The social impact of university entrepreneurship in Romania: Is the institutional discourse replicated or adapted?

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Abstract: The lack of governmental funding accompanied by an increase in the demand for social services have urged the universities to rethink their mission and their position on the market. The paper aims to investigate the dimensions of social impact of university entrepreneurship building on recent studies on the social mission of higher education. The existence of several dimensions in academia is tested by using a sample of twelve universities from Romania which rank first in terms of quality and academic results. A comparison is made between the ways in which the dimensions appear in the discourses of the universities to establish if the discourse is unaltered of variable. The examination reveals that the degree of social orientation differs among universities, some relying more on the activity of their student associations to promote social change, whereas others take the matters in their own hands and implement social projects based on European funding.

Keywords: university entrepreneurship, social impact, social responsibility, Romanian universities, higher education, triple helix.

Introduction

Every academic field has to have its buzzwords and in the last decade some of the most heated debates in the business literature surrounded concepts such as "social responsibility", "social entrepreneurship", "social innovation" or "social impact" (e.g. Mort et al., 2003; Austin et al., 2006; Mair and Martí 2006; Haugh 2007; Certo and Miller 2008; Neck et al., 2009; Pol and Ville 2009; Jackson and Apostolakou 2010; Hao Jiao 2011; Pérez-Luño et al., 2011 to name a few of them). This is definitely the era of social value creators, of those building and

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leading innovative, change-oriented, but sustainable organizations, based on unique, but very efficient business models (Christie and Honig 2006; Choi and Gray 2008). This new generation of socially inspired entrepreneurs has come to exist also in universities leading the third academic revolution. We are witnessing a shift towards the entrepreneurial academic paradigm in which all universities must take part as actors in economic development through extension of both their research and teaching missions thus becoming "an increasingly important platform for societal transformation" (Etzkowitz and Viale, 2010, p. 1). If at first, their contribution was thought of mainly in terms of economic value, recently there has been a paradigm shift and the definition of university entrepreneurship has been widened to also comprise the social value that academia can actively create by collaborating with the external stakeholders (Cantaragiu, 2012). There are many different ways in which universities can generate social value, but they can all be inscribed in the following framework: a) university social value creation is initiated as a response to unsolved social needs; b) the academic social entrepreneur acts as a change agent that has to reshape mentalities and develop responsible behaviors in the university; and c) social value creation is done through co-generation based on partnerships extended to local communities (Păunescu et al., 2013).

The purpose of the present paper is to elucidate the possible dimensions of social impact of university entrepreneurship in order to facilitate further research. We use a sample of twelve top research universities to identify these dimensions applying a content analysis on their institutional charters, and we then compare these dimensions with the ones we extract from the presentation of the projects implemented by the university through European funding or by the student associations hosted by the university. We ask if the dimensions present in the institutional charters act as predictors for the social impact dimensions encountered in the projects' descriptions and what this implies for the universities themselves, for policy makers and for the public at large.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The first part introduces a brief discussion on university entrepreneurship. The following section presents the methodology employed in order to analyse the institutional discourse of twelve Romanian public universities ranking first in terms of quality and academic results according to the national classification of universities conducted in 2011. The third part reveals the results of the content analysis of the university charters, descriptions of projects conducted by students' organisations or by the university through European funding. The paper ends with a section of discussions and conclusions, establishing directions for future research.

University entrepreneurship and social impact
The context of higher education has changed dramatically due to globalization and the increased competition among public universities which are now operating side by side with private universities and alternative forms of higher

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education (Dima and Cantaragiu, 2013). As the role of education in society is being transformed, universities must adapt to the challenges imposed by the competitive world by teaching their students to think and act entrepreneurially in their professional lives (Bridge et al., 2010; Raposo and Paço 2011). In today's society characterized by an entrepreneurial knowledge-based economy, universities are regarded as a key pillar for growth and welfare (Kirby et al., 2011; Amiri et al., 2009) and as a barometer of change which generates creative individuals who will serve as stimuli for economic growth, competitiveness and innovation (Nelles and Vorley 2011). While universities continue to be a source of high quality skills and competences, expert knowledge, scientific advances, and technological innovation (Cooke, 2004; OECD, 2007; Wolfe, 2005 cited in Nelles and Vorley, 2011, p. 342; Păunescu et al., 2014), they have also come to be regarded as entrepreneurial institutions which contribute to wealth creation (Botes, 2005; Kirby and Ibrahim, 2011).

Etzkowitz (2013) argues that entrepreneurial aspirations have reached the academic mainstream. The academic involvement in technology transfer, firm formation and regional development represent a step closer to the academic ideal which is the entrepreneurial university. The more the universities become entrepreneurial, the more the chances for tensions between the old (research and teaching) and the new (entrepreneurial) functions. The present paper is built on the triple helix concept by analysing directly the university, and, indirectly, the industry and government where we advance for a balanced approach specific to the transition towards a knowledge economy in which university and other knowledge institutions act in partnership with industry and government and even take the lead in joint initiatives (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000).

In 2010, Thorp and Goldstein defined the entrepreneurial university in the US first of all, by presenting what an entrepreneurial university is not: "a trade school designed to train students how to start or run a commercial activity" because the practice abounds with guides, tutorials, etc. on that matter; "does not involve the wholesale adoption of methods and values from the commercial world" despite the collaboration of the business world and the academic one, there should still be clearly defined boundaries in between the two; "is not merely an assembly line for the creation of new companies" the academia will conduct high-impact research which will be translated into action by start-ups; "not economic development authorities" in this case, economic development represents a by-product of entrepreneurial universities – therefore they posit that universities do not become more entrepreneurial if they blow up centuries of traditions which represent their core.

Traditionally, schools and universities have focused mostly on ensuring that their graduates can secure the future development of the society. Recently, both formal and informal educational systems must prepare students to compete in a dynamic entrepreneurial and global market (Nelles and Vorley, 2011; Raposo and Paço, 2011). Therefore, a university that is not entrepreneurial is likely to be less competitive in the new market of higher education and to have a lower

chance of survival in the newly created environment. Consequently, there has been an increased scholarly interest in university entrepreneurship defined either in economic terms such as patenting, research contracting, royalties and spin off companies (Shane, 2004; Zhang, 2007; Goel and Grimpe, 2011) or in a broader sense as a more engaged academic community (Winfield, 2004; Botes 2005).

In this entrepreneurial era, more and more universities become aware of the need to integrate social objectives while building their identity and of the need to have an impact on their local communities. Thus, universities worldwide have developed and are pursuing a more market and society-oriented mission that goes beyond teaching and research, (Mars and Rios-Aguilar, 2010), which implies changing the way schools operate and their role in society. Certainly, universities should be encouraged and offered support to achieve their broader socio-economic mission through knowledge exchange and partnerships as well as favourable regulatory framework. From previous research (Păunescu and Cantaragiu, 2013), we know there are two types of forces that act on the socially responsible behavior of universities: certain external driving forces which act in a centripetal way (knowledge creation and exchange with outside partners, partnerships with civil society, existent regulatory framework, alternative funding strategies, etc.), and in-house predictors (the institutional culture and the message that the university management promotes in terms of social focus and the type of network the university is integrated in and the capabilities that derive from it) which act as a centrifugal force mobilizing the university to adopt an engaged view of the relations with the exterior. Researchers dedicate particular importance to the role played by the civil society in that it is considered an incubator for social entrepreneurs who deliver social impact (Găucă and Hadad, 2013).

British universities have been reporting on their economic and social impact for longer than a decade and based on this information, HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) (2010) has published a report on the six directions in which we can relate to the services that academia does for society:

"*(a) developing people to make a contribution to society; (b) innovating, informing and inspiring: opening up university knowledge, expertise and resources; (c) engaging communities and working in partnership: helping community problem solving; (d) informing public policy and the professions: helping communities engage with public policy, support civil society and deliver responsive public services; (e) stimulating local economic and social development; (f) building international connections: being anchors in the local that reach out to the global*" (p. 3).

 Other universities around the world have also become interested in their impact outside the boundaries of their own fields of studies, as did the institutions which supervise the university rankings. The latest project for institutional mapping and ranking, led by CHERPA and financed by the European Union, U-Multirank has a specific dimension for social impact:

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regional engagement which is understood as outreach, partnership and curricular engagement based on mutual beneficial exchanges between the institution and the regional community (van Vught and Ziegele, 2011, p. 74).

In 2007, Romania entered the European Union and, for its higher education system this meant the integration into the European Higher Education Area and many other institutional and policy changes. As such, Romania is required to contribute to the development of the EU knowledge society, by advancing scientific and social innovation. Romanian universities are known not to incorporate social responsibility in their core activities (Dima et al., 2013) as there is no policy framework requiring higher education institutions to create, measure and report the social impact of their university entrepreneurship. Our research elucidates the way in which these institutions indirectly talk about the social impact of their activities, thus creating the premises for bringing social impact into the dialogue between institutions and stakeholders. According to Hadad and (Drumea) Găucă (2014), ssocial impact stands "for the positive shifts that occur in the status quo of people (confronted with social problems) as a consequence of an action, activity, process, project and even policy undertaken by individuals, companies, NGOs, governments and so on".

Research methodology
The academic community agrees, according to a study performed by Gibb et al. (2013) that the most important institutional factor that fosters entrepreneurship lays in the way in which the mission, vision and values of the university are conceptualized. Extrapolating, we hypothesize that the same institutional leadership encountered in the university charter can be of use when trying to identify the drive towards a greater social impact of university entrepreneurship. Thus, the first research question regards the ways in which social impact is conceptualized in the institutional charter of Romanian universities, the document which lays the foundation for all academic activities:

1) What are the patterns/dimensions associated with social impact of university actions within the university charters of our sample of higher education institutions?

Then we compare the patterns identified in these official documents, with the patterns of meaning of social impact extracted from a content analysis of the presentations of institutional projects funded through the European Social Fund in order to see if the patterns are replicated and how much of the institutional discourse is adaptable to context:

2) What are the patterns/dimensions associated with social impact of university actions within the presentation of ESF projects of our sample of higher education institutions?

We also look at other venues of institutional discourse, e.g. the projects developed by these higher education institutions alongside the student associations that they house, in search of a better understanding of the patterns/dimensions in which social impact of university entrepreneurship is understood in Romania at the moment:

3) What are the patterns/dimensions associated with social impact of university actions within the presentation of projects developed in partnership with student associations by our sample of higher education institutions?

Thus, we are able to reach the main research question of this paper which address the replicability and adaptability of institutional discourse with respect to the social impact of university entrepreneurship:

4) How different are the three patterns identified in the case of each institution of higher education from our sample?

The data for our study comes from the top quality universities in Romania. There are twelve universities in the country classified as *universities for advanced research and education*, out of ninety public and private universities operating across the country. This ranking is the result of an evaluation of all national academic programs conducted by the Romanian Ministry of Education in 2011 against four main criteria, namely teaching and learning, scientific research, university relationships with external environment, and institutional capacity. As regards the university profile and core areas of teaching and research, there are three universities out of the twelve investigated which are focused mainly on social sciences and humanities (UB, UBBCluj, and UAIC), one university of economics, business and public administration (ASE), four technical universities (UPB, TUIasi, UTCluj, and UPT), three universities in the field of medicine and pharmacology (UMFBuc, UMFIasi, and UMFCluj), and one university of agricultural science and veterinary medicine (USAMV), for more details, see Table 1.

Table 1. *University entrepreneurship and social impact*

Acronym	Name	Faculties	Official Website
UB	University of Bucharest	Business and administration, Biology, Chemistry, Law, Philosophy, Physics, Geography, Geology and geophysics, History, Journalism and mass communication, Foreign language and literatures, Letters, Mathematics and computer science, Psychology and educational sciences, Sociology and social work, Political science, Baptist theology	www.unibuc.ro
UBBCluj	Babeș-Bolyai University	Mathematics and computer science, Physics, Chemistry and chemical engineering, Biology and geology, Environmental science, Lay, Letters, History and philosophy, Sociology and social work, Psychology and educational sciences, Economics and business administration, European Studies, Business, Political, administrative and communication sciences, Physical education and sport, Orthodox theology, Greek Catholic theology, Reformed theology, Roman Catholic theology, Theatre and television	www.ubbcluj.ro

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Acronym	Name	Faculties	Official Website
UAIC	Alexandru Ioan Cuza University	Biology, Chemistry, Computer science, Economics and business administration, Geography and geology, History, Law, Letters, Mathematics, Orthodox theology, Philosophy and social-political sciences, Physical education and sports, Physics, Psychology and education sciences, Roman-Catholic theology, Center for European studies	www.uaic.ro
ASE	Bucharest University of Economic Studies	Business administration, Administration and public management, Economic cybernetics, statistics and informatics, Accounting and management information systems, Commerce, Economics, Agrifood and environmental economics, Finance, insurance, banking and stock exchange, Management, Marketing, International business and economics	www.ase.ro
USAMVCluj	University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj Napoca	Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal science and biotechnologies, Veterinary medicine, Food science and technology	www.usamvcluj.ro
UMFBuc	Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy	Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Midwives and social care	www.umfcaroldavila.ro
UMFIasi	Grigore T. Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy	Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Medical Bioengineering	www.umfiasi.ro
UMFCluj	Iuliu Haţieganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy	Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy	www.umfcluj.ro
UPB	University Politehnica of Bucharest	Electrical Engineering, Power Engineering, Automatic Control and Computer Science, Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technology, Mechanical Engineering and Mechatronics, Engineering and Management of Technological Systems, Biotechnical Systems Engineering, Transports Aerospace Engineering, Material Science and Engineering, Applied Chemistry and Materials Science, Engineering in Foreign Languages, Applied Sciences, Medical Engineering, Entrepreneurship, Business Engineering and Management	www.upb.ro
UTIasi	The Gheorghe Asachi Technical University	Automatic Control and Computer Engineering, Civil Engineering and Building Services, Architecture "G.M. Cantacuzino", Chemical Engineering and Environmental Protection, Machine Manufacturing and Industrial Management, Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technology, Electrical Engineering, Hydrotechnical Engineering, Geodesy	http://www.tuiasi.ro/

Acronym	Name	Faculties	Official Website
		and Environmental Engineering, Material Science and Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Textiles, Leather and Industrial Management	
UTCluj	The Technical University of Cluj-Napoca	Architecture and Urban Planning, Automation and Computer Science, Civil Engineering, Machine Building; Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technology, Materials and Environmental Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Building Services, Mechanical Engineering	www.utcluj.ro
UPT	The "Politehnica" University of Timișoara	Architecture and Urbaninsm, Automation and Computers, Industrial Chemistry and Environmental Engineering, Civil Engineering Electronics and Telecommunications, Engineering, Electrical and Power Engineering, Hunedoara Engineering, Management in Production and Transportation, Mechanical Engineering, Communication Sciences	www.upt.ro

Source: *Authors' own research.*

The materials under scrutiny are the universities' charters which can be found on their official webpages. The charter is a document which states the mission, vision, principles and general guidelines according to which the academic activity in the institution is conducted. It is the foundation for all other internal regulations and it is supposed to represent a unitary vision of the principles which guide the academic life. The main sections under analysis concern the mission and vision, the strategic objectives, and the principles. These documents have been scanned for the identification of patterns and the extraction of those elements which are pertinent to the study at hand. There have been various studies which have used content analysis in relation to university official documents in order to show the degree of similarity among institutions (Boerema, 2006), the main reason for the institutions' existence (Stemler and Bebell, 1998), the exact nature of the third mission (Roper, 2005), the link between mission and performance (Palmer and Short, 2008), and the elements which form the basis of the institutional identity (Estanek et al., 2006). For this study, the coding of the categories has been done after a preliminary examination of the data. Through emergent coding we sought to create a complete grid of analysis with respect to the patterns/dimensions of the social impact of university entrepreneurship.

The same strategy of analysis was used in relation to the other two data samples: a) the description of the university projects funded through FSE from 2007 to 2013, retrieved from the official list of accepted projects (www.fseromania.ro) and b) the description of the projects implemented by the universities in partnership with their student associations retrieved from the universities' and student associations' websites.

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The major part of the data used in this study was collected from the official sites of the universities and other specialized web pages. Consequently, the current research findings rely upon the accuracy and completeness of data available on the websites, which means that some observations or comments made in the paper may not reflect entirely the reality of situation exposed and cannot be generalized. For example, several ESF projects (especially the more recent ones) did not have websites and it was impossible to identify any sources of information related to their description. We treated these projects the same as the projects that did not display any of the identified dimensions of social impact. Also, the sample of universities included only top research universities, therefore raising issues concerning the extrapolation of the conclusions to the overall population of Romanian universities, which are mostly teaching universities.

Patterns of social impact of university entrepreneurship in the charters
Most of the universities' missions mention in one way or the other the attainment of social, cultural, economic and technical progress for the Romanian society in particular and for society as a whole. For the analysis of the social impact of university entrepreneurship it is of utmost importance to target those elements of the universities missions which specifically talk about reaching out to communities: local, regional and society development, humanistic values, civic engagement, and public policy (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Social engagement dimensions found in the universities' charters*

Institution	Societal development	Public policy	Humanistic values	Civic engagement
UB	O[1]	M	M O	O
UBBCluj	M	-	-	-
UAIC	M O	-	M	M
ASE	O	-	-	-
USAMV	O P	O P	O	-
UMFBuc	O	-	M	M
UMFIasi	M O	-	M O	M O
UMFCluj	M O	-	-	-
UPB	M O	O	-	-
TUIasi	M	-	-	-
UTCluj	M O	-	P	P
UPT	M O	-	-	-

Note: [1] This indicates the location of the statement: O = objectives; M = mission; P = principles – MOP.
Source: *Authors' own findings.*

a) Local, regional and society development: This is one of the most popular dimensions of the social implication of the higher education institutions studied, as nine out of the twelve universities mentioned in their charter their involvement in the local, regional and national development. For example, UB seeks to contribute to the modernization of Romania. UBBCluj has as a single mission the contribution '*to local, regional and national development in regards to social, economic, cultural and political aspects, by an involvement in the reality*

in accordance with the needs of the community'. Community engagement is mostly explained by the fact that the university prepares or hires specialists who can bring valuable contributions to technical, medical, economic and cultural fields. Some universities go even further and name the type of activities their academic members can perform for the benefit of the community. The academic community of UMFIasi specifically targets the '*continuous improvement of the activities and performances of the national public health systems*' whereas UMFCluj has as a goal to set up of more university affiliated hospitals. This type of argumentation works on the basic assumption that the higher education institution gathers in its confines human, material and intangible resources which can be easily translated into community benefits. Inside this framework, community engagement is motivated by what the community can offer to the academic members in return for their services. ASE's mission talks about added value, the UAIC's about promoting the idea of a free society for its development, UMFCluj's discusses the development of society and TUIasi's charter mentions durable development and the evolution of the knowledge society. UPB's mission contains references to contemporary world and the ways in which the institution is able to contribute to its progress. These discursive elements are intended to act as inclusive agents who open up the institutional perspective, but, on the other hand, they can act as disruptors and dilutors of the academic vision.

b) Humanistic values: Half of the universities in question expressed their concern with the promotion of human values such as free thinking, human rights and liberties, ethical values and the respect for human excellence. Two of the universities also mention their concern with imparting the necessary respect for the living world and for nature (USAMV and UTCluj). UAIC has chosen to promote values that are more abstract such as: the search for Truth, the cultivation of Beauty and the spreading of Good. In most of the cases the values appear to be universal and not particular to the environment in which the university is located, a fact which is also expressly mentioned in the charters. The only exceptions are UB which also mentions the consolidation of the national culture which has to be integrated in the European space and open to globalization phenomena and UPB which refers to the socio-cultural progress of the Romanian society (and of the contemporary world).

c) Civic engagement: Most of those universities which are promoting humanistic values do so in the context of the constitutional democratic state. Also, we have to bear in mind that the institutions are run as public organizations which have been set up by the state, most of them having long traditions of public service. UB and UMFBuc mention their adherence to the principles of democracy and their contribution to the development of the constitutional state. UAIC only mentions the idea of a free society and UMFIasi supports the supremacy of the law. These are all civic aspects seen from a national perspective, whereas, in the case of UTCluj, the institution guides its actions based on the principle of making known the culture and the spirit of the citadel, a lower level perspective of the administrative organization.

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d) Public policy: Three of the universities included in the sample have mentioned their implication in the formulation of public policy and strategy at a national and international level. Each seeks a different kind of involvement: for UB the matter of concern is the modernization of the nation state through public policies and legislative content; for UPB the competences of its academic community can be best applied to the formulation of strategies and policies of regional development at a national and European level; and for USAMV it is important for the institution to act as an active element in the elaboration and implementation of policies and programs concerning education, research and innovation, technology transfer and work force employment at a national and international level.

The character of the institution bears important consequences for the formulation of the formal mission and objectives. The technical universities mainly talk about socio-economic progress with no particular instantiation and are less inclined to promote civic engagement and humanistic values. On the other hand, the medical schools are prominently featured as proponents of democratic principles and human rights, whereas the universities with a broad range of academic domains (UBBCluj, UAIC, and UB) have aligned themselves either with one group or the other.

Patterns of social impact of university entrepreneurship in university projects

This section is concerned with the dimensions of social impact that were identified in the activities performed by the higher education institution under study: European funded projects and student organizations' project. These will be compared with the patterns discerned in the previous section.

In what regards the dimensions of the social impact identified in the projects funded through the European Social Fund (ESF), we present the following situation (see Table 3):

Table 3. *Romanian POS DRU projects accepted at 30 April 2014*

University	Societal Development Score	Societal Development Rank	Humanistic Values Score	Humanistic Values Rank	Public Policy Score	Public Policy Rank
USAMV	50%	1	50%	1	0	3
UAIC	45%	2	30%	3	0	3
UPT	44%	3	11%	8	11%	2
UBBCLUJ	38%	4	32%	2	11%	2
ASE	37%	5	6%	10	0	3
UMFBUC	36%	6	21%	5	0	3
UB	30%	7	19%	6	0	3
UPB	26%	8	4%	11	0	3
UTCLUJ	22%	9	22%	4	0	3
TUIASI	11%	10	11%	8	0	3
UMFIASI	10%	11	10%	9	20%	1
UMFCLUJ	0%	12	14%	7	0	3

Source: *Authors' own findings.*

The dimension of *societal development* manifests through the following elements: "sustainable development", "knowledge-based society", "entrepreneurship", "Romania's competitiveness", "brain drain" and "economic cohesion". Based on their frequency, we kept the first four elements. "Sustainable development" and "knowledge-based society" are used as common sense ideas which do not need any further elaboration, they have no temporal or geographical determination and they are not commented in any way. These two dimensions are not found within the institutional language, and were probably borrowed from the standard phrases of ESF policy language without being adapted to institutional characteristics. On the other hand, "entrepreneurship" and "Romania's competiveness" are very well described and they refer to particular economic sectors such as industry, energy, agriculture, services, etc. USAMV ranks first with a percentage of 50%, followed by UAIC and UPT. Societal development is one of the prominent dimensions in the charter analysis, confirming the findings that state that societal development ranks first amongst the dimensions, followed by the humanistic values and public policies.

The dimension of *humanistic values* is depicted by words such as "equal opportunities" (that may embody social inclusion and non-discrimination – they relate to human rights and liberties/freedoms) and "environmental protection" – which mainly relates to pollution control. All the projects imply a high level of cooperation between universities, business environment, European Authorities. In comparison to the charter, only two universities encompass environmental protection. These two elements represent particularizations of MOP in the ESF context. The ranking has been altered, USAMV remains in first place, followed by UBBCluj and UAIC. At the end of the ranking we have ASE and UPB, universities that do not even mention the humanistic values in their missions.

The *public policy* dimension ranges from law changes, policies in the public health, cooperation and dialogue with the Romanian Government to changing the job classifications in Romania. We encountered "public policy" in the projects of four universities, namely UMFIaşi (20% of the projects) followed by UPT and UBBCluj with the same percentage of 11% of the total number of projects. Cross-analysing the charter and the project, we conclude that this dimension is not as prominent as the others.

Although *civic engagement* was identified through the content analysis of the charter, the evidence from the consequent research found no traces of it – we found no university mentioning it in the objectives of their projects mostly because ESF is not set up to support ideas such as democracy, governing, citizenship etc.

Next, we have analysed the projects done by the student associations in partnership with the university which clearly discuss about entrepreneurial community involvement and development, having identified three main themes: environmental impact, entrepreneurial thinking and action, community involvement and development (see Table 4).

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Table 4. *Number of student associations per university*

University	No. of student associations
USAMV	4
UAIC	21
UPT	9
UBBCLUJ	9
ASE	11
UMFBUC	N/A
UB	20
UPB	19
UTCLUJ	5
TUIASI	8
UMFIASI	5
UMFCLUJ	7

Source: *Authors' own findings.*

a) Environmental impact: Most of the universities studied are concerned with environment protection. There are various projects run by student associations which address ecological education of population, meaning environment protection, cleaning, preservation, or trees plantation. For example, at UB the project entitled *Botanic garden – the garden of my town*, which is run in three cities in the country, includes three stages of implementation focused on: eco-education, the beauty of nature and the preservation of nature. Other universities (UTCluj, UPT, UAIC, and UPB) sustain also environmental protection and ecological education (cleaning, recycling) through projects run at local or regional level.

b) Entrepreneurial thinking and action: One third of the universities in question promote projects which require entrepreneurial behavior and competences. For example, the project *European Parliament simulation* run at UBBCluj places students in various decisional situations concerning Europe global issues and encourage them to take actions. *Restart in education* is another project run at UBBCluj which sustains education transformation through a platform dedicated to innovation in education. At ASE there are several projects run by student associations which sustain development of their entrepreneurial spirit. At UPT students conduct projects which concern stimulation of creativity and development of visual language.

c) Community involvement and development: Only one third of the universities studied sustain projects which concern bringing contributions to community. For example, student associations from ASE run the program called *Global community development* which sustains through volunteering initiatives and actions social development of communities across the entire world. At UPB students run projects which encourage participation of young people in actions that deal with unemployment and its prevention among people of their age; there are also projects which deal with inter-generation dialogue, poverty, social exclusion or promoting volunteering and the benefits that can be conducted through volunteering. Other projects regard youth exchange having

as topic the youth unemployment and employability, which produce direct effects on the youth's poverty and social exclusion. To encourage dialogues between university and other socio-economic actors, student associations from UPB and UPT organize urban development competitions using sustainable technologies. The project *Act responsible – Social network for CSR* run at UBBCluj is another example of a project which promotes the social dialogue and sustains companies' efforts in their journey towards implementing CSR, by providing solutions and managerial help. Other similar projects concern the following aspects: raising awareness about the need to change social attitude and stereotypes at the employment and the workplace (UB), harmonious emotional and social development of kids belonging to disadvantaged classes (UBBCluj), sustaining the educational needs of poor or abandoned children, rebuilding the woman status and ensuring equality of chances in the national business environment (UAIC).

The conclusion is that the universities are doing a very good job in adapting their discourse to the context by employing two different strategies: they literally copy/borrow the key words from the EU policies, or they change them according to their institutional vision. With respect to the context offered by the projects developed alongside their student organizations, we found evidence of a highly permissive environment which breeds diversity and effervescence. Consequently, universities have found that there are different avenues of presenting the social impact of their university entrepreneurship and they act as able agents in finding the proper habitats for doing that.

Discussions

The definition of the third academic mission has pointed us towards identifying the ways in which social impact is referred to in different institutional discourses. The top public research universities in Romania are in the phase of establishing the 'why' of social impact, working on the definition of their social mission by making use of the ideas of societal development, the promotion of humanistic values, the change of public policy, and civic engagement. What we can discern from the content analysis is that the social impact is in many cases kept at a very abstract level which can hardly be thought to have an influence on actual institutional practices. There is a marked tendency to de-contextualize the rhetoric of the official documents from the local settings in such a way as to make it difficult to find particularities pertaining to the Romanian culture and to the individual institution. This is especially prominent in the case of the use of universalistic values which seem to act as agents of homogenization of the universities' discourses. Even when Romania is mentioned explicitly, it is closely followed by references to the globalized world of today. The problem with de-contextualization is the loss of a clear image about the particular stakeholders the university is able to interact with most efficiently in terms of social, cultural and economic impact. In some cases we have encountered different means through which universities can achieve a

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higher level of embedding such as mentioning a particular national system they are targeting or expressly mentioning the concern with the elaboration of public policies.

The dimensions of social impact identified in the universities' charters cannot be considered predictors of a particular university's activity, but they do indicate a general tendency at the level of the Romanian higher education system. The four dimensions of social impact can be understood as basic principles of university interactions with the external environment, acting as boxes to be filled with the right words according to context. Thus, at an upper level of analysis, the institutional discourse of Romanian universities is replicable, meaning it follows a similar pattern dictated by the four boxes. At a lower level of analysis, the same discourse is rather adaptable, as institutions are willing to borrow, for example, the principles enunciated by the European Social Fund framework.

If at the level of official discourse some of them seem to be on the right track towards implementing social innovation, at the level of practice there is a heterogeneous mix of initiatives in which the universities leverage their resources in different ways. The main areas of investigation have revealed considerable differences inside the sample. Even if the link between the university's mission and its actual behavior is still up for debate, every institution we studied has mentioned its desire to contribute to the development of the society and we have also found instances of university entrepreneurship with direct social impact in all the cases. However, the degree of social orientation differs among institutions, some relying more on the activity of their student associations to promote social change, whereas others take the matters in their own hands and implement social projects based on European funding. When it comes to the projects of the institution, half of the universities chose to use their specific competence to provide assistance to the industry and the public sector. This means that the partners involved in university engagement differ in the two practices we have investigated: student associations mainly target other young people and disadvantaged communities and the business community for support, whereas universities work with government agencies and associations of businesses.

The study has also pointed towards certain hypotheses which deserve further investigation:

1) The more the rhetoric of the charter is decontextualized, the more the university will focus on its core abilities and will favour those social projects which are specifically in its domain of activity. The more a university is linked with its local environment, the better the chances of it getting involved in activities which do exceed its core competencies, such as environmental projects and initiatives which promote humanistic values.

2) The type of communities the charter is targeting influences the partners the university seeks and its level of outreach (local, regional, national or international).

3) There are some institutional characteristics of the university which influence the way it chooses to act in a socially entrepreneurial way (type, location, capacity, resources).

Conclusions and implications

This paper paves the way for many new research avenues. Firstly, it is clear that universities are engaged in different types of activities motivated by social responsibility, but further research is needed in order to evaluate those practices against the social impact paradigm. Secondly, the social impact of university entrepreneurship on the teaching and learning activities has yet to be fully explored and we believe that further research will lead to the establishment of new pedagogical methods which are based on community collaboration and the creation of legitimacy for the knowledge accumulated by students by testing it against real situations. Finally, there should be more research concerning the impact on students' engagement with university activities generated by university entrepreneurship in academia. The university has to acknowledge that the accomplishment of any social mission depends on the participation of multiple actors and that it is a collaborative effort.

We consider the social impact of university entrepreneurship to be a particularly exciting and fruitful research topic and it is our hope that this article will bring us a step closer to opening up a new perspective on the role of universities in today's world. This topic is of interest, first of all, to academia, as they are both researchers and practitioners of this type of entrepreneurship, and, second of all, to national and international authorities who seek to understand what we should expect from these institutions and for the communities around them.

It has enormous potential to inform and enhance the field of studies in higher education, as it provides an excellent opportunity to rethink central concepts and assumptions regarding the mission of academia of teaching and researching by incorporating the aspect of social impact in relation to the public and private spheres.

While the view of the social impact of university entrepreneurship put forward in this article is far for complete, we see it as an important step to enhance our practical and theoretical understanding of the phenomenon and facilitate future research. Although based on a content analysis of institutional documents, the dimensions of social impact (societal development, humanistic values, civic engagement and public policy) that have been presented have the advantage of being extracted from the universities' own institutional charters, and not from national or international policies and programs that seek to promote a certain agenda and thus are probably closer to the current Romanian view of how the mission should be in academia. As we have seen, these dimensions are quite flexible and adaptable and it is important to understand that new programs do not fall on blank slates when we think of, for example, university rankings which have recently started to measure the social impact of university actions.

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