

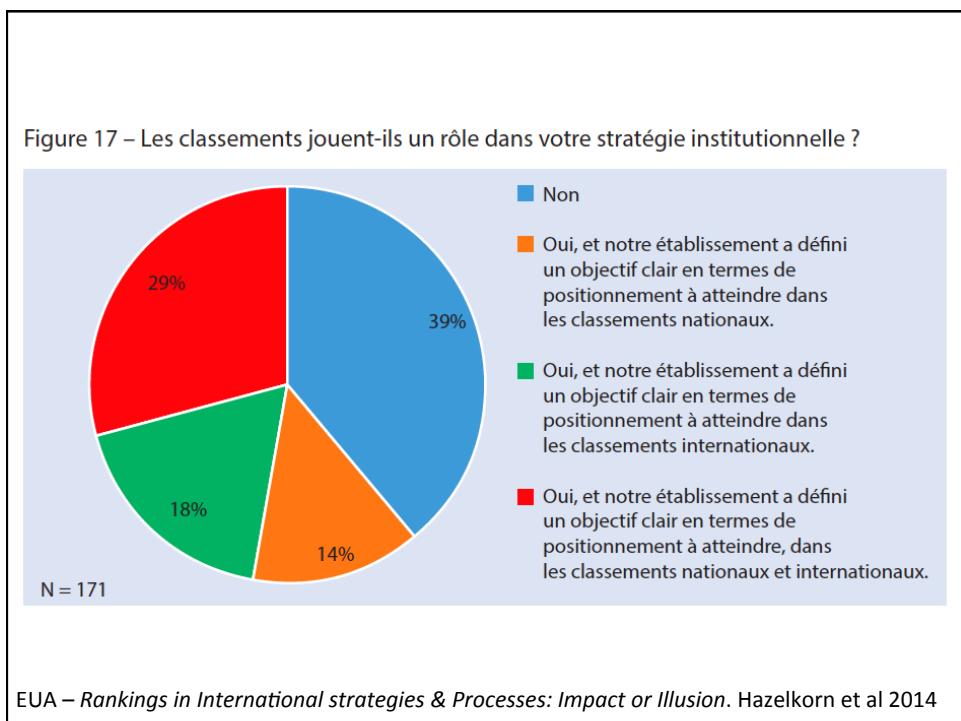


1

*Rankings have
an Impact*

Impact at different level

- ➡ At institutional level
 - strategic orientations



Impact at different level

- ➡ At institutional level
 - strategic orientations
 - Partnerships
 - Benchmarking
 - Recruitment policy
- ➡ At governmental level
(funding)

2

*Rankings are
weak proxies
for Quality*

➡ No universal definition of quality

80% HEIs = Fitness for purpose



- ➡ No universal definition of quality
- ➡ Reveal only parts of the picture
- ➡ Have methodological flaws

3

*Rankings have
specific purposes
and focuses*

	Selection	Focus
ARWU	Nobel prizes Highly cited	Research in science
QS	Highest n° publications	Reputation
U- Multi	Voluntary	Profile
Webometrics	all	Web analysis pub.



4

*Rankings have
methodological
biases & flaws*

- ⇒ Overwhelming weight of research
- ⇒ questionable weighting of criteria
- ⇒ Strong impact of Papers (vs books) in english
- ⇒ few & irrelevant criteria for Teaching
- ⇒ S. sciences & humanities almost ignored
- ⇒ Unclear definition of data
- ⇒ Sometimes poor Quality of date
- ⇒ Often no transparency of calculation procedures



5

*Rankings are
“unstable”*

	2013	2014	2015	2016
201-300	201-300	151-200	201-300	201-300
	105	143	138	
82			278	
P= 3430 P Top 10 =13.9 %			P= 37400 P Top 10 = 13.9 %	

- ➡ Criteria change sometimes every year
- ➡ HEIs “change” their data
- ➡ HEIs invest to improve data
- ➡ Differences between HEIs very small



91	The University of Western Australia	AU	4	25
92	McMaster University	CA	4	24.9
92	Michigan State University	US	50	24.9
92	Rice University	US	50	24.9
92	University of Groningen	NL	3	24.9
92	Weizmann Institute of Science	IL	3	24.9
97	University of Strasbourg	FR	4	24.7
97	University of Sydney	AU	5	24.7
99	Case Western Reserve University	US	52	24.6
100	University of Freiburg	DE	4	24.3

- ➡ Criteria change sometimes every year
- ➡ HEIs “change” their data
- ➡ HEIs invest to improve data
- ➡ Differences between HEIs very small
- ➡ Almost impossible to understand why

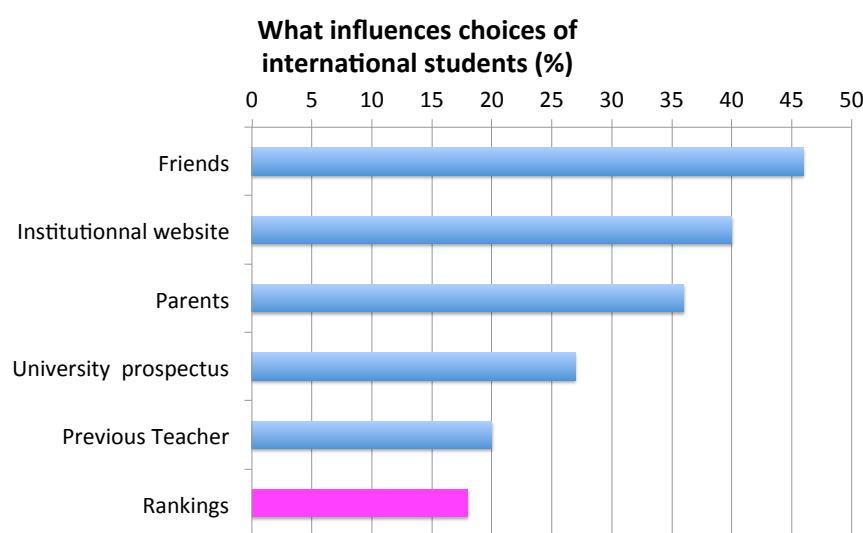
6

*Rankings are
resources
consuming for
universities*

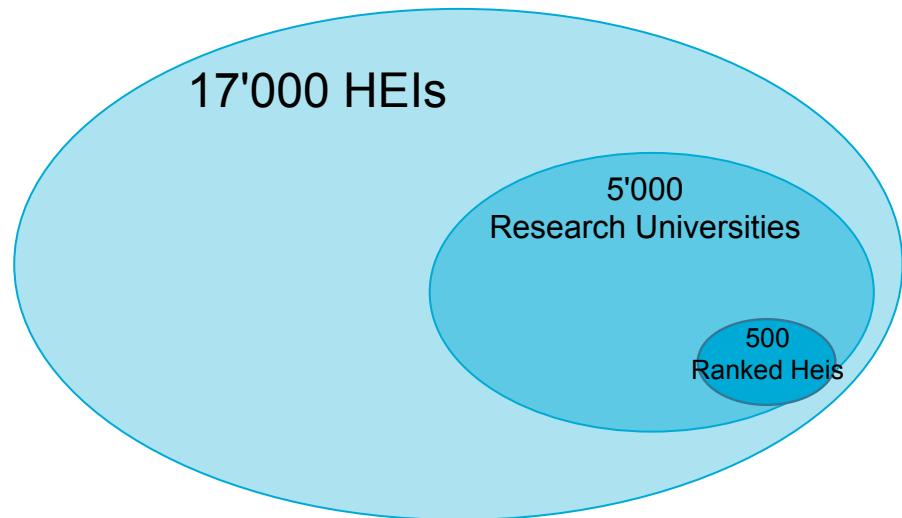
- ➔ Data set different for each ranking
- ➔ Date require specific inquiry
- ➔ Some data difficult to obtain

7

*Rankings are
hardly used by
students for
their choices*

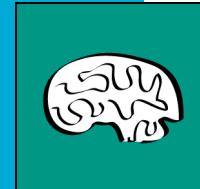


A partial view of the HE landscape

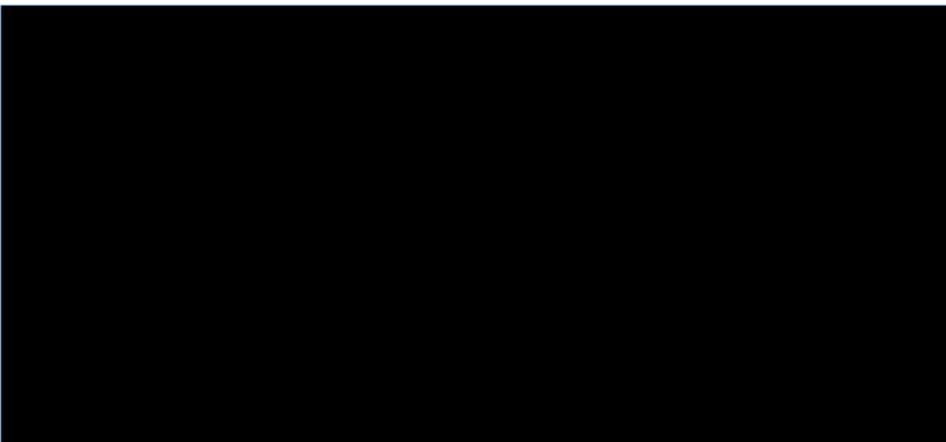


In short...

- Rankings have impacts but real limitations
- Be aware of what they really mean
- Be aware of conceptual & methodological biases of specific rankings
- Be cautious about conclusions and keep critical distance
- Focus more on trends and “groups”



Closer to a beauty contest than scientific truth ...



Common basic measurements but individual preferences ...