). Other interviewees argued that competitive dynamics are not so clear-cut and referred instead to 'cooptition' — cooperation among competing entities if there is a goal perceived by all as requiring joint action. Such a goal is usually linked to a generalized condition such as rural poverty or increasing crime rates. Interviewees from universities located in inner cities saw engagement rising in response to specific problems experienced by inner cities such as a declining economic base, integration of immigrants, or low educational attainment among certain groups. In the case of these urban universities in the U.S., the shift has been towards services that universities may offer to communities and local governments.

In Romania, most interviewees were familiar with the concept of engagement but regarded it as a 'fancy import' rather than as a regular dimension of the university's role. Individuals in leadership positions were better equipped than regular faculty to offer comprehensive definitions and examples of engagement. Most of them were familiar not just with the concept but also with the university's efforts to support engagement at various levels. Their assessment is that currently engagement is shaped by requirements coming from in-

ternational rankings (at least for major universities) and from university leadership (rectors and deans). Students and staff were not seen as a major source of pressure towards change.

In terms of values driving engagement, there is a major difference among U.S. and Romanian universities. To categorize the types of engagement based on values we use the distinction proposed by Appe *et al.* (2017). They refer to a market-oriented model of university engagement; a social justice model of university engagement; and a university social responsibility approach to university engagement. In Romania, most interviewees described a market-oriented type of university engagement, in which the role of university/schools is to develop products and services for stakeholders in the community and to engage in profit-generating activities. Depending on the field of study for each interviewee, the type of examples they offered regarding market-oriented university services ranged from training provided to companies and governments, to patents and commercialized intellectual property, to the creation of business incubators and research and technology parks. Several faculty members referred to the pressure they sometimes felt from school leadership to become more entrepreneurial. One Romanian interviewee mentioned the social justice model, arguing that her understanding of universities' commitment to social justice was likely driven by the fact that the School of Sociology and Social Works at her university was providing a host of community services to disadvantaged groups and had frequent contact with them. The third model, with the university being a social responsible actor in the community, was largely absent.

In the U.S., interviewees argued that currently the main value driving engagement has to do with universities looking outward towards their communities and being good citizens in their communities (social responsibility). Personnel from inner city universities in the U.S. also described a social justice model of university engagement. It appears that U.S. universities perceive engagement as more connected to the city and region in which they are located compared to the Romanian counterparts.

5.2. Terminology employed

We monitored for all U.S. and Romanian universities included in the research the universities' strategic policy documents and websites. All universities from the U.S. in our sample have integrated engagement in their mission/visioning process; 11 universities have already or are in the process of applying for Carnegie Classification. The jargon used in these documents, as well as by interviewees, suggests that most universities use slight variations of the same concepts, referring variously to civic involvement, community outreach, community oriented teaching/learning/research, service, social responsibility or socially responsible behavior/action. In certain cases it was difficult to determine if there is just a change in the name of a concept or more — for example service learning versus experiential learning (described by some interviewees as a recent development). Differences in terminology represent a problem even for American universities (survey conducted at Michigan State University, described in one of the interviews the problem of inexact jargon). In Romanian language, engagement is usually translated through community involvement. Most interviewees referred to different types of engagement using concepts in English and

pointed out that the changing terminology, with concepts used interchangeably, makes understanding of U.S. and other international best practices quite difficult.

One aspect brought up by most interviewees in leadership positions in the U.S. has to do not so much with how universities define engagement but with how they communicate it to their external publics. Many interviewees were wondering if community stakeholders clearly understand the university's engagement pledge, structure, types of programs offered. This is important because community stakeholders need to understand how they can contact the university's offices for setting up a simple meeting. Several interviewees argued that most universities need to streamline their organizational structure/departments — not everything needs to have engagement word in title. Also it was pointed out that frequent changes in university leadership may damage consistency of engagement efforts.

5.3. Engagement as separate function or embedded value in the mission of the university

In Romania, though interviewees are familiar with the concept of engagement, there seems to be a rather rudimentary understanding of it. Most individuals perceive it as a separate function of the university, similar to the more traditional ones (teaching and learning and research). This so-called third mission includes, based on the interviews, a variety of elements ranging from community outreach to economic development and civic engagement but these are to be kept, evaluated, and rewarded separately from the main functions. Only two interviewees discussed about how engagement should be an overarching principle, one that should be incorporated into teaching and learning, research, and service. Moreover, several interviewees claimed that keeping it as a separate function makes it more visible and easier to be included into specific university operations such as teaching load, promotions, etc. In the U.S., most interviewees are aware that engagement is currently permeating all layers of the university. Several interviewees explained that perhaps universities where engagement is not very developed can more easily tackle it if they see it as a separate function. In this way it is easy to compartmentalize what it means, what it involves and how it can be tracked, monitored and assessed.

Interestingly, there is no difference in how engagement is portrayed in strategic university documents in the U.S. or Romania. At this level, universities from both jurisdictions regard engagement as a transversal core value, something that needs to be embedded in all aspects and dimensions of the university's functioning. We can only speculate that Romanian universities are mimicking their American and/or international counterparts mainly due to requirements coming from international rankings.

5.4. Differentiation

For the U.S. research, in terms of differentiation, we started from the assumption that there is going to be a difference between land grant and non-land grant universities. Some authors argued that land grant universities due to their historical role are more experienced with engagement than other universities. From our interviews it came out the fact that being a land grant university does influence engagement. Land grant universities, based

on the accounts offered by our key informants, had in general a higher number of programs under the service and outreach umbrella; they had more sophisticated institutional arrangements at university level in place, with overlaps created over time from adding new programs; and often they managed to engage with more types of community stakeholders than other universities. However, location in the inner city seems to have an equally great impact if not higher on engagement. Being located in a state/region with a declining economic activity was also mentioned as having a great importance for engagement, usually increasing the need for training/requalification and support to small businesses. In regions/cities with a prosperous, knowledge-based economy, universities usually partnered with businesses in order to create innovative start-ups, to transfer patents and technologies, and to provide R&D facilities/capacities. More systematic research on different types of universities is needed however in order to explain differentiation and the role played by location in differentiation.

In Romania, due to the fact that we only had one university in the sample and that the field of engagement is currently emerging, we asked the interviewees a slightly modified question. We wanted to know which Romanian universities, in their opinion, are most likely to become promoters of engagement. First, size was brought up by a majority of interviewees. They argued that size influences the adoption of engagement in two different ways — first, big universities have more resources and staff to dedicate to this new function; second, big universities are most likely to found themselves under external pressure to mimic what foreign universities are doing. Just two interviewees in leadership positions argued that if the city administration views the university as a strategic partner in the university and reaches out for its expertise, there are higher chances that the university will pay more attention to engagement.

5.5. Main forms of engagement in the researched universities

A slightly different research strategy was employed in Romania versus U.S. In Romania, interviewees were given a list with the functions, old and new, described in the literature as being currently performed by universities. The authors opted for this research strategy because most of the interviewees did not know enough about engagement in order to be able to conceptualize it in a clear way. For this research, we used the list of functions provided by Breznitz-Feldman (2012, p. 145). In addition to teaching and research, the author uses three additional functions, knowledge transfer, policy development, and economic initiatives, each of them including sub-functions. Table 1 below summarizes the main findings, comments and observations made by interviewees.

For Romania, the main forms of engagement described are linked to profit-generating activities such as training for the workforce in companies and public agencies as well as research and policy papers. As mentioned in Table 1, often it is not the university/its centers providing research but rather its employees acting in their private capacity as paid consultants. Knowledge transfer is almost inexistent. Service learning is practiced in isolation, at the initiative of individual instructors.

Table 1: Functions performed by universities/schools

Roles			Current situation
Economic initiatives	Workforce development	√	Seen by universities as a way to generate additional resources; some departments more active than others.
	Partnership development	X	Limited and in isolation; certain schools; often based on personal contacts at school leadership level.
	Community development	X	Limited and in isolation; certain schools.
	Real estate development	X	Despite the fact that universities can be the biggest land owner in a city.
Policy development	Policy recommendations	√	Often; however it is not the university/university centers but staff acting as paid consultants. Private consultancy firms and large organizations such as World Bank are more trusted to produce policy papers than universities.
	Economic development research	√	Often; however it is not the university/university centers but staff acting as paid consultants.
Knowledge transfer	Business assistance	X	Almost never
	Knowledge transfer	X	Limited but not in the form of patents and spin off companies; rather it takes the form of industry hiring students, faculty acting as consultants for businesses, and knowledge training among existing local networks.
Teaching		X	No university-wide strategy for service learning; only a limited number of courses incorporate this approach
Basic research		√	Applied component included and encouraged; co-production of knowledge, communities as equal partners are very rare. No systematic discussion about engaged research at university level.

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the interviews

In the U.S., interviewees identified themselves in most cases the forms of engagement. Depending on their role, some described the type of engagement they were involved in while others, especially those in leadership positions, offered an overall picture. The following types of engagement were mentioned more often and allowed us to come up with some conclusions.

Service-learning

- This represents an area in which all universities are experimenting with new approaches; five universities in the sample are creating academies or similar structures for courses/students who decide to follow an educational avenue focused on service.
- Service learning in most cases is no longer taking place in an ad-hoc manner. Rather universities are developing a special curriculum for service learning, students can

choose an academic track based on service, and specialized university structures are in place to assist with this type of learning.
- Certain disciplines/fields of study are more prone to get involved with service learning than others. In these fields we have innovative approaches.
- In several universities it was described as not so attractive from the perspective of staff. It requires adaptation of teaching style, teaching material, and students' evaluation. It is seen as more time consuming than traditional teaching.
- There is a mismatch between service-learning and university policies in terms of tenure and promotion; even when changes are made in university rules, tenure and promotion committees tend to disregard them (on the short term).

Extensions

- Universities with extensions argue that their functioning is currently transforming in response to changes in population and topics covered — there is a transition from rural to suburban and urban taking place right now. Several interviewees argued that this has been an incremental process, perhaps not so much visible to outsiders. Some were questioning whether the communities they serve are aware of these transitions currently taking place in terms of clients supported and topics/areas covered.
- Extensions tend to be somewhat isolated from other engagement efforts; a thing of the past.
- At least four universities in the sample pointed out that there is a slight reduction in funding and importance.

Economic development

- Under this function most interviewees referred to the role of State Departments for Commerce, Local Chambers of Commerce which work with universities on business attraction/retention.
- Existence of a huge state-wide problem, clearly defined, helps with promoting cooperation and brings all universities from the state at the table — rural poverty in Georgia for example.

Institutes

- They are somewhat independent bodies attached to universities. In more than 1/3 of the interviews, interviewees referred to these institutes and their role in engagement.
- Examples include: National Charrette Institute (MSU); Institute for Emerging Issues (NC State University); Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership (Pepperdine University).
- Their role, interconnection with other university structures for engagement, and number of staff varies from case to case.

Engaged scholarship

- In the interviews the focus was on what it means for individual faculty 'engaged scholarship'. This is mainly because we discovered that perceptions of what engaged scholarship is or is not vary broadly. Thus, we had the following categories included: all applied research conducted in a community setting is engaged scholarship; applied research but the one which is not really scientific; applied and scientific; co-produced with community stakeholders (the rarest form and most difficult to achieve).
- From the interviews there seems to be a polarization of attitudes — either pro or against this type of scholarship; there were very few positions in the middle. As with service learning, certain disciplines seem to be more in favor and pro-active regarding engaged scholarship.
- Some universities, such as Michigan State University, have in place interesting policies on how to encourage engaged scholarship by faculty despite challenges.

Patents/Technology transfers/start ups

- This is one area where perhaps interviewees identified the biggest developments and changes during the last three decades. They argue that the focus is no longer on selling patents for big profits (even in the past this was not happening so frequently, the percentage of licensed inventions being relatively low among all inventions, anywhere from 30%–40% according to several interviewees).
- Startups and their important role were mentioned as the 'new thing' to be encouraged and implemented by Technology Transfer Offices.
- Another development in the area of technology transfers refers to incubators and accelerators on campus. These are seen as one avenue through which universities have now become an engine of economic development.
- One type of engagement where there is a lot of discussion about the impact created; most interviewees talked about both direct financial impact but also about more subtle contributions of universities to local innovation ecosystems and local economic development.
- This specific type of engagement needs additional research.

5.6. Drivers and barriers for engagement

This is by far the most challenging dimension of the research in terms of summarizing responses due to a huge diversity in perceptions.

In the U.S., it was possible to distinguish between barriers and drivers placed at institutional level and the ones placed at state/national level. It is important to note that barriers and drivers are interconnected, with the same item acting differently for different universities. At institutional level, there are three drivers mentioned more often: institutional seed funding for engagement, leadership commitment and buy in, and the existence of structures within the university administration to support engagement type activities. One item was mentioned as both driver and hindrance, namely the recognition of community

engagement as a 'legit' component of one's workload and being linked to promotion. At national level, the most important drivers mentioned by some interviewees included earmarked funding for engagement, an ongoing conversation including the entire HES about values underlying engagement, main forms, recent development at home and abroad, etc.

For Romania, the barriers mentioned more often included lack of funding for universities to do programs which fall under engagement and the lack of a national framework based on which university engagement is operationalized and measured. As a potential driver, university leadership mentioned the existence of good practices inside Romania, universities which managed to do something that has positive impact. This proves to the rest of the universities that it is possible not only in other HES but also in Romania.

5.7. Scale for engagement

After conducting the interviews, it became evident that scale — the level at which one investigates community engagement, is critical. The interviewees, depending on their capacity vis-à-vis engagement, had either a very narrow perspective (their own initiative/activity on engagement, independent of the broader university or societal context) or a broad one (especially those in leadership positions). This is not surprising, argued one U.S. interviewee, who also pointed out that much of the literature focuses on engagement at either macro or micro level, the former being equated with the entire HES in a jurisdiction while the latter is at project or course level, and service-learning at either macroscopic level (studying an entire university system) or microscopic level (studying a particular course or project). There is 'nothing in the middle' argued the interviewee. According to her, much more attention should be paid to how specific disciplines or study areas are more prone than others to foster university engagement and service learning within individual institutions or across institutions. The interviewee argued that the academic community should ask itself if the culture of the discipline is more powerful than the socialization of faculty, staff and students by the university. Some interviewees even pointed out that in reality scales are intertwined. Thus, decisions taken at macro/university level may shape individual/departmental engagement. Similarly, policies made by university to stimulate engagement at middle and micro levels may not always translate well into practice or might have a delayed effect.

5.8. Impact of engagement

For the U.S. research, all interviewees in leadership positions as well as the university staff providing assistance to businesses argued that it is crucial for universities to not only generate impact but to be able to measure it. Faculty incorporating engagement into service learning and into research were less aware of impact and/or need to measure it. Several interviewees argued that in terms of impact it is important to decide whether your or your university have an 'outward' versus an 'inward' looking approach. The former means that success of engagement is defined in terms of positive changes in community. These changes are often difficult to quantify and measure and their occurrence may not depend solely on the efforts and initiatives of the university. The latter approach means

that success is rather defined in terms of advantages or positive changes for your internal publics such as students, faculty, staff, etc. In this case, impact might be easier to measure and less dependent upon other factors. At least three interviewees addressed a potential negative consequence of measuring impact. They referred to the situation when university staff has to choose the communities/businesses they will assist. Their opinion was that it is very likely, if performance measurement is in place, to choose those who are likely to succeed as opposed to those who need your assistance the most.

In Romania, when asked about potential indicators by which the success of engagement strategy could be judged, most interviewees referred to having established good connections with the business community and in this context to the way in which students develop better, more adapted skills to the job market as a result of the university and its instructors being more community-oriented. They also referred to profit generated from activities such as trainings and consultancy work as an indicator of successful engagement. One interviewee, coming from a civic activist background, referred also to the changes produced in the community, in terms of solving community problems.

Both the U.S. and Romanian interviewees referred to rankings and classifications as a form of measuring impact. There are significant differences however between the two jurisdictions. In Romania, the interviewees referred to general international rankings where engagement is one subcomponent among others. They perceived engagement indicators as something that university leadership is pushing for or something necessary in order to get a better position at international level. In the U.S., most interviewees referred to the Carnegie Classification, which is specifically targeting engagement. Several interviewees argued that applying for the Carnegie Classification has forced their universities to think about their impact, ways in which it can be quantified and moreover communicated. Decision to seek the Carnegie Classification was described in most cases as a process occurring organically, over a long time (more than 10 years, with incremental progress along the way).

5.9. Transfer of best practices

In terms of best practices, our research targets two aspects. First, is transfer of best practices from U.S. to Romania possible? Second, based on detailed research of experiences with engagement from different jurisdictions, is it possible to build a body of scholarship that is internationally relevant?

In the U.S., more than half of the interviewed individuals have had multiple experiences with providing advice on engagement to their peers from other foreign universities. Some of the universities in the sample, such as University of Delaware, Michigan State University or University of Georgia are nationally recognized in the U.S. as models for certain types/functions concerning engagement. Several interviewees stated that they have no problem explaining to their peers what their university does; however, they pointed out that they do not feel comfortable providing advice on how to transfer their model to a different higher education context. In their opinion, offering suggestions on the transfer of best practices requires intimate knowledge and understanding of the systems where the best practice will be replicated. Four interviewees argued that they have worked extensively

with colleagues in other jurisdictions in order to transfer such best practices. In most cases this happened when they worked abroad for a longer period of time (over 6 months) and/or when due to personal connections (country of origin) had an interest in the successful transfer of certain engagement practice. For the most part, the interviewees felt that many of the contextual factors driving the success of engagement are embedded in the local/regional context and that even across U.S. transfer is difficult.

All the Romanian interviewees have had multiple experiences abroad, over half of them at American universities. While their exchanges did not specifically target engagement (with one exception), this topic came up during their visits. From what they described, three forms of engagement stand out. First, service learning and internships. Most interviewees were amazed that the U.S. universities have specific offices/structures and practices regarding curriculum development, training of instructors, etc., all specifically addressing courses that in one way or another incorporated service learning. In terms of internship, interviewees referred to the excellent student placing services the foreign universities had in place and the varied organizations available to receive interns. Second, the interviewees described services provided to the business community. They stressed out that these services were provided by university staff, hired to do this on a permanent basis/full time. At least two interviewees described that in their interactions with the businesses receiving support the businesses stressed the importance of professionalism associated with the services they received. Third, several interviewees mentioned research conducted in communities. They were impressed that this form of engagement was very different from what it is perceived as applied research in Romania. The research communities/people were not simply the subjects of the research. Rather the research involved them in an active way and the solutions were often co-produced with the researched community. In terms of transfer of best practices, most Romanian interviewees mentioned as barriers the underfunding of such activities and their unstructured, ad hoc character. They pleaded for separate structures to handle engagement, and for additional staff at university level to handle some responsibilities implied by engagement functions such as contact with community partners, placing of students for internship, etc.

With respect to creating a global scholarship body on engagement, most interviewees, both from the U.S. and Romania, were rather skeptical. They mostly claimed that the context in each jurisdiction is too different and that learning from others required a huge amount of adaptation. It is worth noting that people mostly referred to operational issues regarding engagement when describing how difficult transfer of best practices is — how curriculum can be adapted to integrate service learning, how to select communities that would benefit of university's assistance, etc.

As mentioned in the methodology, the Romanian research includes also an analysis based on the direct participation of the three authors in strategic planning processes which included city-community-university cooperation. We are including here some of the main conclusions derived from this experience.

– It is possible to have a strategic type of engagement of universities, which stimulates the change in the profile of the city, from mostly a manufacturing economy to a

knowledge based one. This type of involvement of the university goes beyond regular tactical and/or operational interventions.
- Universities can bring to the table tools and technical expertise which work and are based on research and expert know-how.
- Universities can act as mediators and facilitators between the city hall and the broader community. Because they are perceived as technical and uninvolved politically, they usually enjoy greater level of trust than local authorities/political leaders.
- University-community cooperation can be described as a platform that has been later used to develop new partnerships among community stakeholders and a new pattern of participatory and collaborative governance at the local level.
- The university as a key strategic factor was implemented at the tactical and operational level (by increasing cooperation among universities, but also with the administration and the entire ecosystem).
- For the city of Cluj-Napoca the primary, secondary and tertiary strategic advantages and the main source of competitive advantage is the university — from the number of students and the financial resources brought in the community to the type of local economy, quality of life and urban vitality.
- Such an approach works if local administration is smart and understands its own role as facilitator among different stakeholders in the local ecosystem. It is important for the local administration to understand the importance of universities in the community (assets for development and increase quality of life).
- Ability of university leadership to understand the importance of cooperating with the local administration and its own role as key stakeholder in the local ecosystem.
- Capacity to visualize strategic objectives resulting from cooperation/ impact at community level from the beginning and not as an unexpected or secondary result of a specific project.

6. Discussions and conclusions

Our research investigates two jurisdictions, U.S. and Romania, which are at a different stage in terms of university engagement. U.S. HES is extremely diverse and differentiated in terms of university engagement, with the type of university and its location playing a somewhat important role in the tradition of university engagement. In Romania, the research is based on one case study, which is also considered a best practice. We cannot generalize the findings to other cities and their universities and this is a limitation which needs to be acknowledged. However, there are some conclusions which can be outlined here.

In terms of university engagement, we can argue that the following classification should be considered:

- Permanent/strategic involvement of the university in community, which is growing organically over time and is comprehensive and integrates numerous field of importance for the local community. The university is a key partner in the local ecosystem,

interacting not only with the city hall but also with other stakeholders. This type is ideal but also the most difficult to develop.
- Tactical involvement, focused on specific sectors where there is a mutual interest (medicine or IT for example).
- On and off involvement, based on specific operational programs, which require partnership in order to access some types of funding.
- Fashionable involvement, which is rather superficial, done only for marketing purposes. Under this framework there is no interest in specific topics or results to be achieved. Engagement is rather seen as an opportunity to build a good image for both the city and the university.
- Lack of involvement or even a state of conflict between universities and the city hall/rest of the stakeholders that are part of the local ecosystem.

One important thing when it comes to university engagement deals with drivers. Our research highlighted the importance of leadership both at university and city level. Leadership can make a great difference in moving from ad-hoc, fragmented efforts of various individuals to a more integrated and strategic approach. This is highly important especially in a very dynamic context, and in turbulent times, marked by various crises (Țiclau, Hințea and Trofin, 2021). This is not to say that bottom up efforts are not important. However, without the involvement of leadership, community engagement will remain isolated at micro-level. This conclusion is in line with other scholarly research which identified 'lack of executive leadership support in understanding community engagement, its mandate and potential' as a major hindrance (Johnson, 2020, p. 91). One should keep in mind that it is not only about top management but also about middle management. Often, rectors and/or mayors understand the value of engagement and are willing to support it. In universities, especially due to being less hierarchical than public organizations, the support of deans is crucial if engagement is to take place.

Finally, one important conclusion refers to the strategic dimension of institutional engagement. In the literature this is described with the concept of institutional alignment (ARS, 2006), in the sense that engagement needs to start from the vision and mission of the organization and then to permeate the other dimensions of the organization such as internal policies and procedures, rituals, awards and ceremonies etc. In the absence of this strategic alignment, engagement will most likely continue to be hampered by mismatches between what leadership wants and how this translates into policies and procedures which affect tenure and promotion, for example.

References:

1. Adner, R., 'Match Your Innovation Strategy to Your Innovation Ecosystem', 2006, *Hardvard Business Review*, vol. 84, no. 4, pp. 98–107.
2. Altbach, P.G., 'The Complex Roles of Universities in the Period of Globalization', 2008, *Higher Education in the World 3: New Challenges and Emerging Roles for Human and Social Development*, pp. 5–14.

3. Anderson, R.D., *European Universities from the Enlightenment to 1914*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
4. Andreescu, L., Gheorghiu, R., Proteasa, V. and Curaj, A., 'Institutional Diversification and Homogenity in Romanian Higher Education: The Larger Picture', in Curaj, A., Scott, P., Vlăsceanu, L. and Wilson, L., *European Higher Education at the Crossroads. Between the Bologna Process and National Reforms*, 2012, pp. 863–885.
5. ARS, AASCU and NCHEMS, 'Tools and Insights for Universities Called to Regional Stewardship', Washington, DC & Boulder, CO: Alliance for Regional Stewardship, American Association for State Colleges and Universities, and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2006.
6. Appe, S., Rubaii, N., Lippez-De Castro, S. and Capobianco, S., 'The Concept and Context of the Engaged University in the Global South: Lessons from Latin America to Guide a Research Agenda', 2007, *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 7–36.
7. Barber, B., *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities*, Yale University Press, 2013.
8. Benson, L. and Harkavy, I., 'The University-Assisted Community School Idea Becomes a Movement', 1994, *Universities* & *Community Schools*, vol. 4, no. 1–2, pp. 5–8.
9. Berman, E.P., *Creating the Market University, How Academic Science Became an Economic Engine*, Princeton University Press, 2012.
10. Breznitz, S.M. and Feldman, M.P., 'The Larger Role of the University in Economic Development: Introduction to the Special Issue', 2012, *Journal of Technological Transfer,* vol. 37, pp. 135–138.
11. Brown, J.S., Pendleton-Jullian, A. and Adler, R., 'From Engagement to Ecotone: Land-Grant Universities in the 21st Century', 2010, *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, vo. 42, no. 6, pp. 8–17.
12. Cai, Y., Ma, J. and Chen, Q., 'Higher Education in Innovation Ecosystems', 2020, *Sustainability*, vol. 12, art. no. 4376.
13. Chirca, A. and Lazar, D.T., 'Cluj-Napoca without Students: An Estimation of the Gap in the City's Economy, 2021, *Transyilvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, vol. 62E, pp. 44–59.
14. Cunningham-Sabot, E. and Fol, S., 'Shrinking Cities in France and Great Britain: A Silent Process?', in Pallagst, K., Aber, J., Audirac, I., Cunningham-Sabot, E., Fol, S., Martinez-Fernandez, C., Moraes, S., Mulligan, H., Vargas-Hernandez, J., Wiechmann, T., Wu, T. (eds.) and Rich, J. (contributing ed.)*., The Future of Shrinking Cities. Problems, Patterns and Strategies of Urban Transformation in a Global Context,* Berkeley: University of California, 2009, pp. 24–35.
15. Damian, R.M., 'The Bologna Process as a Reform Initiative in Higher Education in the Balkan Countries: The Case of Romania', 2012, *European Education*, vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 56–69.
16. Ding, L. and Wu, J., 'Innovation Ecosystem of CNG Vehicles: A Case Study of Its Cultivation and Characteristics in Sichuan, China', 2017, *Sustainability*, vol. 10, pp. 1–16.
17. Dobbs, R., Smit, S., Remes, J., Manyika, J., Roxburgh, C. and Restrepo, A., 'Urban World: Mapping the Economic Power of Cities', McKinsey Global Institute, 2011, [Online] available at https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/urbanization/urban%20world/mgi_urban_world_mapping_economic_power_of_cities_full_report.ashx, accessed on October 10, 2022.

18. Dragoescu, R.M., 'Changes in Romanian Higher Education after 1990', 2013, *Romanian Statistical Review*, vol. 3, pp. 28–36.
19. European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission on a European Strategy for Universities', 2022, [Online] available at https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/commission-communication-on-a-european-strategy-for-universities, accessed on October 10, 2022.
20. Geuna, A. and Rossi, F., *The University and the Economy. Pathways to Growth and Economic Development*, Edward Elgar, 2015.
21. Glaeser, E. and Saiz, A., *The Rise of the Skilled City,* Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2003.
22. Gobble, M., 'Changing the Innovation Ecosystem', 2014, *Research and Technology Management*, vol. 57, no. 4, pp. 55–57.
23. Goodman, E., 'Smart Cities Meet Anchor Institutions: The Case for Broadband and the Public Library', *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, 2015, vol. 41, no. 5, pp. 1665–1694.
24. Granstranda, O. and Holgersson, M., 'Innovation Ecosystems: A Conceptual Review and a New Definition, 2020, *Technovation*, vol. 90–91, pp. 1–12.
25. Harkavy, I.R. and Zuckerman, H., *Eds and Meds: Cities' Hidden Assets*, Brookings Institution, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 1999.
26. Harris, M. and Holley, K., 'Universities as Anchor Institutions: Economic and Social Potential for Urban Development', in Paulsen. M. (ed.), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, Springer, 2016, pp. 393–439.
27. Haselmayer, S., 'How Cities Are Taking over Innovation Ecosystems', 2019, [Online] available at https://www.citymart.com/how-cities-are-taking-over-innovation-eco-systems-a0acd0da9dd8, accessed on October 10, 2022.
28. Heaton, S., Siegel, D. and Teece, D., 'Universities and Innovation Ecosystems: A Dynamic Capabilities Perspective', 2019, *Industrial and Corporate Change*, vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 921–939.
29. Hințea, C.E., Profiroiu, M.C. and Țiclau, T.C., *Strategic Planning in Local Communities: A Cross-National Study of 7 Countries*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019a.
30. Hințea, C.E., Profiroiu, M.C. and Țiclau, T.C., 'Strategic Planning in Local Public Administration: The Case of Romania', in Hințea, C.E., Profiroiu, M.C., Țiclau, T.C., *Strategic Planning in Local Communities: A Cross-National Study of 7 Countries*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019b, pp. 71–113.
31. Hințea, C.E., 'Public Administration Schools in Romania: Strategic Choices for the Future', 2013, *Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială*, vol. 42, pp. 294–309.
32. Hospers, G-J., 'Creative Cities: Breeding Places in the Knowledge Economy', 2003, *Knowledge, Technology* & *Policy*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 143–162.
33. Huggins, R. and Johnston, A., 'The Economic and Innovation Contribution of Universities: A Regional Perspective', 2009, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, vol. 27, no. 6, pp. 1008–1106.
34. Iacob, M., 'History of Education in Romania with a Focus on Bologna Process in Higher Education Institutions: An Analysis of Institutional Autonomy, Quality Assurance, and the Social Dimension', 2015, *Regae – Revista de Gestão e Avaliação Educacional*, vol. 4, no. 7, pp. 61–81.
35. Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, 'Anchor Institutions and Urban Economic Development: From Community Benefit to Shared Value', 2011, *Inner City Insight Findings*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 1–9.

36. Johnson, B.J., 'Community Engagement: Barriers and Drivers in South African Higher Education', 2020, *South African Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 34, no. 6, pp. 87–105.
37. Kerr, C., *The Uses of the University*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.
38. Kleiman, N. and Poethig, E., 'Here's How Cities and Anchor Institutions Can Work Together to Drive Growth', 2015, [Online] available at https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/anchor-institutions-cities-national-resouorce-network, accessed on October 10, 2022.
39. Kourtit, K. and Nijkamp, P., 'Smart Cities in the Innovation Age', 2012, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 93–95.
40. Kwiek, M., 'Revisiting the Classical German Idea of the University Revisited (on the Nationalization of the Modern Institution)', 2008, *Polish Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 55–78.
41. Matějů, P., Řeháková, B. and Simonová, N., 'Transition to University under Communism and after Its Demise. The Role of Socio-economic Background in the Transition between Secondary and Tertiary Education in the Czech Republic 1948–1998', 2003, *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review*, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 301–324.
42. McKinsey Global Institute, *Urban America: US Cities in the Global Economy*, McKinsey & Company, 2012.
43. Melhuish, C., 'University-led Urban Regeneration. Introduction to Case Studies', UCL Urban Laboratory, 2015, [Online] available at https://www.ucl.ac.uk/urbanlab/docs/introduction-university-led-urban-regeneration, accessed on October 10, 2022.
44. Ministry of Education, 'Raport privind starea învățământului superior din România 2020–2021' (Report concerning the Status of Romanian Higher Education 2020–2021), 2022, [Online] available at https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2021/Transparenta/Stare%20invatamant/Raport_stare_invatamant_superior_RO_2020_2021.pdf, accessed on October 10, 2022.
45. Miroiu, A. and Vlăsceanu, L., 'Relating Quality and Funding: The Romanian Case, in Curaj, A., Scott, P., Vlăsceanu, L. and Wilson, L., *European Higher Education at the Crossroads. Between the Bologna Process and National Reforms*, 2012, pp. 791–885.
46. Muro, M., Katz, B., Rahman, S. and Warren, D., *Metropolicy: Shaping a New Federal Partnership for a Metropolitan Nation*, Washington: The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, 2008.
47. Nicolescu, L., 'Higher Education in Romania: Evolution and Views from the Business Community', 2003, *Tertiary Education and Management*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp 77–95.
48. Nybom, T., The Humboldt Legacy: Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of the European University', 2003, *Higher Education Policy*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 141–59.
49. OECD, 'Reviews of National Policies for Education: Romania 2000', 2000, [Online] available at https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/reviews-of-national-policies-for-education-romania-2000_9789264181731-en, accessed on October 10, 2022.
50. O'Mara, M., 'Beyond Town and Gown: University Economic Engagement and the Legacy of the Urban Crisis', 2012, *Journal of Technology Transfer*, vol. 37, pp. 234–250.
51. Pallagst, K., Aber, J., Audirac, I., Cunningham-Sabot, E., Fol, S., Martinez-Fernandez, C., Moraes, S., Mulligan, H., Vargas-Hernandez, J., Wiechmann, T., Wu, T. (eds.) and Rich, J. (contributing ed.)*., The Future of Shrinking Cities. Problems, Patterns and Strategies of Urban Transformation in a Global Context,* Berkeley: University of California, 2009.

52. Polèse, M., 'Cities and National Economic Growth: A Reappraisal', 2005, *Urban Studies*, vol. 42, no. 8, pp. 1429–1451.
53. Popescu, A.-C., 'The Decentralisation of the School System in Post-Communist Romania', 2010, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 315–336.
54. Profiroiu, M.C. and Briscariu, M.R., 'Universities as 'Drivers' of Local and Regional Development', 2021, *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, vol. 62E, pp. 134–152.
55. Rink, D., 'The Rise and Fall of an Industrial Region', in Oswalt, P. (ed.), *Shrinking Cities Vol. 1. International Research*, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2006, pp. 632–642.
56. Pallagst, K., Aber, J., Audirac, I., Cunningham-Sabot, E., Fol, S. Martinez-Fernandez, C. Moraes, S. Mulligan, H. Vargas-Hernandez, J. Wiechmann, T., Wu, T. (eds.) and Rich, J. (contributing ed.), *The Future of Shrinking Cities: Problems, Patterns and Strategies of Urban Transformation in a Global Context*, University of California, 2009.
57. Parrillo, A.J. and de Socio, M., 'Universities and Hospitals as Agents of Economic Stability and Growth in Small Cities: A Comparative Analysis', 2014, *The Industrial Geographer*, vol. 11, pp. 1–28.
58. Reichert, S., 'Refocusing the Debate on Diversity in Higher Education', in Curaj, A., Scott, P., Vlăsceanu, L. and Wilson, L., *European Higher Education at the Crossroads. Between the Bologna Process and National Reforms*, 2012, pp. 811–835.
59. Reisz, D.R., 'Romania is Oscillating between Centralism and Autonomy', 2006, *European Education Journal*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 73–84.
60. Rissola, G., Hervás, F., Slavcheva, M. and Jonkers, K., 'Place-Based Innovation Ecosystems. Espoo Innovation Garden and Aalto University (Finland)', 2017, [Online] available at https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC106122/aalto_innovation_ecosystem_case_study_formatted_online_version.pdf, accessed on October 2, 2022.
61. Rouse, W., *Universities as Complex Enterprises: How Academia Works, Why It Works These Ways, and Where the University Enterprise Is Headed*, Stevens Institute Series on Complex Systems and Enterprises, Wiley, 2016.
62. Scott, P., 'The Idea of the University in the 21st Century: A British Perspective', 1993, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 41, pp. 4–25.
63. Serbanica, C., 'O analiză de tip cauză–efect a cooperării universitate–mediu de afaceri pentru inovarea regională în România', 2011, *Economie teoretică şi aplicată*, vol. XVIII, no. 10(563), pp. 27–43.
64. Shahid, Y. and Kaoru, N., *How Universities Promote Economic Growth. Directions in Development; Human Development,* Washington, DC: World Bank, 2007.
65. Taylor, H.T. and Luter, D.G., *Anchor Institutions: An Interpretive Review Essay*, A Report by the Anchor Institutions Task Force (AITF), New York, NY: Marga, 2013.
66. Țiclau, T., Hințea, C. and Trofin, C., 'Resilient Leadership. Qualitative Study on Factors Influencing Organizational Resilience and Adaptive Response to Adversity', 2021, *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, Special Issue 2021, pp. 127–143.
67. Tödtling, F., 'The Role of Universities in Innovation Systems and Regional Economies', Expert meeting on The future of academic research, 2006, [Online] available at http://www.oecd.org/innovation/research/37592074.pdf, accessed on October 2, 2022.
68. Valero, A. and Van Reenen, J., 'The Economic Impact of Universities: Evidence from Across the Globe', 2016, [Online] available at http://www.eua.be/Libraries/nrc-activities/valero-

amp-mimeo-2016_the-economic-impact-of-universities---evidence-from-across-the-globe.pdf, accessed on September 16, 2022.
69. van Winden, W., 'European Cities in the Knowledge-Based Economy: Observations and Policy Challenges', *disP – The Planning Review*, 2009, vol. 45, no. 178, pp. 83–88.
70. United Nations, 'World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revisions', 2018, [Online] available at https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/files/documents/2020/Jan/un_2018_worldcities_databooklet.pdf, accessed on October 10, 2022.
71. Watson, D., Hollister, R., Stroud, S. and Babcock, E., *The Engaged University. International Perspectives on Civic Engagement*, Routledge, 2013.
72. Webber, H.S. and Karlstrom, M., *Why Community Investment is Good for Nonprofit Anchor Institutions: Understanding Costs, Benefits, and the Range of Strategic Options*, Chicago: Chapin Hall, University of Chicago, 2009.
73. Weiss, B., 'The Rise of Social Responsibility in Higher Education', University World News, no. 423, August 2016, [Online] available at http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20160811095808959, accessed on October 10, 2022.