Missiv, med diskussionsunderlag

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LUNDS UNIVERSITET

Universitetsstyrelsen

Avdelning Planering
Tim Ekberg, Planeringschef

Universitetets förhållande till ranking

Ranking av universitet har kommit för att stanna. Hur ett universitet placerar sig på dessa listor påverkar på olika sätt möjligheterna att rekrytera forskare, studenter och attrahera forskningsmedel. De olika rankingarna har sina egna modeller för att väga ihop olika indikatorer och generera en sammanhållen rankinglista. Gemensamt för de presenterade listorna är att det är forskningsresultat som står i fokus. Lärosätens anseende har kommit att spela en betydande roll för flera av listorna. Samtidigt finns det en betydande kritik mot dessa rankinglistor.

Under senare år har svenska universitets placeringar på flera rankinglistor backat. Det handlar inte om någon dramatisk tillbakagång, men trenden är tydlig och bedöms fortsätta i takt med att allt fler universitet tar plats och konkurrerar om ett begränsat utrymme.

För att få en mer samlad bild av rankingsystemen fick professor Mats Benner i uppdrag att ta fram en rapport, som finns som bilaga. I uppdraget ingick att göra en kartläggning av de större rankingar som görs samt hur de används av och påverkar olika typer av lärosäten. Målet med rapporten var ett underlag som kan fungera som ett diskussionsunderlag för hur Lunds universitet kan och bör förhålla sig till fenomenet ranking. Styrelsens diskussion kan bli ett stöd i de strategiska vägval som universitetsledningen står inför.

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Mats Benner
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Universitetsrankingar - en översikt

Svensk översikt

Vi lever i en tid av stora datamängder och ambitioner att jämföra och sätta betyg på basis av dem. Detta har, oundvikligen kan det tyckas, spillt över på universitetens villkor. Sedan åtminstone 1980-talet har det gjorts olika typer av jämförelser, listor och ligor över världens universitet. Dessa olika listor har ambitionen att svara på frågor som: vilket universitet ger den bästa utbildningen, vilket är mest betydelsefullt inom forskningen, vilket är mest prisvärt och vilket är mest samhällstillvänt? Rangordnat på en skala, från bäst till sämst.

Rankingar har därmed blivit en allt mer betydelsefull en del av universitetens villkor. Resultaten annonseras på universitetens hemsidor (också i fallet med Lunds universitet), och när rankingarna presenteras följs det ofta av stor uppmärksamhet. Medierna slår upp resultaten och de fungerar – hävdas det ofta – som ett slags vägledning för internationella studenter och för lärare som söker samarbeten eller utbyten. Samtidigt är universitet utomordentligt sammansatta och komplexa organisationer, som inte primärt är uppbyggda efter att svara på enkla marknadsförväntningar. De gör en mängd saker som inte inryms i rankingarna och de saker de gör som omfattas av rankingarnas indikatorer är inte heller enkelt relaterade till några framgångsmått. Forskning görs inte (primärt) för att citeras utan för att undersöka fenomen; inte sällan resultatlöst. Utbildning handlar om att förmedla värden och attityder, inte (enbart) om att förbinda studenter med arbetsmarknadens behov. Rankingar bygger dessutom på sammansatta mått som inte säger något tydligt om kvaliteten i enskildheter: ett högrankat universitet är inte automatiskt enastående i allt det gör eller hos alla sina medarbetare och studenter. Ett lägre rankat universitet kan bedriva utbildning och forskning i absolut framkant inom vissa områden. Rankingar är uppbyggda i en medvetenhet om detta, och deras ”svar” på dessa enkla och raka frågor är också ganska sammansatta. Åtminstone är svaren i sig uppbyggda kring en sammansättning av indikatorer som på olika sätt knyter an till frågor om vad som kan uppfattas vara kvalitet i utbildning och forskning (och i vissa fall också samverkan).

Framväxten av rankingar bygger i sin tur på ett antal skilda men sammanvävda omständigheter. Tillgången på data och möjligheten att sammanställa dem är alltså en - flera av de indikatorer som nämndes ovan bygger på just utbudet på analyserbar data. Datatillgång och analyskapacitet är alltså en viktig drivkraft; det går helt enkelt att göra olika slags kvantitativa analyser av så skilda faktorer som vetenskapligt genomslag och arbetsmarknadsanknytning. En annan faktor är en förändrad syn på universitet, en syn vars tillkomst kan härledas åtminstone 10–20 år tillbaka i tiden (Krücken 2006). Denna förändrade syn uttrycks i att universitet i allmänhet ses som aktiva och handlande organisationer snarare än passiva sammanslutningar av individer och aktiviteter utan samordning eller koppling. Universitet förväntas med andra ord fungera som målmedvetna organisationer som aktivt förhåller sig till sin resursbas, sina interna villkor, externa förväntningar och en uppsättning mål och ambitioner. För att kunna åstadkomma denna målmedvetenhet, måste de identifiera resurser, villkor och målsättningar, och dessa ska inte enbart vara relaterade till en allmän roll (att bedriva utbildning, forskning och samverkan) utan agera mer specifikt med utmejslade mål och ambitioner. Det ska dessutom, om vi följer tankegången, ske inom ramen för en samlad, kollektiv riktning för lärosätet (som världsledande eller nationellt ledande, alternativt som regional resurs eller utbildningsorienterat, etc.). Denna nya uppfattning om universitet som aktiva organisatoriska subjekt kan också kopplas till en ny förståelse av hela universitetsfältet – där universitet under vissa omständigheter kan utvecklas i riktning mot nya finansieringskällor, områden där de kan bli erkända och nå ökad ryktbarhet (Clark 1998). Universitet kan med andra ord göra karriär, genom att utnyttja inre och yttre omständigheter. Detta i sin tur innebär att det finns en ökad känslighet för att universitet som kollektiva organisationer utvecklas i den ena eller andra riktningen – och detta är en annan drivkraft att identifiera sådana rörelser, till exempel genom rankingar.

En annan och relaterad utveckling är den framväxande föreställningen att universitet kan jämföras och en sådan jämförelse kan göras på ett mer eller mindre exakt sätt (Salmi 2008). Detta är kopplat inte minst till länder och regioner som befinner sig i snabb ekonomisk och social utveckling, och där närvaron av universitet som uppfattas som ledande på någon eller några dimensioner ses som en del i denna strävan (Wildawski 2010). Detta är i sin tur relaterat till ett antal världsledande universitets ambition att kapitalisera på sitt goda namn genom att samarbeta med länder som vill stärka sitt internationella renommé (mest aktivt i vissa asiatiska länder, som Singapore, och i Gulfstaterna). Till denna grupp av universitet med globala ambitioner att paketera och exportera framgångsrika och högt rankade organisationsmodeller hör Yale, Cornell och MIT i USA och Imperial College i Storbritannien. Detta är en annan pådrivande faktor bakom rankingarnas betydelse, både för att söka efter attraktiva partner och att mäta och värdera effekterna av dessa samarbeten. Också i den svenska debatten har detta förekommit som en tänkbar lösning för att stärka kvaliteten i det svenska universitetssystemet.[1]

Det finns samtidigt en livlig och kritisk debatt om rankingars (och andra resultatmåtts) tillkortakommanden och kortsiktighet. I denna kritiska debatt lyfts metrikers och jämförelsers effekter på själva grundvalarna för lärande och forskning – där måtten lever sitt eget liv och där datainsamlarna och databearbetarna får orimligt stort inflytande över självförståelsen bland lärare, forskare, studenter och andra som direkt berörs av det akademiska arbetet (Williamson 2017). Rankingar riskerar också, allt annat lika, att förskjuta riktningen mot att upprätthålla ett ansvar och en bredd till att bli marknadsanpassade utbudsproducenter (Douglass 2015). Om så sker, reduceras den samhällsroll som universiteten historiskt sett har haft och de omvandlas istället till organisationer som svarar emot vissa globala och generiska kvalitetsmått – som definieras av andra, snarare än av universiteten själva.

Rankingar tar till viss del hänsyn till denna typ av kritik. Deras olika indikatorer hanteras på ett sätt som ska minska risken för skevheter: de enkäter som exempelvis QS och THE skickar ut hanteras på ett sådant sätt att anglosaxiska universitet inte ska gynnas. THE har initierat en ranking som bygger på hur mycket lärosäten bidrar till att uppfylla FN:s hållhetsmått.[2] Både QS och THE har gjort särskilda rankingar för yngre universitet ("under 50"), för att kontrollera risken för snedvridning på grund av ålder. De stora rankinginstitutionerna bjuder också in till olika typer av arrangemang och dialogfora kring hur rankingarna är uppbyggda, vilka konsekvenser de får på universitets sätt att arbeta. De erbjuder också - vilket är en

[1] http://www.malardalsradet.se/tobias-krantz-svenskt-naringsliv-satsa-pa-skolan-och-ett-utlandskt-toppuniversitet/
[2] https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/developing-ranking-based-sustainable-development-goals

förväntad effekt av rankingarnas växande betydelse – olika typer av konsulttjänster och liknande för universitet som vill öka sin förståelse av hur rankingarnas utfall ser ut och hur de förhåller sig till dessa. QS samarbetar exempelvis med förlaget Elsevier kring just denna typ av tjänster, där universitetens (och ämnesområdens) publiceringsprofiler matchas med deras institutionella förutsättningar. Förlagen i sig arbetar med en allt bredare ansats och erbjuder universitet, länder och organisationer olika typer av analyser av arbetssätt och utfall, exempelvis av Elsevier som har en omfattande verksamhet inom området ”research intelligence”. Mycket talar alltså för att denna typ av analyser – och vidhängande listor över olika typer av utfall och prestationer – etablerat sig på allvar.

Vilken är rankingarnas framtid? Frågan är öppen. Det stora intresset och engagemanget kring rankingar – liksom universitetens villighet att förhålla sig till dem – indikerar att de inte kommer att försvinna i förstone. Men i likhet med andra instrument för att mäta och värdera, kommer de sannolikt att utvecklas vidare. Rankingarna är dessutom speglingar av sin samtid. När de på allvar slog igenom tidigt 00-tal stod ambitionen att identifiera globala kvalitetsmått i centrum. Det gällde, enkelt uttryckt, att mäta hur långt ett universitet befann sig från globala måttstockar på kvalitet och genomslag. Dessa måttstockar har justerats efterhand och intresset förskjutits och vidgats mot också andra föreställningar om vad som är ett gott lärosäte, liksom bredare systemfrågor som de som olika ”research intelligence”-funktioner belyser. Rankingars lite begränsade ambition – att på en linjär skala identifiera vem som är bäst, näst bäst etc. – kan ur ett sådant perspektiv framstå som just begränsat, för att på sikt ersättas av mer komplexa analyser. Denna rapport försöker åstadkomma detta genom att tala om olika typer av lärosäten snarare än ligalistor där alla universitet finns med, oavsett förutsättningar och ambition. Samtidigt är jämförelser i listformat inte nödvändigtvis destruktiva; de kan skapa identitet, de kan skapa drivkrafter för förändring, de kan fungera som måttstockar. Som alla typer av enkla jämförelsemått kan de hanteras både passivt och aktivt, okritiskt och reflexivt.

Rankingar som sådana kommer i olika former (en längre genomgång av deras metodiker finns i det engelska appendixet). Ett antal rankingar arbetar med få, entydiga och lättkontrollerade mått som sin bas. Ett exempel på det är *Leiden ranking*, som enbart är baserad på publicerings- och citeringsdata av vetenskapliga artiklar. Den kanske mest välkända av alla rankingar, Shanghairanking (ARWU, *Academic Rankings of World Universities*) är också förhållandevis rak, eftersom den bygger på öppna data som den sedan viktar på olika sätt utifrån en tämligen enkel logik (främst priser och utmärkelser liksom närvaro i de mest renommerade vetenskapliga sammanhangen). ARWU bygger på idealtypen storskaliga (nordamerikanska) universitet, med omfattande vetenskaplig produktion, höga kvalitetsambitioner och en lärarkår som återfinns i den yttersta spetsen inom sina respektive områden. Dessa lärosäten utgör nollpunkten i ARWU, mot vilken sedan andra universitet ska jämföras. ARWU är på det sättet också en ganska stabil ranking, med tydliga hierarkier. Det finns sedan en annan grupp rankingar som till betydande del bygger på ryktbarhetsanalys, där akademiska kolleger och företrädare för omgivande samhälle får uttala sig om ett lärosätes position. De mest kända exemplen här är QS (*Quacquarelli Symonds*) och THE (*Times Higher Education*). De bygger på en mer sammansatt uppsättning indikatorer på kvalitet, och dessutom huvudsakligen på sammanställda enkätdata från lärare och arbetsgivare om ett lärosätes ryktbarhet, som helhet och inom olika delområden.

Utöver dessa de mest etablerade rankingarna finns en hel undervegetation av rankingar som på olika sätt försöker komplettera de etablerade alternativt erbjuda andra sätt att vikta och värdera lärosätens renommé. Många av dem har entydiga kommersiella eller chauvinistiska ambitioner och har därför ingen större betydelse.

Vi kan konstatera att rankingar används av universitet; utvecklingen är alltså inte enbart att rankingar pådyvlas universiteten utan de används också av universiteten själva i sin presentation. Lunds universitet beskriver sig själv på hemsida på följande sätt: ”Lunds universitet rankas återkommande som ett av världens 100 främst universitet”. Detta är ett vanligt förhållningssätt.

Rankingar måste förstås i sina sammanhang, som skiljer sig åt mellan olika typer av universitet men också mellan olika typer av ambitioner inom dessa olika typer. För att klargöra hur rankingar verkar och används, utgår denna rapport från en typologi över olika slags universitet (Paradeise & Thoenig 2016): *ledande*, *ärevördiga*, *uppåtsträvande* och *uppgiftsdrivna* universitet.

Till gruppen av Ledande universitet hör de universitet som definierar den globala standarden när de gäller kvalitet och förnyelse inom utbildning och forskning. De utmärks av internationell rekrytering av lärare, forskare och studenter och en ambition att driva kunskapsfronten framåt inom alla områden de är verksamma inom. De har en stor och bred finansieringsbas som gör dessa ambitioner möjliga.

Ärevördiga universitet tillhör de mest prestigefyllda och viktigaste i sitt sammanhang (ett land, en delstat eller region etc.) men är inte, på samma sätt som de ledande, internationellt ryktbara. Deras referensramar är alltså huvudsakligen nationella och deras finansieringsbas är också i huvudsak offentlig.

Uppåtsträvande universitet saknar historisk internationell synlighet och verkar ofta i länder som i sig inte varit särskilt framträdande inom vare sig utbildning eller forskning. Men de strävar efter att snabbt skaffa sig en sådan ställning, ofta på basis av stora offentliga satsningar för att bygga upp universitet som förväntas ta klivet över till den ledande kategorin inom kort tid.

Uppgiftsdrivna universitet, slutligen, är sådana som av olika skäl – begränsad finansieringsbas, smal profil, brokig historia och liknande – inte nått vare sig internationell eller nationellt ledande ställning, och som därför koncentrerar sig på att fullgöra sin specifika uppgift och identitet, som kan vara baserade i exempelvis tillgänglighet, bredd eller liknande.

De ledande universiteten har alltså en tydlig ambition att befinna sig i förtruppen både vad gäller utbildning och forskning; deras självbild är just den av att leda snarare än följa trender och tendenser inom forskningen och utbildningen. Hur förhåller de sig till rankingar? Mitt material tyder på att de har en tämligen aktiv syn på rankingar; dessa fungerar som ett slags kvitton på att de tillhör just gruppen av ledande och de (liktydigt med deras ledningar) vill gärna orientera sig efter rankingpositioner - om inte annat så för att försäkra sig att de fortfarande tillhör en exklusiv grupp av ”världsledande” (20–30 främsta i världen). En sådan status har också självförstärkande fördelar, och kan växlas över i större donationer, spektakulära rekryteringar och liknande – i vart fall är det så som ledningarna för denna typ av universitet tänker.

I kategorin ”ärevördiga” (venerables) dit Lunds universitet kan anses höra, finns en naturlig och historiskt etablerad roll som nationellt ledande universitet. Universitet som hör till denna kategori har finansiering och villkor i övrigt som kan backa upp denna position, och deras ställning som den mest attraktiva platsen nationellt har också – här och var – kunnat växlas över i internationell ryktbarhet: nationellt ledande betyder ju i många fall också internationellt framstående, exempelvis för svensk matematik eller neurovetenskap. Dessa universitet har med andra ord en relativt säker plats bland de 100–200 främsta i världen. Deras villkor förknippas inte sällan med förväntningar om att lärosätena ska hantera ytterligare uppskruvade förväntningar, kanske till och med att de ska uppnå status av ”världsledande”. Hit hör sådana initiativ som det tyska excellensprogrammet liksom Linnéstöd och Strategiska forskningsområden i Sverige. Men dessa satsningar, och de villkor som varit förknippade med dem, har sällan givit dessa universitet möjligheten eller ambitionen att utvecklas vidare, utöver rollen som ärevördiga (Vetenskapsrådet 2015). Förklaringen är mångfacetterad, en aspekt är att staten inte i alla avseenden varit villig att ställa resurser i den omfattning det skulle krävas för att växla upp till att bli ett ledande universitet. Det finns också interna faktorer som begränsar. Ärevördiga universitet styrs vanligen efter starkt decentraliserade ideal, utan samlad och samordnad riktning och ambition. Sammantaget är alltså de ärevördiga universiteten inte särskilt aktiva i förhållande till rankingar: de uppfattas som rimligt fungerande vad gäller att få den historiska positionen bekräftad, och de går att använda i extern kommunikation, men de ger få eller inga ledtrådar för det interna arbetet.

Om rankingar skulle användas aktivt som en måttstock på institutionell kvalitet, skulle de ärevördiga universiteten behöva fundera på sin relativa position – kommer de exempelvis att blir passerade av upphämtningsuniversiteten? Dessa förhåller sig väldigt aktivt till rankingar och ser klättrandet på rankinglistor som ett viktigt kvitto på sina strävanden. Och hur förhåller sig kvaliteten – den uppmätta i olika rankingar – inom olika områden i förhållande till varandra? Vad kan göras om exempelvis positionen är blygsam inom ett eller annat område? För ett ledande universitet är detta inte några dramatiska frågor: om någon del faller utanför ramen i externa bedömningar eller rankingar, förväntas dessa fallerande delar kunna förklara sig och kunna prestera en förbättringsplan. För de ärevördiga är situationen annorlunda. De tenderar att ha relativt passiva ledningsfunktion som inte onödigtvis provocerar fram interna diskussioner om kvalitet och utfall i olika kvalitetsjämförelser. De saknar de finansiella ramar som de ledande universiteten har, och de har inte heller den förändringsambition som vägleder upphämtningsuniversiteten. Samtidigt saknar dessa universitet de uppgiftsdriva universitetens fria position i förhållande till rankingar: ärevördigt är nämligen liktydigt med en viss plats i den globala hierarkin och den behöver på något sätt hanteras och bevakas om den inte ska förskingras.

För dessa universitet råder det alltså en sorts frikoppling mellan externa processer – där de själva gärna kommunicerar hur de placerar sig i olika rankingar – och interna processer, där betydelsen och implikationerna av rankingar tonas ned. Det finns rationella anledningar till detta, men det är inte riskfritt: Även en frikoppling kräver någon form av grundläggande idé om hur effekterna av en sådan frikoppling ska hanteras, till exempel om det sker kraftiga förändringar i rankingtabeller eller om det sker genomgripande skiften i hur rankingar görs eller används. Även ett radikalt avståndstagande kräver någon form av analys, exempelvis hur det skulle påverka rekrytering av studenter och lärare, eller hur den externa kommunikationen ska utformas.[3]

Det finns dessutom, inom denna breda kategori av ärevördiga universitet, stor variation, där Lunds universitet tillhör de mer försiktiga och passiva i förhållande till rankingar medan andra, exempelvis Köpenhamns universitet, använder sig av rankingar och jämförelser på ett mer aktivt sätt. Köpenhamn utgår från sin internationella ställning när dess rekryteringspolicy utformats och genomförs (idag anställs huvudsakligen personer rekryterade internationellt som professorer). Ledningspersoner inom Köpenhamns universitet har identifierat ledande

[3] https://www.chronicle.com/article/In-Norway-Government/148977/?cid=gn&utm_medium=en&utm_source=gn

universitet i världen – exempelvis Berkeley – som mål och måttstockar för utvecklingen i Köpenhamn.[4] Andra universitet i denna kategori, exempelvis från Storbritannien – använder rankingar som ett medel för att identifiera starka och svaga punkter samt att försäkra sig om att vissa nischområden når hög internationell uppmärksamhet. Rankingar används då också för att belysa en tydlig identitet som just ett bredare och mer inkluderande universitet än exempelvis de ledande, och samtidigt mer kvalitetsmedvetet än andra ärevördiga universitet.[5] Rankingarna vägleder ambitioner och klargör riktning. Gemensamt är att positionen som ärevördig inte tas för givet, inte uppfattas som statisk, utan som något som kan förändras också av egen kraft och därmed som ett medel för interna överläggningar och beslut. Denna variation kan stämma till eftertanke i det fortsatta arbetet med rankingfrågor inom Lunds universitet.

Upphämtningsuniversiteten använder rankingar inte minst i sitt interna arbete, ofta helt explicit. De använder rankingar som måttstock för framsteg och riktmärken för framtida utveckling. Deras relation till staten och andra intressenter är också i grunden präglat av rankingar. De utvecklas i sammanhang av stora samhälleliga förväntningar, och har i många fall fått kraftiga resurstillskott baserade i just dessa förväntningar. De handlar om att tillgängliggöra och modernisera utbildning, öppna universiteten mot internationella rekryteringar och att ge dem förutsättningar att bedriva framstående, ofta grundläggande men inte sällan också programorienterad, forskning. De verkar alltså i komplexa sammanhang av förväntningar, där rankingar utgör en inte oviktig del av dem. Syftet med de offentliga satsningarna är just att de ska nå internationellt erkännande och just därför används rankingar aktivt, i såväl extern som intern kommunikation, men också i belöningssystem, resursfördelning, rekrytering och andra funktioner.

De uppgiftsdriva universiteten, slutligen, har sällan eller aldrig ett aktivt förhållningssätt till rankingar, huvudsakligen av anledningen att deras profil inte passar särskilt väl med rankinginstitutetens idealmodeller, som antingen är stora, breda och forskningstunga universitet alternativt sådana som är verksamma inom specifika språkområden. Dessa universitet har istället en identitet som handlar om sådant som tillgänglighet, specialisering, arbetsmarknadsanknytning, sociala uppdrag eller institutionell ungdom – de är alternativ till den rådande hegemonin bland universitet och ser sig därför som aktivt orankade. Det betyder inte att de inte förhåller sig aktivt till vare sig intern eller extern kommunikation: de söker efter identitetsskapande markörer snarare än globala jämförelser, de vill inte och kan inte ha den bredd som rankingarna belönar utan letar istället efter relevanta och belönande goda exempel och jämförelser i sin omgivning.[6]

Kategorierna är inte homogena och Alla universitet är inte lika inom dessa olika kategorier. Exempelvis arbetar ett ledande universitet som Harvard på andra sätt än Stanford; de har olika syn på hur ansvarsfördelning, resursmobilisering och organisation ska utformas. Deras ambition må vara den samma, nämligen att leda snarare än följa utvecklingen, men vägarna dit skiljer sig åt inte minst vad det gäller ledningens ansvar och ledningsnivåerna inbördes relationer. ”Upphämtningsuniversitet” – exempelvis universiteten i Singapore eller i Sydkorea – har också olika förhållningssätt till själva upphämtningsprocessen (Singapore rekryterar internationellt medan Hongkong främst rekryterar kineser som flyttat till USA).

[4] https://uniavisen.dk/en/comment-what-can-we-learn-from-berkeley/
[5] https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/elite-universities-strive-inclusivity-only-point
[6] https://cshe.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/publications/douglass.malmouniversity.finalfeb-5-2018.pdf

Vad kan och bör göras av ett universitet som Lund? Som nämnts tidigare, finns det flera olika tänkbara förhållningssätt bland den typ av universitet som Lund tillhör – de ärevördiga. Flera exempel på en aktivistisk hållning har nämnts, med utmanande jämförelser och tydligt bruk av rankingspositioner för att stärka vissa områden och kanske tona ned andra. Lund framstår här som försiktigt, en hållning det delar med många andra ärevördiga lärosäten som gärna vill tillhöra de ledande men som inte kan eller vill skapa interna konvulsioner. Samtidigt är denna hållning inte riskfri utan kan under ogynnsamma omständigheter skapa låsningar och blockeringar, och risk för fall i ryktbarhet som sedan riskerar att verka självförstärkande. En tänkbar väg att gå, oavsett om grundhållningen är positiv eller negativ till rankingar som underlag för interna överväganden, är att stärka förmågan att överhuvudtaget förhålla sig till rankingar och andra analytiska jämförelser av universitet. Lund har idag bara rudimentär sådan verksamhet och mig veterligt ingen direkt koppling till universitetets ledning. Det skulle i så fall innebära att det skapas en tydligare ledningsuppgift kring omvärldsanalys och analys av förutsättningar för expansion och positionering av Lunds universitet, liksom en förstärkning av universitetets kapacitet att följa utvecklingen inom olika rankingar – och deras uppbyggnad – på analytikernivå.

English appendix

This memo represents the report of a commission from the Board of Lund University, to make an overview of how university rankings have evolved, their methodologies, and their implications for decision-making and strategy in universities.

The memo makes a number of conclusions:

Rankings evolved from two different positions: consumer-based assessment of graduate schools in the US, and the Chinese interest in global benchmarks for world-class universities. Together, these tendencies have morphed into a governance force in itself, where a variety of different composite indexes have been established to structure and hierarchize universities in the world. Hence, rankings have emerged as an instrument to guide attention and create identity markers of different types of universities. Rankings are by definitions intended to produce lists, and in so doing they represent a sharp break with one of the foundations of both higher education policy and studies of higher education institutions, namely that universities are embedded in their settings and contexts.

First conclusion: rankings are part of a global homogenization of notions of quality and of institutional capacity.

Rankings reflect the existing hierarchies and the steady state of higher education institutions - based on language, size, research income, and other factors that are not universally distributed. While this has been alleviated by some measures to also pinpoint newer institutions (such as rankings of institutions below the age of 50), rankings tend to reward and highlight institutions that are already widely known and recognized.

Second conclusion: in the short to medium term perspective, rankings reproduce existing hierarchies among universities, in particular between categories of higher education institutions: globally leading ("top of the pile") universities, "venerable" universities (top 100), wannabe universities (relatively lowly ranked but in an upward direction) and an undifferentiated group of "missionary" universities with limited capacity (or willingness) to climb in the ranking tables.

Rankings are based on composite indicators, however with different tendencies and weights attached. Some are purely metrics- or indicator-based, and are therefore relatively transparent and predictable. The metrics and indicators are, however, delimited and reflect existing stratifications (such as scientific prizes and citations). The dominant group of rankings are based on a complex set of indicators, which include both transparent indicators and those that are produced for the ranking itself (employability data, reputational surveys, and the like).

Third conclusions: rankings are often based on composite indicators. While this is intended to enable multidimensional inputs and holistic outcomes, it risks to create reinforcing interdependencies among indicators, results that are difficult to reconstruct and that may change due to changes in the weighting of indicators, and where statistical errors (or errors in data collection) may have large impact. The composite nature of rankings therefore addresses parts of the critique against rankings, but creates new shortcomings.

Methodologically, rankings are distinguished between those based on publicly available data, and those which are based on data collection done conjointly by ranking agencies, ranked institutions and academic communities. The former is the most lenient and most easily reconstructed, while the latter is more variable, multidimensional, information-rich, but also opaque. The general tendency is a movement towards "enmeshed rankings", where ranking organizations engage with the universities that are being ranked, not only for information supply but also for consultancy and collaboration.

Fourth conclusion: rankings are increasingly based on collaborations with universities but also the provision of auxiliary services, as they build on the engagement (and buy-in) of universities. However, the ranking organization generally reserve the right to construct and reconstruct rankings (including weighting, forms of data collection and processing). This duality creates a power asymmetry for the higher education institutions, but also a marketization of the very process of rankings which in turn risks to undermine their importance.

Despite methodological drawbacks, theoretical skewness, and potentially commercial alignments – rankings are used as (one of many) instruments for institutional capacity-building and for university strategy. One reason for this is that rankings provide benchmarks for universities and identifies certain properties associated with different ranking positions. The use of rankings varies considerably between types of universities. They matter the least for "top of the pile" universities and "missionary" universities,

Fifth conclusion: rankings are used, along with many other data sources available, by universities for a variety of purposes. They are rarely used directly (e.g. for recruitments and the like) in "mature" higher education systems, but more often so in emerging higher education systems where recruitments tend to be based on citation patterns, prize awards, and similar indicators. There is also a marked variety in how they are deployed in "mature" higher education systems: in systems where systemic competition and/or international benchmarks are emphasized (e.g. UK and Denmark), rankings tend to be used to a larger extent than in those where higher education policy is marked by other predominantly national concerns (e.g. Norway, the Netherlands). The general tendency is, however, for ranking positions to be used more actively in the profiling of universities as well as one of the outcome/impact measures that are being used.

The overall conclusion is therefore that rankings are hampered by many limitations, and founded on unstable theoretical and methodological foundations, with unclear patronage and governance. Despite this, they have become one of many outcome instruments available to higher education policy, in its totally: from students to policymakers, as they indicate relative positions in a (partially) global higher education system and pinpoint (a delimited) set of objectives for higher education policies. They are also to some extent deployed by the higher education institutions as steering instruments in their profiling, external communication and internal processes.

The implications for universities vary. For globally leading ("top of the pile") universities, rankings are of rather significant importance, as are they for wannabe universities. For mid-range (venerable) universities with secure national identities and roles but variegated conditions in global comparison, they matter less as rankings may challenge the rather loose organizational and leadership structure of these universities. However, somewhat paradoxically, the venerables profile their ranking positions externally and are therefore rather vulnerable. They are therefore the type of universities that are most affected by the rankings. As a result, some of the venerables have taken on a more active relationship to the rankings, for instance by hiring analysts and integrating ranking as one (of many) ingredients in their strategy work. The report concludes by recommending Lund University as a minimum to devote special resources to the analysis and monitoring of rankings, but also to integrate rankings and other metrics more systematically in leadership and management, not as a panacea but as one of many different reference points for a university which claims to be among the leading universities in the world. The alternative would be to avoid such comparisons and such unstable claims (unstable in the sense that they may change, and in the sense that they do not reflect any objective measures or analyses). This, on the other hand, would entail a very different approach to external communication and perhaps also an activist stance among universities in the world towards the phenomenon of rankings.

Introduction

This report affords an overview of the phenomenon of university rankings, how rankings emerged, developed, the role they currently play in university governance, and the future impact they might have. The focus is, particularly, on how universities of different composition and historical roles have - and could - relate to rankings, but also to other forms of comparisons, such as associations, idealtypical conceptions, and the like.

Universities, while being truly international as organizations (language wise, in their professional nomenclature and in their disciplinary foundation), have historically been closely tied to national conditions and national concerns. Their funding and their tasks have been at the same time detailed and loose. Governments or other patrons regulated the administrative procedures for universities and gave broad remits for their missions in education and research. Within this broad framework, universities enjoyed considerable operational autonomy (Clark 1983). Hence, universities operated in a concomitantly national, political and autonomous space. While there were certainly sharp demarcations within the group of universities – with differences in funding and reputation to match – these demarcations were seldom or never translated into lists or explicit hierarchies.

The United States was always the exception to this rule, partly because of the lack of a national political regulator (Ministry of Education, or similar). Instead came a series of attempts to regulate the format of higher education and research: through accreditation (tied to public student grants) and through the assessment and ranking of PhD programmes (the National Research Council) and of college programmes more generally (US News and World Report). The PhD assessments cover the entire range of PhD programmes in the US, some 4-5000 programmes, which are assessed according to 20 different criteria, from citations to the supply of student health insurance. Overall, the criteria cover both the academic standing of the department, the processes of examination and coursework, the future directions, and the social conditions surrounding the programmmes (National Research Council 2010). The methodology is rather straightforward for all of the aforementioned rankings; they serve as "consumer guides" to parents (and other who pay for tuition), but also as quasi-regulating devices in a large and complex system without a clear policy centre.

Another factor of importance in the United States was the skewed distribution of federal research funding (Feller 2018). Funding from major federal agencies (National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Defense, and Department of Energy) is does not reflect the bewildering variety of higher education institutions in the US, but is largely geared to a small set of leading research universities. Even though there are some counteracting measures, such as state funding and "pork barrel" resource allocation at the federal level (Feller 2018), the overall distribution is in itself a testimony to the variety of US universities.

The United States therefore represented a template for hierarchies of universities, and ways and means of identifying those hierarchies. But the North American university model was always exceptional, and other ways of identifying (and governing) universities existed side by side.

Historically, universities have fulfilled rather clear-cut role, albeit in different societal, political and economic contexts (Clark 1983). Following Clark's typology, universities were either market-oriented, politically-oriented, or academically-oriented in their governance. Market-oriented universities - exemplified by the United States of America – were determined by competitive forces, either in the form of pecuniary resources (the recruitment of fee paying students, the mobilization of external support for research in competitive processes), and operated in an organizational ecology with competition-based (and therefore variable) positions. A typical such hierarchization is afforded by Hermanowitz (2010) who distinguishes between elite universities, pluralist universities, and community colleges. Elite universities (leading private universities such as Harvard and Stanford, plus a select number of "flagship" public universities such as Berkeley and Michigan) marked by international recruitment of students and staff, large numbers of faculty being members of learned societies, prominent prize-winners, prestigious funding, etc. Pluralist universities – typically state universities with more limited research budgets – are primarily defined by their educational remit and broad recruitment profile and have neither the resources nor the mandate to pursue activities that aim for the prestige of the top-tier universities. Community colleges in turn provide essentially societal services and engage only occasionally in research. This stable hierarchy was, albeit unintentionally, the template for ranking policies, namely to concentrate resources and prestige to a small set of institutions while giving the rest of the higher education landscape more constricted and confined roles. It flies in the face of university policies of other

For universities in politically governed systems – Sweden is the example chosen by Clark – the overarching overdetermining role was that of a prolongation of politically decided functions and governance mechanisms. Universities were primarily seen as extensions of political power and shaped and moulded by such expectations. They did operate in a hierarchical system, though, as political steering was blended with historical appropriations and task assignment to the universities, with marked differences between old comprehensive universities, new comprehensive universities, old specialized universities and more recent specialized ones. But the ambition was never to elevate a small set of institutions to a position of excessive privileges, but rather to mitigate the preexisting hierarchies by emphasizing missions and mandates rather than preselected institutional positions. For the third category of university systems identified by Clark, those primarily governed by intrinsic academic procedures and values, hierarchies and positions were not tied to institutions but to professional roles. This gave the professoriate a dominant role in the procedures of academic environments. While this is not in itself incompatible with the accumulation of prestige in some higher education institutions, the direction of higher education policy was not to create a select number of high ranking institutions. Instead, countries marked by "academic oligarchies" (Clark's term) operated on a sharp bifurcation, where universities were either part of a rather homogeneous group of venerable institutions or part of a set of practice-oriented sites, with only limited status differentials within those groups. Belgium or the Netherlands are clear examples of this, where a set of universities were deemed more or less equally well-performing without any major differentials in funding or governance arrangements – or specific initiatives takes to elevate their respective position. The only major exception in this group was Switzerland, which instead emulated a US-styled policy where one federal university (ETH) was given infinite funding and a dedicated obligation to pursue academic excellence only.

Clark depicted the university systems in operation after WW2 all the way until the 1980s. What happened since has been a partial convergence, in the sense that the capacity of the US university system to produce high impact research, scientific prizes and globally leading institutions, has become a policy template for others to emulate (Aghion et al. 2010, Marginson 2009). While the recipe to emulate the US exemplar varies, and the recipe itself is not widely known even in the US (Cole 2010, Labaree 2017), the notion of "world class" and "excellent" universities has spread, as has the notion of "entrepreneurial universities", that is universities that have developed governance models that seek to elevate them out of the dependence of the state and instead engage with markets and other non-public stakeholders. This has taken different forms in different countries: Germany instigated a scheme for excellent universities in 2005 which explicitly aimed to elevate a few but not all universities to leading international status and afford them substantial amounts of funding to allow such an elevation (currently 11). For other countries, notably France, the aim to compete with the US dominance in the higher education system has been to conduct structural reforms in particular of higher education admissions but also in the form of alignments between the research institute sector and the universities. France has also, under Macron's presidency, heralded the notion of "European university networks" as a measure to counteract the dominance of US universities, with four to six universities of similar capacity joining forces and forging semi-permanent organizations of similar strength, size and visibility as their North American counterparts. As we will return to later, the changes in continental European university policy have articulated with the tendency towards rankings and metrics and address the consequences of this; Macron's proposal of university networks and the German excellence initiative are the most explicit examples, but it recurs in many other national circumstances too.

For the Nordic countries, the last couple of decades have seen the rise of new way of governing universities, with increasing organizational leeway, performance-based funding and enforced mergers and reorganizations (Pinheiro and Geschwind 2018). While little of this has been explicitly based on rankings positions and the like – indeed, in some cases (notably in Norway) the effect has been the opposite namely to decrease the ranking positions of universities that have been merged[7] - the reforms reflect a globalized template of university governance. For the US, the last decades have seen continuity rather than change as the North American universities still mark the very template for many of the rankings available. This notwithstanding, also they are in the midst of various mutations and reforms, notably to ensure that their contribution to societal development are properly organized, including affordability and alignment with critical issues for US society (Christensen & Eyring 2011, Crow & Dabars 2018). The most significant change in recent history is, of course, the rise of Asia as a region within global higher education and research. China, Hong Kong and Singapore, South Korea are the most bold and ambitious countries in this respect - others have been less vigorous or are still in a more rudimentary state (Benner, forthcoming). The main instruments for the elevation of Asian universities in the aforementioned countries have been resource mobilization and the recruitment of students and staff from the vicinity. But a significant measure to aid and direct activity has been the use of rankings. University rankings are used explicitly in university governance in some Asian countries, and influence recruitment policies, resource allocation and organizational strategies – certainly not as the sole input but as one of several measures to measure and assess achievements at the level of individual universities but also that of the nation as a whole (these countries typically aim to have a certain number of higher education institutions within the global 100 or 200

[7] https://www.universitetsavisa.no/nyheter/2018/09/27/NTNU-faller-100-plasser-p%C3%A5-ny-rangering-75541.ece

universities). In addition, rankings have been elevated as a side-effect of the global mobility of Asian – and in particular Chinese – students who use rankings as a selection device in their search for locations of their international studies (Chao et al. 2017).

The outcome has been the continuous rise of ways to enable comparisons but also yardsticks for university development. Indeed, the very notion of "performance" has been established only rather recently, and rankings have been instrumental in this process. While both the theoretical and methodological foundations of this are rudimentary – and much of the literature on higher education institutions pointing at the increasingly complexity of universities *qua* organizations – the practice of performance measurement and organizational comparisons has been undeterred. This partly reflect the globalizing nature of university environments, marked by student and staff mobility, and the mounting interactivity in communication and in collaboration. This forces universities and university systems to relate to their environments, scan and map them and act (at least partially) on the basis of that information. This process has been largely driven by actors and interests that operate outside the confines and control of the higher education institutions themselves. We would therefore expect both a reflective deployment of rankings, a critical discussion of the value of the information they provide and how that information might feed into the governance of universities. At the same time we would expect measures to avoid unnecessary constraints and demoralizing comparisons, which match national expectations an divergent roles with the global templates for performance that the rankings provide. These can be organized into *internal aspects* – how rankings may be used for identity work and for the governance of university matters – and *external aspects*, in the form of communication with prospective and existing students, faculty and teachers, funders, the state and stakeholders in society and the economy.

This leads us to the next issue to be dealt with here, namely how rankings are constructed.

Rankings and their methodologies

Rankings is as mentioned a relatively recent phenomenon in university governance and politics. Starting out as a media-based attempt to assess and evaluate which universities that are by one measure or another deemed "best" in a national context (emanating in the US and then spread to Europe), they have mutated into a global template for measuring and comparing universities. The most important element in this surge of rankings was the Shanghai ranking (officially Academic Ranking of World Universities, ARWU) commenced in 2003, which set out to disentangle different groups or strata of universities globally. The Shanghai formula is not hegemonic though, but has rather been complemented by a different model, spearheaded by the Times Higher Education Supplement's ranking, now split into two - QS and THES with some commonalities but also some fundamental differences. The methodologies of rankings can, simplified, be structured into two broad methodological approaches: indicator-based and composite with a core element of .

ARWU is often considered the most influential of all contemporary university rankings (Marginson 2014; cf. Fernández-Cano et al. 2018). Incepted to serve as a yardstick for the renovation of China's elite universities, it has evolved into a powerful instrument to compare and assess the qualities of the world's universities. Given this, it is striking that the methodological design of it has a design that is rather specific in its focus and choice of indicators. It is based on six indicators that are assumed to measure the degree of institutional excellence:

Quality of alumni: the number of alumni that have received the highest scientific awards (Nobel prizes, Fields prize)

Quality of teaching: number of teachers that have received Nobel and Fields prizes

Quality of staff: number of staff that belong to the category of "highly cited researchers" in 21 different fields (ISI/ThomsonReuters/Clarivate Analytics)

Quality of research: number of papers in Nature and Science (with special reference to first, or corresponding authorship)

Quality of research: number of papers in journals indexed in the Science Citation Index and the Social Science Citation Index

Productivity: as measured in the number of publications per full time faculty members.

The first and last of these indicators represent 10 per cent of the total weight of the ranking, the other four 20 per cent each.

The Shanghai ranking is based on an ideal university, the research-focused, large-scale (comprehensive, almost by necessity including a medical school), resource-intensive, university that operates in a global system of recruitment, retention and reward. This, again, reflects the duality of the Shanghai ranking: it is based on the contemporary conception of a "world class university", namely one which hosts scholars that are leading in their respective fields, at the ultimate level (Nobel prizes, etc.), and at the highest level below that (highly cited) and that have at its disposal instruments to assure that productivity is high and widespread.

Another ranking exercise which have been described as the most transparent and the least marred with methodological ambiguities (Fernández-Cano et al. 2018), is the *Leiden ranking*. It is solely based on bibliometrics, with data provided by the Web of Science database (Clarivate Analytics). It has been continuously refined since it was incepted in 2003, and is updated annually. In its most recent incarnation, it covers the period 2013-2016, and papers published in English and in so-called core journals (with an international, rather than purely national, reach and remit). It covers around 1000 universities worldwide – the smallest one produces 1000 publications over a four year period (Rockefeller University), the largest one (Harvard University) 30 times more. Incidentally, they are number 1 and number 4, respectively, in terms of scientific impact at the highest level (1 per cent).

The Leiden ranking uses two measures to rank universities: scientific impact and collaboration. Scientific impact is ranked at different levels of refinement, from 1% (as proportion of publications that belong to the one per cent most cited) to 50 per cent (ibid.). This gives an indication of how influential a given university is in the production of the most influential publications (1 per cent being a very small set, 10 per cent a reasonably large one, and 50% indicating the breadth of publications and where it is related to the world average). In addition, Leiden ranking provides information on the mean number of citations of a given publication from a given university.

For collaboration, the Leiden ranking includes a number of measures that universities are ranked by: the number and share of publications produced with two or more collaborative partners, with industry, and beyond different geographical distances.

The Leiden ranking profiles itself as a transparent and reflexive ranking, transparent by only using publicly available data, reflexive by incurring a dose of criticism to the very exercise of ranking universities and deploying the data available. It has also cautioned against the use of rankings more generally.[8] In doing so, the CWTS (Centre for Science and Technology Studies at Leiden University) has provided ten principles for the use of rankings:

It does not operate with composite indicators, and is based on one data set only to avoid opaque methodologies or weightings. It does not conflate size-dependent and size-independent indicators, to avoid discriminating against small-scale universities. In dealing with bibliometrics, rankings should deal in a consistent manner with different types of universities, to avoid confusing demarcations with, e.g. university hospitals. This again is a call for the transparent use of data sources. The data used should be made available to the universities that are being ranked to avoid mistakes in the data inputs or suspicions of unclear weightings. Rankings should be context-sensitive and allow for the recognition of different profiles when it comes to, e.g., industry engagement or international orientation. Rankings should be presented in a nuanced and sensitive way, to avoid sensationalist accounts. One way to do so is to include stability intervals to shod variations in inputs. Rankings should also, the CWTS argues, be presented in a way which does overstate differences on ordinal scales, for instance the difference between 200 and 300 on any given ranking. Instead, rankings should be constructed to allow for the analysis of structural (rather than cyclical, or temporary) differences between universities. Rankings should be acknowledged as skewed in relation to the totality of university tasks, and should be recognized as sources of information rather than foundations of judgements. Rankings at the level of universities should not be automatically translated into all parts of those universities, and instead allow for differences when it comes to international publications or industry collaboration. Finally, and despite the caveats, the Leiden group makes a case for rankings as sources of relevant information:

"When used in a responsible manner, university rankings may provide relevant information to universities, researchers, students, research funders, governments, and other stakeholders. They may offer a useful international comparative perspective on the performance of universities. The management of a university may use information obtained from university rankings to support decision making and to make visible the strengths of the university. However, when doing so, the limitations of university rankings and the caveats in their use should be continuously emphasized." https://www.cwts.nl/blog?article=n-r2q274

Moving then to the other idealtype, which draws heavily on the inclusion of peer review, are the QS ranking, and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE), respectively.

These rankings typically profile a mixed set of indicators, broadly organized into four broad categories: teaching environment, research volume and impact, international reputation, and industry engagement. These rankings are therefore more complex and in doing so target slightly broader audience groups than the ARWU ranking.

QS and THE afford a degree of openness and reflexivity concerning their methodological considerations, pitfalls and opportunities.[9] A critical element for them is comparability, between disciplines and areas of specialization for research performance, or response rates

[8] https://www.cwts.nl/blog?article=n-r2q274
[9] http://www.iu.qs.com/university-rankings/subject-tables/

among academics in the peer review, or the balance between national and international reputation.

They structure these inputs somewhat differently: THE gives 30 per cent weight to the teaching environment, 60 per cent to research (of which 30 per cent are based on bibliometrical measures), and the remaining ten per cent to international reputation (7.5 per cent) and industry involvement (2.5 per cent).

Reputation surveys have a strong influence on these rankings. For THE, teaching component, it represents half of the ranking value. For research, it represents 60 per cent of the total value. QS operates with slightly different weightings. It does not include financial metrics but instead put an even heavier emphasis on peer surveys (40 per cent in the world university ranking, with altogether more than 80000 respondents). It further gives a 10 per cent weighting to responses in an employers' survey (40000 respondents). It follows THE in including a citation analysis (citations per faculty, with weighting according to research areas, which accounts for 20 per cent), faculty/student ratio (20 per cent), and International faculty/international student ration (10 per cent).

This, the ranking organizations themselves argue, allow for a more flexible set of ranked institutions, with a less pronounced focus on large-scale universities as in the case of Shanghai:

"Many evaluations seem based on a US model of what defines excellence in a university. Thus their results are often dominated by English-speaking, comprehensive, large universities with medical schools. A widely distributed pool of academic experts help identify excellence in areas unmapped by other metrics, resulting in institutions from 32 countries appearing in the top 200 in QS' ranking." (http://www.iu.qs.com/university-rankings/indicator-academic/#toggle-id-1)

They have also expanded into sub-rankings of a wide variety of fields, for QS currently over 50, where more detailed composite assessments are afforded at the level of individual disciplines.

QS and THE represent a different approach to structuring universities, arguably somewhat less influential as global yardsticks as the Shanghai ranking but intended to be more versatile and flexible. They have evolved with various sub- and extra-rankings, such as for younger universities or targeting specific disciplines and areas in much finer detail than ARWU. Their methodologies rely heavily on their peer review approach, which - albeit corrected to reflect the composition of responses - reproduce conceptions of a reputational hierarchy heavily skewed towards anglo-saxon universities.

Conclusion: rankings are based on a fundamental theoretical and methodological challenge, namely to pare down a very complex set of activities into a small number of indicators, which are in their turn conjoined. They also struggle with the relatively complicated matter of data management and the desire to manipulate and change weightings and relative importance over time with expectations of predictability and longevity. This in turn is a reflection – see more below on the matter – of the rather abrupt introduction of rankings as a measure of both strategy work and communication strategies among universities. The fact that rankings have grown in importance as a source of identity and of internal steering (and government policy, to some extent) has increased the pressure on the rankings to be refined and changed intermittently.

One of the main weaknesses of rankings is the limited intersubjectivity, as ranking position tend to be different depending on the ranking at hand. Lund University ranks among the top 100 in QS and UWR, in the 101-150 category in ARWU, and as 353 in Leiden. While some of this variation is inevitable, it also invites an à la carte approach to rankings, as they may vary significantly and no stable standard exists. This has also proffered the introduction of very heterogeneous and inclusive rankings - not included in this report - such as the multi-rank exercise, which offers rankings that may satisfy needs and interests of those institutions that do not necessarily score very highly in other rankings. There has also been a surge of more or less dubious rankings which elevate specific experiences at the expense of others (Donetskaia 2017). Multi-rank, the European Union's alternative measure, merely underlines this tendency, as its multidimensional form - intended to serve as a complement to the skewed focus of existing rankings - primarily reflects another university ideal.

The different rankings therefore represent different forms of biases and skewed ideals: ARWU favours the North American large-scale research-intensive university ideal, QS and THE on their side favour anglo-saxon universities more generally (Bornmann & Glänzel 2017). While this reflects tendencies in how universities globally are oriented and where they identify strategic directions (Marginson 2008), it nevertheless indicates a defining weakness among rankings, namely that they reproduce current understandings of university qualities rather than emerging ones. If rankings are to be sustained, they need to find measures that encourage innovation and change, not only adaptations to global best practices.

Rankings and their patronage
When university rankings began in earnest, their aim was rather straightforward - to provide a form of consumer guidance and some informative directions for the institutions being ranked, based on rather straightforward (albeit primitive) measures. To some extent this tradition lives in in US based rankings where rankings are afforded with regularity and in the form of data tables, but as other rankings have evolved and profiled, and become increasingly utilized in different forms and forums, they have also spun off various services and auxiliary functions to guide the interpretation of ranking data as well as to provide preparatory services.

Thus, various consultancy services, conferences, and policy advice functions have evolved. ARWU and its host organization (Centre for World-Class Universities at Shanghai Jiao Tong University) organize biannual conferences on the concept and practice of "world class universities". QS and its collaborate partner Elsevier afford national policy advice and institutional profiling where the bibliometric analyses provided by Elsevier are complemented by the intra-organizational observations generated by QS. THE on its side runs the THE annual conferences (World Academic Summit), which coincide with the launching of THE's annual rankings and which cost a substantial amount of money (not disclosed) for the organizing university. Even Leiden can be seen as an instrument to advertise its bibliometrical services, which serve as a substantial part of CWTS operations. Thus, rankings, without any significant exceptions, are embedded in auxiliary services. Thus, it needs to be considered that rankings are aligned with various attempts to profile the services that ensue with the rankings, which again pinpoints the relatively fuzzy demarcations between rankings as free information provision and as expensive service production.

Different types of universities, different responses
A key element in the understanding of what rankings are concerns how they are met with, and acted upon, by universities. It has been generally assumed that rankings are an increasingly

important backdrop to university strategy (Hazelkorn 2007, 2008). In this section, I distinguish 3-4 types of universities and how they approach and deploy rankings:

- one category that can be considered a "top of the pile university",
- another which is in the global 100-200 ("venerables") with a solid national position but less pronounced international visibility,
- another one which is relatively small, applied and new ("missionary"), often at low or not discernable levels in ranking exercises.

I also include some notes on how rankings are used among Asian universities, where these categories do not necessarily fit, where rankings have been particularly important in the assessment of university policy progress more generally and for the individual universities in particular. This category is called, along the lines of Thoenig and Paradeise (2016), "wannebes", that is universities with only limited international recognition but with the aim to propel their international status and visibility - for instance by deploying measures and indicators of relative success.

Top of the pile universities are those which are consistently located among the leading 20-30 universities in the world. They generally have large budgets, especially for research, procured through a combination of state appropriations and competition-based funding, and/or with significant amounts of accumulated capital, land ownings or endowments. In their academic work, they aim for disruptive and innovative activities, and recruitment of faculty to match those ambitions tend to be global and recurrent - they consider themselves as "recruitment machines" more than anything else. Strategic thinking among these universities is generally long-term, aiming to secure and possibly propel their status in relation to other leading institutions. Strategies in these universities tend to evolve from both the top level and from the level of faculty – i.e. university-wide leadership sets goals when it comes to research incomes, the presence in certain selective forums, and the formation of networks and activities that are conducive to the goal of being "truly world class". Their main yardstick is therefore international and they aim not only for the recruitment of students from outside their vicinity but also faculty, and research funding.

How do these universities proceed on the basis of rankings? Rankings may corroborate their position as institutions that outsize their national role, i.e. they not only serve as leading institutions in their own university system but also function as nodes in global system. Rankings give their patrons evidence of their performance, but they also serve as yardsticks to elevate ambition, reduce internal slack and generally put productive pressure as well as to reproduce conducive modes of operation, generalize a quality culture and quality norms. With internal expectations of strong management, strong management needs underpinnings, rankings may serve as one input for those ambitions. Rankings are primarily aimed at ensuring that no major drops is recoded and that the university is associated with good company - *top of the pile* indicating that it belongs to a group of universities that define quality and impact. This also means, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, that these universities are less critical of the methodologies of rankings than the venerables; given that they aim for the highest positions in the rankings, they adhere to, and adapt to the principles of the rankings.

For one of the universities studied here, rankings are used among other criteria of a "leading" university: its top performance in employability, its global links, its location, its linkages and its position in global rankings conjoin in giving the university its identity. This identity work has also laid ground - in this case - for some radical redeployments of resources, including significant cuts in one of its faculties and the parallel inauguration of a business school, and the construction of new buildings. In this process, rankings served as one of many inputs, in particular regarding international attractiveness and how that might be attained. A numerical goal was set when a new Vice Chancellor was appointed, to belong to the "super-elite" group of universities in the top 20 of the world (cf. Hertig 2016).

A second category deployed by Thoenig and Paradeise is that of "*venerables*". These universities have a stable position in their national contexts, as leading or among the leading when it comes to reputation and attractiveness, but their international visibility is less pronounced than the *top of the pile* universities. Typically, they would count as among the global 100-200 universities, reputable but without the position (or funding) that ensues with the elite status.

For these universities, appropriations are more modest than for the leading universities and predominantly based on student number, historical trajectories, with some additional funding available in addition for various profiling purposes (excellence centres, or industry collaboration centres, typically). These universities tend therefore to focus on the constraints rather than opportunities that ensue with their position in the national university policy system but also internationally: "we will never be widely known internationally" said one vice chancellor of a venerable institution, as an indication of the (relatively) limited reach of rankings. Despite this, this university, as well as others in this category, keep track of its performance and from time to time compare itself with equivalent institutions, both domestic and international. This is similar to the tracking within a field of similar universities but in adjacent systems that the top of the pile institutions does. On the basis of this, the university at hand argues that it has had a much stronger development as a research university, in terms of scientific impact and scientific prizes (and similar), than other similar-sized universities. In fact, and this is pointed out in the interview, it has actually has taken some measures to profile its international reputation (recently its position in the THES ranking) as a vehicle in discussions with the relevant ministry. In addition to such ad-hoc measures and activities, it does not consider itself very active in relation to rankings as its position (around the top 100 in the world) is more difficult to translate into specific actions than the "super-elite" where both financial and recruitment (and visibility) goals are more tangible. Hence, this and other venerables are not very high profiled, but not entirely disengaged either.

Similar to the top of the pile universities, these universities view THES and QS as the most relevant of the global rankings available - contrary to the popular belief (also in Marginson 2014) that ARWU matters the most. For universities with only few, or no, historical or active Nobel or Fields prize winners, ARWU is seen as too geared to extreme measures of excellence whereas THES and QS are more versatile and flexible. They are viewed as valid although the methodology is questioned, especially the dynamic view of weightings, as is the lack of transparency. They also find the competition for services and arrangements surrounding rankings both cumbersome and they find it difficult to understand why some universities are so actively engaged in issues pertaining to that (including some of the top of the pile institutions). Newer forms of rankings, such as Multirank, are viewed as too cumbersome and not helpful, a ranking device mostly used by the long tail of institutions ("missionaries") that find something in it to back up their own position.

The official standpoint among *venerables* tend to be that recruitments and resource deployment are not contingent upon rankings. However, it was observed in one interview that internationally recruited faculty benefit from rankings as they help them identify the institutional status of the university. Students on their side, at this type of institution, tend to be less inclined to engage in ranking exercises, as they fear that it might drive the orientation too much towards research priorities and recruitment exercises internationally, to the detriment of current student conditions. The differences with top of the pile institutions should not be exaggerated, not least because of the small data set on which these observations are made, but rankings must align with their constrained resources, dependence on the state, and their recruitment profile which is still largely national. Unlike the top of the pile universities, for which the rankings serve as an important yardstick, the venerables studied here seem to fear that their fragile balance between different interests and goals are rocked if rankings are taken "too seriously": they express the anxiety of rankings becoming straitjackets, and instead wish for them to measure comparable issues but not point universities in specific strategic directions that are currently not attainable for them. This ties in with the generally rather constrained strategic maneuvering space of these universities – the act to reduce complexity and risks, rather than as the top of the pile universities which aim to maximize their exposure to change and innovation. Hence, rankings may serve as a disturbing force for the venerables; however, by treating them in this hands-off manner, they run the risk of stagnation and an overly strong focus on stability and incremental change.

A third category, applicable to the Asian experience (Benner, forthcoming, is devoted to this category and its evolution the last decades), is that of *wannabe universities*. These universities challenge in particular the venerables by actually aiming to be counted among the leading universities in the worlds, if perhaps not (yet) as part of the "super elite" which still are far more influential. "Wannabe universities" share with the venerables the relatively modest international status (typically at best in the global 100-200 league) but they match this with a totally different type of engagement both from their patrons - normally the state - and from within the universities. *Wannabe universities* are embedded in national strategies to raise resources to attract students and staff, not only nationally but also internationally (in particular from other Asian countries, but also to some extent from North America and Europe). Governments invest heavily in these universities, in particular for research, and align these expectations with various numerical goals, chief among these rankings. For the *wannabe universities*, ARWU seems to have a better alignment than QS or THE, as ARWU points in the direction of goals that are embraced by their patron governments, such as high impact papers, contributions to Nature and Science, and globally leading scientific prizes. They do not aim to the same degree for the rounded profile that QS and THE reward and may be seen largely as emulations of the North American ideal of research-intensive and resource-intensive institutions, that climb the ladder of international recognition via massive infusions of resources and recruitments into fast-moving areas. Their time-horizon is also quite short: the strategies of these universities tend to focus on and reward short-term and tangible gains in rewards and recognition, and rankings tend therefore to be of considerable importance as they give recurrent feedback on the development of specific fields and specific institutions. Ranking positions tend therefore to be included in the dialogue between patrons and universities. For these universities, top-don steering via managerial prerogative is an immanent feature and rakings therefore deployed as an instrument to seer and evaluate not only on a general level but also in some detail. If the *top of the pile universities* use rankings as a device to ensure that they are still defining the frontiers of their respective activities, and *venerables* use (or do not use) various techniques to ensure that rankings do not cause internal friction or radical changes in university governance, rankings function as yardsticks and measures of progress for the *wannabe universities*. It identifies, in a rather pedantic and straightforward manner, a set of institutional models and measures that can be deployed to reach the desired status. These are then in turn implemented through the organizations in a systematic manner when it comes to recruitments and rewards (Benner, forthcoming).

The final category is labelled *missionary universities*, representing the broad range of universities that operate with only marginal alignment with rankings, either because of their profiles (single faculty universities) or their age and reputation (nascent). Simply put, their profiles and historical legacy are not rewarded or recognized in rankings. Among these universities we may discern different strategies, but most of them seem to deploy a strategy of being an actively unranked university, viewing rankings as largely unproductive; for it, the main matter is comparability and justice (in the sense that indicators should be dynamic and not simply punish newcomers). The missionary universities thus operate through the identification of specific profile areas, where it wants to align innovative research profiles with educational engagement, and societal alignment and collaboration. Instead of aiming to reinvent and innovative entire fields, or through ensuring that its reputation holds international level (whatever that is taken to mean). The missionary universities seek alliances with governments and other patrons that support and reward specific profiles rather than the very broad and coherent organizational wholes that characterize the *top of the pile* and *venerables*. This they have in common with the wannabe universities, which aim to excel in particular fields where they can propel their international standing (and align that with national goals). For the missionaries, goals are somewhat more eclectic, as they primarily seek to forge alliances with local interests, with more modest aims to excel in fast-growing globalized fields. If a national system of negotiated profiles, where historical factors are downplayed, will be established, this will enable the university to leverage on the basis of such profiles. This will also enable them to translate their active non-engagement with rankings into clear-cut internal strategies of priority-setting and profiling. Without such alliances and such yardsticks of progress and success, they are left without direction.

Comparability rather than rankings are therefore key to strategic considerations among the *missionaries* – they aim to identify areas and indicators that actually measure change rather than identify static (and unattainable) status positions. Nationally they may therefore seek alliances with forces that recognize the value of a plurality of universities, and internationally, it seeks to identify similar universities with societal missions, which operate for the benefit of society and with a foundational ground.

Reflections on Lund

A few concluding points can be made of how rankings affect and apply to universities like Lund. Lund clearly belongs to the category of *venerables*, institutions with a stable national reputation (and resources to match). As with the mainstream of venerables, rankings and other comparative exercises may be viewed with some distance, as they may provide (unrealistic) yardsticks and risk creating internal tensions that cannot be contained or even managed within the current organizational and financial set-up. As we have argued above, venerables rely heavily on their historical reputation as nationally leading institutions, which has been translated into conditions conducive to relatively prominent positions in rankings. However, unlike the *top of the pile* and *wannabe* institutions, the do not have patrons (public or private) that allow for major resource accretion or drastic changes in strategic directions. But nor do they have the organizational leeway to experiment and identify niches and profiles that the missionary universities do - and that sometimes is also done by top of the pile institutions in their search for innovation and change in their activities. Thus, the venerables may risk ending up in a position of relative stalemate and avoidance of information - including rankings - that may be seen as detrimental to their organizational balance. However, if there are any higher education institutions that may see their fortunes and positions dwindle in an increasingly expensive and internationally aligned (and competitive) higher education system, it is the venerables. They should therefore, in a critical and reflexive manner, seek to broaden their understanding of their relative position in the world and similarly reflexively engage with those depictions.

A first step in that direction is actually to invest in a monitoring of rankings and a recurrent analysis of what the rankings say, why they say it, and what they do not say, and how that then might shape their internal activities and their articulation with their patrons. This would entail a strengthening of the analytical capacity to monitor and decipher the outcomes (and inputs) into rankings. It would also necessitate a strengthening of the analytical underpinnings within the management of Lund University, to assess the implications of rankings and blend these outcomes with other analytical inputs on the performance of Lund University on many different dimensions – from student satisfaction over highly cited papers to the contributions to global development goals. If Lund is to remain a venerable institution, it needs to critically assess which this actually implies in terms of internal and external processes - and it may need to gauge what other universities are doing and how the global academic field is evolving.

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