

Universities and their Place

Concepts and Conundrums



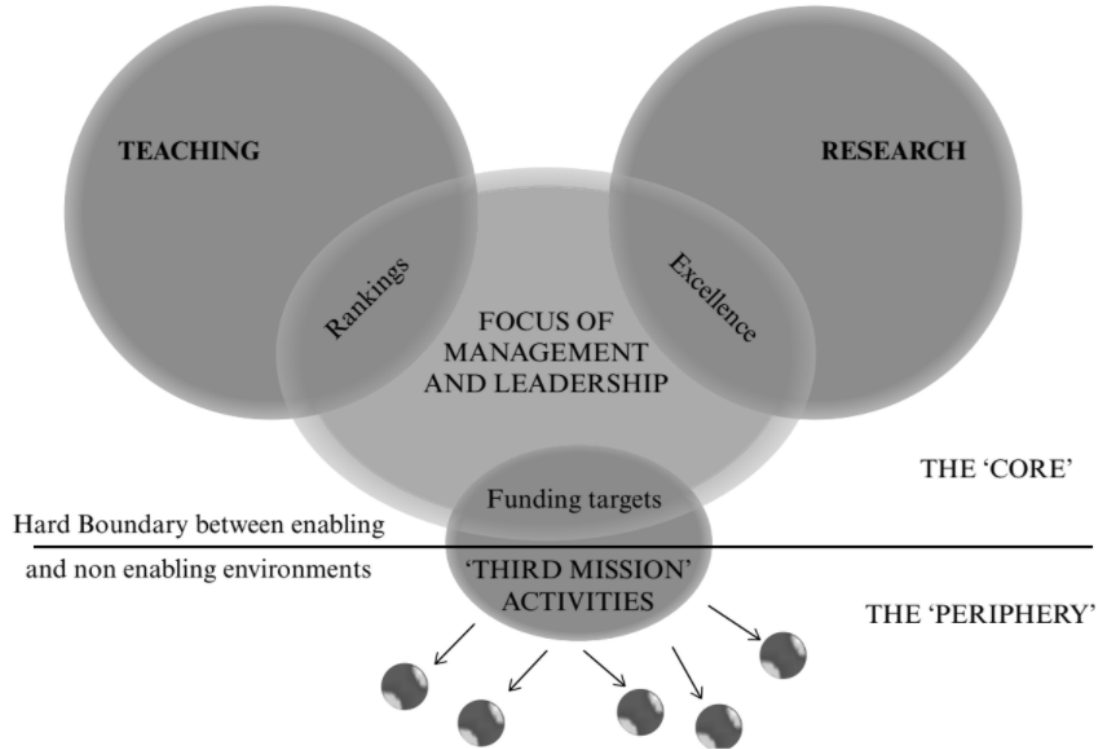
Some place-related ideas of the university

Concept	Central ideas	Discussion	Key institutions (UK)
'Town & Gown'	University-community relations, university as major local employer, moderating student behaviours, student volunteering as value-add.	A now-deprecated approach marked by symbolic and shallow engagement, but some elements have been subsumed by the civic agenda.	Political layer of local government.
Universities in local growth & regeneration	Universities a key driver of economic performance in their local area or region.	Centralises visions of successful entrepreneurial universities which translate research and teaching activity into economic growth.	Regional Development Agencies (once upon a time), BEIS/MCLG, LEPs/LEP network, What Works Centre for Local Growth, devolved enterprise bodies.
Civic Universities	Broad and deep university engagement on social, cultural, and economic dimensions. Research and teaching activity more aligned to 'place'.	Seeks to move beyond the entrepreneurial university towards the 'ecological' university. Recently popular, part of a movement to defend universities in a tough political climate?	Civic University Network; significant academic advocates.

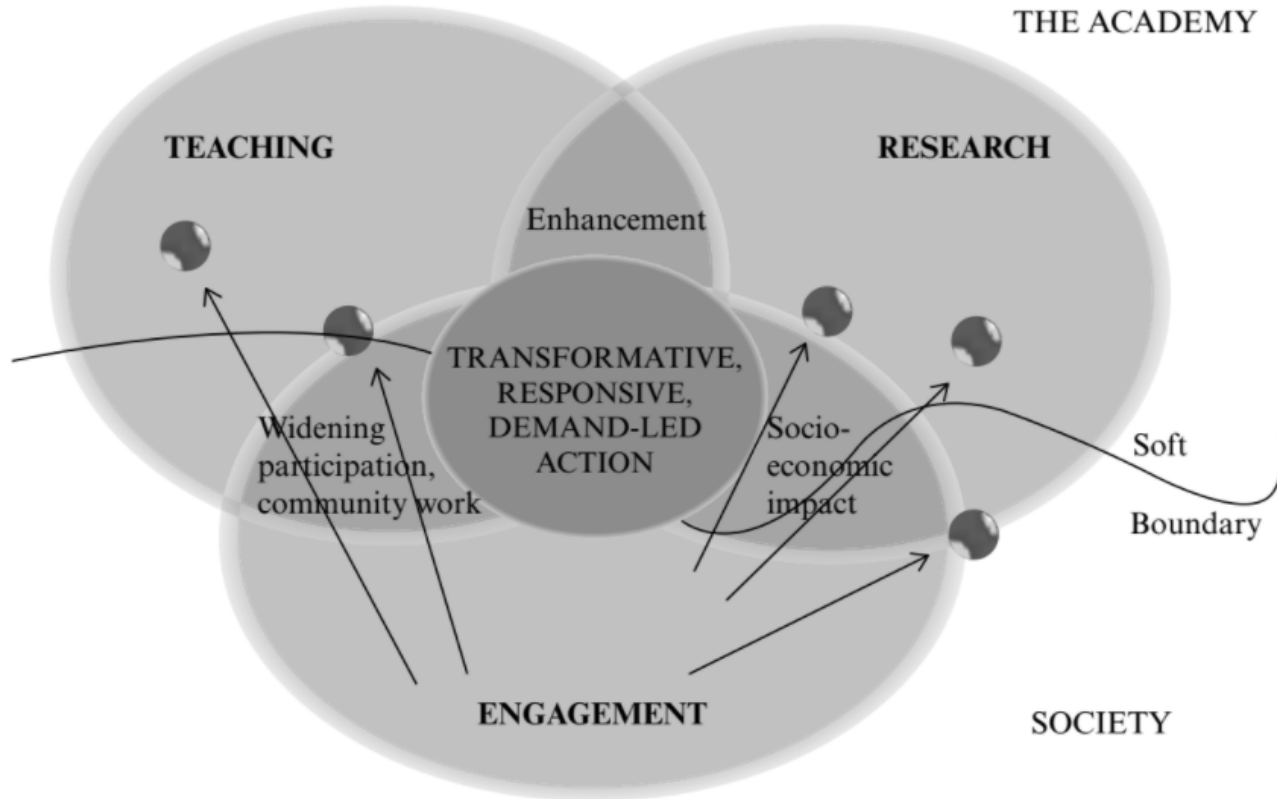
A new phase?

Concept	Central ideas	Discussion	Key institutions (UK)
'Town & Gown'	University-community relations, university as major local employer, moderating student behaviours, student volunteering as value-add.	A now-deprecated approach marked by symbolic and shallow engagement, but some elements have been subsumed by the civic agenda.	Political layer of local government.
Universities in local growth & regeneration	Universities a key driver of economic performance in their local area or region.	Centralises visions of successful entrepreneurial universities which translate research and teaching activity into economic growth.	Regional Development Agencies (once upon a time), BEIS/MCLG, LEPs/LEP network, What Works Centre for Local Growth, devolved enterprise bodies.
Civic Universities	Broad and deep university engagement on social, cultural, and economic dimensions. Research and teaching activity more aligned to 'place'.	Seeks to move beyond the entrepreneurial university towards the 'ecological' university. Recently popular, part of a movement to defend universities in a tough political climate?	Civic University Network; significant academic advocates.
New Power Universities	Universities move from placemaking to community organising, a key focus of teaching and research is social good.	A recently developed concept looking at how universities might respond to changing dynamics of power in society.	Community organisations, social media platforms.

The un-civic university



The civic university



Place in practice

Domain	What universities can bring	What places can bring
Corporate	<p>Provision of public access to facilities / services - e.g. sporting, library, transport</p> <p>Local employment</p>	<p>Core / foundational public services</p> <p>Cultural institutions</p> <p>Vibrant nightlife - or day life</p>
Teaching	<p>Access and participation efforts</p> <p>Provision aimed at support for lifelong learning</p> <p>Embedding local perspectives and dimensions into courses and programmes</p>	<p>Involvement of local people and organisations in course provision - placements, 'sessional' community teachers, real-world projects sourced from business needs</p>
Research	<p>Support for innovation - business partnerships, incubators, spin-outs</p> <p>Support for policy-making - expert advice and knowledge insight for decision makers</p>	<p>Research resources - people, organisations, supply chains</p> <p>'Citizen science'?</p>

Conundrums

- Policy pressures - e.g. universities' responsibility towards schools, responsibility to reduce carbon emissions, responsibility to support 'levelling up'
- What is 'the place' - the town/city? (not all universities are in a town or city), the region? (some regions have many universities, others few; some are very wealthy, some are quite disadvantaged, etc.), the planet? (some universities express their civic commitments in terms of global impact)
- How much place-based activity is truly rooted in what *only* a university can do, i.e. creating value-from-knowledge?
- What about governance? How much control should places have over their universities?

Shifting the question

- What is the role of universities in their place?

Shifting the question

- ~~What is the role of universities in their place?~~ Too abstract, too many diverse answers to reach a meaningful conclusion.

Shifting the question

- ~~What is the role of universities in their place?~~ Too abstract, too many diverse answers to reach a meaningful conclusion. Instead...
- For *a* university, how is the approach to place:
 - Shaped?
 - Explained?
 - Led?
 - Enacted - in partnership?
 - Evaluated?
 - ...and what resources and commitments does this demand, or exclude?
- At the system level, (how) should we compare, assess, and steer this?