The importance of the Matthew effect
Or: Why do we need excellent universities?
WTMC annual conference 2014

Rathenau Instituut
Some observations on the Dutch HE sector

• 42 universities in the Netherlands, in three blocks.
  • 38 teaching universities who get less money per student because the students are less talented
  • 13 are research universities, and get more money per student for education because they are more talented
  • 1 is an open university.

• Current system promotes quality but not excellence
  • Current evaluation system will mark all research as “excellent” in 2025.
Figure 3  Average score by criterion and year

Source: PER Base (CHEPS and Rathenau Instituut)
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  • Current evaluation system will mark all research as “excellent” in 2025.
  • Thirteen research universities seem to move upwards in rankings, but not beyond place 50
  • Academic career model creates similar incentives, creates one model of a successful researcher, and assumes that system is growing
Stabiel?

Met omvang van functie, in, uit en doorstroom kunnen we zien wat er gebeurt als we niets doen.
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**Rathenau Instituut**
Scenario’s of the future for universities

• Driving forces that may change the contexts in which universities have to operate in 2025

• Two uncertainties:
  • Do universities operate in public or private value networks
  • Is the access to critical resources competitive or non-competitive
National solidarity

Society emphasises public value of education and research

A stable environment with little competition

Dutch universities

A hyper-competitive environment in which competitive advantages are highly volatile

Knowledge is seen as a private commodity

Regional power

International selection

Rathenau
Scenario’s of the future for universities

• Driving forces that may change the contexts in which universities have to operate in 2025
• Two uncertainties: public or private value network | critical resources competitive or non competitive
• One scenario is nationally oriented,
• Three of them imply a different geographical space in which we think universities operate, and different contextual logics.
  • Consequently: we have to develop other models of universities as the national university we now think of: a university flourishing on national funding to educate national students and help national industry, government and society.
So why do we need two really excellent universities?

• Because we can’t have thirteen, though we tried for the last 25 years,
• Because society is in need of more university models then the two we now have in the Netherlands
• Because the possibility of Europeanisation and globalisation makes it risky for the Netherlands not to have excellent universities.
• Because going for one, makes that one lazy.
• And of course we keep another 40 universities that are perform very good in multiple ways.