

University Rankings and University Benchmarking

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Market vs. Institutional University Evaluation

- Institutional Evaluation
 - Self Evaluation or Accreditation or the third-party evaluation
- Market Evaluation
 - Commercialized Evaluation
 - typical: University Rankings (Kaneko 2000)
- Difference
 - Institutional Evaluation=Public Goods
 - Market Evaluation=Commercial Goods

Characteristics of Institutional Evaluation

- Evaluation itself is not a purpose.
- The purpose is quality assurance and to improve and enhance the quality of university.
- But the data of institutional evaluation are often used in university rankings.
- The controversial issue of institutional evaluation is whether to link it with resource allocation or not.

Characteristics of Market Evaluation

- Plural evaluation bodies
- Evaluation of the “market evaluation” is done by market, i.e., how much sold is matter.
- It reflects the demands and expectations of the consumers.
- It provides useful information to students and parents, especially to foreign students.
- University ranking is a typical case.
- However the World University Ranking of Shanghai Jiao tong University is an institutional ranking.

University and Market Evaluation

- The universities themselves constitute another major background factor contributing to the demand for market university evaluations.
- Universities frequently use high ranks for their own publicity purposes. They are in no position to criticize the rankings if they do so only when their rank declines, but immediately incorporate rankings into admissions pamphlets the moment their rank shoots up.
- The social prestige of market university evaluations is actually rising as a result of such changes in university behavior.

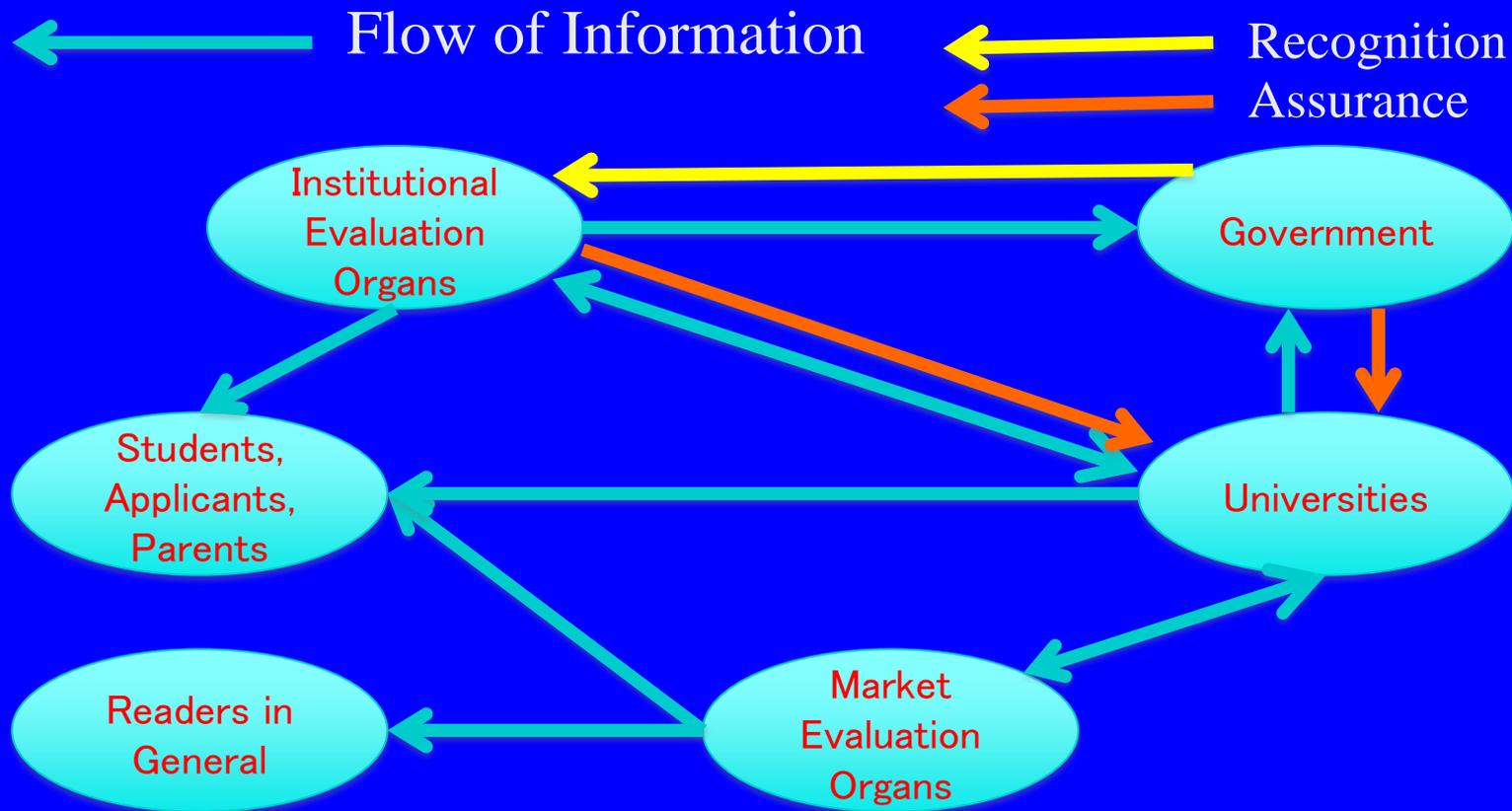
Researchers and Market Evaluation

- Many researchers have recently adopted the U.S. News university ranking scores as data in their higher education research in the US.
- This is granting legitimacy to the U.S. News rankings and making them more and more authoritative.
- It can even be said that university rankings are being used, in a sense, by those universities and researchers who criticize them.

The Difficulty of Investigation of Market Evaluation

- On the other hand, it is difficult for researchers to rigorously examine the reliability and appropriateness of university rankings. That requires a great deal of time and effort to collect objective data and verify the validity of the rankings, all in an area that is not highly regarded as a field of research.
- There is also strong skepticism regarding whether or not university rankings are even possible in the first place.
- Consequently, some believe that in and of themselves efforts to investigate university rankings are simply meaningless, and of no value whatsoever.

Socioeconomic Background to University Evaluation



Market vs. Institutional Evaluation

	Market Evaluation	Institutional Evaluation
Reviewer	Single	plural
Responsibility	Clear and Definite	unclear
Criteria	One dimensional	Multi dimensional
Contents	Easy to evaluate	No Market Value
Purpose	Quality enhancement	Quality enhancement
Reliability	poor	rich
Example	rankings	accreditation

Criticism of Market Evaluation

- There has been a great deal of criticism that university evaluations and rankings do not precisely evaluate university education and research.
- Some also hold that the ranking of universities is fundamentally impossible in and of itself. One factor causing the debate to easily become confused is the mix-up and combination of the concepts regarding university evaluations and university rankings. This is especially true for university rankings.
- Since these rankings are not a scientific concept to begin with, they are applied inconsistently without any strict definition, and this brings confusion to the discussion.

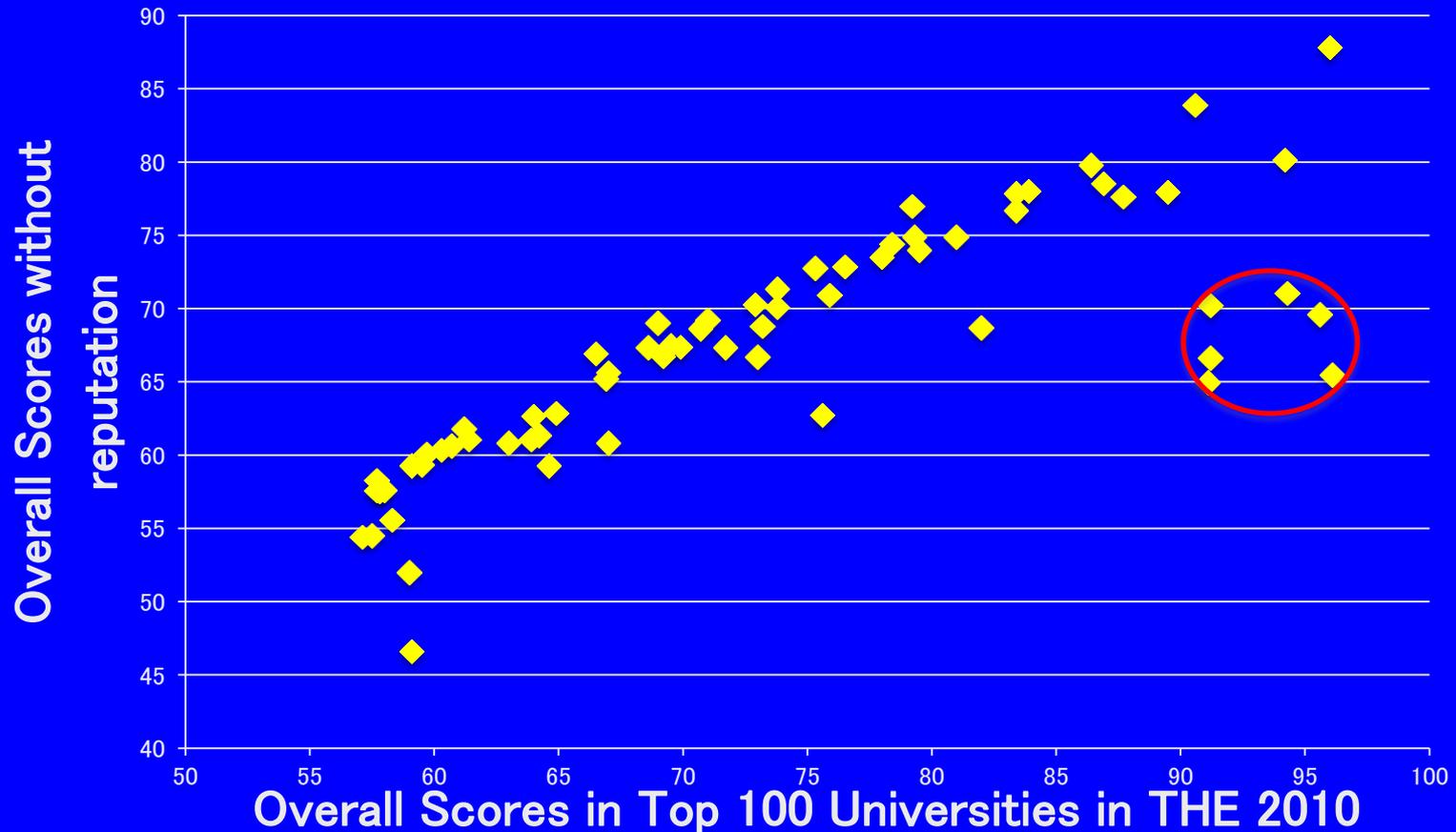
Criticism 1

- There are various criticisms of this approach, and these are problems not only with university rankings, but with rankings in general.
- The rankings tend to take numerical approach.
- The first criticism is that with the numerical approach items that cannot be quantified are completely ignored. There is also strong criticism regarding items that can be quantified, such as the number of research papers or the percentage of exchange students, since objectively these may not be appropriate measures to indicate the quality of research or the level of internationalization. In particular, many have noted the difficulty of quantifying indicators concerning education, as opposed to research.

Criticism 2

- Criticisms of the subjectivity of the peer reviews or reputation (expert opinions) adopted by many university rankings.
- Many research findings indicate that such peer reviews are rather stable, and tend not to change. This has also been criticized by those who hold/ that the peer evaluations do not change enough/ because they are heavily influenced by past rankings.

Overall Scores and Overall Scores without Reputation THE 2010



Criticism 3

- Overall, there is no limit to the criticisms of the individual indicators used to compile university rankings.
- Yet even if we do not deny the possibility of quantification using individual indicators, there is still a more important issue. Even if there were objective indicators to numerically measure and rank the quality of various aspects of university education and research, would it then be possible to combine these into overall scores and rankings of entire universities? Overall scores use multiple evaluation criteria, calculate the scores for each of these criteria, assign weights to each of the scores, and are then computed as weighted averages.

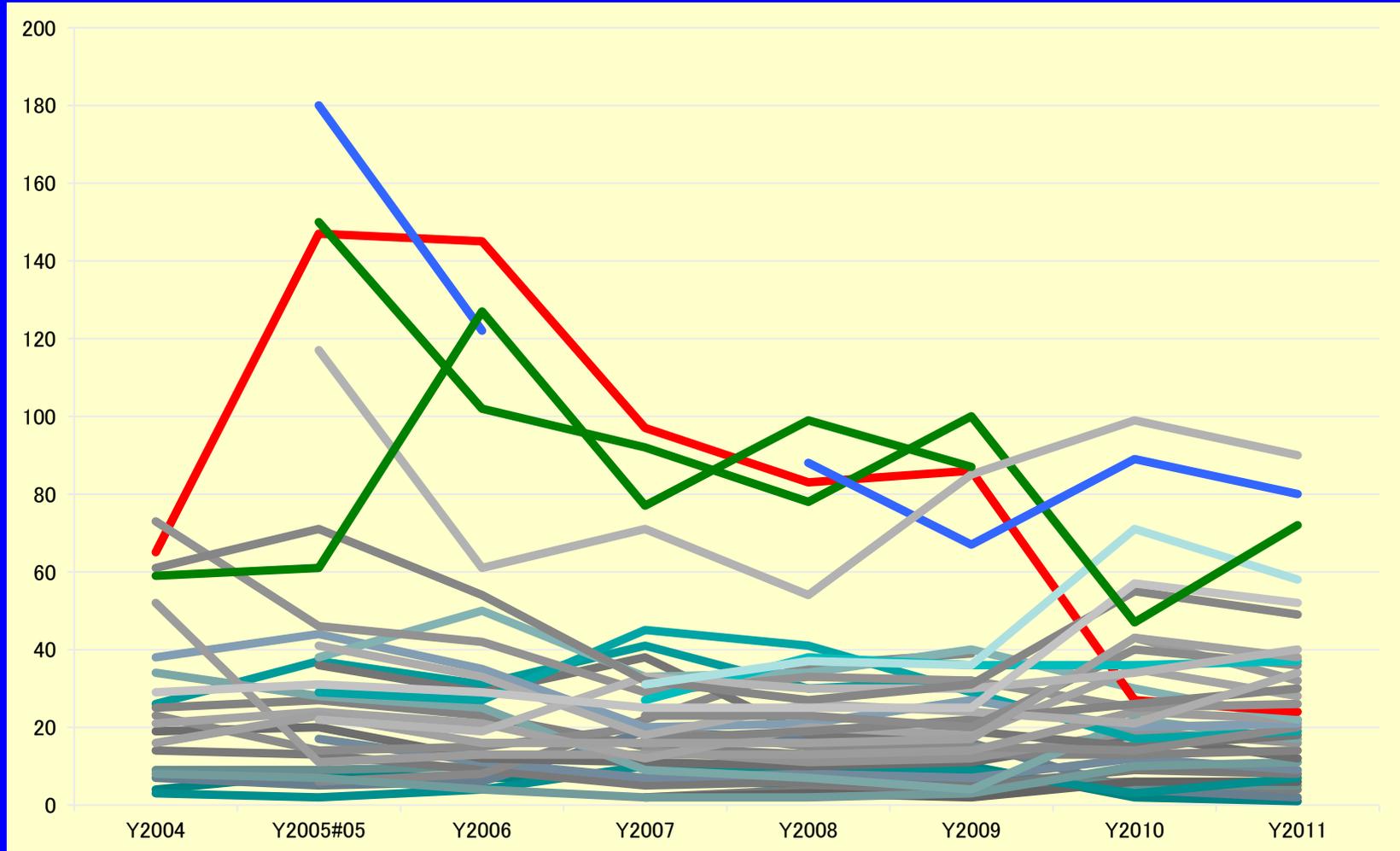
Criticism 4

- The comprehensive rankings are determined based on these overall scores. Under this approach, as explained above, the evaluation criteria are an important issue, but the weights used for the weighted averages are also problematic.
- In fact, overall scores and the rankings based on them are highly sensitive to changes in the weightings.
- Despite this, the bases for the weights given to the individual indicators in all the comprehensive university rankings are unclear. This also holds true for the two global university rankings analyzed here.

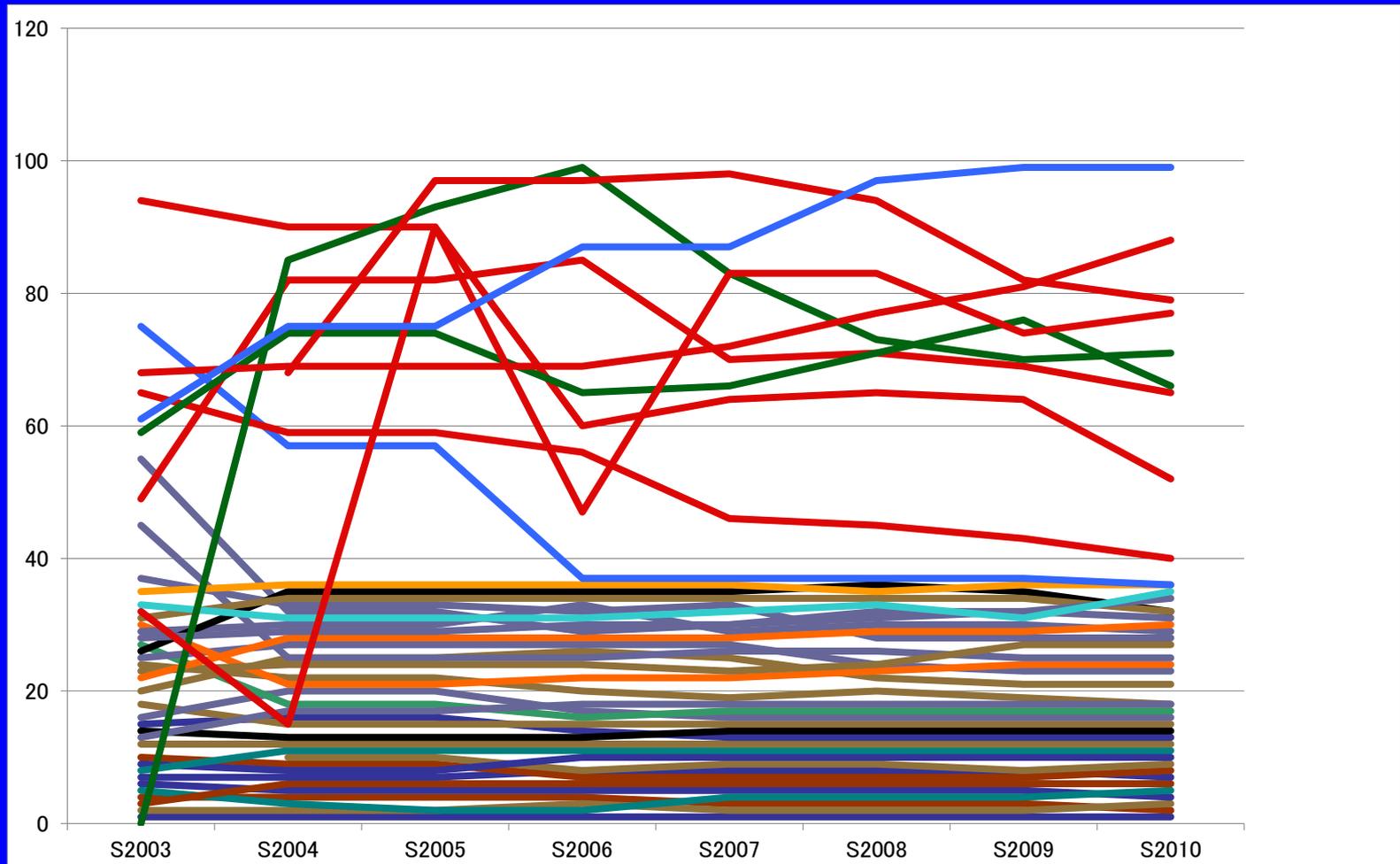
Comparison of Institutional and Market rankings

- Market Ranking is commercial good, and must be sold. To sell it the ranking must change in each year, though some stability is required to make readers think the ranking reliable.
- Institutional Ranking is public goods. The rank of each university does not change so drastically.
- Hypothesis: The market ranking is fluctuating in its nature, but the institutional ranking is stable.
- Data: Times Higher Education Ranking as Market Ranking
- Shanghai Jiao Tong University Ranking as Institutional Ranking

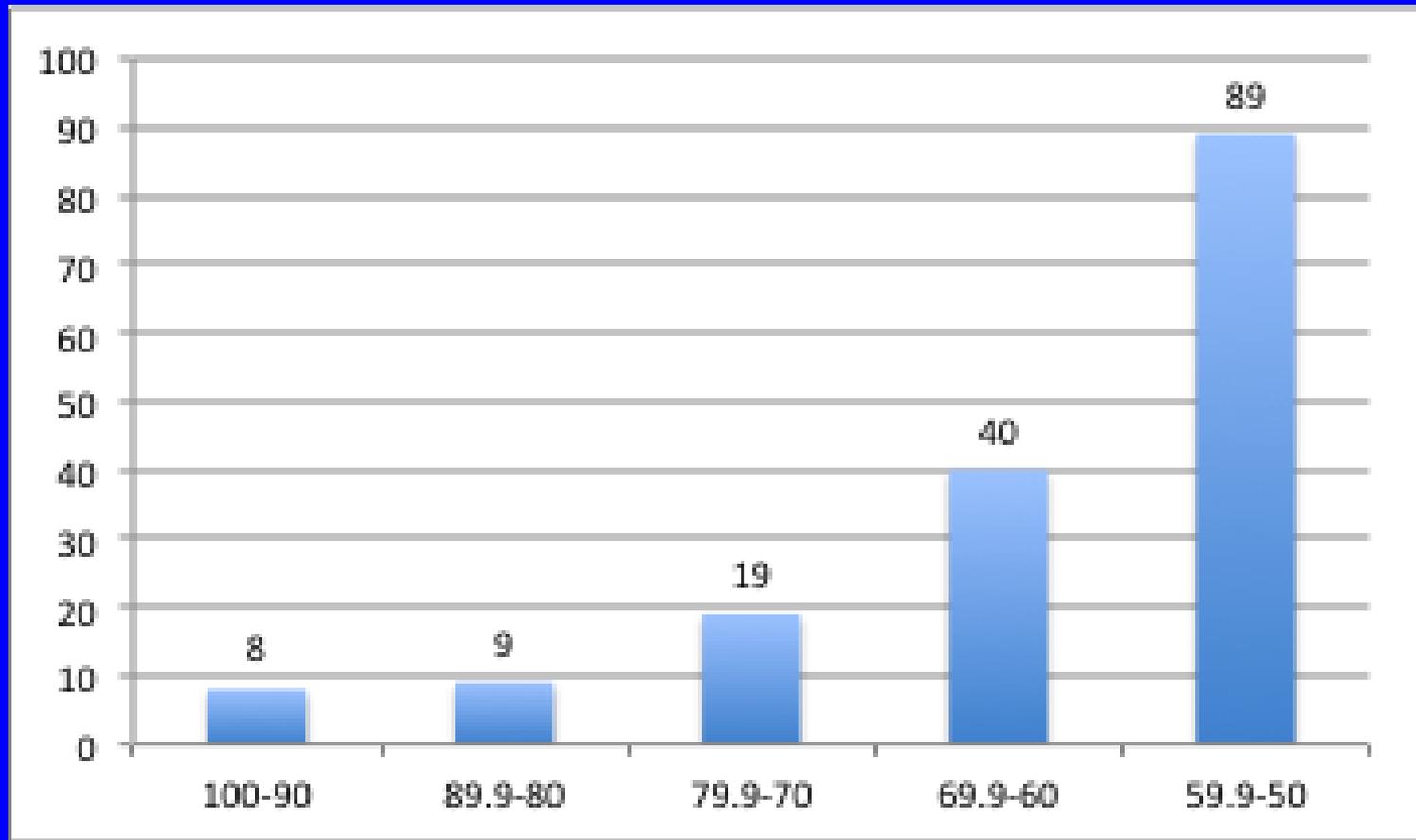
Changes in Market Ranking: THE World University Ranking



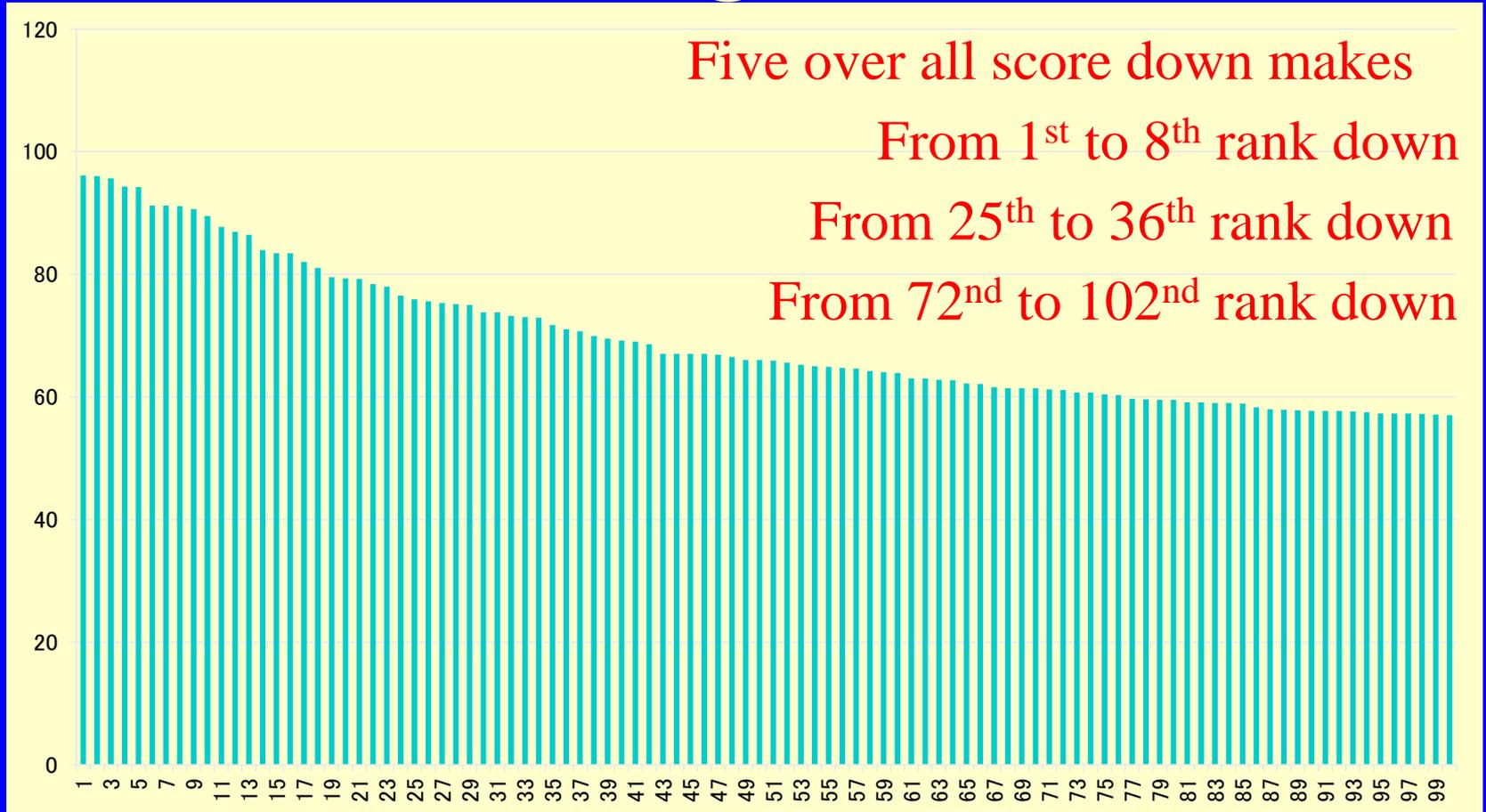
Changes in Institutional Ranking: Shanghai Jiao Tong University Ranking



Distribution of Overall Scores of Top 165 Universities in THE 2010



Overall Scores of THE ranking 2010



Policy Implications

- We need to improve the university evaluation by making it more transparent.
- Cf. UNESCO, 2006, *Berlin Principles on Ranking of Higher Education Institutions*
- For this purpose data disclosure scheme is needed.
- So many problems in Market Evaluation
- But we do not neglect the positive influence of market university evaluation to enhance the quality of universities and university evaluation.
- I think the benchmark of the university is more fruitful than the rankings.

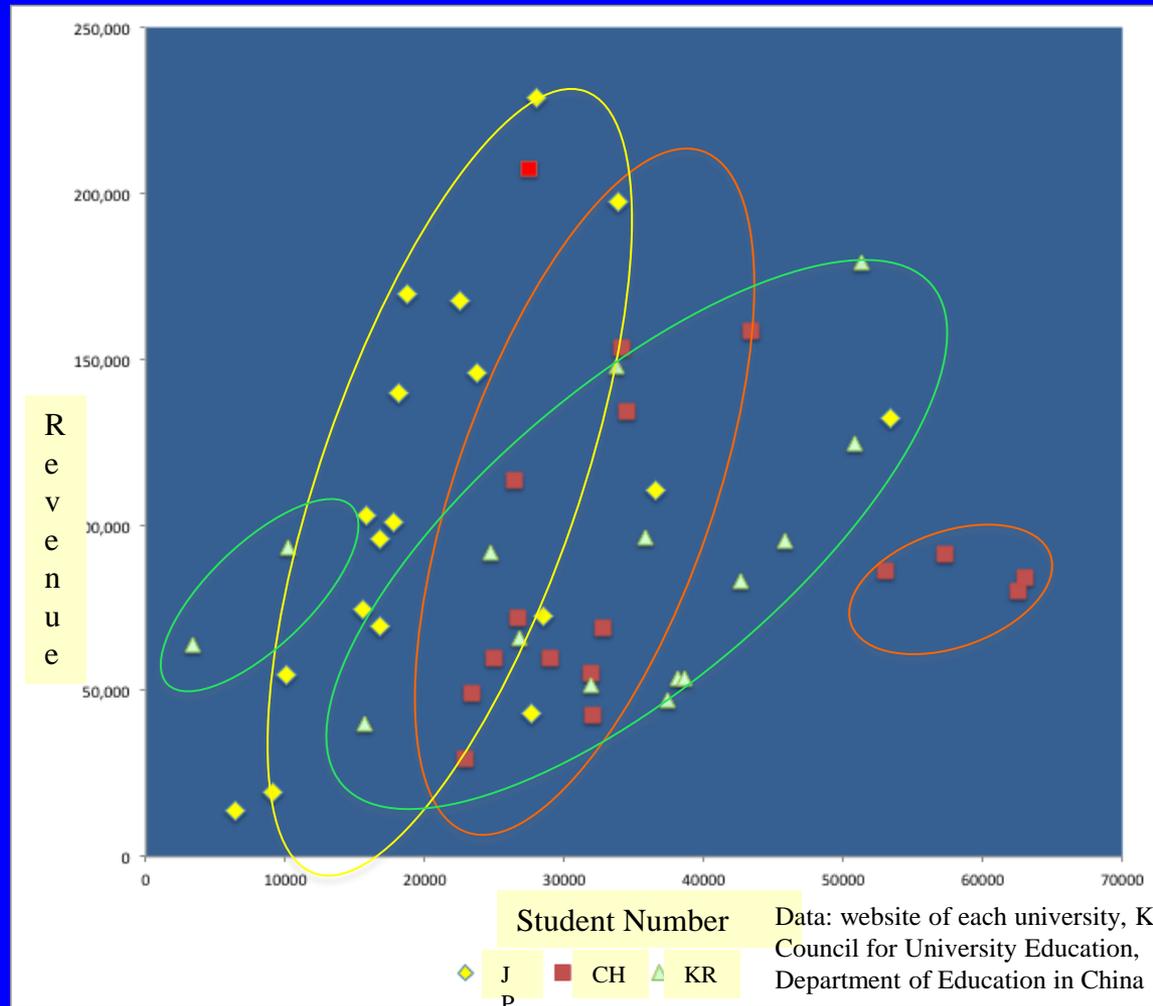
Benchmarking of Nine Universities: Student Number



	Oxford	Cambridge	Harvard	Yale	Stanford	Berkeley	Tokyo	Tsinghua	Peking
Under-graduates	11,766	11,608	6,648	5,247	6,878	25,530	14,394	14,258	15,128
Graduates	6,293	6,003	18,898	6,169	8,441	10,313	14,327	21,084	10,031
total	18,059	17,611	25,546	11,416	15,319	35,843	28,721	35,342	25,159

Data: from the Website of each university

Benchmarking of Japanese, Chinese and Korean Universities



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