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UNIVERSITY RANKINGS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON CONTEMPORARY ACADEMIC POLICY

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University rankings are the popular issue for discussion during last decade. It is relatively new topic for academic area. The first national university ranking appeared in 1983 in American journal "U.S. News & World Report" and was based on opinion survey among college presidents, who evaluate national universities - just eight pages, which draw much attention of public, which showed the great perspectives for working in this dimension. Robert Morse was a person, who started this project and continues to manage it. "The U.S. News rankings are run by Robert Morse, whose six-person team operates out of a small red brick office building in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington D.C. Morse is a middle-aged man with gray hair who looks like the prototypical Beltway wonk: rumpled, self-effacing, mildly preppy and sensibly shoed. His office is piled high with the statistical detritus of more than two decades of data collection. When he took on his current job, in the mid-nineteen-eighties, the college guide was little more than an item of service journal-

ism tucked away inside U.S. News magazine. Now the weekly print magazine is defunct, but the rankings have taken on a life of their own" (Gladwell, 2011).

Only 20 years later, in 2003, the first international university ranking – Academic Ranking of World Universities or Shanghai Ranking – was elaborated by Chinese researchers. One of the founders of this ranking Nian Cai Liu describes the process of establishing of this ranking in the following way: "From 1999 to 2001, Dr Ying Cheng, two other colleagues and I worked on the project to benchmark top Chinese universities with four groups of US universities, from the very top to the less-known research universities, according to a wide spectrum of indicators of academic or research performance. The publication of the report resulted in numerous positive comments, many of which invoke the possibility of undertaking a real ranking of world universities. I decided to undertake the ranking project and the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) was completed two years later in early 2003, and published on our website in June of the same year" (Liu, 2013, p. 24 – 25).

Despite of their short time of existence, as Ellen Hazelkorn mentioned: "Around the world, rankings consciousness has risen sharply and, arguably inevitable, in response to globalization and the pursuit of new knowledge as the basis of economic growth, and the drive for public accountability and transparency. Rankings are a manifestation of what has become known as the worldwide 'battle for excellence', and are perceived and used to determine the status of individual institutions, assess the quality and performance of the higher education system and gauge global competitiveness" (Hazelkorn, 2011, p. 4).

So, ranking became additional powerful tool in assessment of quality of university education in a very instrumental, applicable and pragmatic ways with the direct relations to the interests of the main target audiences. "Rankings can help consumers see the value of their investment in higher education and hold institutions accountable for results. Rankings can provide with comparison of institutions in different countries. In addition, socio-political contexts, neo-liberalism, also add up the popularity of ranking among policymakers as well

as parents and students" (Jung Cheol Shin & Toutkoushian, 2011, p. 3).

Also, in my understanding, university rankings could be regarded as a kind of innovative social technology, which fosters the transformation of academic environment and support reforms in this, relatively conservative, area (Kurbatov, 2012, p. 59 – 75). This function is especially important for the system of university education in transitive countries, like Ukraine. At the same time, rankings construct a kind of seduction of simplification of university reality, which is reduced only to the indicators, presented in the most influential rankings. Also, each ranking, as a result of theoretical construction, implies certain ideal model of the university – imaginary or real (for example, Harvard). The process of achieving the main parameters of this model became a quintessence of academic policy at the level of particular university, involved in ranking race.

University managers with pragmatic and technocratic type of thinking take ranking indicators as a guideline for further development of their institutions. So, imperfections and limitations of ranking methodology are actively implemented in academic policy. "Many of institutional leaders set rankings as their benchmark in their vision or master plan for the university. Nevertheless, academics are quite skeptical of rankings because they believe that they mislead higher education institutions as well as have enormous methodological limitations" (Jung Cheol Shin, Toutkoushian & Teichler, 2011, p. V).

Currently we have many international university rankings, which could be classified in the following way: 1) rankings, whose main purpose is to produce league table of top universities only; 2) university rankings, concerning the research performance only; 3) university ranking with a number of indicators without intension to produce league tables; 4) OECD Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO), which is intension to benchmark universities according to the actual learning outcomes; 5) rankings only according to university visibility on the web (Rauhvargers, 2011, p. 12).

So, in this paper I would try to analyze, how global university rankings changed the perception of university mission through the lenses of

universal philosophical categories time and space – or, in other words, in temporal and spatial perspectives.

Temporal challenges for the mission of contemporary university

Since its origin as the social institution in the late Middle Ages teaching was the main and unique component of the university mission. “The university is a European institution; indeed, it is the European institution *par excellence*. As a community of teachers and taught, accorded certain rights, such as administrative autonomy and the determination and realization of curricula (courses of study) and of the objectives of research as well as the award of publicly recognized degrees, it is a creation of medieval Europe, which was the Europe of papal Christianity” (Ruegg, 1992, p. XIX).

What is teaching in temporal perspective? It is a process of transmitting knowledge, skills and technologies from the past. We could teach only something, which have already existed. Teaching is a transfer of past knowledge, skills and technologies in present time. The metaphor of the bridge come into my mind, when I am thinking about the essence of the process of teaching – a bridge, which unites past and present in continuous movement of human history. The sacred character of past, which is typical for the European civilization that time, underlined a specific place of university in this temporal perspective as a rational substitution of the church and a mediator between past and present. But the elements of rational attitudes toward reality and research component were initially presented in university life.

The decreasing of the role of church and secularization of the everyday life leads to substantial devaluation of the past and its knowledge. Research component of university mission became more and more important. The special equilibrium of teaching and research was legitimized by classical model of university, which was created at the beginning of the 19th century by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767 – 1835). “The German model bears the name of the Humboldt university. The credit must indeed go to the scholar and statesman Wilhelm von Humboldt, for persuading the King of Prussia to found a university in Berlin in 1810

built on liberal ideas of the theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher. According to the latter, the function of the university was not to pass on recognized and directly usable knowledge such as the school and colleges did, but rather to demonstrate how this knowledge is discovered” (Ruegg, 2004, p. 5). But “although the link between teaching and research was at the heart of the Prussian model, initially, at least, research was limited to a subordinate role” (Charle, 2004, p. 48 – 49).

Let us look at the research in temporal perspective. It is a kind of transfer of knowledge and skills from the future. If we research something it means we have no knowledge on this issue and expect to receive it. The increasing of the value of the future in the life of European civilization legitimized the importance of research as one of key components of university mission. In comparison with the results of teaching, the research results are much more measurable and it is easy to quantify them, and this gives additional reason to use them as indicators of university rankings.

We could observe the increasing of the importance of research at elite segment of university education during the second half of the 20th century, and this tendency receive a powerful support with the origin of international university ranking. The first international university ranking – Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) or Shanghai Ranking – is based mostly of research indicators. In table 1 you could see the main indicators of this ranking in 2003 – 2015, which do not passed through substantial changes up to the current time¹:

¹ Academic Ranking of World Universities. Retrieved from: <<http://www.shanghairanking.com/>>.

Table 1.
Indicators and Weights for ARWU 2003 - 2015

Indicator	Description	Score
Quality of Education	Alumni of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals	10 %
Quality of Faculty	Staff of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals	20 %
Quality of Faculty	Highly cited researchers in 21 broad subject categories	20 %
Research Output	Papers published in Nature and Science	20 %
Research Output	Papers indexed in Science Citation Index-expanded and Social Science Citation Index	20 %
Per Capita Performance	Per capita academic performance of an institution	10 %
Total		100 %

We have already mentioned the classification of rankings, provided by Andrejs Rauhvargers with the special cluster of "ranking, concerning the research performance only" (Rauhvargers, 2011, p. 12). The typical example of this group of rankings is CWTS Leiden Ranking², which in 2015 was based on publications in Thomson Reuters Web of Science database (Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Science Citation Index and Arts & Humanities Citation Index) in the period 2010 - 2013. Other example of ranking, which is based on the results of research activities, is University Ranking by Academic Performance URAP. The intention of URAP is "to help universities identify potential areas of progress with respect to specific academic performance indicator"³. Also, we could mention here SCImago Research Rankings⁴.

Such substantial attention to the research performance in international university rankings additionally fostered the orientation of the management of elite university toward improving of the research performance of their institutions and articulated the question re-

garding finding the optimal balance between teaching and research as the main components of the mission of contemporary university. If we take this question in broad philosophical perspective it would be the looking for a new balance between value of the past and value of the future in the life of contemporary civilization.

Spatial challenges for the mission of contemporary university

Although the first European universities were a kind of international institutions, the origin of the majority of them coincided with the origin and development of national state. "After 1500, the mission of nationalization or service to the government of the nation-state embraced the traditional teaching mission. Today, most of Europe's and, hence, the world's universities are national institutions that retain early modern mission of service to the state whether the state is free or totalitarian" (Scott, 2006, p. 10).

But after the end of the Second World War the process of globalization in university education started. Before the origin of international rankings Philip Altbath describes the relations between national and international components of university mission in the following way: "Higher education is both national and international. There are many national variations in organization and management of academe. Yet, there is also important international element. Not only does academe have common historical roots, but contemporary forces are making higher education even more influenced by global trends. Perhaps, more than any time since the Middle Ages - when universities functioned in a common language (Latin) and both faculty and students were highly mobile, academe operates in global environment. Now, English is in some ways a Latin of the new era. There is again an international labor market for professoriate, and more than one million students are studied outside their own countries" (Altbach, 2000, p. 2).

What do national and international dimensions of university activities mean in spatial sense? In the framework of nationalization university became a centre of collection, study and spreading the certain discourses of natio-

² CWTS Leiden Ranking 2015. Retrieved from: <<http://www.leidenranking.com/methodology/indicators>>

³ University Ranking of Academic Performance. Goal and Scope. Retrieved from: <<http://www.urapcenter.org/2014/methodology.php?q=2>>.

⁴ SCImago Institutions Rankings. Retrieved from: <<http://www.scimagoir.com/>>.

nal culture and producing bureaucracy for national state. So, it maintains the function of political and cultural separation. Instead of this in the framework of globalization elite university became a centre of spreading of transnational ideas, approached, technologies. So, the function of university in this context is to support a global unification of humanity.

If we analyze the main indicators of the international university ranking we would see, that they almost totally ignore the national dimension of university activities, but the indicators for evaluation of internationalization are important and visible among other indicators. In Table 2 we present direct indicators of internationalization in THE World University Rankings⁵ and QS World University Rankings⁶ in 2015:

Table 2.
Indicators of internationalization in THE and QS World university Rankings in 2015

Indicator	THE	QS
International students ratio	2,5 %	5 %
International faculty ratio	2,5 %	5 %
International collaboration	2,5 %	-

Conclusions

Finally, we could identify a kind of temporal and spatial asymmetry in understanding of the mission of contemporary university and international university ranking in the 21st century become one of the most important factors of academic policy, which supported this asymmetry. At temporal intersection of university mission this is a stress on research activities, and at spatial intersection - on internationalization. So, the ranking methodology needs to be improved in order to find a balance between the main components of university mission: teaching, research, nationalization and internationalization, which would help to overcome this asymmetry at the level of academic policy.

⁵ Times Higher Education World University Rankings. About. Retrieved from: <<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/ranking-methodology-2016>>.

⁶ QS World University Rankings: Methodology. Retrieved from: <<http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings-articles/world-university-rankings/qs-world-university-rankings-methodology>>.

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