THE IMPACT OF RANKINGS ON INTERNATIONALIZATION, AND REVERSE?

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KEY QUESTIONS

- What do we mean by internationalization and how is that meaning reflected in the rankings?

- What is the relationship between internationalization and rankings?

- How do rankings impact on the perceptions, approaches and policies for internationalization by institutions of higher education, and reverse?
Internationalization of Higher Education

- A relatively new but broad and varied phenomenon
- Driven by a dynamic combination of political, economic, socio-cultural and academic rationales and stakeholders
- Impact on regions, countries and institutions according to particular context
- No single model that fits all
- So, difficult to measure by rankings
Global Trends

1. Growing importance of internationalization at all levels (broader range of activities, more strategic approach, emerging national strategies and ambitions)

2. Increase in institutional strategies (but also risks of homogenization, focus on quantitative results only)

3. Challenges of funding everywhere

4. Trend towards increased privatization through revenue generation

5. Competitive pressures of globalization, with increasing convergence of aspirations, if not yet actions
Global Trends 2

6 Evident shift from (only) co-operation to (more) competition

7 Emerging regionalization, with Europe often a model

8 Numbers rising everywhere, with challenge of quantity versus quality

9 Lack of sufficient data for comparative analysis and decision making
Focus of national and institutional strategies tends to be still on:

- Mobility
- Short and/or long term economic gain
- Talent recruitment
- International positioning

Far greater efforts needed to:

- Incorporate approaches into more comprehensive strategies
- Focus on internationalization of the curriculum and learning outcomes to enhance quality of education and research
THREE PILLARS

- Mobility
- Curriculum
- Partnerships

Rankings focus mainly on the first of these three
PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

- Internationalization has become a mainstream point of focus and reference in the Higher Education Sector

- Big Words are used to make this clear: Soft Power, Reputation, Internationalization of the Curriculum, Global Citizenship, Sustainable Development Goals, Comprehensive internationalization

- The Practice is still more on: Income Generation, Recruitment of International Students and Staff, Study Abroad and Teaching and Research in English

- And Rankings measure only these last ones
“Not only is internationalization a means rather than an end, but the ends may vary from institution to institution and the particular approach to internationalization chosen is dependent on the ends being pursued.” (Hudzik, 2011)

- We consider internationalisation too much as a goal in itself instead of as a means to an end.

- Internationalisation is not more and less than a way to enhance the quality of education and research and their service to society.

- And if internationalization is an indicator of quality, can rankings measure that separately?
A REVISED DEFINITION OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Reflects increased awareness that

- IoHE must become more inclusive and less elitist
- Mobility must become an integral part of the internationalized curriculum that ensures internationalisation for all

Re-emphasises that

- Internationalization is not a goal in itself, but a means to enhance quality
- Should not focus solely on economic rationales
- Should not focus only on inputs and outputs but in particular on outcomes
Updated Definition: Internationalization of Higher Education

“**The intentional** process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society”

(de Wit et al, 2015, European Parliament Study)
RANKINGS’ APPROACH TO INTERNATIONALIZATION

- Focus is on outputs, not on outcomes

- Limited number of outputs: international students, international staff, internationally co-authored publications, study abroad (U-Multirank only)

- There is no common agreement on the definition of these used indicators

- And these indicators do not reflect the broader scope and outcomes/impact of internationalization
Does Internationalization has an impact on rankings?

- In a narrow and limited sense yes!
- In a broader and qualitative sense, no!
DO RANKINGS IMPACT INTERNATIONALIZATION?

- Yes, in the sense of that their quantitative indicators lead decision makers to focus mainly on those indicators.

- Yes, in the sense that because of that, there is no priority in policy on more qualitative strategies, such as internationalization of the curriculum and more comprehensive strategies of internationalization.

- And Yes, International Rankings say something about how international universities are, although more based on the other indicators than those referred to as indicating internationalization!
THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY !?

- Increased attention to internationalization and rankings:
  - THE ranking of ‘International Universities’ and U-Multirank ranking of International Orientation of universities are examples
  - Same quantitative indicators: number of international students (U-Multirank incoming and outgoing mobility), number of international staff, international co-authored publications
  - No qualitative assessment, no focus on IaH, institutional
  - Is there another way to assess the quality of internationalization and its contribution to the quality of education?
OTHER WAYS OF IMPACT

- Other instruments like quality assurance and accreditation have a positive impact on internationalization.

- And internationalization can influence in a more qualitative way those processes.

- Processes like the ISAS of IAU (institutional quality assurance) and CeQuint of ECA (institutional and program, certified and related to accreditation) are relating input, output and outcomes in a qualitative way.

- Increasingly accreditation includes internationalization in its assessment, although even there the shift from output to outcomes is still limited.
RANKINGS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

- THANK YOU
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