



## The University Rankings and Europe-seminar

Time: 26 October, 2011

Place: Porthania III (Yliopistonkatu 3), University of Helsinki

Contact: Tero Erkkilä (tero.erkkila@helsinki.fi), Max Eklund (max.eklund@helsinki.fi)

The seminar is open for all interested. Everyone attending the seminar is also invited to the related Rector's reception at 18:00. We would kindly ask you to inform us by email (to max.eklund@helsinki.fi) about your participation in the seminar and the reception by 19 October.

### Programme

10:00–12:00 *University Rankings and the European Higher Education Policies*  
(Chair: Juhana Aunesluoma)

#### **Welcome: University Rankings and Europe**

Tero Erkkilä, University of Helsinki

#### **The Impacts of Rankings on the European Higher Education Landscape**

Barbara M. Kehm, University of Kassel

#### **The University in Competition for Excellence. The Impact of Rankings on the Academic Field**

Richard Münch, Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg

12:00–13:30 Lunch break

13:30–15:30 *University Rankings and Academic Research in Europe* (Chair: Ilkka Arminen)

#### **How to Measure Excellence in Social Sciences and Humanities**

Arto Mustajoki, University of Helsinki

#### **“The Nordic Model”, Excellence Initiatives and University Rankings**

Åse Gornitzka, University of Oslo

#### **University Rankings and Political Science in Europe**

Niilo Kauppi, University of Strasbourg

15:30–15:50 Coffee

15:50–17:45 *Impacts on European Higher Education Institutions* (Chair: Tero Erkkilä)

#### **The Drift to Conformity: the Myth of Institutional Diversity**

Jon Nixon, University of Sheffield

#### **Organizational Structures and Disciplinary Rankings: The Case of Political Science**

Erkki Berndtson, University of Helsinki

#### **The Bologna Process, the European Commission and University Rankings: The Most Remarkable Transformation of Higher Education in Europe**

Bob Reinalda, Radboud University Nijmegen

18:00–20:00 Rector's reception, hosted by Vice-Rector Jukka Kola



## Abstracts & Biographies

### Organisational Structures and Disciplinary Rankings:

#### The Case of Political Science

Erkki Berndtson

**ABSTRACT** Academic rankings mainly focus on universities, especially those concerning regional or global rankings. These rankings often do not take into account disciplinary variations within universities although higher education institutions are based on academic disciplines. There are some disciplinary rankings, but they are often interested in analysing disciplines only at the national level. There is one exception, however. Simon Hix's study "*A Global Ranking of Political Science Departments*" (Political Studies Review 2004). This paper reviews Hix's study critically and broadens the perspective by asking, what is the discipline of political science? Does it matter for the global or regional ranking of a discipline, how we define the discipline and how the discipline is organized within universities? The paper focuses mainly on European political science departments. However, to understand the disciplinary logic of political science, the European situation is compared with political science in other parts of the world.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE** Erkki Berndtson is Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the University of Helsinki. His research interests include history of political science, politics of higher education, power and democratic theory, architecture and public space as well as U.S. government and politics. He is currently Vice Chair of the IPSA Research Committee on "The Study of the Discipline of Political Science". One of his latest publications in the field of higher education policy is "*Education Policy and the Harmonization of Political Science as a Discipline*", in Anja P. Jakobi, Kerstin Martens, Klaus Dieter Wolf (eds.), *Education in Political Science* (Routledge, London, 2009).

### University Rankings and Europe

Tero Erkkilä

**ABSTRACT** The first global university rankings have not yet existed for a decade, but they have nevertheless received an unprecedented attention among policy experts of higher education as well as politicians and general public. These rankings have geographic implications as they make rank orders not only of universities but indirectly also of countries and regions, revealing the systemic differences among these. They render the institutional traditions visible, making for instance European university model a policy concern in the EU.



The rankings are also increasingly policy relevant. There are several on-going reforms in the domain of higher education in Europe that refer to the university rankings when identifying state of affairs that demand action. I will discuss the above implications of global university rankings, claiming that the rankings have created a political imaginary of competition, where the European universities are to be reformed to be successful. Outlining reform ideas involved, I will claim that the rankings are increasingly steering the higher education on the EU-level, as well as on national and institutional levels. I will conclude with a critical assessment of the ideational elements inherent in the rankings and the potential institutional outcomes of their policy prescriptions.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE** Tero Erkkilä (D.Soc.Sci.) is acting as a University Lecturer of political science at the Department of Political and Economic Studies, University of Helsinki. His research interests include transnational governance, public institutions and collective identities. He has published on accountability, transparency, public information management, governance indices, higher education rankings and EU concepts. His recent publications on the topic include a monograph on *Government Transparency* by Palgrave Macmillan (forthcoming), and articles *The Making of a Global Field of Higher Education: Actors, Institutions and Public Policy Instruments* (with Niilo Kauppi) in *International Political Sociology* (forthcoming), and *Alternatives to Existing International Rankings* (with Niilo Kauppi) in *UNESCO World Social Science Report*, 2010.

### **“The Nordic Model”, excellence initiatives and university rankings**

Åse Gornitzka

**ABSTRACT** At the European level the reference to university rankings has been used frequently to “diagnose” European universities and to prescribe the appropriate remedies, such as in the calls for the modernisation of European universities and reform initiatives aimed at promoting the innovative orientation of universities. We have also seen how actors that are part of the EU policy landscape on higher education and research attempt to provide *alternative* accounts of European universities. This presentation on the other hand will focus on national level reform initiatives and examine how university rankings and the underlying indicators on which these are based are related to the string of excellence initiatives in the Nordic University systems. The presentation will be based on the first phase of a new research project funded by the Research Council of Norway examining the way in which Flagship universities in eight small Northwestern European countries have used their institutional autonomy to balance academic excellence and economic relevance.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE** Dr. Åse Gornitzka is Research Professor and political scientist at ARENA Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo. ARENA is an interdisciplinary centre for advanced studies on the dynamics of the European system of governance. Particular emphasis is on the transformation of the European political order through the development of the European Union.



Previously Gornitzka was senior researcher at the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education and senior research associate at the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at the University of Twente, the Netherlands. She holds a doctoral degree from the Faculty of Public Administration, University of Twente. Her research at Arena has been focussed on the development and institutionalisation a multilevel Union administration and governance capacity at the European level, amongst other with a special focus on a “Europe of Knowledge” and role of expertise in EU policy making. She has conducted several studies on university organisation (incl. work on administrative change and bureaucratisation of universities) and on comparative research and higher education policy. Gornitzka is also now heading a two-year project funded by the Research Council of Norway entitled “European Flagship Universities: balancing academic excellence and socio-economic relevance (FLAGSHIP)”.

Recent publications include:

- ‘Access of Experts: Information and EU Decision Making’, *West European Politics* 34(1), 2011(with U. Sverdrup).
- ‘Enlightened Decision Making? The Role of Scientists in EU Governance’, *Politique Européenne* 32(3), 2010 (with U. Sverdrup).
- ‘Bologna in Context: A Horizontal Perspective on the Dynamics of Governance Sites for a “Europe of Knowledge”’, *European Journal of Education*, 44(4): 535-48, 2010.
- ‘The Ingredients of Trust in European Higher Education’. In B. Kehm, J. Huisman and B. Stensaker (eds.), *The European Higher Education Area: Perspectives on a Moving Target*. Rotterdam: Sense, 2009 (with B. Stensaker).
- ‘Who consults? The configuration of expert groups in the European Union’, *West European Politics*, 31(4), 725-750, 2008 (with U. Sverdrup).
- ‘Europe of knowledge’: Search for a new pact’, in P. Maassen and J.P. Olsen (eds) *University dynamics and European integration*, Dordrecht: Springer. 2007 (with P. Maassen, J.P. Olsen and B. Stensaker).

## **University Rankings and Political Science in Europe**

Niilo Kauppi

**ABSTRACT** Since the 1990s actors such as the European Commission and national civil servants have been spending considerable energy in attempts to reform the European university system. University rankings as tools of public policy have played a key role in this process. The argument of this paper is that by producing a unified global numerical order that reproduces established reputational hierarchies university rankings legitimize dominant institutions and mainstream scholarly approaches in European political science.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE** Niilo Kauppi is Research Professor at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and Associate Director of the Centre for European Political



Sociology at the University of Strasbourg. He teaches at Sciences Po-Strasbourg and at the University of Lausanne. His research areas are European governance, higher education, political radicalism, and social theory.

Recent publications include “The Struggle over Global Higher Education” (with Tero Erkkilä), *International Political Sociology* 3/2011, “EU Politics”, in *Sociology of the EU*, Adrian Favell and Virginie Guiraudon (eds.), Palgrave 2011, “The Political Ontology of European Integration”, *Comparative European Politics*, 8(1)/2010, p. 19-36, “L’Europe et la logique du palmarès dans le champ global de l’enseignement supérieur en formation: Acteurs, institutions, pratiques” (with Tero Erkkilä), in *Jahrbuch des Frankreichzentrums der Universität des Saarlandes*, Band 9/2009, 2010, p. 111-130, “Alternatives to Existing International Rankings” (with Tero Erkkilä), *World Social Science Report 2009-2010*, UNESCO, p. 239-241, and *Radicalism in French Culture: A Sociology of French Theory in the 1960s* (Ashgate 2010).

## **The Impact of Rankings on the European Higher Education Landscape**

Barbara M. Kehm

**ABSTRACT** In the introduction I will briefly give an account of the history of rankings (starting in the USA and then moving to Europe after a detour to China in the form of the Shanghai Jiao Tong Ranking).

A second part of the presentation will demonstrate the precarious relationship between what rankings measure (research output and reputation) and which constituency they claim to serve (students) for which purpose (choice of institution). In this part I will also discuss why the most important constituencies of rankings are actually political decision-makers and university leaders and why rankings seem to be so important for these groups of actors.

The third part of my presentation will give a brief account of national and European rankings as well as world rankings which have an impact on European higher education.

A fourth part will discuss impacts of rankings from two perspectives: (a) impacts on national systems; (b) impacts on individual institutions. This will then be translated in terms of changes for the European higher education landscape as a whole. An emphasis will be put on the shift from horizontal and functional diversity of institutions and provisions to vertical stratification and the implications of this shift.

In the concluding part of my presentation I will discuss the general problems with rankings, why they are here to stay and for which universities it might make sense to compete for high positions.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE** Barbara M. Kehm is a Professor of Higher Education Research and Director of the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER) at the University of Kassel (Germany).

From 1990 until 2003 she has worked as a post-doc researcher at the University of Kassel and at the Institute of Higher Education Research of the University of Halle-Wittenberg (East-Germany).



In 2003 she became Professor at Kassel University and Managing Director of INCHER in 2004. She was a member of the EAIR Executive Board and Chairperson of the German Society for Higher Education Research for several years. She is currently the Secretary of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER). In addition she is a member of the editorial board of four international higher education journals. Her publications include more than 20 monographs and more than 200 journal articles and book chapters. Her particular fields of expertise are: internationalisation in higher education, new forms of governance, and the role of new higher education professionals.

### **The University in Competition for Excellence. The Impact of Rankings on the Academic Field**

Richard Münch

**ABSTRACT** Science undergoes a deep change in present time. Entrepreneurial universities deprive the scientific community of researchers, the academic community of professors and students in the university and the disciplinary associations of their original power in determining how to conceive good scientific research and academic teaching. Research and teaching are subjected to an entrepreneurial strategic operation and quality management and are turned into fields of business, in which entrepreneurial universities have to secure shares of the market through strategic decisions and managerial control on operations with the aim of the circular accumulation of material and symbolic capital (governmental basic budgets, external grants, endowments, tuition fees, reputation, definitional power). On the tracks of the global diffusion of liberal governmentality the functional differentiation of science from external control is being replaced by its submission under the regime of the economy. The colonization of science by the economy is heavily supported by all kinds of commercial and non-commercial rankings, ratings and evaluation procedures.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE** Münch, Richard, born in 1945, is a professor of sociology at the Otto-Friedrich-University in Bamberg. His focus of research is on social theory and comparative macro-sociology. He is spokesman of the interdisciplinary doctoral program “Markets and Social Systems in Europe” (funded by the German Research Foundation). Moreover, he is a member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, of the scientific directorate of the Institute for European Politics in Berlin, of the council of the German Sociological Association, and chairman of the advisory board of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne. His most recent publications include: *Die akademische Elite. Zur sozialen Konstruktion wissenschaftlicher Exzellenz* (Suhrkamp, 2007), *Die Konstruktion der europäischen Gesellschaft* (Campus, 2008), *Globale Eliten, lokale Autoritäten. Bildung und Wissenschaft unter dem Regime von PISA*, McKinsey & Co. (Suhrkamp, 2009), *Das Regime des liberalen Kapitalismus* (Campus, 2009), *European Governmentality. The Liberal Drift of Multilevel Governance* (Routledge, 2010), *Das*



Regime des Pluralismus. Zivilgesellschaft im Kontext der Weltgesellschaft (Campus, 2010),  
Akademischer Kapitalismus (Suhrkamp, 2011).

## **How to measure excellence in Social Sciences and Humanities**

Arto Mustajoki

**ABSTRACT** It is a commonplace fact that the Social Sciences and Humanities constitute a problem when we use major journal databases (Web of Science, Scopus) in assessing the research quality and productivity of countries, universities, departments, and individual researchers. As a result, these fields are absent or irrelevant in the compilation of such publication-based university rankings as those of Jiao Tong University Shanghai (AWRU), Taiwan Accreditation Centre (Performance Ranking), or Leiden University. The problem persists even if we provide field-adjusted results, because the coverage of the databases is clearly insufficient in these fields.

As a matter of fact, if we divide research fields into five large categories (natural sciences, medical sciences, technical sciences, social sciences, and humanities), only the first two fit into the journal article preference ideology; technical sciences are also a problem due to their tradition of publishing in conference proceedings (67% of publications according to a Finnish survey). If we take a closer look at the subfields of the first two fields, problems rise there as well. Due to major differences in publication structures within the medical field, a researcher in otology will be very far from the top if we adjust the results to medicine as a whole, even if (s)he is among the best in the world in her/his own subfield.

SSH display a great internal diversity in publishing habits. In this respect, psychology is not far from medicine or biology, while literary studies and history represent a totally different world. There are big differences even within fields: compare cognitive psychology and social psychology, logic and practical philosophy, general linguistics and German philology. The great variety of fields and subfields can be shown by comparing publication data from WoS and Publish or Perish. There are some shortcomings in PoP, but for comparisons of this nature it is reliable enough. In my paper I will use top Finnish researchers in SSH as examples demonstrating the differences in coverage between the databases. In concrete terms, the coverage of WoS in comparison with PoP varies from 1 to 80 %. In the presentation I will also provide some data based on the publication records of SSH researchers using journal and publisher categorizations.

An interesting question is whether researchers in SSH have changed their publishing habits in order to fit in better with the measurements used. Another question is: should they?

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE** Arto Mustajoki is a Professor of Russian at the University of Helsinki. In 1992-1998 he was a Vice-Rector of the university. Since 2010, he has been Chair of the Board of the Academy of Finland and Head of the Department of Modern Languages. Mustajoki has taken part in several international research assessments. In 2008-2009 he was a member of the EU



expert group on the assessment of university-based research (AUBR). Besides works on linguistic topics, Mustajoki has published (in Finnish) a book on university politics and papers on university rankings and the societal impact of research.

### **The Drift to Conformity: the Myth of Institutional Diversity**

Jon Nixon

**ABSTRACT** One of the recurring arguments used in defence of the marketization of higher education is that it enhances quality by increasing institutional diversity, thereby ensuring that institutions (a) excel according to their particular strengths and (b) provide greater choice for a wider variety of students. However, what actually happens is very different. Institutions drift towards an ideal type as exemplified in the market leaders. Since, by definition, a ranking can only include a small proportion of premier league institutions, the large majority of institutions are relegated to the second and third league and below. This system offers neither greater diversity nor greater choice. It ensures increasing inequality of funding and prestige across the university sector, and reinforces (and reproduces) through the mechanisms of selection and differential funding the structural inequalities across society. This paper examines both the rhetoric and reality relating to the impact of university rankings on institutions of higher education, and identifies some of the policy issues that will need to be addressed if the gap between rhetoric and reality is to be narrowed.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE** Jon Nixon has held chairs at four universities across the UK. He currently holds an honorary chair at the University of Sheffield, UK. His publications include *Interpretive Pedagogies for Higher Education: Arendt, Berger, Said, Nussbaum and their Legacies* (Continuum, 2012), *Higher Education and the Public Good: Imagining the University* (Continuum, 2011), and *Towards the Virtuous University: the Moral Bases of Academic Practice* (Routledge, 2008).

### **The Bologna Process, the European Commission and University Rankings: The Most Remarkable Transformation of Higher Education in Europe**

Bob Reinalda

**ABSTRACT** How can we explain that higher education, which for many years firmly remained a matter of national policy making and subsidiarity in the context of European integration, suddenly became a pan-European affair, with the European Commission as a dynamic policy entrepreneur, even beyond the European Union? The answer is to be found in the initiative and management of the intergovernmental Bologna Process, which covers both EU and non-EU member states. It was launched in 1999 and in 2010 resulted in the creation of the (pan-) European Higher Education





Area (EHEA). Within the Bologna Process and the EHEA some actors are more important than others. The European Commission is an additional full member of the Bologna Process, which has initiated and promoted various new policies, such as mobility schemes, student-oriented approaches and specific research strategies and is also looking for a better ranking system in Europe. It is an actor with extensive resources available. The higher education institutions themselves also play an important role in this context through their position as stakeholders. Within the Bologna Process they are represented by their associations (European University Association EUA and European Association of Institutions in Higher Education EURASHE) in a consultative capacity. However, the role of these institutions was increased by the fact that they used the transformations set in motion by the Bologna Process as a window of opportunity by developing an institutional autonomy that allowed them to initiate changes other than those covered by the action lines of the Bologna Process. Prominent among these are the enhancement and enlargement of their institutions through merger processes, with CEOs dealing with merger and building plans as well as higher salaries, rather than with higher education policies. It is expected that university rankings are part of this transformation process of European higher education, in which the European Commission is steering in specific directions and higher education institutions regard ranking systems as helpful tools for their purposes.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE** Bob Reinalda is Senior Researcher at the Department of Political Science at Radboud University Nijmegen in The Netherlands. He has published about international organizations and the Bologna Process as an international institution.

Recent publication include:

- Reinalda, B. and E. Kulesza (2006). *The Bologna Process - Harmonizing Europe's Higher Education. Including the Essential Original Texts. Foreword by Hans-Dieter Klingemann. 2nd revised edition.* Opladen and Farmington Hills, MI, Barbara Budrich Publishers.
- Reinalda, B. (2008). "The Bologna Process and Its Achievements in Europe 1999-2007." *Journal of Political Science Education* 4(4): 463-476.
- Reinalda, B. (2008). "The Ongoing Bologna Process and Political Science." *eps European Political Science* 7(3): 382-393.
- Reinalda, B. (2011). *The Bologna Process Revisited.* Paper for the ECPR Reykjavik Conference, August.