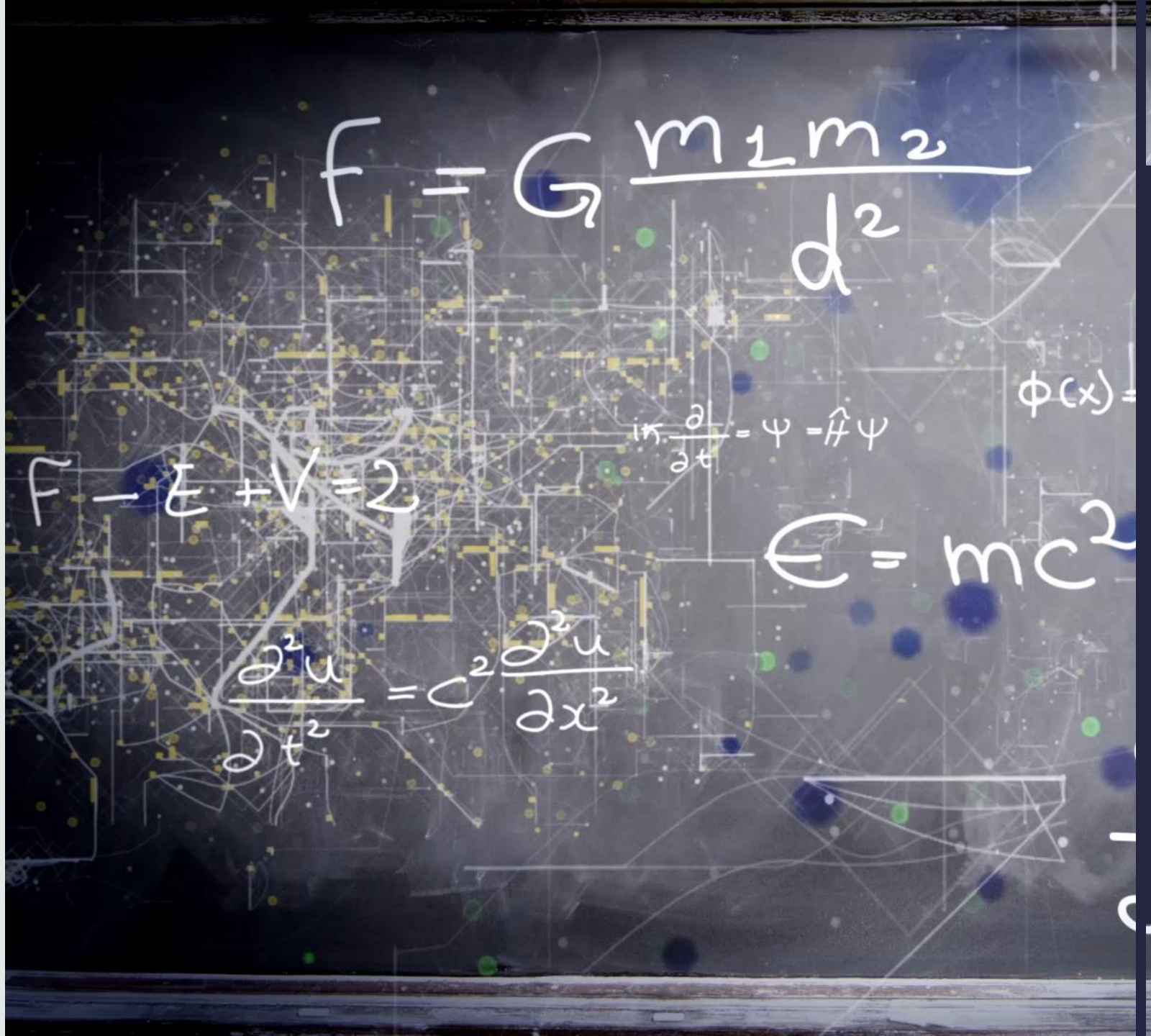


CLASSIFICATIONS AND RANKINGS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Contextualizing Classifications and Rankings

1. **Why a classification and ranking system?**
   Historical and international context
2. **On definitions**
   Similarities and differences
3. **Recent changes in rankings and classifications**
   Trends and distinctiveness of Romanian system
4. **The importance of institutions diversity**
   From different perspectives
5. **Uses of Classification and Ranking Systems**
6. **Concluding Remarks**

Why developing a system of classification of HEIs and ranking of study programs?

- Legal
- Traditional
- Theoretical

BUT: formal vs *real*

Classification of HEIs in Denmark

Business academies: Offer professionally oriented short cycle and first cycle degree programs.
University Colleges: Offer professionally oriented first cycle degree programs.
Maritime Education and Training Institutions: Offer professionally oriented short cycle and first cycle degree programs.
General and specialised research universities: Offer first, second and third cycle degree programs in academic disciplines.
University level institutions: Offer first, second and third cycle degree programs in subject fields such as architecture, design, music, and fine and performing arts.

Key factors shaping HE sector in past decades

Tension Heterogenization – Homogenization

Differentiation

- Massification – expansion
- Economic challenges – underpins massification and expansion
- Technological changes – emergence knowledge economy

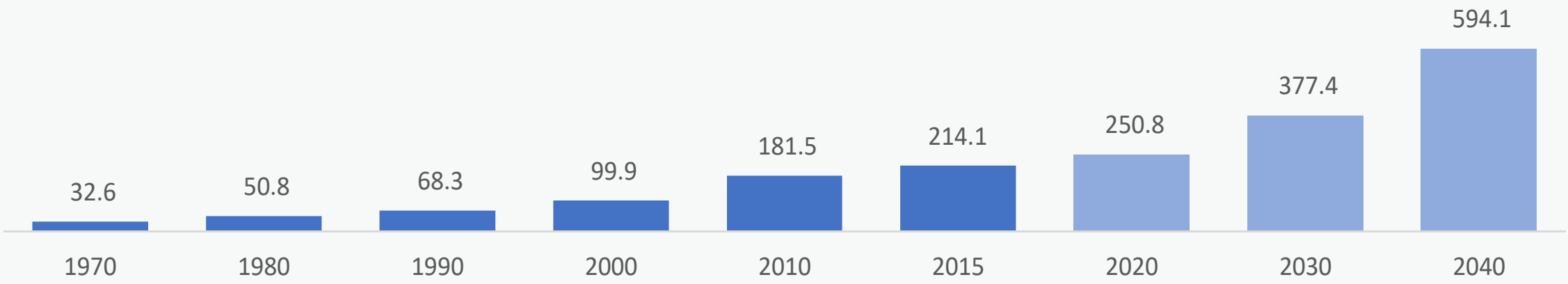
Convergence

- Global rankings emergence
- Research: ready-available data…
- Shangai, QS, THE
- The research university as the model

Driving efforts to use data to obtain a clearer picture of this new and changing scenario

Massification of Higher Education

Fig. 1: Global higher education enrolments
Actual 1970 to 2015 and Projection to 2040 (mil)



Source: Calderón (2018), based on UIS data

The rise of data-driven classifications

Carnegie Classification System (U.S.A.)

It focuses on post-secondary education institutions (degree-granting colleges and universities) as registered in the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics system.
It consists of six (6) separate but inter-related classifications. Each of them look at different "dimensions" of institutions:

- ***Basic classification***: According to level of study in which the institutions award most degrees (associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctoral).
- ***Undergraduate instructional program classification***: On fields of study focus and mix in degrees conferred.
- ***Graduate instructional program classification***: On fields of study and type of graduate degrees conferred.
- ***Enrolment profile classification***: According to level of study in which students are most predominantly enrolled.
- ***Undergraduate profile classification***: On enrolment status (modality), selectivity, and transfers.
- ***Size and setting classification***: On duration of study courses, enrolment size, residential situation of undergraduates.

U-Map,

EU since early 2010s

U-Multirank

European level

U-Ranking

Spain

StudyChoice

Netherlands

CHE

Germany, Austria and Switzerland

BURS

Bulgaria

Multi- dimensional AND user-driven RANKINGS and information tools.

Contain pre-defined rankings and "building your own"' anking or specific queries for different users

Classifications and rankings are different in many ways, but have common features and can operate in synergy…

On definitions

Classifications: a taxonomy of institutions	Rankings: a hierarchy of study programmes
System Differentiation	
Horizontal diversity	Vertical stratification
Quality	
Not directly Results do not reflect differences in terms of quality	Yes Results are oriented to show differences in quality
Type of Indicators	
Activity and demographic indicators (e.g. size, students' profile, study fields)	Performance indicators (e.g. impact of publications, graduation rates)
Scope of data	
Granularity: Focus on specific characteristics relevant to the type of university or for the national and local level	Comparability: Include measures that can be nationally or globally comparable
Distinctive but interlinked goals	
Contextualization and interpretation: Allows to see standard classifications and rankings in clusters of institutions defined along different variables.	Provides synthetic information: For decision making and benchmarking purposes.

Some recent changes: global rankings

The Shangai ranking

- started in 2003 looking at institutions
- since 2009 runs also the ranking by study programs
- since 2016 conducts a more specific one for sports science schools

The THE ranking

since 2017 conducts a teacher and learning specific ranking for Japan

in 2019 launched a new ranking that assesses universities against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

QS ranking

expanded focus from research to teaching and learning

- since 2016 looks at students' experience, with the ranking of student cities
- in 2017 incorporated the ranking on employability looking at different related dimensions (not just graduates employability, also relevant institutional processes).

Some recent changes: national rankings

Bulgaria BURS

Discontinuation of survey data from pre-defined ranking

- though reputation was resumed

Gradually more regional indicators have been included

- for instance, unemployment among graduates is compared to unemployment at corresponding regional level

Involvement in European Joint programs

CHE Ranking

Increasing granularity of information

- via methodological changes to allow for departments with small numbers of students to be included in results

Managing improvements

- As departments improve, students hardly give poor assessments, so indicators so indicators assessed as good or better throughout are not included in ranking results
- If all so good, continuous improvement lies in the details…

Some recent changes: similar transparency tools

U-Multirank:

- funding new rounds with the support of Santander bank (partnerships)

Australia:

- focus on outcomes (beyond employability! Like UK…)
- attempt at a ranking on equity... But non-integrated…

More focus on employment

- Spain IVEA latest edition focused on employment of graduates…
- CHILE information tool focused on mapping and employment (secondary data only)

Romania: distinctive for the harmonization and comprehensiveness of the tool.

Why institutional diversity matters

Rankings

Competition

↓

increased quality/excellence

Classification

Diversification offer

↓

equity and **quality for all**

Both conducive to



dynamically reflect and facilitate changes in the system



adaptability and resilience

Critical in times of

rapid change (open economies, technological change) and

uncertainty (climate and COVID)

Diversity in Higher Education: different perspectives

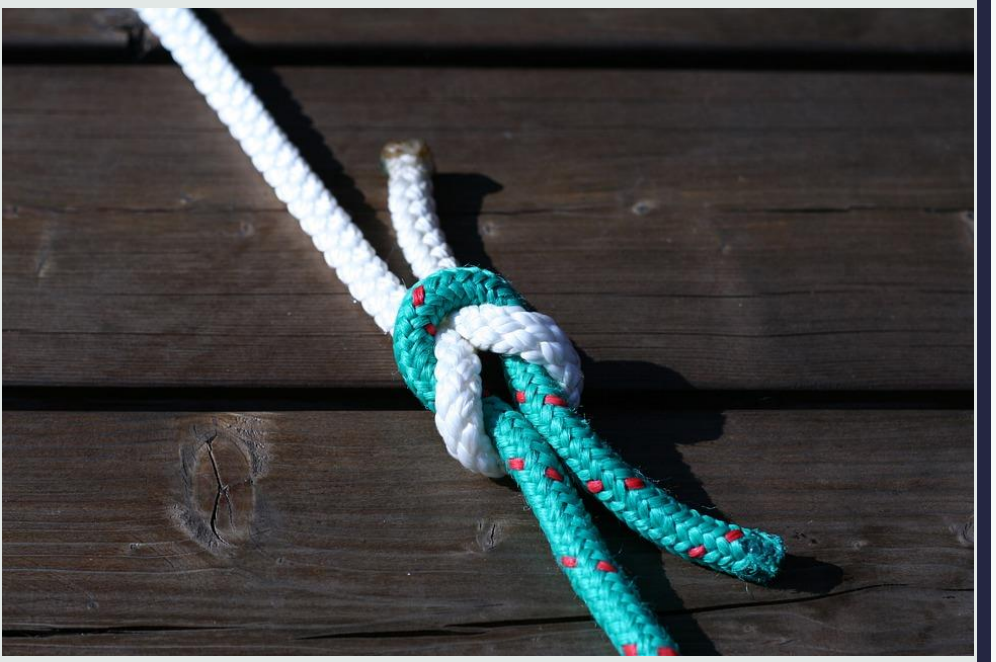
- 1960s, USA: because of massification
- Rankings -> convergence/isomorphism
- Differentiation also result of crisis, sponteneous
  can we plan?
- Diversity (institutions, programs, modalities) = inclusion
  can we monitor?

  Digitalisation + Covid: exacerbated, not reduced inequalities
- Formal mission/in practice may differ (and vice versa!)
  C+R can support needed change



Uses of Classification and Ranking systems

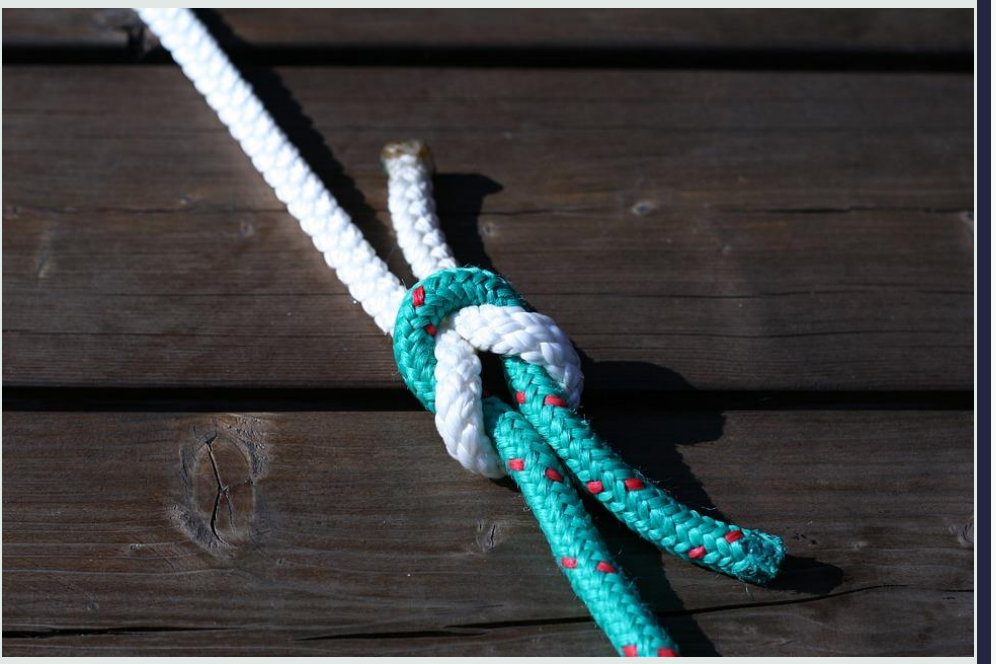
- INFORMATION TOOL
- Students: what study program? Where? What does the university offer?
- Universities: benchmarking in relation to mission and characteristics
- Policy-makers and universities: curricula redesign, financial decisions
- Employers: Best graduates in our field? Universities more connected to the region?
- General public and policy-makers: Adequate quality assessment



On the links between C+R and Quality

From the perspective of Quality Assurance, C+R have to be carefully used as complementary tools for contextual information at each national context.

To know that Harvard, Cambridge or MIT are the tops universities in the world neither adds value to our daily life questions about where to study or enroll our daughters and sons, nor provides us with relevant information about our national HE system.



On the links between C+R and Quality

EQUAMBI
Enhancing Quality Assurance Management and Benchmarking Strategies in Indian Universities

Our experience from other international contexts, such as in the Erasmus+ Project "Enhancing Quality Assurance Management and Benchmarking Strategies in Indian Universities EQUAM-BI", shows that QA benchmarking can serve to enhancement-led institutional classification strategies.

The advantages of QA and benchmarking and rankings approaches complement each other in a positive way, given "quality assurance is largely context blind, rankings are context biased" (Harris, 2017).

Concluding remarks

How can a system of classification and ranking help to improve the HE sector in Romania?

- ✓ Study programmes and labour market needs
- ✓ HEIs strategic planning
- ✓ Quality and relevance of research
- ✓ Quality higher education for all
- ✓ International relevance
- ✓ **Comprehensive, synthetic and regionally relevant system**


Thank you!