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EXAMINING RANKINGS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING:

Variations In Local Commitments

INTRODUCTION

For decades, research universities throughout the world have sought to secure and strengthen their status, not least to advance within the major global rankings (Hazelkorn, 2015). Although status is an intangible asset, developments within higher education globally have increasingly made it easier to link (the build-up of) status to measurable indicators and criteria – both domestically and globally through rankings. At the same time, due to new national expectations directed at higher education, there is renewed political interest in how higher education can contribute to society – economically, socially and culturally (Benneworth, 2013; Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008; Marginson, 2016). Hence, in a number of countries, governmental authorities and higher education institutions are emphasizing local contributions, what is known as the "third mission" of universities; activities that are related to regional development, innovation, community service and societal outreach (Nedeva, 2007). Some authors also claim that "third mission" activities currently have become an essential element in the mission and strategic considerations of higher education institutions (Montesinos, Carot, Martinez, & Mora, 2008; Nedeva, 2007).

While one could argue that adding the "third mission" to the core of university attention is positive, there are still a number of concerns related to this development. One of these concerns is related to how higher education institutions prioritize the many possible third mission activities, and consequently, which parts and segments of society they choose to "serve" and how they serve them (Benneworth, 2013). The current article addresses this issue by analyzing third mission priorities according to institutional status. This focus is based on the fact that many tangible indicators and criteria for third mission activities are based on economic contributions to society, and that in search of higher status, institutions engage in various forms of academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004), and that other third mission activities are downplayed as a result, including those that may have social and cultural impact in more broad terms.

By using global rankings as a proxy for institutional status (Authors, 2017), the current article provides a detailed analysis of how hierarchical positions within the global field of higher education influence the strategic choices and priorities of universities in different parts of the world by examining their local orientations of third missions in their strategic plans.

Strategic Plans

Over time strategic plans have become a key management tool in higher education, not least witnessed by the prominent place strategic planning has taken within universities and colleges (Toma, 2010). While the institutional movement towards becoming more "strategic" as institutions do vary between regions and countries, the overall trends is quite clear with ongoing governmental de-regulation and the subsequent rise of more entrepreneurial universities internationally with strengthened steering cores (Clark, 1998; Fumasoli & Lepori, 2011; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), and due to increased political and societal pressure for external accountability both financially and academically (Deschamps & Lee, 2015; Morphew, Fumasoli, & Stensaker, 2016; Saichaie & Morphew, 2014).

While the impact of strategic planning can be debated (Birnbaum, 2000; Abdallah & Langley, 2014; Toma, 2010), it is in general found that strategic planning and strategic plans do affect universities, not least with respect to shaping the process of institutional positioning through branding and marketing efforts in addition to long-term budget allocations. In particular, strategic plans can be seen as expressions of where the institutional attention is focused – which also might have a considerable impact on later decision-making and institutional priorities, legitimizing, and rationalizing difficult trade-offs that have to be made by those in charge (Drori & Honig, 2013). As such, strategic plans are valuable sources of information because they are publicly known means by which

universities establish and strengthen their external legitimacy with respect to internationalization and globalization (Fumasoli, Pinheiro, & Stensaker, 2015).

In a recent study by the paper authors (2017), we found evidence of stratified university strategies that varied by institutional status. We suggested that patterns of globalization are mediated by status based differences in aspirational behavior (Riesman, 1958) and "old institutional" forces (Stinchcombe, 1997) that contribute to differently situated universities pursuing different paths in seeking to build external legitimacy. Based on Suchman's (1995) differentiated forms of legitimacy, we found highly ranked institutions pursuing "cognitive" forms of legitimacy, evoking the neo-liberal global narrative of the world-class university, while non-ranked institutions espoused "pragmatic" accounts having to do with infrastructure and curricular standards. Across all ranked and non-ranked categories, we also found evidence of "moral" narratives in connecting the universities to society.

Third Mission

Our conceptual framework stems from the idea that in the era of globalization, status and reputation have become important objectives for universities, and that the ways to strengthen status have been narrowed down due to the emergence of new global standards for how "world-class universities" should appear and what activities and profiles they should develop and engage in (Salmi, 2009). Several issues here are noticeable. First, when attempting internationalization as a goal, many universities tend to conceive of their constituencies so broadly, and so globally, that they might downplay service to the locals and the regions they are embedded within (OECD, 2007), which tend to make up the bulk of both their student populations and the stakeholders who are impacted by the university's activities. As international rankings, over national or even global regional rankings, increasingly become the cornerstones of university marketing efforts, and institutions seek to prove their merit based on global reach, the local might get reshuffled to minor positions in terms of commitment and impact. A globally oriented university may not see the benefit to its global status when highlighting its work in its own city, unless it is forced to do so because of negative incidents or local pressures. However, institutions enjoying lower status may find their distinctiveness, and their niches, exactly in this gap left by the outward oriented international university (Pinheiro, Benneworth & Jones, 2012).

Second, given the many possible activities that fall under the "third mission" label, another dimension of importance is also the kind of service to society that universities would priorities. Laredo (2007) has, in a discussion of the many possible dimensions related to the third mission, distinguished between those that are more related to economic concerns and those that are related to societal and cultural concerns. In the economic category, Laredo identifies activities such as spin-offs, patents and intellectual property rights, and contracts and collaboration with industry (p. 447). In the social and cultural category, Laredo mentions cooperation with public bodies, involvements in social and cultural life, and participation in policy-making and/or implementation (p. 447-448). Within current national and international accountability, reporting and performance-based schemes and not least within global rankings, it is often the economic indicators, over broad common goods, that becomes tangible and as such represent a way to consolidate and to improve institutional status.

A related classification further splits the third mission into social, enterprising, and innovative dimensions. Montesinos, Carot, Martinez, and Mora (2008) propose these particular differentiations to identify services to society that do not produce any direct economic benefit and yet should be factored in rankings. The "social third mission" (p. 262) are engagement activities that are typically done after budget requirements are met and can include non-academic dissemination, volunteer contributions to the community, cultural activities, and other forms of outreach and education. In contrast, the "enterprising third mission" involves behavior that would diversify university outcomes and generate resources by developing services to society, other organizations, and students, such as in the form of patents, commercialization of intellectual property, collaborative research, and continuing education. Finally, the "innovative third mission" would include services and products transmittable to society, such as business networking, searching for seed capital, and other joint ventures. Among the three, the social third mission produces hardly any, or at least limited economic return (or status), and thus perhaps the least prioritized among world-class universities.

Marginson (2016) most clearly distinguishes the relatively complex economic and political definitions of public and private goods in into the four quadrants, divided by market and non-market goods and state and non-state sector goods. In addition to differentiating the economic from the social third mission activities (i.e., market and non-market), his framework further addresses the extent of the public realm being served (i.e., state and non-state). Within the broad range of possible public goods, the model further allows for the identification of local, or state, versus global, or non-state, benefits. While Marginson focuses primarily on the research and education missions of

universities and the kinds of goods they produce, these variations apply to the third mission activities as well, as our findings will demonstrate.

The fact that third mission activities may include both global and local, as well as economic and social/cultural activities is a characteristic that in general could be imagined to sustain institutional diversity and allow for institutional diversification (Van Vught & Westerheijden, 2012). For example, it is possible to argue that an explicit and public commitment to social and cultural community engagement is a way for lower status institutions to engage with the broader public good in a manner that reasserts the value of both the institution and its community. Furthermore, high status universities might seek to assert their status by adapting to the tangible criteria that are associated with global outreach and a focus on economic impact.

However, the drive for improving institutional status may dramatically impact system diversity and also the global higher education landscape, especially of lower status institutions trying to imitate higher status institutions (Riesman, 1956). In addition to reducing institutional diversity, such imitation activity could also potentially impact the scope of the third mission activities as reducing the local, social and cultural dimensions. Such challenges have triggered questions about the extent to which the higher education sector still reflects the traditional public good dimensions associated with research universities (Altbach, 1981, Lee, 2017). How less globally ranked universities fared has received limited attention, with far less known about the public society being served.

METHODS

Our research questions were as follows: To what extent do universities position themselves locally in their strategic plans across the global ranks? What are their third mission strategies in relation to local society?

This study is part of a larger project that investigates strategic plans across universities of diverse rankings throughout the world. The data consisted of online strategic plans for a variety of high ranked, mid/low ranked, and unranked institutions across six regions: North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. The research team comprised of a diverse group of international scholars and graduate students located in and/or with experience with most of the major global regions. The selection of the countries was based on the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the larger research team. Each researcher was responsible collecting university data based on their corresponding language skills (i.e., Spanish, Mandarin, Russian, etc.) and direct knowledge of the region. For institutional selection, research team members were then tasked with identifying globally ranked, globally unranked, public, and private universities. Over 100 universities were identified in the initial list of universities. When formal strategic plans were unavailable, we instead made use of related online university documents (i.e., annual reports and financial reports). Universities without online strategic plans were eliminated. In all, 78 of institutions were included in the study from 33 countries across 9 regions (See Table 1). We included both public and private institutions with an additional goal to include countries that are often overlooked in higher education studies. However, the majority (82%) were public universities given that some countries do not have developed private higher education systems.

Table 1. Study sample by institutional regions and rankings.

Region	High Ranked	Mid/Low Ranked	Unranked	Total
East Asia	4	2	4	10
Europe	9	7	6	22
Latin America	2	6	1	9
Middle East and North Africa	3	4	3	10
North America (excluding Mexico)	4	1	1	4
Oceania	1	1		2
South Asia		1	1	2
South East Asia	2	4	3	9
Sub Saharan Africa	1		7	8
Total	26	26	26	78

For the purposes of this study, we used three major rankings systems: The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2016; the QS World University Rankings (QS) 2016/2017; and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE) 2016/2017. As shown in Table 2, these global rankings criteria are generally based on research output and global impact, without substantive weight directly related to third mission. The only

appearance of any aspect of the third mission is in the Times's "Industry Income" (2.5%), which reflects knowledge transfer (Times Higher Education, 2017). There are no apparent measure in any of the three major global rankings criteria that acknowledge any non-economic contributions to local communities.

Table 2. Global Rankings Criteria in 2017

ARWU	QS	Times
Teaching (30%)	Academic Reputation (40%)	Quality of Education (10%)
Research (30%)	Employer Reputation (10%)	Quality of Faculty (40%)
Citations (30%)	Faculty/Student Ratio (20%)	Research Output (40%)
International Outlook (7.5%)	Citations per Faculty (20%)	Per Capita Performance (10%)
Industry Income (2.5%)	International Faculty Ratio (5%)	
	International Student Ratio (5%)	

Highly ranked institutions were those ranked in the top 200 in one of three major rankings systems. Mid/low ranked institutions were those ranked from 200-800 in at least one of the rankings, and unranked institutions were those that did not appear in the top 800 of any of the named rankings systems.

Our analytic approach was to generate the common qualitative patterns that arose within each ranking category. We first coded the data (translated if not in English) to identify expressions of third mission and then compared the initial codes across rankings. These categories were then organized into two major classifications: Economic Third Mission and Social/Cultural Third Mission (Laredo, 2007; Marginson, 2016; Montesinos, Carot, Martinez, & Mora, 2008). The Economic Third Mission entailed strategies with that would yield direct or indirect financial benefits, unlike the Social/Cultural that would likely not (see Table 2).

Table 2. Third Mission Economic and Social/Cultural Classifications

Category	Montesinos, Carot, Martinez, & Mora (2008)	Laredo (2007)	Marginson (2016)
Economic	"Enterprising Third Mission" and "Innovative Third Mission"	Spin-offs, patents, industry collaborations	"Market-Produced Goods"
Social/ Cultural	"Social Third Mission"	Cooperation w/ public bodies, involvements in social & cultural life, and civic participation	"Non-Market-Produced Goods"

Beyond the economic versus non-economic, we were also interested in the extent to which these orientations were local (i.e., local city, region, country, region) and/or global. Marginson's (2016) distinguishes public and private goods from the "state sector" and "non-state sector," while we were more interested in a more flexible sense of location given the varied levels of economic development in which a country's shared region might be emphasized. Our second cycle of coding consisted of developing core categories related to local, referring to relative locational, engagement: "contributing to the local economy", "preserving or promoting local culture/scholarship", "partnering locally (training, community service, etc.)", "recognition of local challenges/environment," and "representing the local region/nation/continent". This latter category was the most common category across strategic plans and statements for universities in all rankings. Within this category, we further introduced sub-themes of "regional (and sometimes continental) representation", "national representation," and "nation building". The findings were organized by ranks, then by the variations on local and/or global contexts, and their third mission strategies.

FINDINGS

Overall, our findings demonstrate that top globally ranked institutions were generally less explicit about their third mission related to the local compared to mid/low and unranked institutions based on their university strategic plans. As depicted in Figure 1, top ranked institutions' ambitions tended to be most globally oriented and when their third mission was discussed, it was mostly framed in economic terms within a broader global context. Mid/low ranked institutions appeared to be more aspirational in partnering locally. Meanwhile, unranked institutions showed the most evidence of desiring to contribute to national development or nation building. Unranked institutions most consistently demonstrated strategies in contributing to the local economy, recognizing local challenges and the local environment, bettering the local surrounds (i.e., nation-state, community). These institutions also most clearly emphasized the country's social and cultural distinctiveness as priorities. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1. Third Mission Across the Global Ranks
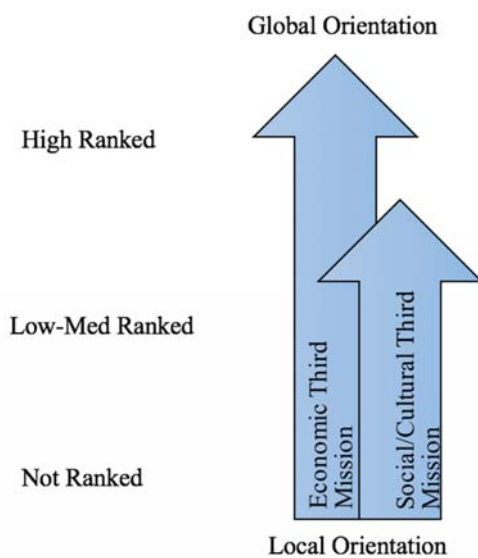
Top Ranked

Top ranked institutions were the most research oriented and showed the least evidence of third mission with respect to the local. Very few statements included any clear recognition of particular local challenges or the local environment, and often the mentions of local engagement were plans to collaborate with unspecified businesses and industries, as will be discussed.

Geographical orientation.
National and Global. Though the overall goals of universities in the top rankings were quite ambitious in terms of breadth of audience and impact, these institutions mostly discussed the roles they played nationally or geographically beyond in their strategic plans. Except for two German institutions, they rarely mentioned their local regional roles within their respective countries, instead focusing on their national, broader regional or global reputations. One university even discussed its conscious effort to move away from being a regional university within the US. "Growth meant that [University] had to transform itself from a good regional university to an outstanding national and international research university" (USA). According to this institution, progress was associated with moving away from the country's local region.
Unsurprisingly, top ranked institutions positioned themselves as the best university representatives from their countries, and sometimes continents, to the world. A Mexican university described itself as "the University of the Nation." A Saudi university was intertwined with its national identity: "our vision is built around three themes:

A vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation." Others were more ambitious. A Scottish university, noted its international nature as its primary identity "a truly international university firmly rooted in Scotland." Examples of as the leading universities within their region and their continent were several. A South African university wished to promote, broadly, African scholarship, while a Singaporean university desired to "become a truly leading global university centered in Asia and influencing the communities in Singapore, the region and beyond." The fact that local engagement was low overall, but the desire to be a leading international institution was high, highlights the differences between highly ranked institutions versus lower or unranked institutions.

Economic Third Mission. One distinctive feature across the limited third mission narratives among the top ranked institutions was the promotion of tech transfer and related ventures to support industry and to enhance university-industry ties. This priority was particularly evident among the top ranked institutions. Examples included: "Here in [city], [University] will be promoting closer interaction with industry, encouraging growth-oriented technology spin-offs, and working with government to secure a broader scope of action as an entrepreneurial university" (Germany). Another institution wanted to "integrate [their young researchers and entrepreneurs]'s companies in Israel's hi-tech industry." A Malaysian university specifically discussed tech transfer and university-industry collaboration, and a North American institution listed "accelerate technology transfer initiatives" as a key focus area.

The limited plans to contribute to the local areas, however, were unspecified. The extent to which these strategies were targeted local capacity building, nation-building, and/or national competitiveness are unknown. In a few cases, top ranked institutions highlighted generally partnering with public and non-profit sectors (Denmark), or maintaining close links with local and regional players in business, politics, and culture (Germany). In most cases, however, the strategies were limited to vague entrepreneurial pursuits with a lack of evidence of social/cultural third mission.

Overall, the limited examples of social or cultural third mission tended to only come from the same few institutions. These few exceptions were either located in the Global South, or were North American institutions that acknowledged that they had previously been criticized for their lack of local, non-economic engagement. Decolonization was one such strategy. A South African institution expressed its plan to "engage with a process of decolonization…The focus of the social action has been the inequalities, prejudices, and structural disadvantages that continue to characterize South African society and our universities." A Canadian institution indicated, "In response to the expressed needs and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples, [university] engages in research and generates curricula across the University that respect, reflect and include Aboriginal cultures, histories and systems of knowledge." Among the strategies include: "Create venues for dialogue with Aboriginal communities, and the broader public, on significant issues". Overall, these particular institutions did not reflect the more common economic values of the other top ranked institutions.

Medium-Lower Ranked

Mid/low ranked institutions generally fell somewhere in between top ranked and unranked institutions in the extent of articulating their third mission within the local context. Most notably, mid/low ranked institutions showed a more pervasive commitment to partnering locally in comparison to the more highly ranked, although those plans were also not specified.

Geographic orientation
Local. Mid/low ranked institutions sometimes had vague allusions to commitments to regional networks within their countries (Turkey, Sweden, Germany) or becoming regionally recognized (Qatar). A Russian institution was committed to "improving the quality of life and investment attractiveness in Russian regions [unspecified]". Otherwise, mid/low institutions were more focused on national representation.
National. Being ranked mid/low still involved striving for national excellence and reputation, especially as some were the top ranked institutions in their respective countries of the Global South, where there are far fewer top globally ranked institutions than in the Global North. Most of these universities focused on the national context were located in Asia. One Thai university sought "to become a centre of wisdom for the Kingdom as a source of knowledge for Thailand's people." An Indonesian institution saw itself as promoting "the state ideology and dedicated to the nation's interest." Although not always top global institutions, many of the institutions were leading national institutions in a country with fewer universities overall (compared to the US and UK, for example). These countries might then espouse a broader set of expectations and impose greater local pressures for their higher education institutions to work with and for the local communities.

Several universities in the mid/low rankings had plans to contribute to national development, particularly in regard to national economies, but also to promote public service. A Malaysian university discussed its goal of "empowering students to enhance future leadership talents to build a human capital that is holistic and sensitive to social issues and global changes in the process of nation building" as well as its 'primary role…in the development of the country's human capital." A second Malaysian university also had an objective "to enhance the nation's competitiveness." A Chinese university described itself as having responsibility for national prosperity, rejuvenation and modernization. The examples of mid/low ranked institutions also include examples outside of Asia. In Jordan, a university called itself "Jordan's most recognized and nation-building university." Two Chilean universities appeared in this theme, with one describing "social responsibility towards national development" as one of its strategies, and another vying "to increase even more its contribution to the development of the country." This same university wanted to "make the spirit of the university community with a clear conscience of service to Chile." Another example included a plan of a Russian institution, which aimed to develop "innovations for the socio-economic and sustainable development of Russia." Finally, the most explicit plan came from a university in Costa Rica. This university described plans to "develop new innovative academic programs that are relevant to the development of the country" and to "deepen our links with different sectors of the national community, with the purpose of improving the quality of life of the population."

Economic Third Mission. Compared to the highly ranked, mid/low ranked institutions were more specific about how they would contribute to the local economy. One described recognizing local business as stakeholders (Mexico), working with local business to improve the economy (India), and collaborating with key enterprises in order to serve national and local economic development (China). A Malaysian institution described their establishment of an "Industry Advisory Panel to ensure its educational contents remain relevant to industrial practices." A German institution wanted to not just produce workers, but attract more business to their region: "[The university] will continue to exercise its regional responsibilities…help shape the [Named] region as a business and science location and so ensure economic transformation." Additionally, a Costa Rican university aimed for "integration of university activities with the main development needs of the country" and "to boost entrepreneurship and innovation for project development that serves the different needs of Costa Rican society."

Mid/low institutions, as well as unranked institutions, also emphasized the value of preparing well rounded students to contribute to the economy. "[Our goal is] empowering students with the values and characteristics that are accepted in local and global markets" (Malaysia). "Service to the country is not an area that should be measured by the amount of resources it generates, but rather by the capacity we develop to education and research in permanent dialogue with our environment" (Chile).

Social/Cultural Third Mission. Student access to higher education was a recurring third mission theme for many mid/low ranked institutions. One university from the USA explicitly aimed to serve students of their state, in particular low income and underrepresented students. This institution specifically discussed how "recognizing that our state's metropolitan universities serve nearly half of the students in the State University System, [University] has joined with [other Regional University] and [other Regional University] in a national model of collaboration." Another institution's mission was "to promote equal access to education while…giving full support to the community" (Thailand). Recognition of particular challenges in their locales appeared especially important to some mid/low ranked universities. Despite being a branch campus of a foreign university, one institution in Qatar stated a goal to "teach and conduct research which addresses relevant local and regional challenges." And an Egyptian institution did not shy away from addressing recent events, indicating that they recognized the security challenges for operating in their locale. Mid/low ranked institutions showed strategies related to promoting their national language and cultures, such as "promotion and dissemination of the Spanish language" (Spain) and "imbued with the nation's cultural values based on Pancasila" (Indonesia).

Unranked

Unranked institutions exhibited the most statements and observable commitment to the third mission in their strategic plans in varied economic and social/cultural ways, through contributing to the local economy, in recognition of local challenges/environment, and in representing their locales to a wider audience. Unranked institutions were much more explicit about local concerns and their plans about addressing specific local issues compared to the ranked institutions. Despite their unranked status, some institutions indicated a desire to represent their nations or regions (either within a country or as part of a continental region), perhaps as a way to signal that they are quality institutions. Additionally, among the universities that indicated their aspiration to be recognized internationally, these institutions tended to focus on bringing the benefits of international engagement to their

students and faculty, such as through increased opportunities for mobility or training, rather than on being able to solve grand global challenges, in contrast to the top ranked institutions.

Unranked institutions particularly surpassed the highly ranked institutions in the area of partnering locally with other specified institutions, businesses, local government, and other entities through training, community service programs, lifelong learning, etc. Across all rankings, when institutions made reference to partnering locally, they usually described some form of planned collaboration with local enterprises or organizations, though the unranked institutions had more specific plans in terms of how to achieve that goal.

Geographic orientation.

Local. Unranked institutions were most focused on local regional representation within their countries than ranked institutions, which tended to focus more on national and international orientations. Two Scandinavian universities emphasized their social responsibility to the local region and seeking partnerships with other regional universities within the country. Regional innovation and representing the "cutting edge" of the region were cited by a Japanese university and an Italian university, respectively. A Chinese university stated that it "intends…to increase the support and contribution that [University] could make to [Province]…in terms of economy, culture, and social development." A Moroccan institution focused specifically on the development of their region within the country. A Kenyan institution focused explicitly on the eastern region of the country.

National. Most importantly, unranked institutions most strongly featured national development goals. These appeared mostly in institutions in the Global South, such as in Africa and Asia. "We are committed to developing the nation" and to "improve the quality of life of Indonesians" (Indonesia). Two universities from South Africa mentioned national development. "[University] will strive to be an effective partner in the larger national project of building a sustainable and equitable non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, multilingual society" stated one. The other aimed for "applying…knowledge to the scientific, technological, and socio-economic development of our nation" and to aligning "university priorities with national priorities." Two Kenyan universities also appeared with this theme. One had a self-appointed status as "Kenya's university," and students there are expected to use their education to improve state of their country. The other aimed to be a premier university for sustainable national development, and its main purpose and goal is to improve access to higher education for Kenyans. A Moroccan institution desired to contribute to national development and while strengthening the nation's Islamic identity.

Economic Third Mission. When it came to contributing to the local economy, many unranked institutions expressed their commitment to nation building and local development. Two unranked institutions in China discussed university-enterprise partnerships, with one also mentioning that the university could function as a think tank for industry. An unranked university in Norway focused on increasing knowledge in oil and energy production, noting its location in the "oil capital" of that country. One unranked university in Italy discussed its desire to "spread…knowledge, perspectives, and skills in the region through institutional communication, orientation, public engagement, start-ups, spin-offs, patents, consultancy, third parties, etc." A Moroccan university detailed their interest in producing entrepreneurs who could contribute to the local economy.

Social/Cultural Third Mission. Across the ranks, the unranked were most specific about their social and cultural third mission. A Chinese university planned to "preserve and disseminate traditional Chinese culture." One Turkish university made it clear that local society, including the community, governmental and civic organizations are seen as important stakeholders, and promoted the development of strategies on sharing university facilities with local society. Additionally, this same institution detailed how they provide voluntary education support to the local community. Another unranked institution, in Morocco, described development plans aimed to address the shortage of health personnel in their region. And two Kenyan universities discussed specific projects, such as procuring laptops for local primary schools and working with international partners to establish local centers for addressing various health and development issues. A Nigerian university, in recognition of its local spiritual context, discussed offering community worship programs. And lastly, an Italian university went so far as recognizing that they needed to improve their community outreach. Their plan included a directive to "communicate better who we are and promote awareness of ourselves in the area around the university."

Access to education for specific local populations was a recurring theme. A Singaporean institution, recognizing that its students were often working professionals, touted its flexible hours and short "time to degree" plans. Similarly, a Nigerian university addressed the needs of its large working student population in their city. For a Swedish university, their priorities emphasized their students' "working life" and the needs of their local labor market. In Hong Kong, an institution stated in its mission that it wished "to meet the actual needs of Hong Kong society by training efficient and well balanced young people for various services in the community." One university in Kenya planned to increase access to higher education for the Eastern region of the country in which it is based, due to that area's historically underserved population. Indian and Thai institutions both addressed providing

increased access to local, domestic populations. Despite being located in a global capital with high potential to recruit internationally, a Chinese university stated that it is "basing in Beijing and serving Beijing". We found these foci to be notable as in the era of globalization, to signal their increased internationalization, institutions are sometimes criticized for putting too much emphasis on non-local (national and usually international) recruitment (Watanabe, 2016; Anderson, 2016; McKenna, 2015; Rhee & Danowitz Sagaria, 2004). These unranked institutions were instead clearly emphasizing their commitments to their local stakeholders and students.

DISCUSSION

The third mission was expressed differently based on global ranks. In contrast to the most highly ranked, lower ranked or unranked institutions were often more communicative and specific about their commitments to and impacts on their local communities. Highly ranked institutions, in contrast, tended to be more focused on international engagement and impact than on local matters. Furthermore, the unranked institutions were most explicit about social and cultural third missions, whereas the highly ranked third missions were more often embedded in economic benefits.

While rankings mattered, so did the extent of national development, often determined by whether the institution was located in the Global North or Global South. Across mid/low and unranked universities, those located in the Global South often cited being a part of a national development strategy or helping with nation building projects, while those located in the Global North and at the top of the rankings sought to represent the best of their country's scholarship to the world.

While the highly ranked, mid/low ranked, and unranked institutions included both local and global goals in their strategic plans, the differences may have indicated their underlying purposes. The lower ranked and unranked institutions used "world class" language to signal international relevance and to possibly show that they are higher quality than their rankings might indicate. Conversely, the top ranked used local engagement language, albeit far less, to signal that they had local relevance. The few top ranked institutions that showed the most explicit commitment to their local communities were usually doing so in light of, or in response to, political issues within their countries or due to admitted negative community relations in the past. No mid/low ranked or unranked institution cited the existence of any past criticisms when discussing their commitment to local engagement, and none seemed to indicate that they needed to rectify or address negative political issues in their plans. A few unranked institutions, despite their lack of international recognition, were regardless committed to representing the nation and beyond.

While one might assume, given the current political climate, that focusing on the region or city in which a university is based to be parochial and contrary to the larger trend of internationalization, we found that the strategic plans of lower ranked and unranked institutions do not support this. While unranked and lower ranked institutions do focus more on local and regional issues and impact than highly ranked institutions, these universities often do so in a way that emphasizes their desire to promote local and regional culture on a larger scale, and/or bring the benefits of the university's reach to bear for the local community. These institutions reflected strategies for the benefit of their traditional, local constituents. Some emphasized a desire to promote local cultures and languages to global audiences, protect local cultures, or promote national knowledge externally. It was, therefore, the prominence of commitment to the local and the regional that made the strategic missions of lower and non-ranked institutions stood out in this study.

At the time of this study, none of the three major global rankings (Academic Ranking of World Universities, the QS World University Rankings, and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings), emphasize the third mission or local engagement. Previous research has well criticized rankings for promoting global or national prestige and power (Pusser & Marginson, 2013). An implication of this research is the possible diminishing priority of third mission, especially non-entrepreneurial social and cultural missions, as institutions seek global reputations via rising in their global rankings. While there are some exceptions, such as some globally-ranked top national universities in the Global South, local communities may be paying the social price for their universities' world-class criteria (i.e., globally ranked) pursuits. This study therefore suggests greater weight on contributions to local issues and communities as status or quality indicators. Some regional and national attempts to measure third mission are underway, such as the European Indicators and Ranking Methodology for University Third Mission (2017) and Moscow International University Ranking, "The Three Missions of Universities," (2017), although they have yet to be embraced globally. Another implication is suggesting public universities be held more accountable to ways they offer direct benefits to the local community and nation, and whether the pursuit of global rankings and national betterment are compatible. Meanwhile, the extent to which local priorities will be associated with world-class status remains uncertain.

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Appendix A - List of Universities (Region / *Country* / Institution)
East Asia

- o *China (including Hong Kong)*
    1. Hong Kong Shue Yan University
    2. The University of Hong Kong
    3. Peking University
    4. Beijing Normal University
    5. Anhui University
    6. Shandong University
    7. Shanghai Jiao Tong University
- ○ *Japan*
    8. University of Tokyo
    9. Yamagata University

Europe
- ○ *Denmark*
    10. University of Copenhagen
    11. University of Southern Denmark
- ○ *Germany*
    12. Gottingen University
    13. Technical University of Dresden
    14. Technical University of Munich
    15. University of Duisburg Essen
- ○ *Italy*
    16. Universitá degli Studi di Palermo
    17. Universita di Macerata
- ○ *Norway*
    18. University of Oslo
    19. University of Stavanger
- ○ *Russia*
    20. Moscow State University
    21. Saint-Petersburg National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics (ITMO)
- ○ *UK*
    22. University of Edinburgh
    23. University of Glasgow
- ○ *Spain*
    24. Universidad de Salamanca
    25. Universidad Pública de Navarra
- ○ *Sweden*
    26. University of Karlstad
    27. University of Umeå
    28. University of Uppsala
- ○ *Turkey*
    29. Gebze Technical University
    30. Istanbul University
    31. Yeditepe University

Latin America
- ○ *Brazil*
    32. Universidade Catolica de Brasilia
    33. Universidade Estadual de Campinas
    34. Universidade Federal de Pernambuco
- ○ *Chile*

35. Pontifical Catholic University of Chile
36. University of Santiago
- *Colombia*
37. University of Los Andes
- *Costa Rica*
38. University of Costa Rica
- *México*
40. National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)
41. Tecnológico de Monterrey

Middle East and North Africa
- *Egypt*
42. American University in Cairo
- *Israel/Palestine*
43. Technion Israel Institute of Technology
- *Jordan*
44. University of Jordan
- *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*
45. King Abdul Allah University for Science and Technology
46. King Saud University
- *Morocco*
47. Cadi Ayyad University
48. Chouaib Doukkali University
49. University Hassan II Casablanca
- *Qatar*
50. Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar
51. Qatar University

North America (Excluding Mexico)
- *United States of America*
52. Arizona State University
53. Florida International University
54. New York University
55. Park University
- *Canada*
56. University of British Columbia
57. University of Toronto

Oceania
- *Australia*
58. Griffith University
59. University of New South Wales

South Asia
- *India*
60. Cochin University of Science and Technology
61. Indian Institute of Science

Southeast Asia
- *Indonesia*
62. BINUS University
63. Universitas Gadjah Mada
- *Malaysia*

64. Universiti Malaya
65. Universiti Sains Malaysia
66. Universiti Teknologi Petronas
- *Singapore*
  67. National University of Singapore
  68. Singapore Institute of Management-GE
- *Thailand*
  69. Chulalongkorn University
  70. Ramkhamhaeng University

Sub Saharan Africa
- *Kenya*
  71. Chuka University
  72. Kenyatta University
- *Nigeria*
  73. University of Lagos
  74. Veritas University
- *South Africa*
  75. Cape Peninsula University of Technology
  76. University of Cape Town
  77. University of Fort Hare
  78. University of Western Cape