Methodological Mismatch? Times Higher Education and Representation of Humanities Scholarship in Global University Rankings

Þorsteinsdóttir, Sara

Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

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STUDENT NAME: SARA ÞORSTEINSDÓTTIR

STUDENT NUMBER: S2545691

SUPERVISOR: DR. PETER VERHAAR

SECOND READER: DR. ADRIAAN VAN DER WEEL

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Abstract

Global university rankings have developed to become a prominent feature of the scholarly landscape as they provide means to measure, quantify and hierarchically organise higher education institutions (HEIs) across the globe. The ways in which such measurements take place are highly criticised and call for examination of what the rankings measure, their representativity and their reflexivity to the diverse nature of scholarly fields. This thesis examines the Times Higher Education University Ranking (THE) and its incorporation of the structure of the humanities scholarly field in its rankings. A literature review is conducted to establish three core features of humanities scholarship that must be accounted for in any meaningful representation of the field. This thesis concludes that despite THE's methodological adjustments to different fields (subjects), it fails to meaningfully represent the distinct makeup of humanities scholarship by omission of these three core features in its methodology. Means to rectify such shortcomings are proposed through the introduction of field-specific indicators and reevaluating the methodological composition producing THE's overall score.

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Abbreviations

AHCI – Arts and Humanities Citation Index

AHELO – Assessment of Higher Learning Outcomes

APC – Article Processing Charge

ARWU – The Academic Ranking of World Universities. Also sometimes referred to as the Shanghai Ranking

BCI – Book Citation Index

DH – Digital Humanities

ESCI – Emerging Sources Citation Index

EU – The European Union

FWCI – Field-Weighted Citation Impact

HEI – Higher Education Institution

JIF – Journal Impact Factor

OA – Open Access

OECD – The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

QS - Quacquarelli Symonds

SCI – Science Citation Index

SS – Social Sciences

SSCI – Social Science Citation Index

SSH – Social Sciences and Humanities

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

THE – Times Higher Education University Ranking

UU – University of Utrecht

UZH – University of Zurich

Chapter 1: Introduction

Universities and other HEIs are, by nature, composed of a vast number of activities including teaching, research/publication, social participation, and administration that each inform, and impact one another. Each component comprises people on various levels, with different titles and functions within the institution, once again all with a unique set of dynamics between them. This is all to illustrate that HEIs are large, complex, and ever-changing phenomena, comparable to that of a living organism where each component holds a unique, yet important role in the overall function. The attempt to visualise a higher education institution (HEI) in its entirety and to include all its components and interplay between them conjures up the image of an anarchic detective's board with vast amounts of red string criss-crossing between a near-infinite number of pins.

Due to their complexities, attempts at simplifications and quantifications require compromise and often run the risk of oversimplification and misrepresentation. However, for any manageable discussion and overview, simplification is often necessary. The ways in which such simplifications are carried out are as controversial as they are many. Often a proxy is introduced as a simplified representation of a larger, more complex entity. University rankings act as one such proxy where the quantified score acts as a representative of the overall 'quality' of the university in question and its activities.

On October 9, 2024, the twentieth iteration of the Times Higher Education University Ranking (THE) was published. This ranking hierarchically organises the world's universities to symbolise their comparative and quality. While university rankings are subject to considerable criticism, they have carved out a significant space for themselves in the academic landscape. Their influence is not merely symbolical and discursive but extends into policy making of individual institutions as well as federal and national governments such as the case of the Netherlands, Denmark, and Macedonia whose immigration policies have included a ranking aspect to define 'skilled migrants' and determine a person's eligibility to seek visa or permanent residence.[1] On the individual level, university rankings can inform decision making when selecting which university to attend for its associated prestige and status.[2] On an institutional level, performance and aspiration for a strong placement of

[1] Ellen Hazelkorn, *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education: The Battle for World-Class Excellence*, 2nd edn (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 152–53.
[2] Ellen Hazelkorn and Georgiana Mihut, 'Introduction: Putting Rankings in Context Looking Back, Looking Forward', in *Research Handbook on University Rankings*, ed. by Ellen Hazelkorn and Georgiana Mihut (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021), pp. 1–17 (p. 9), doi:10.4337/9781788974981.00008.

university ranking can influence allocation of funding, strategies and policy making. University rankings can even weigh heavily in restructuring the institution as in the case of Aalto university in Finland, which was founded in 2010 as the merger of four Finnish universities as part of their pursuit to consolidate resources and increase their competitiveness and standings in global university rankings.[3]

However, unlike the case of Aalto, the extent to which university rankings can shape university spheres and impact decision- and policy making can often be hard to pin down and often stem from implicit expectations, rather than explicit requirements. Discussions on the impact of university rankings are therefore often based on general assumptions and indications of their significance, rather than exact measurements of their impact. This is because much of the power they hold relates to elements that are difficult to measure and quantify, such as prestige and social status. This is why this thesis focuses on what is being measured and whether it is representative of what the rankings claim to measure rather than attempting to outline their impact. The notion that university rankings impact the construction and reconstruction of the academic environment is accepted and assumed, but the *extent* of their influence is not relevant to this research which isolates their methodological structure and their representativeness.

This thesis focuses on the representativeness of the humanities scholarly field in one ranking methodology, the Times Higher Education University Ranking (THE). The humanities field is chosen to review the reflexivity of ranking frameworks and evaluate THE's ability to accommodate diverse scholarly fields in their methodology. The trends and traditions that separate the humanities from other scholarly fields are laid out in Chapter 3 to establish the elements necessary to consider in their evaluation and whether such idiosyncrasies are accounted for is discussed in the consecutive section. Three primary themes within the humanities are highlighted to illustrate its distinct nature and patterns. These themes primarily pertain to academic publishing and scholarly communication and include trends and traditions of research outputs with a focus on the scholarly monograph, language of communication, and authorship trends. While evaluating the other components of the methodology, such as teaching, demography, and income is equally important to establish the

[3] Janne Tienari, Hanna-Mari Aula, and Timo Aarrevaara, 'Built to Be Excellent? The Aalto University Merger in Finland', *European Journal of Higher Education*, 6.1 (2016), pp. 25–40 (pp. 26–27), doi:10.1080/21568235.2015.1099454; 'Aalto University: History', *Aalto University*, 2022 <https://www.aalto.fi/en/aalto-university/history>; Hazelkorn, *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education*, p. 176.

overall presentation of the ranking, such efforts are beyond the scope of this thesis. Similarly, the elements chosen for discussion is not an exhaustive list of the humanities' idiosyncrasies. Topics such as open access and digital humanities that are highly relevant to the nature of contemporary humanities scholarship are only included briefly to allow for more in depth discussions for the chosen elements. The features of humanities scholarship chosen for discussion are selected on basis of their inclusion and applicability in THE's ranking methodology and the significance they hold in humanities scholarship.

The main questions sought to answer in this thesis are: *To what extent does Times Higher Education University Ranking accommodate the unique structure of the scholarly field of the humanities in its methodological framework?* And subsequently, *to what extent does the ranking offer a representative indication of the quality of humanities scholarship?* Through evaluation, this thesis argues that although the unique structure of the humanities is acknowledged in its methodology by evidence of adjustments to the weighted factors, such adjustments are insufficient to accurately accommodate the distinct makeup of humanities scholarship and therefore, in its current presentation, fail to meaningfully represent the field of the humanities in its rankings.

Incorporating the elements above and support the stated argument, a literature review is conducted to provide the basis upon which arguments in the latter chapters are built. Consequently, the thesis is structured in the following manner. Firstly, a chapter on university rankings is presented, along with the historical overview of evaluation and the conditions in which university rankings as they are known today emerge. This chapter also introduces THE, its history, and the make-up of its evaluation framework, and the developments leading up to its methodology evaluated in later chapters. Chapter 3 presents the scholarly field of the humanities. This chapter includes a discussion on pursuits and challenges to delineate and conceptualise the field and the disciplines within its scope. Defining the humanities is necessary for the following sub-chapters that list and individually discuss primary characteristics of humanities scholarship, namely monograph publications, non-English publications, and authorship trends. The following chapter combines both themes of rankings and the humanities and critically assesses THE's ranking methodology and the way it incorporates humanities-specific characteristics. Chapter 5 introduces proposed adjustments to THE's framework and how it can more accurately represent humanities scholarship in its rankings. Finally, a concluding chapter summarises the findings of this thesis, reiterates its relevance and introduces opportunities for further, related research.

Chapter 2: University Rankings

In this chapter, university rankings are defined, and their contemporary presentation is contextualised through establishing the conditions in which they first emerge and the factors influential in their development.

As mentioned in the introduction, university rankings are tools through which evaluation of HEIs take place on a global scale. However, to understand university rankings and their history, they must first be adequately defined. The definition of university rankings used in this thesis is one conceptualised by Jelena Brankovic and Stefan Wilbers. They define rankings as '[…] quantified zero-sum comparisons of performances, visualized by means of a hierarchical table and repeatedly published by a third party.'[4] Each university ranking system is unique in its methodological composition, yet all share the three components presented in the definition. Quantified zero-sum comparisons indicate the numerical presentation, or the allotment of a total score to a given HEI where the HEIs are hierarchically organised in a manner where one institution's placement is at the cost of another. Through this vertical visualisation, one university's gain on the ranking implies a loss to another. The third, temporal, component requires the regular revision of the ranking. This introduces a dynamic element to the rankings in which an institution's placement is not secure and can be either improved upon or worsened.

This definition of university rankings allows for the distinction of the nature of the ranking systems discussed in this thesis from other forms of academic evaluation frameworks. Such distinction is necessary as the history of university rankings is one shared with the history of evaluation and is deeply embedded in the history of HEIs and the overarching academic landscape. Due to the close link between local, national and in some cases trans-national governing bodies and university institutions, it is important to recognise the impact of political and socio-economic contexts on the history of university rankings. Such contexts inform the conditions leading to the active efforts to both quantify, compare, and hierarchically organise universities on a national, regional and eventually global scale.

Only a broad overview is presented in this chapter and specificities are drawn primarily from US and Western European contexts as much of the scholarly literature on the topic focuses on the two contexts.

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[4] Stefan Wilbers and Jelena Brankovic, 'The Emergence of University Rankings: A Historical-sociological Account', *Higher Education*, 86.4 (2023), pp. 733–50 (p. 734), doi:10.1007/s10734-021-00776-7.

2.1 University Rankings Historical Overview

University rankings, as previously conceptualised, can be traced back to the turn of the 20th century. This period saw a shift towards standardisation across universities. In the US, many universities either weakened or cut their religious ties to become a part of a larger system of HEIs rather than remain individually organised entities. Wilbers and Brankovic describe this as a decrease in 'organizational heterogeneity'[5] and a shift towards new ideals and standards which in turn facilitated comparison across increasingly homogenous features of university activities. Rankings evolved from increased emphasis on evaluation, classification and ambition to compare performances across institutions. Increased standardisation facilitated comparison on an increasingly larger scale. Such comparisons began at a regional and national level and gradually expanded to a global scale with technological advancements and globalisation.

Early university rankings were informal in nature and relied largely on prestige and reputation associated with alumni based on achievements both within and outside academia. Hierarchically organised lists of scholars and associated universities attempted to establish the quality of their education based on their successes in their post-student years. In 1910, the directory *American Men of Science* reportedly published a list establishing the 'scientific strength' of US universities based on their attendees. Evaluation criteria also took availability of resources into consideration based on number of titles held in the university library and the ratio of faculty/student numbers. Despite the informality of the 'ranking', Hazelkorn and Mihut pinpoint such efforts as the first, sub-national/elite rankings. Moreover, the efforts are emblematic of the motivation to quantify academic quality and research reputation and structurally organise such evaluations.[6]

Around the mid-century mark, commercially driven national rankings emerged in the wake of rapid population growth and both social and physical mobility of large populations. That is, a larger number of people attended universities and were not limited to institutions close by which further motivated the effort to evaluate HEIs to determine their comparative quality. In the US, ranking universities became a national effort which was both the product of, and a driving force towards increased standardisation of universities across the country. The introduction of the Science Citation Index (SCI) in 1961 facilitated evaluations based on bibliometric data and saw the adjustment of methodologies to include quantified

[5] Wilbers and Brankovic, 'The Emergence of University Rankings', p. 736.
[6] Hazelkorn and Mihut, 'Introduction', pp. 2–3; Hazelkorn, *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education*, pp. 26–27.

measurements to inform reputation factors. SCI's intended function was to act as a tool to facilitate the measurement of the influence and impact of research through measuring elements such as citation impact and journal impact factor (JIF). The SCI later included field-specific indices such as the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI), the Book Citation Index (BCI), and the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), etc. and SCI forms the basis of the bibliometric database Web of Science (WoS) established in 1997.[7] In 1998, a non-US ranking system, the CHE-Hochschul ranking was developed in Germany, building the foundation for European ranking efforts. Similarly to the US rankings, such systems were built and utilised on a national, inter-federal basis, and later expanded internationally after the turn of the century. Hazelkorn identifies the (prospective) students and parents as the primary audience of rankings until the turn of the century – which saw more engagement and introduction of new stakeholders both inside and outside the HEI as the notion of rankings went beyond the national context.[8]

The year 2003 marked a watershed moment in ranking and evaluation history as it saw the emergence of the first *global* university ranking system, The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), or as it is often referred to, the Shanghai ranking. ARWU was developed at Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China in response to the call of the Chinese government to establish globally competitive universities.[9] This is the first case where rankings transcend national borders to become a truly global phenomenon. Now universities across the world are subjected to the same evaluation framework to receive a placement on the ranking. This new evaluation framework consists of a combination of bibliometric indicators informed by WoS, a large and global database. Following the launch of the ARWU in 2003, many other ranking systems promptly emerged and over 20 more major global ranking systems have been established between the years 2003 and 2021.[10] This growth of the ranking systems similarly expanded the demographic utilising the rankings for decision-making purposes. Governing bodies both within and outside universities, and funding organisations join prospective students as primary audiences for the rankings.

Following the expansion of the reach of now global ranking systems, supra-national entities such as the EU and OECD began to involve themselves as governing bodies

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[7] Heather Morrison, '5 What Counts in Research? Dysfunction in Knowledge Creation and Moving Beyond', in *Global University Rankings and the Politics of Knowledge*, ed. by Michelle Stack (University of Toronto Press, 2021), pp. 109–32 (p. 110), doi:10.3138/9781487545154-008.
[8] Hazelkorn, *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education*, pp. 27–28.
[9] Ibid., p. 28.
[10] Hazelkorn and Mihut, 'Introduction', pp. 2–5.

responsible for regulating this emerging marketplace of many co-existing and competing ranking systems. EU's U-Multirank and OECD's Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) initiatives were primarily motivated by criticism of the lack of representativeness of research quality in existing rankings. This need to regulate is borne out of the recognition of the economic, political and social value of higher education and the mobility it facilitates in a globalised environment. That is, higher education is now treated and regulated as a commodity in a global market. Both U-Multirank and AHELO de-emphasise research outputs in their methodologies, placing more focus on learning outcomes.[11] Neither system present aggregate, numeric scores for the institutions evaluated. Criticism of university rankings comes not only from governing bodies such as the EU and OECD and has been a visible feature of both academic and public discourse surrounding university rankings.

Criticism of global university rankings is primarily directed at the notion and manner of simplification of complex organisations such as HEIs. Some reject the notion of quantifying and scoring HEIs altogether, whereas others direct their criticism at individual ranking systems and point out flaws and insufficiencies in their methodologies. Falling into the first group is Gary R. S. Barron who criticises the effects of ranking efforts on individual academics and the overall academic environment. He argues that university rankings act as a coercive force dictating academic's behaviours in their various research, teaching and publication choices. This influence extends to topics of research, types of publication outputs, and language choices, etc. and limits academic freedom. While critical of their impact, Barron nevertheless concedes the firm position rankings hold in the academic landscape and that they are hard to ignore or avoid. He writes:

> The problem is this: The material and cultural relations in which rankings are entwined make them all at once seductive, coercive, and profane to academics, who are not only subject to them but whose very work feeds their production. That is, they are not only embedded within long-standing academic practices and interests, they are increasingly integrated into routine ways of knowing, thinking about, and recognizing legitimate universities and academic work.[12]

[11] However, finding a suitable indicator to measure learning outcomes has posed a significant challenge for both U-Multirank and AHELO.

[12] Gary R. S. Barron, '8 Rankings as Surveillance Assemblage', in *Global University Rankings and the Politics of Knowledge*, ed. by Michelle Stack (University of Toronto Press, 2021), pp. 172–94 (p. 172), doi:10.3138/9781487545154-011.

As Barron indicates, some argue that rankings place institutions and scholars in a deadlock where participating in a flawed system is preferable to subjecting themselves to the disadvantages of not participating at all. However, there has been pushback from institutions that withdraw their participation from the rankings in demonstration of their disapproval of the structure of the ranking systems. One such example is the University of Utrecht (UU) which did not submit data for THE's 2024 iteration of its ranking.[13] A similar case to the one of UU is the University of Zurich (UZH) that in March 2024 made the announcement that it would withdraw from the THE ranking stating that 'The ranking is not able to reflect the wide range of activities in teaching and research undertaken by universities'[14]. In addition to some universities opting out of participation in different ranking systems, others may opt for conditional participation (participating in some aspects of the rankings, but not all).[15] Much of the criticism is centred around the failure of the methodologies to meaningfully represent HEIs' activities in a holistic manner. This thesis discusses this criticism towards the rankings, with a focus on the representation of humanities scholarship in one ranking system particularly, the THE. THE's history and methodology is presented in the following section and subsequent sections combine the discussion of the humanities with THE's methodological framework.

2.2 Times Higher Education University Ranking

Times Higher Education, a UK based ranking system, traces its origin back to the year 2004 and was therefore one of the earliest global university rankings, launching only a year after ARWU. THE is a commercially private entity that has since 2019 been owned by Inflexion, a UK-based private equity firm. In its early years, THE worked in collaboration with another UK based organisation Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) to produce its rankings. The THE-QS ranking system was primarily survey-based where data was collected from scholars at institutions across the globe. In 2010, Times Higher Education and QS ended their partnership and respectively established individual ranking systems. After this split THE's methodology underwent significant changes and began dedicating a large portion of its methodology to

[13] 'Why UU Is Missing in the THE Ranking', 2023 <https://www.uu.nl/en/news/why-uu-is-missing-in-the-the-ranking> [accessed 12 September 2024].
[14] 'UZH to No Longer Provide Data for THE Ranking', 2024 <https://www.news.uzh.ch/en/articles/news/2024/rankings.html> [accessed 12 September 2024].
[15] Barron, '8 Rankings as Surveillance Assemblage', p. 190.

bibliometrics and citation data collected from Elsevier's Scopus database, whereas the QS remained primarily survey based.[16]

Following the transformation of THE's methodology after the split from QS in 2010, no major changes were made to its methodology until 2023. This new, updated methodology is the one discussed in this thesis as it claims to '[…] reflect the outputs of the diverse range of research-intensive universities across the world.'[17] THE's current methodology is made up of

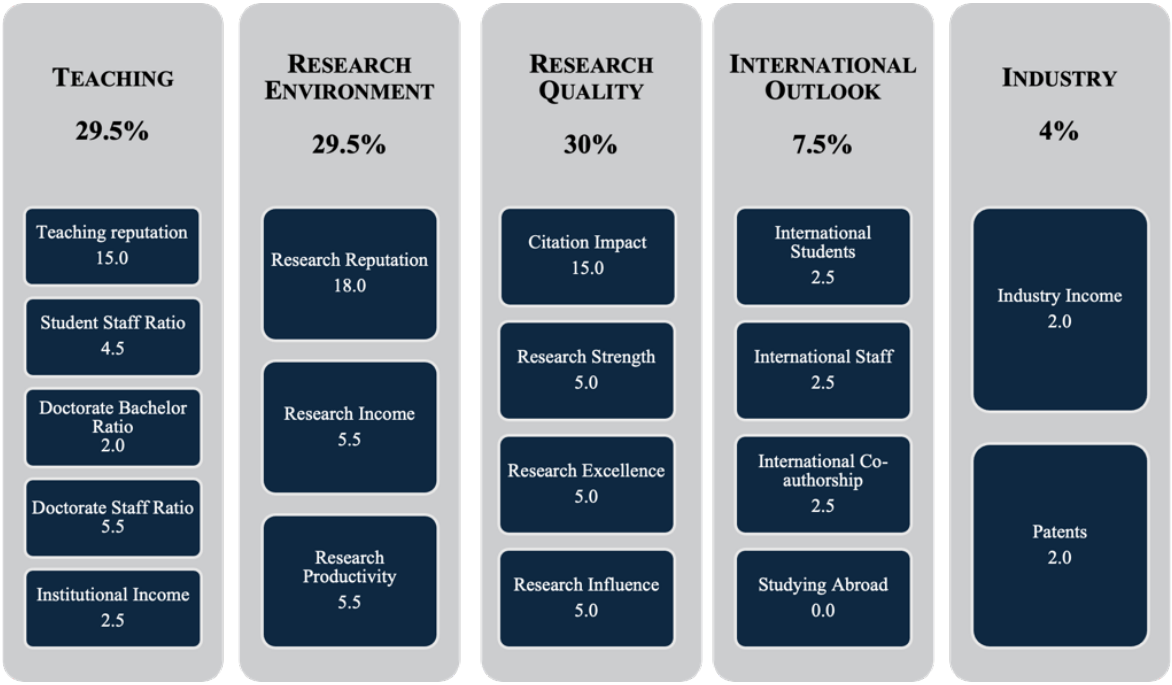

Figure 1: THE's Overall Methodology [18]

five primary components that are each split into subcategories. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of THE's methodology along with the weighting given to each component. This breakdown shows the methodology leading to a HEI's overall score, although the weighted components are adjusted for their rankings by subject as is discussed further in Chapter 4.

THE's ranking framework employs a mixed methodology where results are either survey-based, based on data collected from bibliographic sources or from submitted datasets from institutions participating in the ranking. The survey-based data concerns only the two reputation indicators, namely the teaching reputation and the research reputation and is

[16] George Chen and Leslie Chan, 'University Rankings and Governance by Metrics and Algorithms', in *Research Handbook on University Rankings*, ed. by Ellen Hazelkorn and Georgiana Mihut (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021), pp. 425–43 (p. 429), doi:10.4337/9781788974981.00043.
[17] Duncan Ross, *THE World University Rankings: Methodology for Overall and Subject Rankings for the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024*, September 2023, p. 3 <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/sites/default/files/the_2024_world_university_rankings_methodology.pdf> [accessed 23 May 2024].
[18] Ibid., 14.

collected from a closed, selected pool of respondents. THE sends this survey to well-established, individual scholars within their field of expertise. This methodological choice is rationalised by claiming that experienced and established scholars in their field are the most qualified to evaluate and judge an institution's merit in terms of its teaching and research quality. Respondents can list up to 15 institutions they deem to be the best within both categories respectively. The submitted datasets from the institutions themselves pertain to components such as student staff ratio, doctorate bachelor ratio, institutional income, industry income, international students/staff/co-authorship, studying abroad, and patents.

Bibliographic data is used to determine the components listed in Figure 1: Research productivity, citation impact, research strength, research excellence, and research influence. The bibliographic data used in THE's methodology is collected through the Scopus database, which was launched in 2004 and is owned and run by academic publisher Elsevier. It is one of the most comprehensive and widely used datasets for scholarly publications in the world. The bibliometric data contributing to THE's 2024 ranking consisted of all indexed citations, publications, and journals between the years 2019 and 2024. This included over 30,000 active journals, 18 million journal articles and 157 million citations.[19]

While the dataset provided by Scopus is one of the most comprehensive in the world, the reliance on the Scopus dataset is not without flaws or criticism. Firstly, the fact that Scopus is owned by one of the world's largest academic publisher is criticised for a conflict of interest as Elsevier both contributes to the data as an academic publisher, as well as facilitates the access to the data.[20] Elsevier is a commercial enterprise and its publishing activities, as well as provisions of bibliographic datasets are criticised for being under the influence of financial incentives. Secondly, THE's claim that its ranking is informed by all indexed data implies that the dataset is complete. However, while THE's claim is not untrue, the primary problem lies in flawed and uncomprehensive indexing. Not all academic publications are properly indexed whereas others are not indexed at all. This line of criticism is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.4 as repercussions of this indexing gap are particularly strongly felt within humanities scholarship.

In summary, the development of ranking systems has led to their increased scale of reach and influence. The increased scale of the rankings has brought with it significant criticism towards the ways in which university activities are quantified and hierarchically

[19] Ross, *THE World University Ranking Methodology*, p. 4.
[20] Barron, '8 Rankings as Surveillance Assemblage', p. 186.

measured. There is nevertheless a clear demand for global rankings as HEIs are active participants in a global competitive economy where their activities are quantified and compared to determine their value and status.

Chapter 3: The Humanities

To comprehensively analyse and evaluate the way the scholarly field of humanities is represented and incorporated into university ranking frameworks, the humanities field as an entity must be defined, along with the primary characteristics separating it from other academic fields and disciplines. This section includes an exploration of efforts to both define and delineate the humanities field as well as the humanities' position in a wider academic landscape. The chosen features of the humanities discussed in this thesis (monograph publishing, non-English publishing, and single author trends) are then addressed individually in respective sections.

3.1 Historical Overview and Defining the Humanities

Given that the 'object' of observation within the humanities is humanity itself and the various forms of self-expression, it is impossible to pin-point the exact origins of the humanities as a field.[21] Observing the meaning-making and patterns of languages and cultural practices began long before the formalisation of human-observation as an academic endeavour or the humanities as an academic field.[22] Similarly, the study of human self-expression was not a stand-alone practice and was often undertaken in junction with subjects that would fall under natural or hard sciences by contemporary classification schemes. The blurred lines between both the subjects and their practitioners make the delineation of the history of the humanities a challenging undertaking.

In this chapter, the characteristics and traditions of the scholarly field of humanities are presented along with a discussion on the definition, categorisation, and classification of the field within a larger academic context. Through examination of the literature, it becomes evident that the most consistent feature of the humanities field is its dynamic and diverse nature. Subdisciplines include, but are not limited to linguistics, law, history, ethics,

[21] Rens Bod, 'A New History of the Humanities: The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present', *Choice Reviews Online*, 52.02 (2014), pp. 52-0622-52–0622 (p. 1), doi:10.5860/CHOICE.52-0622.
[22] Willem B. Drees, *What Are the Humanities For?*, 1st edn (Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 17, doi:10.1017/9781108974615.

philosophy, media studies, philology, and theology.[23] Humanities disciplines often appear to have more differences than commonalities and the field's diversity makes it an interesting phenomenon to study, although it introduces several challenges. One must acknowledge the field's complexities yet simultaneously attempt to simplify it for a more manageable discussion. This is why classification models and definitions are presented as theories and contributions to a scholarly debate, rather than fact. Literature on the topic of the humanities is often grouped together with social sciences (SS) and the two fields are often discussed jointly as SSH, rather than separate entities. While this thesis focuses on the humanities alone, much of the trends discussed are shared with that of the SS and literature is often drawn from sources that discuss the SSH and humanities in combination, rather than the humanities as a stand-alone field.

As presented by Willem D. Brees, the humanities are 'the scholarly field of the human world, […], the study of the stories and histories, languages and literatures, religions, and moralities of humans.'[24] Encapsulating the various aspects of 'humanity' inevitably brings about a very diverse field. The variety within the field makes it difficult to study the humanities as an entity and to assert overall behaviours and trends. However, as Brees argues, all humanities disciplines share a common foundation in that they

> […] are academic disciplines in which humans seek understanding of human self-understandings and self-expressions, and of the ways in which people thereby construct and experience the world they live in.[25]

For this reason, he argues that the disciplines within the humanities can be grouped and discussed together. Accepting Brees' argument that the humanities disciplines can be grouped together, there have been many interpretations of exactly how this should be done and on what grounds such delineations should be made. Two widely cited interpretations are discussed in this section, but do not exhaust the list of theories and scholars who have attempted to define the humanities.[26]

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[23] The categorisation of which disciplines belong to the field of humanities is sometimes contested, especially so for law and linguistics disciplines that often break away from the trends discussed later in this chapter.
[24] Drees, *What Are the Humanities For?*, pp. 1–2.
[25] Ibid., p. 12.
[26] Tony Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines* (ociety for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press, 1989), pp. 14–16.

A proposed classification of academic fields and disciplines is presented by David A. Kolb who devised a two-dimensional classification system based on the following four components: abstract-concrete and active-reflective. Kolb adds these four components onto what he considers the already existing dichotomy between two primary academic camps, namely the 'scientific' and the 'artistic.' Kolb argues that the academic field can be mapped through a bilateral allocation of characteristics and components. Abstract-reflective includes disciplines such as natural sciences and mathematics whereas engineering and other science-based professions fall under the abstract-active classification. Law, education, and social work belong to the concrete-active classification and the humanities and SS are primarily categorised as concrete-reflective. Kolb does not set this up as a binary, but rather a spectrum spanning both a y and x-axis. This is illustrated in Figure 2.[27]

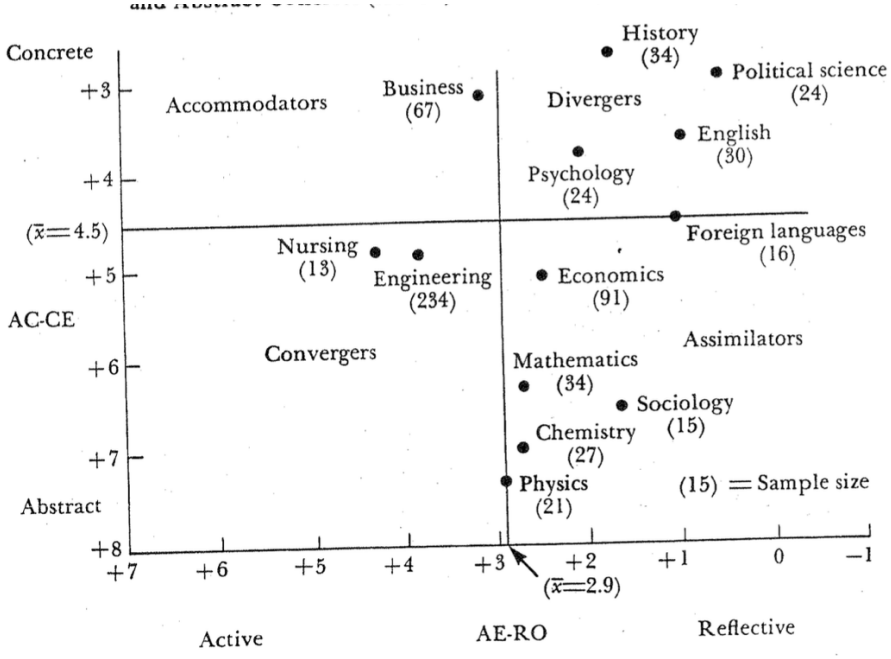

Figure 1: Kolb's Abstract-Concrete & Active-Reflective Spectrum[28]

While Kolb's presentation of the basis of the humanities field provides a worthwhile contribution – the conceptualisation of the humanities as a scholarly field accepted in this thesis is Becher's interpretation of Kuhn's theory of paradigms. This perspective holds that rather than dividing fields by nature of objects of research one should look at the presence or absence of a paradigm within disciplines, or sciences. According to Kuhn, a paradigm is a conceptual framework that shapes scholars' 'belief system' within a given discipline. That is,

[27] David Kolb, 'Learning Styles and Disciplinary Differences', 18 (1981), pp. 232–55 (p. 240); Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories*, p. 12.
[28] Ibid.

a paradigm determines the base assumptions of foundational principles upon which scholars build to further scientific discovery.[29] Kuhn also referred to paradigms as a 'disciplinary matrix'[30] to illustrate that a paradigm is a dominant framework within a given discipline until a new paradigm emerges to take the place of the existing one. That is, no two paradigms can coexist within a single discipline. Examples of paradigm shifts include Copernican revolution which shifted the field of Astronomy from a geocentric to a heliocentric perspective of the solar system.[31]

Rather than labelling disciplines as belonging to 'natural' or 'social' sciences, Becher divides disciplines into ones operating under a dominant paradigm, namely, 'mature' sciences and disciplines without a paradigm which he names 'pre-paradigmatic' sciences.[32] A prominent feature of SS and humanities disciplines is the lack of both theoretical and methodological consensus as well as a diverging perception of foundational principles. There is no single common understanding of the 'way the world works,' or a common framework upon which all subsequent humanities practice is built. The humanities and the SS are therefore considered 'pre-paradigmatic' disciplines. Contrastingly, following Becher's organising principle, the presence of paradigms within STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines marks them as 'mature' sciences.[33] Kuhn and Becher's use of terminology implies the inevitability of the emergence of paradigms within scholarly disciplines. Whether paradigms are a natural state to arrive at in all disciplines, or even a desirable outcome, is up for debate.

Through explorations of paradigms as an organising principle, the primary feature of the humanities field and its disciplines is its methodological pluralism. This is one of the main differentiations between the STEM and humanities fields as both encapsulate diverse disciplines and subdisciplines regarding their subject matter, but there is overarching methodological consensus and best practices followed when conducting and presenting STEM research. That is, a methodological paradigm is present among STEM and its disciplines, but there is no such overarching methodological consensus, or rather, a paradigm, within the humanities. However, although diverging in their methodological approaches, patterns can be distinguished in the presentation of the research. There are several features of

[29] Thomas S. Kuhn and Ian Hacking, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 4th edn (The University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 11.
[30] Ibid., p. 181.
[31] Ibid., p. 76.
[32] Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories*, p. 10.
[33] Ibid.

scholarly communication within the humanities that can be grouped together as broad trends that distinguish them from other academic fields. These elements are discussed in the following chapters.

The humanities field has often been declared in a state of crisis. While few scholars would argue against the claim that the field faces significant resource and representation-related challenges, the extent to which such challenges bring about a state of 'crisis' is debated. Some scholars, such as Reitter and Wellmon argue that a state of crisis is internally borne and imposed on external circumstances. That is, that a state of crisis is only brought on by a perpetuated discourse that the humanities field is comparatively disadvantaged by external factors. They argue that the humanities field is in no more state of crisis now than previously in history. The field is simply in continuous process of development and is shaped by new technologies and contemporary circumstances just as it has in the past. Such changes are strongly felt in real time and cannot yet be viewed from a more distant and less sentimental historical perspective. Others argue that the significance and impact of the challenges faced by the humanities field are not only unprecedented, but a cause for concern.[34]

3.2 Unique Structure of the Humanities

Whether intended or not, the humanities and STEM fields are often presented as a dichotomy and often in direct contrast to one another. While there are significant differences between common practices within STEM and humanities disciplines, the extent of such differences, or whether such differences matter, are subject of scholarly debate. Drees argues that while expressions may differ between academic fields and disciplines, the core motivation behind all academic practices is shared across the board. That is, the pursuit of gaining understanding and generating knowledge.[35] Similarly, Bod asserts that the division between the STEM and humanities may seem natural, logical, and inevitable if seen through a contemporary perspective, but the history of the fields counters this notion. Many great thinkers throughout history, including Galileo, Plato and Newton, are to this day referred to as both scientists and philosophers, or to use a more contemporary phrasing, STEM scholars and humanists alike. Bod argues that not only are the boundaries between the STEM and humanities somewhat

[34] Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon, *Permanent Crisis: The Humanities in a Disenchanted Age* (The University of Chicago Press, 2021).
[35] Drees, *What Are the Humanities For?*, p. 17.

artificially and arbitrarily constructed, but the point of divergence between the fields is unclear and should not be assumed as truth or inevitable.[36]

While the ideals and values behind categorisation can be theoretically argued and questioned, in practice there is a clear dichotomy presented between that of the STEM and the humanities (often within a larger grouping of the SSH), both formally and discursively. While the terminology may differ, sometimes referred to as the 'hard' versus 'soft sciences', or 'natural' versus 'arts' or 'social' sciences, the notion remains consistent that the two groups are discussed in contrast to one another. Such contrast is not borne out of nothing, and the following subsections highlight the elements that separate the nature of the humanities from other fields of scholarship, and especially that of STEM. Such differences showcase that any discussions and evaluations of scholarship must take such nuances into account and that there is no one-size-fits-all way they can be meaningfully. The first theme of humanities scholarship discussed is that of monographs publications, followed by a discussion on non-English publishing and authorship trends.

3.2.1 Monograph Publications

The scholarly monograph is an academic book on a very specialised subject of research. As a scholarly output, monographs allow for a detailed exploration of a particular perspective or topic and a single monograph is often the result of multiple years of research. Monographs are often, although not exclusively, published by university presses and the selection and affiliation with a prestigious press can influence the perception of the monograph itself. A monograph follows a logical, linear structure. That is, it is not a compilation of independent chapters or essays and although a monograph can be authored by more than one scholar, it must constitute a single, coherent unit.

Sentences along the lines of 'the scholarly monograph is the "gold standard" for humanities publishing' and 'the scholarly monograph is dying/dead' have, despite their oxymoronic nature, become equally cliché utterances on the topic of monograph and the humanities. The question remains of how both such sentiments on the same topic can coexist and be maintained. The combination of positive discourses on the value of the monograph and the negative discourses concerning its vitality distracts from the true position monographs hold in contemporary humanities scholarship. This chapter aims to present scholarly

[36] Bod, 'A New History of the Humanities', pp. 1–2.

discourses on the current and historical value of the monograph, as well as contextualise the discourse of the monograph's demise. Primarily, this chapter synthesises literature discussing trends and statistics behind monograph publications to establish its current, proportional role within humanities scholarship. Previously mentioned caveats on the diverse nature and practices of the humanities similarly apply to the role of monographs. The monograph tradition is more prevalent in certain disciplines such as philosophy and literature, whereas other disciplines such as linguistics are often more journal based.[37] However, just as with the rest of this thesis' discussions, the humanities are discussed in an over-arching manner, but with the recognition that not all statements made are true for the individual disciplines.

The scholarly monograph as an academic output is strongly associated with the field of the humanities. While monographs are not unheard of in other fields, the monograph tradition has throughout history, and to this day been more prevalent in the humanities than among STEM disciplines or even the SS. Despite the prevailing prevalence of the monograph as a scholarly output, recent years have seen rapid changes within patterns of scholarly communication and many scholars flag concerns about the monograph's decline in academia, whereas others have gone as far as to claim the monograph already dead.[38]

Monographs are often embedded in university structures as a benchmark for scientific rigour and demonstrate the ability to conduct high-quality, in-depth research. Authoring monographs is therefore often a criterion for promotions and attainment of tenured positions. This associated prestige of the monograph leads to its common designation as a 'gold standard' of humanities scholarship.[39] While the history of the monograph can be traced back further than the emergence of the printing press and the transformation of means to disseminate knowledge, this thesis limits itself to the historical period most relevant for the current context, namely from 1900 onwards. Within that time span, both the status, role and

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[37] Björn Hammarfelt, 'Beyond Coverage: Toward a Bibliometrics for the Humanities', in *Research Assessment in the Humanities*, ed. by Michael Ochsner, Sven E. Hug, and Hans-Dieter Daniel (Springer International Publishing, 2016), pp. 115–31 (p. 119), doi:10.1007/978-3-319-29016-4_10.

[38] Jennifer Wolfe Thompson, 'The Death of the Scholarly Monograph in the Humanities? Citation Patterns in Literary Scholarship', *Libri*, 52.3 (2002), p. 121, doi:10.1515/LIBR.2002.121; Hammarfelt, 'Beyond Coverage', p. 118; John B. Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age: The Transformation of Academic and Higher Education Publishing in Britain and the United States* (Polity Press, 2005), p. 83.

[39] Phil Pochoda, 'The Big One: The Epistemic System Break in Scholarly Monograph Publishing', *New Media & Society*, 15.3 (2013), pp. 359–78 (p. 359), doi:10.1177/1461444812465143; Martin Paul Eve, *Open Access and the Humanities: Contexts, Controversies and the Future*, 1st edn (Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 113, doi:10.1017/CBO9781316161012; Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age*, pp. 84–85; Tim C.E. Engels and others, 'Are Book Publications Disappearing from Scholarly Communication in the Social Sciences and Humanities?', *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 70.6 (2018), pp. 592–607 (p. 593), doi:10.1108/AJIM-05-2018-0127.

nature of the monograph has changed considerably and fostered the conditions relevant to this discussion.

Between approximately 1900 and the 1960s, the scholarly monograph and its publication processes were well established, financially viable, and had a firm place both within scholarly publication circuits as well as tools for accreditation and professionalisation within university structures. Within humanities disciplines, scholars were expected, and oftentimes required to publish monographs on a topic within their specialty to advance in their academic careers. Naturally, monographs of this period are exclusively analogue and carved out an entire section of the academic publishing sector.[40]

The precise decade in which the demand for the monograph started to decrease is debated among scholars.[41] There is, however, a consensus that by the late 1980s, the status of the monograph had dramatically changed from simply a few decades prior. Thompson reports over a 75% drop in monograph sales between the years 1970 and 2005 and the continuously decreasing financial viability of monograph publishing. The decline of the monograph occurred in the wake of several political and socio-economic shifts that had significant impact on the business of publishing and purchasing monographs. Political unrest during the Cold War period and economic recessions saw a decline in budget allocation towards universities, and a subsequent shrinking of library budgets. A limited budget necessitated prioritisation of purchases, of which humanities scholarship found itself far back in the pecking order in comparison to many STEM fields. Especially so during a time when technological advancements and comparative knowledge generation and acquisition are high up on the political agenda. Academic publishers were inevitably hit by this blow to their primary customer's purchasing power. During this time, commercial academic publishers such as Springer, Wiley, and Bertelsmann expanded and consolidated a significant share of prestigious international journal titles, primarily within the STEM fields. The large market share held by these publishers granted them strong bargaining power towards libraries to pay high subscription fees, despite their tight budgets. Such pressures carved an even larger share of library budgets, subsequently leaving less money over for monograph purchases.[42]

The chasm between journal and monograph publications was widened further with the introduction and proliferation of digital technologies whose structure largely favoured the former. Digital technologies had begun to seep into publishing practices from the 1980s

[40] Pochoda, 'The Big One', pp. 362–64.po
[41] Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age*, p. 93.Pochoda, 'The Big One', p. 365.
[42] Pochoda, 'The Big One', pp. 363–66.

onwards following the popularisation of desktop computers. By the 1990s, technologies undermining the need for paper during any stages of publication further disadvantaged the scholarly monograph whose long-form characteristic did not lend itself easily to the affordances of the digital format.

That is not to say that no efforts were made to bring monographs into the digital realm in the early days. Academic publishers, as early as the 1990s began experimenting and conceptualising how transform monographs into digital publications. The possible benefits of new revenue streams, combatting the declining sales, and embracing new affordances that are beyond the abilities of the paper medium made the business venture appealing. In addition, the digitisation of journal publications had already proven to be successful endeavours and heralding a new age of publishing. However, multiple barriers presented themselves in trying to realise the digital monograph. Expected low costs of production were not reflected in reality due to costs involved with novel digital production and dissemination, compared to well established physical publication processes. Formatting, standardisation, metadata and copyright issues presented yet another set of obstacles, but as Thompson emphasises:

> […] the fundamental problem that faced any publisher who thought that there might be an electronic solution to the problems of scholarly monograph publishing was that no one had demonstrated that there was a viable market for monographs delivered in an electronic form, and no one had come up with a business model which showed that electronic publication of scholarly monographs would be financially viable, let alone profitable, concern.[43]

Engels et al report that in 2018, over a decade after Thompson's exploration, monograph publications represented only a fraction of online scholarly publishing.[44]

An increasingly important component of scholarship in the digital realm is the open access (OA) movement as an effort to make scholarly publications digitally available universally and removing price barriers for readers.[45] Implications following the pursuit of OA differ between fields. This is particularly true for the humanities and monographs as OA poses new challenges requiring attention and efforts to solve. Giglia argues that OA

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[43] Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age*, p. 332.
[44] Engels and others, 'Are Book Publications Disappearing from Scholarly Communication in the Social Sciences and Humanities?', p. 595.
[45] Eve, *Open Access and the Humanities*, pp. 1–2.

endeavours for humanities scholarship is different from that of other fields because of the fragmentation in both disciplinary behaviours/languages and publishing landscape. The disciplinary differences and the involvement of smaller agents and publishers can be compared to that of STEM publishing where most research flows through the pipeline of the largest five publishers. [46]

Fragmentation and a lack of standardised practice in transitioning humanities scholarship to OA leads to a gap that is particularly pronounced for monographs. This is primarily due to their resource-intense nature in both production and peer-review.[47] Due to the core differences between monographs and journal-based publications in terms of their production processes, scope, resource-intensity, and role in scholarship as highly specialised outputs, monographs are treated separately from other scholarly outputs. However, Eve argues that for digital publishing, the differences between the outputs in terms of production, are minimal and are only a matter of scale. He claims that the need to treat the monograph differently stems from social factors and is not borne out of a technical necessity to do so. The primary motivations for the separate treatments of monographs stems from the symbolic, as well as functional, role of the publisher as an agent of quality control.[48] Pairing this with the fragmented nature of humanities publishers, OA is far from a straightforward ordeal for monographs, neither in theory nor practice. In her research, Roncevic implores that OA monographs require a different business model than other outputs due to the high-risk investment and the number of stakeholders involved.[49]

Despite facing significant challenges, monographs still hold a prevailing role in humanities scholarship, both regarding number of publications and symbolic value. In their examination of publishing trends in five European countries,[50] Engels et al demonstrate that there is significant national variety in monograph publication trends and that the rates fluctuate between the measured years of 2004 and 2015. In the last measured year, the average share of monograph publications across the five countries is 4.9% with the Belgian region of Flanders scoring lowest at 2.5% and Slovenia scoring highest at 7.2%. To

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[46] Elena Giglia, 'OPERAS: Bringing the Long Tail of Social Sciences and Humanities into Open Science', *Septentrio Conference Series*, 1, 2018, p. 146, doi:10.7557/5.4564.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Eve, *Open Access and the Humanities*, p. 120.
[49] Mirela Roncevic, 'Characteristics of European Universities That Participate in Library Crowdfunding Initiatives for Open Access Monographs', *Publications*, 11.1 (2023), p. 9 (p. 2), doi:10.3390/publications11010009.
[50] One of the measured entities is the Belgian region of Flanders and does not count Belgian scholarship in its totality. This is primarily due to Belgium having two national languages.

demonstrate trends from such percentages, they must be viewed in context. The share of monograph publishing in Flanders, in the first measured year of 2004 was 2.6% and Slovenia's share was 8.2%. Combining such numbers with statistics on book chapter publications from the same countries over the same timeline, where the five countries average 36.5% - the total share of publications stemming from book-based sources is 41.4%.

Research such as the one presented by Engels et al demonstrates that book-based sources make up a considerable portion of humanities scholarship and therefore necessitate its inclusion in metrics. However, Engels et al also demonstrate that indexing efforts of book-based sources are often incomplete in international databases, if they are indexed at all. They argue that this primarily stems from the fact that scholarly books are often published in local languages and indexed into local databases which do not extend to larger, international systems. This gap can also further contribute to the discussion on the statistical decline of monograph publications if such data is pulled from incomplete data sources. This problem extends beyond incorporation of publications in databases to the access and production of citation data.[51] This is discussed further in Chapter 4.4. Beyond the local/national aspect, the digital system in which most of contemporary academic scholarship exists was built around the structures of journals and the renumeration of the scholarly work is often not accurately adjusted to the size, nature or significance of the output. That is, while a monograph requires far more time and resources to produce and peer-review than a journal article, such differences are often not appropriately accounted for in the weighted numeration of publication and citation data. That is, a monograph often counts equally, and sometimes even less than a journal article in bibliometrics.[52]

If the recognition for writing and publishing a monograph is not corresponding to the effort required to produce it, there is less incentive for scholars to put in such work. On the other hand, the symbolic value of the monograph has not decreased within the humanities and their production is still embedded in the organisational culture of HEIs where humanities scholars are often expected or required to publish monographs to advance in their careers.[53]

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[51] Engels and others, 'Are Book Publications Disappearing from Scholarly Communication in the Social Sciences and Humanities?', p. 595.
[52] However, it is important to acknowledge where such metrics and evaluations stem from. Sometimes such metrics are internally and nationally produced to encourage some outputs more than others and weights and numerations are therefore adjusted as means to an end. An example of this is Poland where national research evaluation systems assign higher weights to journal publications than book-based publications.
[53] Engels and others, 'Are Book Publications Disappearing from Scholarly Communication in the Social Sciences and Humanities?', p. 593; Marcel Knöchelmann, *Authorship and Publishing in the Humanities*, 1st edn (Cambridge University Press, 2023), p. 4, doi:10.1017/9781009223089.

This juxtaposition where there is tension between incentives on one hand and discouragement away from the format on the other hand poses more challenges for scholars in the humanities than other fields where there is less (expected) diversity in the types of outputs.

Pressures challenging the position of the monographs do not only stem from the strong relative position of journal publications, but also from different entities within the scholarly publication industry such as the publishers themselves. Thompson reports that academic publishers and associated commissioning editors often push for more textbook publications over that of monographs. While both are scholarly publications, they perform a vastly different function. Textbooks are teaching materials that are primarily designed for teachers and students to facilitate foundational knowledge. Textbooks are designed to replicate and communicate existing knowledge whereas monographs generate new knowledge and introduce new perspectives. However, the authors of textbooks and monographs is often pulled from the same pool of individuals, that is scholars that are often employed at HEIs. The prioritisation of textbooks over monographs among academic publishers is often in direct contrast to the interest of the scholar's direct employer for which value is derived from research excellence and citation data that primarily stem from novel and innovative research such as monographs and journal articles and are not associated with textbooks.[54] This tension between the ambitions of scholars and HEIs on one hand and commercial academic publishers on the other hand introduces yet another dynamic to navigate as the role of the monograph in current scholarship is evaluated.

Scholars such as Knöchelmann emphasise the continued value of monographs within the humanities field and Engels et al go on to state that monographs remain the most important sources in scholarly research, despite such sentiments not being reflected in publication statistics or pessimistic discourses surrounding the monograph's (imminent) demise.[55] The notable debate about the role, or rather the vitality, of the monograph requires a thorough examination of both the statistical publication data, as well as a recognition that its symbolic value goes beyond its rates of publications.

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[54] Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age*, pp. 282–83.
[55] Engels and others, 'Are Book Publications Disappearing from Scholarly Communication in the Social Sciences and Humanities?'; Knöchelmann, *Authorship and Publishing in the Humanities*, p. 4.

3.2.2 Non-English Publications

The humanities is the field that studies the collective and individual human experience, incorporating language, culture, and the lived experience and dynamic meaning making of people and societies. This means that all 'objects' of study are not only highly subjective, but context dependent. This leads to a stronger tradition patterns of knowledge generation and distribution in local languages and channels. Contrastingly, research within STEM fields is primarily based on universal laws and features that are not locally bound.

Knowledge disseminated within humanities disciplines can be described as less exportable to contexts outside the ones in which the knowledge is generated.[56] Such barriers can be language-based, but are also highly reliant on cultural, socio-political, and geographical context. The use of local language is relevant to academic scholarship in many ways, but more so in the humanities as it has stronger tradition for local, non-English publishing than other fields of research. Languages themselves can carry knowledge and connote meanings that are not 'translatable' or transferrable to other languages. That is, a significant part of the meaning making lies in the language itself and its ability to capture and describe the subject matter.[57] Language and culture are intrinsically linked and while they can be described to others, the true meaning is not transferrable to other languages or persons outside the context of study. The use of local languages can facilitate communication for scholars themselves and remove language barriers for scholars in their research. While incentives to publish in English or other core languages are many and contain multiple layers, some scholars prefer to conduct research in their native languages for their own sake and for the sake of the research quality.[58]

These highlighted features are not relevant only to humanities scholarship. While there is a longer and more prominent tradition of English publishing within the STEM fields, the linguistic hegemony of English as the lingua franca of scholarly communication and the notion of 'publish in English or perish in academia'[59] is not without criticism. Similarly to the

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[56] Karen Bennett, 'English as a Lingua Franca in Academia: Combating Epistemicide through Translator Training', *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, 7.2 (2013), pp. 169–93 (p. 170), doi:10.1080/13556509.2013.10798850.
[57] Giglia, 'OPERAS', p. 143.
[58] Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir, '5 Issues of Identity and Voice: Writing English for Research Purposes in the Semi-Periphery', in *Global Academic Publishing*, ed. by Mary Jane Curry and Theresa Lillis (Multilingual Matters, 2017), pp. 73–87, doi:10.21832/9781783099245-010.
[59] Ana Bocanegra-Valle, '"English Is My Default Academic Language": Voices from LSP Scholars Publishing in a Multilingual Journal', *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 13 (2014), pp. 65–77 (p. 65), doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2013.10.010.

humanities, there is significant diversity with the STEM fields and the prominence of the discussion differs between disciplines where local contextualisation is considered more relevant in disciplines such as ecology and conservation science.[60]

The use of a single lingua franca provides many benefits and has greatly contributed to the advancement of many academic fields through facilitating cooperation and understanding. However, the use of a lingua franca is a double-edged sword that simultaneously breaks down and builds barriers to access. In contemporary scholarship, English has been the primary language of scholarly communication since the 1990s although it is not the first case of a scholarly lingua franca where previously Latin, French, Russian, and German were established as languages of knowledge creation and dissemination.[61] In current academic environments, English as a language of science can facilitate understanding across the globe, but not without granting advantage to native English speakers or scholars from countries with significant exposure to English and minimal barriers to English learning. At the same time, the use of English can disadvantage scholars from countries where access to English is minimal. Implicit language biases such as flawed use of grammar and academic register can lead to higher rejection rates and delegitimisation of the research based on the use of language. To circumvent such occurrences, many pay for external editing and writing assistance, incurring more costs than native English speakers or researchers in environments with more access to English.[62] Others argue that the pressure to publish in English can diminish the quality of the research which in the humanities is often very context based and rooted in the culture and the language of observation.[63]

A proportional growth is observed in English-language publications over local-language publications in the SSH in the last two decades. This is demonstrated by Engels, Ossenblok, and Spruyt in their Flanders-focused research on publication patterns in the years 2000-2009. Secondary analysis of a comprehensive and locally constructed database on SSH publication by output found that between 2000 and 2009 the share of English-language

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[60] Tatsuya Amano, Juan P. González-Varo, and William J. Sutherland, 'Languages Are Still a Major Barrier to Global Science', *PLOS Biology*, 14.12 (2016), p. e2000933 (p. 2), doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.2000933; Henry Arenas-Castro, 'Academic Publishing Requires Linguistically Inclusive Policies' (Zenodo, 2023), doi:10.5281/ZENODO.10386753.

[61] Bennett, 'English as a Lingua Franca in Academia', p. 170.

[62] Tatsuya Amano and others, 'The Manifold Costs of Being a Non-Native English Speaker in Science', ed. by Ulrich Dirnagl, *PLOS Biology*, 21.7 (2023), p. e3002184 (p. 2), doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.3002184; Bocanegra-Valle, '"English Is My Default Academic Language"', pp. 65–66; Christophe Dony, Iryna Kuchma, and Milica Ševkušić, 'Dealing with Multilingualism and Non-English Content in Open Repositories: Challenges and Perspectives', *The Journal of Electronic Publishing*, 27.1 (2024), p. 260, doi:10.3998/jep.5455.

[63] Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir, '5 Issues of Identity and Voice'.

publications rose from 61.1% to 74.6% whereas the share of Dutch-language publications decreased from 30.3% to 19.4%.[64] Their research findings are relevant to this thesis in two different ways. Firstly, they showcase a significant shift away from Dutch-language publications towards English language publications. Secondly, their use of a more comprehensive local database reveals the shortcomings of widely used databases such as the WoS that primarily contain indexed English-language publications and therefore provide a skewed portrayal of overall publications in non-English speaking academic environments. This issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.4.

Similar research was conducted by Knöchelmann in 2018 where he outlines authorship and publishing trends in humanities fields in Germany and the UK. Concluding the prominence of the English language in UK humanities scholarship is quite evident and unsurprising as Knöchelmann also points out. A more interesting observation is found in the proportions between English and German language publications. In the year 2018, the language division of German humanities publications across all formats was 17.5% solely in English, 36.5% solely in German, 42% in both German and English, and 4% in other languages. Knöchelmann's research demonstrates two things simultaneously. Firstly, that the English language holds a significant position in scholarship environments where it is not the national language, and secondly, that native, non-English, languages, in this case German, still holds a dominant position as the language of scholarly communication. Knöchelmann furthermore includes a comparison between language composition used in the humanities fields versus SS fields. The use of English language in SS publications in Germany is proportionally far higher than in the humanities, or with an average of 39% solely in English, 19% solely in German, 40.5% in both German and English, and 1.5% in other languages. These results demonstrate that in this case. the use of local, non-English languages is more prevalent the humanities than other fields of research. While Knöchelmann does not introduce a STEM comparison in his research, it is widely acknowledged that the English language holds a proportionally larger share of publications in natural sciences than in that of the humanities and the SS.[65]

A qualitative study conducted in Iceland demonstrates that between the years 2000 and 2015, there has been a drastic shift towards English-based research and publications among

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[64] Tim C. E. Engels, Truyken L. B. Ossenblok, and Eric H. J. Spruyt, 'Changing Publication Patterns in the Social Sciences and Humanities, 2000–2009', *Scientometrics*, 93.2 (2012), pp. 373–90 (pp. 374, 384), doi:10.1007/s11192-012-0680-2.

[65] Knöchelmann, *Authorship and Publishing in the Humanities*, pp. 30–31.

scholars at the University of Iceland. A participant-based case study shows that around the turn of the century, there was little to no pressure, nor expectations to publish in English, whereas at the time of study in 2015 reports show that research is almost exclusively conducted and published in English.[66] This shift towards English-based publications has come at a personal cost for individual researchers that have to undertake additional steps to overcome language barriers both in their source material and own research. Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir report that while feelings differ among individual researchers, many express grievances over this felt pressure to publish in their non-native language and that it can compromise both the quality and individuality of their research. Negative perceptions of such shifts are particularly prominent among humanities scholars, whose research is said to be primarily qualitative and embedded in the local language.[67] While motivations to publish in English are multi-faceted and can be both internal and external, the University of Iceland case describes a visible shift in expectations and pressure to publish in English after the university's pledge to improve its position on global rankings and including it as a core feature of policy making.[68] Financial and career-oriented incentives such as eligibility for grant funding, bonuses, and promotions often require that research is conducted and published in English.[69]

Contrastingly to the case presented by Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir, Bocanegra-Valle show that many scholars, given the option of publishing in their local, non-English language or English in a multilingual humanities journal, just under 70% of scholars chose to still publish in English.[70] The primary reason for this was reportedly to maximise possible readership and to facilitate communication with other experts in the field, whether global or local. However, such preferences were accompanied by the acknowledgements that the predominance of English can have severe implications for academia, quality of research and the languages previously used for scholarly communication.[71]

While Bocanegra-Valle demonstrates that given the choice, many scholars opt for publishing in English over their native languages. This perspective is challenged by Flowerdew and Li, who claim that scholarly languages is not, and does not have to be a zero-

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[66] Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir, '5 Issues of Identity and Voice', pp. 77–78.
[67] Ibid., pp. 79–80.
[68] 'Betri Háskóli, Betra Samfélag: Stefna 2021-2026' <https://stefna.hi.is/#Betri-haskoli> [accessed 1 October 2024]; Hazelkorn, *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education*, p. 95.
[69] Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir, '5 Issues of Identity and Voice', p. 75.
[70] This statistic includes a 20% of respondends that are native English speakers.
[71] Bocanegra-Valle, '"English Is My Default Academic Language"', pp. 69–75.

sum game. That is, the use of English does not automatically undermine the use of another, local language and that in the case of there are of research in China, that English and Chinese are often used in tandem and that most researchers still preferred to write and publish their research in Chinese. Such preferences were reported to stem from both language barriers, cultural nationalism, and disciplinary differences. Flowerdew and Li report that scholars in more locally based disciplines showcased a stronger preference for use of Chinese.[72]

This chapter and the selection of cases drawn from literature demonstrates that despite the growing use of English in all fields of scholarship, including the humanities, the use of local languages still holds a significant role in humanities scholarship. However, the share of English versus non-English publishing is difficult to determine due to flawed indexing that disproportionately represents English-language publications and simultaneously underrepresents non-English scholarship. This is discussed further in Chapter 4.4.

While not explicitly stipulated, it is generally understood that publishing in top-ranked journals automatically means publishing in English-language journals and therefore publishing in the English language. That is, the likelier the research is to attract citations, the stronger the citation index. Seeing as English is the most widely used international language of scholarship, English-language publications are likelier to be cited than non-English citations. Adding on top of that the pressure of rankings where improving publication statistics that contribute to the ranking methodology, there is even greater incentives to publish in English over a local language that may impede the possible reach or citation potential of the research. Chou discusses how pressures towards more 'global' research are disproportionately felt by SS and humanities faculties that had a strong tradition for locally oriented Mandarin scholarship.[73]

This chapter demonstrates that despite the rising use of English within humanities scholarship globally, non-English scholarship still holds a meaningful position within the field. While the advantages of English publishing are widely acknowledged, many regard the pressure and expectation to publish in English as a negative feature of a contemporary academic culture. This pressure is claimed to have negative consequences for the languages themselves as well as the quality of research as it can erect a language barrier to both access

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[72] John Flowerdew and Yongyan Li, 'English or Chinese? The Trade-off between Local and International Publication among Chinese Academics in the Humanities and Social Sciences', *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 18.1 (2009), pp. 1–16 (pp. 3, 11), doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2008.09.005.

[73] Chuing Prudence Chou, 'Academic Culture in Transition: Measuring Up for What in Taiwan?', in *Global University Rankings and the Politics of Knowledge*, ed. by Michelle Stack (University of Toronto Press, 2021), pp. 95–108 (p. 98) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/j.ctv2sm3b3t.9>.

to the research and communicating the true nature of culturally and linguistically embedded objects of study. The use of non-English is therefore held in high regard among many humanities scholars whereas others prefer to publish in English to increase possible readership. There is therefore a lack of consensus regarding the value and impact of increased use of English within humanities scholarship. The preference of many scholars to write in their native, non-English language and the proportional significance of non-English scholarship indicates that such dynamics must be considered for a comprehensive evaluation of the humanities field and its practices.

3.2.3 Authorship trends

Authorship trends (i.e. single or co-authorship) is yet another feature where the trends observed within the humanities differ from most other academic fields. Within the humanities, there is a long-standing tendency towards sole authorship and proportionally fewer collaborative publications than in the SS or STEM publications.[74] This may of course partially stem from the stronger tradition for publications in national languages, and non-English publications as discussed in the previous chapter. Knöchelmann writes,

> […] single authorship is defining in the humanities; it is much less so in the social sciences. This confirms the common assumption that the humanities predominantly rely on sole authorship.[75]

Knöchelmann bases his research on UK and German context and both cases report over 80% of respondents claiming to either agree or strongly agree that single authorship is prominent within the humanities field. Contrastingly, less than 40% of social scientists in both UK and Germany claim that single authorship is predominant within their discipline. Similarly to the case of non-English publishing, there is a far stronger tendency towards collaborative publishing within STEM disciplines, although Knöchelmann presents data only for the SS and the humanities.[76]

Another study on co-authorship was published in 2017 by Verleysen and Ossenblok and presented the case of Flemish scholarship.[77] Their research presents data on authorship in humanities and SS respectively and demonstrates that the proportion of single authorship is

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[74] Christine L. Borgman, *Scholarship in the Digital Age: Information, Infrastructure, and the Internet* (MIT Press, 2007), pp. 219–20.
[75] Knöchelmann, *Authorship and Publishing in the Humanities*, p. 37.
[76] Ibid., pp. 36-7.
[77] It is important to note that their research pertained to monographs only, and not overall statistics of humanities scholarship in Flanders.

far higher in the humanities than in SS. Their findings show that 73% of humanities monographs were attributed to one author, 18% to two authors, and 9% to three or more authors. Contrastingly, SS publications were 34% single-authored, 37% dual-authored, and 29% of SS monographs were attributed to three or more scholars. Verleysen and Ossenblok's findings therefore support the notion that co-authorship is significantly less frequent in humanities, even when compared to the academic field it shares the most commonalities with and with which it is often lumped together and discussed as one.[78] Diaz-Faez et al also emphasise the need to not only make a distinction between individual humanities disciplines, but that especially in the case of authorship trends, SS and the humanities should not be discussed as one. This is primarily due to the prevailing tendency for humanities publications to be single authored whereas the SS shows stronger collaborative patterns.[79]

The consequences of a failure to account for authorship trends materialise in different ways and do not automatically imply a disadvantage for humanities scholars. In the case of Norwegian performance-based allocation of funding, their publication indicator established in 2006 was adjusted in 2016 due to the above-average percentage of the single authorship in the humanities leading to a significantly higher publication 'score' for humanities scholars and a subsequent high proportion of funding allocation. Benneworth et al report that the publication score upon which much of the funding allocation was based, was 2.5 times higher for humanities scholars than medical professors at similar stages in their academic careers. This discrepancy was not representative of the average number of publications, but rather in how they were weighted and allocated a publication score based on authorship – granting solo-authored publications a significantly higher score than co-authored ones.[80] Learning from this, the new Norwegian publication score system established in 2016 includes nuances that account for what Benneworth et al describe as 'the special nature of the humanities.'[81]

As is discussed in later sections, single-authorship trends do not lead to similarly favourable outcomes for humanities scholars in the THE ranking methodology, but this case demonstrates the extent to which humanities authorship trends differ from other fields and

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[78] Frederik T. Verleysen and Truyken L. B. Ossenblok, 'Profiles of Monograph Authors in the Social Sciences and Humanities: An Analysis of Productivity, Career Stage, Co-Authorship, Disciplinary Affiliation and Gender, Based on a Regional Bibliographic Database', *Scientometrics*, 111.3 (2017), pp. 1673–86 (pp. 1676–80), doi:10.1007/s11192-017-2312-3.

[79] Adrián A. Díaz-Faes, María Bordons, and Thed N. Van Leeuwen, 'Integrating Metrics to Measure Research Performance in Social Sciences and Humanities: The Case of the Spanish CSIC', *Research Evaluation*, 2016, p. rvw018 (p. 452), doi:10.1093/reseval/rvw018.

[80] Hammarfelt, 'Beyond Coverage', p. 123.

[81] Paul Benneworth, Magnus Gulbrandsen, and Ellen Hazelkorn, *The Impact and Future of Arts and Humanities Research* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), pp. 74–75, doi:10.1057/978-1-137-40899-0.

necessitate adjustments in evaluations made on that basis.[82] Borgman presents the dichotomy of humanities and STEM scholarship as 'opposite extremes'[83] where humanities have the lowest rates of co-authorship, whereas co-authorship and collaboration is both highly valued and common practice in STEM scholarship. The inclusion of (international) co-authorship is therefore a relevant factor when evaluating STEM research – but as this chapter demonstrates, less so for the humanities. The implications of this inclusion of authorship metrics in THE's methodology is discussed in more detail in later sections.

Authorship trends in humanities are reportedly changing – and scholars attribute these changes to several factors. Borgman asserts that the largest shift away from single authorship is in digital humanities scholarship where technology not only facilitates, but sometimes requires collaboration between two or more scholars. Working with large datasets often requires the input of individuals with a broad range of expertise and technological advances facilitating larger projects simply requires more hands on deck.[84] Additionally, Chou asserts that the implementation of internationalisation policies in China resulted not only in a sharp increase in English-language publications, but also in rates of co-authorship.[85]

Criticism towards the inclusion of authorship concerns not only its applicability for the humanities, but also the authenticity of authorship attributions. On his study on authorship and rankings, Marginson argues that authorship is a very flawed metric, or 'currency'[86] through which to evaluate research quality or (international) collaboration. He reports that numbers are easily distorted and do not always reflect the contributions made by the scholars authoring the publication in question. Collaborations and co-authorship can be the product of what Marginson calls 'cognitive debt'[87] which can also be described as cashing in of favours or a 'scratch my back and I'll scratch yours' dynamic where all scholars involved, as well as their institutions benefit. Similarly, asymmetrical and hierarchical relations between authors can lead to authorship attributions that are not representative of the actual contributions to the research. Due to the existence of many and multi-layered motivations behind co-authorship

[82] Benneworth, Gulbrandsen, and Hazelkorn, *The Impact and Future of Arts and Humanities Research*, pp. 74–75.
[83] Borgman, *Scholarship in the Digital Age*, p. 219.
[84] Ibid., 220.
[85] Chou, 'Academic Culture in Transition', p. 101.
[86] Simon Marginson, 'The Reality underneath the Rankings: Trends in Global Science', in *Research Handbook on University Rankings*, ed. by Ellen Hazelkorn and Georgiana Mihut (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021), pp. 19–37 (p. 24), doi:10.4337/9781788974981.00010.
[87] Ibid.

that may not always be scientifically motivated, Marginson argues against its overall inclusion in the rankings.

This chapter demonstrates that there is a clear difference in authorship dynamics when comparing the humanities to other fields. The proportion of solo authorship within the humanities far exceeds trends in other fields of academia, including the SS whose trends and traditions in scholarly communications are often seen as comparable, or similar to the humanities. This discrepancy can have implications in evaluation frameworks that favour co-authorship and collaborative research and despite the rise of digital humanities bringing about an increase in collaborative humanities research, most humanities outputs are single authored. By evidence presented in this chapter, evaluation frameworks that take the current makeup of authorship trends in the humanities should not favour co-authorship or collaborative research over single authored publications. This particularly disadvantages humanities scholarship when directly compared to other fields where co-authorship is more common.

Chapter 4: THE Ranking Framework and the Humanities

This section will combine the two previous chapters to evaluate the extent to which the nature of humanities scholarship presented is accounted for in THE's ranking methodology. This is done through analysing the ranking methodology against the backdrop of the literature presented in previous chapters. As is demonstrated in Chapter 3.2.1 a meaningful representation of humanities scholarship must consider the elements that separates it from other academic fields, such as the prevailing importance of monograph publications, non-English publications, and authorship trends. Failing to incorporate or recognise these elements leads to a skewed view of humanities scholarship and subsequently undermines the accuracy of the ranking results.

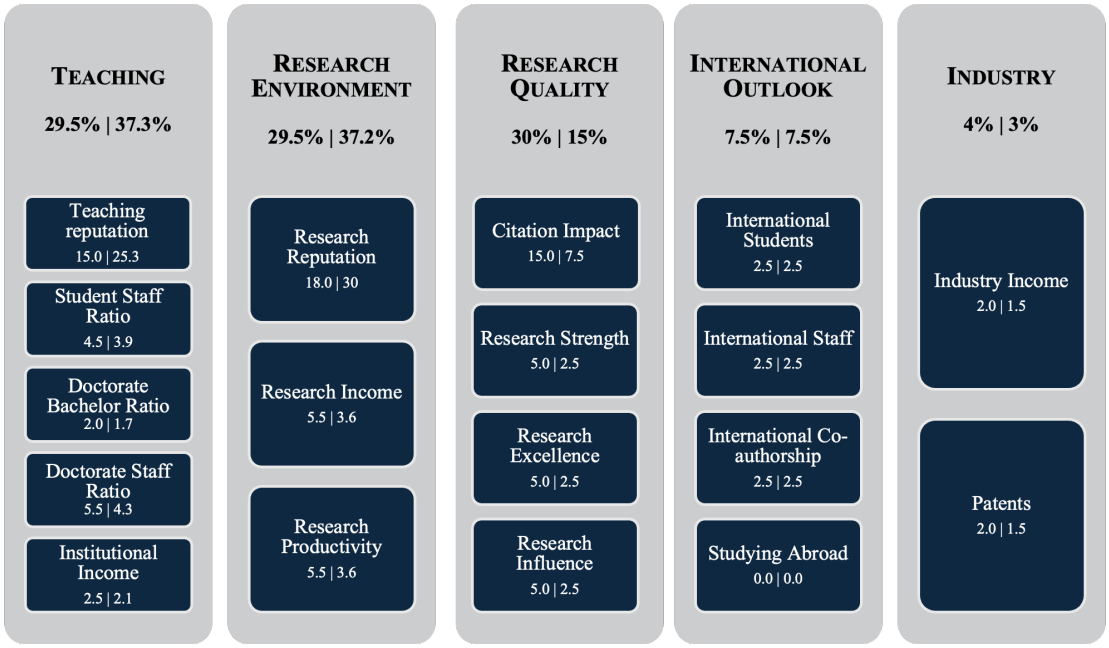
This chapter's structure mimics that of Chapter 3 and individually discusses the established humanities themes and the ways in which they are incorporated in THE's methodology. As stated in the introduction, the focus of this thesis is on the evaluation of elements pertaining to scholarly communication and academic publications. This is why only six of the 17 weighted indicators[88] are discussed in depth. Within the research environment pillar, only research productivity is discussed, excluding a discussion on research reputation and research income as the former is survey-based, and the respondents' reasoning cannot be

[88] This number excludes the 'Studying Abroad' indicator since it has no weighting in the methodology.

conclusively determined. The latter falls outside the scope of measuring scholarly communication and is therefore not discussed in detail. All indicators within research quality are discussed, as well as the international co-authorship. This chapter concludes with a section on the implications of the use of the Scopus database within the methodology and the ways in which indexing gaps disproportionally effect certain scholarly fields, including the humanities.

The main argument presented in this chapter is that despite weight adjustments for subject rankings, using the same components of measurements across fields falls short of a meaningful representation of the humanities field in the rankings. This is because partly

Figure 3: THE's Overall Methodology [89]



because of THE's reliance of incomplete data sources such as Scopus, as well as its focus on journal metrics and underrepresentation of other scholarly outputs. The quantification of international collaboration is also called into question and weighed against the literature presented in Chapter 3.2.2 and Chapter 3.2.3 pertaining to the language of publications and authorship trends within the humanities. Above, Figure 3 presents an extension of Figure 1. The score on the left presents the weighting for the overall score, while the right side represents the adjusted proportional weight of the measured components for the humanities.

[89] Ross, *THE World University Ranking Methodology*, p. 14.

4.1 THE and Monographs

As established in Chapter 3.2, monographs still hold a significant role within humanities scholarship. Although monographs publication rates are proportionally decreasing, research evaluating their recent or current role in scholarship showcases that the rates in which they are published necessitate their inclusion in metrics representative of the field. Paired with the symbolic value they hold within academic culture, monographs are still a prominent feature of the humanities field and therefore need to be recognised as such in ranking methodologies. This chapter evaluates they ways in which monographs are incorporated in THE's ranking methodology – both regarding the overall rankings and the adjusted subject ranking for the arts and humanities.

Within THE's methodology, research productivity is measured through establishing the ratio between the number of papers published and indexed in Scopus and number of full-time staff employed by a HEI. As stated in THE's methodological outline: 'The indicator gives a sense of the institution's ability to get papers published in quality peer-reviewed journals.'[90] The weighting of this indicator is decreased to 3.6% for the arts and humanities from that of 5.5% for the overall ranking calculations. This indicates THE's acknowledgement that journal publications are of less proportional significance for the humanities, as it has a culture of more diverse outputs compared to other academic fields. However, the significance of monographs within the humanities, as established in Chapter 3.2.1 illustrates that bibliometric indicators for the humanities should not be limited to journal publications. The significance of monograph publications and outputs other than journal articles should be included in any bibliographic measurements for humanities scholarship. Adjusting the weighting of the indicator does therefore not fully compensate for the gap in representativity caused by the omission of monographs. The ways in which monographs should be incorporated is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Similarly to research productivity, citation impact is a calculated through counting the average number of global citations made to academic journals authored by researchers affiliated with the institution and all indexed publications between 2019-2023. The aim is to establish 'how much a university is contributing to the sum of human knowledge'.[91] This indicator is weighted at 15% for the overall ranking but halved to only represent 7.5% of the

[90] Ross, *THE World University Ranking Methodology*, p. 11.
[91] 'World University Rankings 2025: Methodology', 2024 <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/world-university-rankings-2025-methodology> [accessed 16 December 2024].

makeup of the subject-specific arts and humanities ranking. This decrease in weighting appropriately corresponds to the way citation counts have been highly criticised as a representative proxy for research relevance and quality.[92] However, the weighting remains at 7.5% which is considerable in proportion to the other weighted components. It is difficult to evaluate the ways in which monographs are incorporated into the calculations of this indicator due to the vague descriptions presented in the methodology. The methodology simply stipulates that all indexed publications between 2019 and 2024 are included to collect the citation data but does not go into further detail about the ways in which this is done or whether there are any distinctions made between different types of outputs. However, as previously mentioned, not only should monographs be numerically accounted for in the calculation of this indicator, but their comparative size should be considered as well.

Research strength and research excellence are measurements based on Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) and individually account for 5% of the overall ranking and 2.5% of the humanities ranking. As defined on Scopus' website 'Field-Weighted Citation Impact is the ratio of the total citations actually received by the denominator output and the total citations expected based on the average of the subject field.'[93] The indicators take both publication numbers and citations into account. Research strength evaluates which publications fall within the global 75th percentile and research excellence establishes the 10th percentile. That is, how a publication performs globally in accordance with the expectations based on the conditions in which it is created (e.g. location and language). A score is allocated based on whether the actual performance exceeds or falls short of such expectations. Again, due to the incomprehensive nature of the publicly available methodology, it is difficult to evaluate the precise incorporation of monographs within this component. Its use has the potential to be an adequate metric for monographs as it takes conditions of production and field-related specificities into considerations, but only if monographs are well indexed and compared internally – and not with other types of publications.

Research influence '[…] analyses the influence of an entity's publications by analysing their current citations.'[94] This influence is determined by evaluating the citation impact of the publications citing the publication in question. That is, how important is the research that

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[92] Morrison, '5 What Counts in Research?', p. 112.
[93] 'What Is Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI)?', *Scopus*, 2024 <https://service.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/14894/supporthub/scopus/~/what-is-field-weighted-citation-impact-%28fwci%29%3F/> [accessed 16 December 2024].
[94] Ross, *THE World University Ranking Methodology*, p. 12.

bases itself on your research? This indicator accounts for 5% of the overall ranking and 2.5% of the arts and humanities ranking. Again, the outline of the methodology is brief and lacks detail. However, only journal publications are mentioned, leaving out all other types of publications. This fails to recognise the role of monographs and other book-based publications within the humanities. As monographs are highly detailed works on a particular topic, being cited in a monograph indicates a high relevance for the topic of research in question. The inclusion of this indicator, albeit with the omission of monograph, does not provide the desired representation of relevance and influence within a given field. Although lowered in its weighting, any bibliographic metric must contain monograph publications in proportion to their weighted significance.

International co-authorship accounts for both 2.5% for the overall and the humanities subject ranking. This is quantified through calculating the proportion of publications that are internationally co-authored by at least one other scholar. As discussed in Chapter 3.2.1 and Chapter 3.2.3, monographs are mostly attributed to only one author and are highly specialised and context-dependent. This therefore decreases the rates of co-authorship, and especially international collaborations. The weighting for this component is therefore not appropriately adjusted to the humanities-specific behaviours and patterns. Taking such trends into account, such indicators should either count for only a minimal percentage, if any at all.[95]

A limitation to the analysis conducted above is the vague nature of THE's outlined methodology and lack of access to raw data and calculations. This analysis relies on publicly available versions of the methodology that contain ambiguous descriptions such as

> We look at the academic journals indexed by Elsevier's Scopus database and all indexed publications between 2019 and 2023. Citations to these publications made in the six years from 2019-2024 are also collected.[96]

and

> It captures the 75th percentile of the Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) of all papers published by a university. We look at all Scopus-

[95] This is, however, likely to change in the near future as digital humanities scholarship is steeply increasing the rates at which humanities research is internationally collaborative in nature.
[96] Ross, *THE World University Ranking Methodology*, p. 11.

> Indexed publications between 2019-2023 and the corresponding citations to these publications made from 2019 are also collected.[97]

Both sentences contain direct references to journal publications only, yet stipulate that they contain 'all indexed publications'. Whether this 'total' refers to journal publications only or includes other types of outputs is unclear by the phrasing used. In the analysis above, 'all publications' is taken to include outputs other than journal publications, although this cannot be determined with certainty. Should this be an inaccurate interpretation of the phrasing – it would call for a re-evaluation of the analysis in its entirety.

In summary, THE indicators of research productivity, research output, research strength and excellence and research influence fail to account for, or are unclear in how they account for, monograph publications. Suggestions for further development of these indicators to better reflect this aspect of humanities scholarship is discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2 THE and Non-English Publications

As established in Chapter 3.2.2, despite the rising proportion of English-language research, non-English publications remain both statistically and symbolically significant within humanities fields in scholarly environments outside English-speaking countries. It is therefore argued that this prominent feature of humanities scholarship needs to be accounted for in THE's methodology. Through evaluation of the indicators, the primary downside of THE's methodology is the indexing gap discussed in Chapter 4.4 and an over-reliance on an incomplete data source.

It is only indirectly that non-English publishing contributes to the outcome of a HEIs research productivity score. The choice of language does not automatically influence the number of papers published in journals, nor the number of full-time staff at a given HEI. However, there is an increased 'preference' and pressure to publish in English which can impact the acceptance rates of publications into indexed journals. As discussed later in Chapter 4.4, non-English publications are often missing in databases such as Scopus which directly skews the data contributing to this indicator. This has negative effects on the scores of HEIs with high proportion of non-English journal publications. Similar effects are seen with the citation indicator, where publishing in a language other than English automatically shrinks the pool of scholars likely to cite the paper. Accounting for the prevalence of non-English

[97] Ross, *THE World University Ranking Methodology*, p. 11.

publications calls for a further reconsideration of the weighting of citation impact, or numerically accounting for the fact that non-English citations and 'performances' should not be identically measured.

To evaluate the true incorporation of non-English publications in the FWCI, a more detailed description of the methodology is required. Without information of how the data is adjusted and how predicted performance is established, only preliminary evaluations on the indicators can be made. Using FWCI, this indicator allows for adjustments to account for non-English publications as its aim is to contextualise the data presented. If language is not part of the contributing factors to the field weighting and only the average performance for the humanities overall is used, this demonstrably disadvantages HEIs that publish in languages other than English. As the use of English facilitates access and higher odds of citations through visibility alone, non-English publications and particularly publications in languages with few speakers are very likely to underperform and remain outside of the 75th percentile and almost guaranteed to remain outside the 10th percentile.

The international co-authorship indicator is the one most directly related to non-English publications. This indicator directly advantages HEIs and scholars that conduct and publish research in English as it is the most widely spoken non-native language globally. However, some other core languages such as Spanish, French, Portuguese, etc. that have a large and dispersed population of proficient speakers can also benefit from this metric. However, scholars publishing in languages with fewer speakers are directly disadvantaged as the opportunities for international co-authorships are proportional to the number of speakers outside the national context. As presented in the case of Iceland by Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir, given the small number of proficient Icelandic speakers outside of Iceland, international co-authorship in Icelandic is highly unlikely, and most likely requires additional resources to facilitate translation services. [98] While a diaspora of emigrated scholars can indeed facilitate international co-authorship – the advantage is proportional to the size of the population and number of language speakers.

As discussed in Chapter 3.2.2, the choice of language is often made on the grounds of scholars' language abilities, but additionally, the language that best encapsulates and communicates the object of research. That is, within humanities, where research is highly context-dependent and embedded in language and culture, much of the research is locally oriented. This refers both to the production of the research as local scholars research locally

[98] Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir, '5 Issues of Identity and Voice'.

specific phenomena and target audiences for whom the research is considered most relevant. This is why international co-authorship as a metric should be viewed differently within humanities compared to STEM scholarship where both the language and object of research lend itself to international collaboration. At the time of writing, international co-authorship is deemed as an insufficient metric that does not adequately account for the current makeup of humanities scholarship. However, with the rise of digital humanities, this is likely to change in the near future. Within digital humanities, technological advancements both facilitate and often necessitate the collaboration of scholars across the globe to manage the expansive size of projects and required expertise.

4.3 THE and Authorship Trends

Similarly to non-English publishing, the implications for single authorship in the humanities are indirect for the research productivity, citation impact, research strength, research excellence and research influence. All rely on the counting of publications and citations which cannot be directly related to the number of authors for a given citation without further supporting evidence. Predictions can be made that with more people working on a particular publication, the faster the work will be completed, leading to more publications – but similar arguments can be made that a higher number of contributors requires more accommodation for different timelines and opinions, leading to a less effective production process. However, both notions are conjecture without further evidence.

However, the international co-authorship indicator has direct consequences for humanities scholarship as it has proportionally high rates of single authorship. While it could be assumed that within the subject ranking the effects would be the same across the board since authorship trends are broadly applicable for the field – but this yet again introduces the language dynamic which discourages collaborative research among speakers of smaller languages. Additionally, it is in the overall ranking where the ranking score is the sum of all of HEIs components without recognitions of subject-related specificities. This means that a higher proportion of single authored publications within a HEI will produce a lower score than that of one with a higher proportion of internationally co-authored publications. This could cause both direct and indirect discouragement for single authored publications for all fields – and particularly undermines the dynamics presented in contemporary humanities scholarship.

While such incentives or disincentives may be a cause for reconsideration, they are not the primary concern of this thesis. The evidence presented in Chapter 3.2.3 shows that when

compared to other fields, co-authorship is more common for scholarship in other fields, which could be a justification for its 2.5% weighting in the overall ranking. However, using the logic of how relevant a given indicator is when looking at the HEI overall, and more specifically at fields of study, the lack of adjustment for this indicator is not representative of the proportional weight given to the practice of co-authorship within the humanities.

4.4 Scopus Limitations

As frequently alluded to in this thesis, a reoccurring criticism of ranking methodologies, and THE's methodology more specifically, relate to the data source used. This chapter presents literature discussing the primary shortcomings of methodologies foundationally reliant on the Scopus database.[99] The pitfalls of the Scopus database are discussed for the humanities features of focus in this thesis. The concern most highlighted regarding the use of Scopus for ranking methodologies and evaluation frameworks is the lag, or gap, in indexing. That is, while substantial in size, number of indexed titles and collection and presentation of metadata – it is not (yet) a complete dataset as there are many titles, both past and present, that are not yet indexed in the database. For this reason, the representativity of Scopus in efforts to evaluate scholarship is called into question. Moreover, this indexing gap is not arbitrary and outputs other than English-language, journal-based sources are disproportionally missing or incomplete in indexing and citation data. This is not to say that such omissions or flaws are intentional, but rather presents a reality that the datasets used in publication and citation data are incomplete in systematic ways.[100] This has direct consequences for the evaluation of humanities scholarship, as it contains more diversity in terms of types of outputs and language of publications.

Scholars such as Sivertsen argue that Scopus is particularly ill-equipped to act as a data source for humanities evaluations as the lag is more significant for humanities scholarship than other fields of academia. Sivertsen conducted an evaluation of the comprehensiveness of WoS and Scopus by comparing it to the more comprehensive Norwegian dataset where all national publications get indexed. Through such methods, the completeness of databases (or lack thereof) can be estimated. Sivertsen reports that in 2016,

[99] Similar criticism is relevant for other databases such as the WoS but are primarily directed at the Scopus as it is the database used in THE's ranking.
[100] Truyken L.B. Ossenblok, Frederik T. Verleysen, and Tim C.E. Engels, 'Coauthorship of Journal Articles and Book Chapters in the Social Sciences and Humanities (2000–2010)', *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 65.5 (2014), pp. 882–97 (p. 882), doi:10.1002/asi.23015.

Scopus included around 30% of peer-reviewed humanities publications and WoS only just over 10% of all indexed publications in Norway's national database. For SS scholarship, Scopus included just under 40% whereas WoS just over 20%. Contrastingly, both databases included well over 75% of publications in health and natural sciences, demonstrating that the incompleteness of international databases is not arbitrary or evenly spread out over fields and disciplines. However, it is also important to recognise that in the near decade since Sivertsen published his findings, significant improvements to both datasets have been made, although they are far from complete, especially so for humanities publications.[101] Further work replicating Sivertsen's study to quantitatively evaluate these improvements may be of benefit. Recognising such shortcomings, many scholars evaluating cases on a national basis such as Sivertsen, Engels, Ossenblok, and Verleysen use national databases instead of international ones such as Scopus as national databases are more comprehensive for the case in question. This shows a mismatch and lack of transferability between national and international databases.

The indexing problem is often highlighted in discussions on the different types of publications. Giménes-Toledo, Mañana-Rodriguez, and Sivertsen point out that in 2017 Scopus only indexed scholarly books from a particular list of publishers that were deemed to be of high reputation and impact. Such criteria limited the number of books indexed significantly and led to the concentration of indexed material to a small number of scholars from a small number of countries where the English language is not a considerable barrier of entry.[102] While the use of English was not stated as a firm criterion, Giménes-Toledo et al argue that English publications were prioritised in the indexing selection process as its usefulness was considered greater than that of research in less international languages because of its universality and better citation prospects. In the seven years since Giménes-Toledo et al.'s critique, Scopus' inclusion of non-English, non-journal publications has increased considerably. No explicit criteria limit the indexing of publications in non-English, although English abstracts are required for all publications. Despite improvements and inclusivity of

[101] Gunnar Sivertsen, 'Publication-Based Funding: The Norwegian Model', in *Research Assessment in the Humanities*, ed. by Michael Ochsner, Sven E. Hug, and Hans-Dieter Daniel (Springer International Publishing, 2016), pp. 79–90 (pp. 80–84), doi:10.1007/978-3-319-29016-4_7; Hammarfelt, 'Beyond Coverage', p. 126; Rachel McCullough, 'The Scopus Content Coverage Guide: A Complete Overview of the Content Coverage in Scopus and Corresponding Policies', 2023 <https://blog.scopus.com/posts/the-scopus-content-coverage-guide-a-complete-overview-of-the-content-coverage-in-scopus-and> [accessed 14 January 2025].

[102] Elea Giménez-Toledo, Jorge Mañana-Rodríguez, and Gunnar Sivertsen, 'Scholarly Book Publishing: Its Information Sources for Evaluation in the Social Sciences and Humanities', *Research Evaluation*, 26.2 (2017), pp. 91–101 (p. 93), doi:10.1093/reseval/rvx007.

more diverse titles, the aftereffects of this prioritisation of the English- and journal-based publications are found in a clear lag in the indexing efforts of other publications.[103]

Similarly to monographs, the crux of the issue with determining the real proportion of scholarship in non-English lies in the data retrieval and flawed indexing. It is difficult to evaluate the relevance of non-English publishing in the humanities, when databases such as Scopus and WoS underrepresent non-English scholarship and therefore skew the data drawn from such systems. The primary criticism of the results of THE lies not with the methods used by THE itself, but their reliance on a flawed data collection system that is presented as complete. That is, if THE continues to rely solely on Scopus for their citation data, the results will remain skewed as long as the database remains incomprehensive and fails to meaningfully account for the variance within scholarship and scholarly outputs. As established in Chapter 2.2.1 and Chapter 2.2.2 where monographs and non-English publications are often omitted or not more accurately weighted in bibliometrics.

While the predominance of English as the language of scholarly communication is more of an implicit requirement rather than explicitly stated, the reality is that the continued and increased use of English becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy where English publications are more likely to attract readership and citations – which then fosters the conditions for both internal and external pressures to continue to publish in English to increase the visibility of a scholars' research and to contribute to stronger and more competitive metrics. English supremacy in academia and the disadvantages this poses to non-Anglophone scholars is not brought about by university rankings. However, the structure of university rankings may further perpetuate such inequalities through the design of methodologies and the reliance on a database that disproportionately represents English literature. While the inequalities and pressures felt are highly important topics to discuss, it is the disproportionate representation of English literature that is of most relevance in this thesis. That is, the fact that Scopus primarily consists of English scholarship does not mean that the non-English literature is not being produced – it is simply not indexed to the extent that English scholarship is. While there is an overall trend and pressures towards English scholarship, there is still a significant proportion and a reported willingness by scholars to produce research in their local languages. This is reported by Knöchelmann as well as Flowerdew and Li whose research clearly states the

[103] Raminta Pranckutė, 'Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus: The Titans of Bibliographic Information in Today's Academic World', *Publications*, 9.1 (2021), p. 12 (p. 8), doi:10.3390/publications9010012.

preserved importance of non-English research and publications in humanities outside the English-speaking context.[104]

Chapter 5: Proposed Adjustments to THE's Framework

This chapter summarises the shortcomings of THE's ranking methodology drawn from the previous chapters and proposes ways in which such drawbacks can be rectified, or at the very least improved upon. Recognising the gap between theory and practice and that actualising proposed solutions often brings about unforeseen barriers and complications, this chapter is not to be viewed as the be-all and end-all of how to repair university rankings and resolve all their problems. Rather, it points out ways to incorporate elements that, if applied, can present a more comprehensive representation of diverse forms of scholarship than THE's current iteration. To repair the biggest shortcomings of THE's ranking, one primary and one secondary recommendation is made. The secondary recommendation can be viewed as an appeal to reevaluate the makeup of the overall ranking framework rather than directly applicable advice. This is due to a lack of data available to showcase the effects of the suggested changes.

The primary recommendation pertains to THE's expansion of its subject ranking to incorporate field-specific elements and not simply rearrange the weighting of the same elements used for all other fields and the overall ranking. This can include adding, removing and/or expanding certain indicators. For the case of the humanities, the change proposed is to introduce more nuance to the bibliometric-based indicators and lower the weighting of or remove the international co-authorship indicator completely. Introducing supplementary indicators such as solo-authorship or national collaborative efforts would render the indicator redundant as it would simply count the authors of all publications. The suggested method to introduce nuance to the bibliometric indicators is to divide the research quality pillar and the research productivity indicator into three components, journal/book chapter publications, monograph publications, and other publications. The proportions of each are determined by up-to-date research on the real proportion of outputs within the field. This counteracts the 'weighting' problem of monographs as monographs would now be internally compared and not compared with other outputs of a smaller scale. While it is a positive feature of THE's rankings that it does recognise different scholarly cultures and adjust its methodology, there needs to be more recognition for the unique nature of the fields in the methodologies through

[104] Knöchelmann, *Authorship and Publishing in the Humanities*; Flowerdew and Li, 'English or Chinese?'

greater adjustments to the subject rankings by not simply adjusting the weight of the indicators, but to adjust the number of indicators to fit the field of evaluation.

Alternatively, if the research productivity component is not split into different categories, THE should introduce methods to numerically represent the type and scale of publications within the existing bibliometric indicators. That is, to introduce a scoring system based on the type of output. The ways in which monographs could be better incorporated into THE's methodology takes account of their size and magnitude in comparison to other publications. That is, monographs are far more resource intensive to produce than shorter publications such as journal articles or book chapters. This observation is true for scholars, peer-reviewers and publishers alike. Incorporating monographs must take their 'weight' into account and ensure that they are not simply counted as 'a' publication, but that they are proportionally counted and weighted in the rankings. Should THE wish to continue to rely on both publication and citation counts, their counting system should be expanded to allow for some publications to receive a higher count. Such efforts are not new, and this recommendation leans on a Norwegian policy implemented in 2006 which Benneworth er al refer to as 'tellekantsystemet'[105] which divided weight among publications on a scale of 1-8 based on both the type of output and its level of 'excellence'. The recommendation presented in this thesis refers not to the level of excellence, but to the nature and length of publication. A 1-5 range counting system is recommended, depending on the extensiveness of the publication in question. A journal article or book chapter, depending on its extensiveness and length, can be awarded anywhere between 1-2 counts, whereas a monograph can receive between 3-5. This system can of course be fine-tuned and adjusted but represents a simple way to meaningfully incorporate the weight of the publications in the ranking methodology in a more representative manner. Otherwise, a lack of remuneration runs the risk of disincentivising the production of monographs and as is stated in the introduction, the rankings should provide a means to evaluate the current state of scholarship and not act as a driver of change through (dis)-incentivising certain developments. The range in question should not be too broad to prevent a reward-system based only on length at the expense of quality or relevance, but, in reality, a degree of self-regulation takes place that discourages such activities.

Expanding the counting system to incorporate a weighted component inevitably requires the cooperation of databases used to present usable data that represents the size of the output

[105] Benneworth, Gulbrandsen, and Hazelkorn, *The Impact and Future of Arts and Humanities Research*, p. 73.

in question. That is, the nature and size of the publication must be clearly indexed in a standardised manner for THE to translate it into usable data points for the rankings. Not only must monographs and other outputs be accurately indexed in proportion to their weight, but an active effort must be made to counteract the current indexing gap. This is, however, beyond the means of THE to single-handedly repair.

Accounting for the language dynamic of the humanities through introduction of new indicators is not considered an effective solution as it requires more reflexivity. That is, an indicator must be an independent variable within the subject rankings and overarchingly applicable to achieve the comparison it is built to perform. Because the prevalence of English differs greatly between HEIs and the context in which they exist, it is difficult to set up an indicator that takes account of the use of different languages. This is why such measurements are reliant on the improvement of Scopus to expand its database to incorporate a larger portion of non-English scholarship. This is, once again, out of THE's control – although it could reconcile such shortcomings by either lowering the weightings of the bibliometric factors even further, or to develop alternative data collection methods that are not reliant on Scopus alone. This can be in the form of data retrieval from the institutions and the internal catalogues they have for publications by their associated authors. On the other hand, lowering the weight of bibliometric indicator can introduce other disadvantages as it could lead to a disproportionate weighting of other indicators that are income-, opinion-, and demography based. The extent of such downsides must be reviewed and reconciled before changing the value of the bibliographic indicators.

Should THE continue to base a large portion of its methodology on citation and publication data, a way to circumvent the current indexing gap is to include more non-English journal scholarship is to extend its dataset beyond international commercial databases such as Scopus and to include national databases that are already in existence. However, this introduces a new problem, namely that not all countries with HEIs on THE's ranking have a comprehensive, local database from which to retrieve data. While countries such as Norway, Belgium, Finland, and Denmark have prioritised the establishment of such local databases, this is not the case for all 115 countries with HEIs included in THE's ranking.[106] This imbalance, while mitigating some problems, can therefore cause new ones in the process. A temporary improvement could include bridging the boundaries between national and

[106] Engels, Ossenblok, and Spruyt, 'Changing Publication Patterns in the Social Sciences and Humanities, 2000–2009', p. 596.

international databases so that the former can inform and expand the latter. This is, however, once again beyond the role and scope of THE as a ranking entity.

THE is an organisation that focuses on producing and publishing university rankings. It is not expected or argued that it is THE's responsibility to fix the significant indexing gaps in databases such as WoS and Scopus. It is, however, THE's responsibility to acknowledge such shortcomings and adjust its methodologies accordingly – or alternatively to scale back on its strong claims of level of representativity and accuracy of their ranking results. This recommendation presents an attempt to improve all the elements of its rankings and do not just apply to its evaluation of the humanities but to all the subjects included in the methodology.

The secondary recommendation made is based on the former, primary recommendation and it encourages a shift from a top-down to a bottom-up approach to calculate the overall ranking score. Currently, subject rankings are seen as deviations, or 'recalibrations' of the methodology for the overall ranking. As is stated in THE's methodology:

> However, within the subject rankings, the overall methodology is carefully recalibrated by subject, with the weightings changed to best suit the individual fields. In particular, those given to the research indicators that have been altered to fit more closely the research culture in each subject, reflecting the publication habits: in arts and humanities for instance, where the range of outputs extends well beyond peer-reviewed journals, we give less weight to paper citations.[107]

THE is encouraged to explore using the cumulative subject rankings as the basis of the overall ranking score, rather than a single framework applied to evaluate the HEI in its entirety. That is, rather than applying a single percentage to each component across the HEI's faculties, to aggregate the scores for each component within the subject rankings. As is seen in Figure 4, there are many instances where the percentages determining the contribution to the overall score differs from the weight given to the same component for the subject ranking. To illustrate, *teaching reputation* is weighted at 15% in the total ranking but are measured at 17.90% or above in four out of the eleven instances of the subject rankings. A similar case is seen for all eight t1-r3 indicators listed in Figure 4. This shows that the overall score is in

[107] Ross, *THE World University Ranking Methodology*, p. 15.

many cases not an average, or a middle ground between the differently weighted subject ranking components, but either given a lower or higher weighting in the overall ranking than for the same component in *all* the subject rankings. This is the result of a top-down approach where the overall weighting is determined first, and later adjusted to include more specificities. However, as is evident from THE's methodological overview, the overall weighting is not a reflection of the weight a particular component is given in field-specific rankings. Therefore, the proposed adjustments include the removal of the current presentation of the overall scoring for an overall score obtained through aggregate scoring of the subject rankings, including the field-specific indicator adjustments proposed in the primary recommendation. The weighting of each subject is then normalised to reflect the size of the faculty within a given HEI. This would allow for the adjustment of suitable indicators of subject rankings in weight, number and nature – and such nuances would be included in the larger, overall score when all subject rankings are added.

Such changes would not be too difficult to enact as THE already engages in subject-specific rankings and would only have to change the ways in which they use the data they already have. The calculations would be adjusted in accordance with the student and staff demography of the given HEI to reflect the faculties in proportional accordance. That is, if the arts and humanities faculty of a given HEI make up 17% and the Engineering faculty is 25%, the subject ranking contributing to the overall ranking would be calculated with a weighted average respective to this distribution. This would also make the rankings more representative for HEIs where certain faculties are significantly larger than others, such as medical and technical HEIs. This is because the subject ranking is adjusted to be reflective and comparative within fields and does therefore not provide an advantage to HEIs whose faculties' trends are more in line with the current overall ranking such as a strong tendency towards English-language journal publications.[108]

Basing the proportion of the subject on the size of the faculty inevitably invites complications as the makeup of a faculty in terms of student and staff numbers is not always straightforward. There are many forms of temporary and informal associations with universities such as project-based research positions, collaborative programs and exchange programs where students or staff are not permanently and exclusively part of a particular HEI. However, similar problems arise within the demography indicators such as the demography-based indicators within the teaching and international outlook pillars and

[108] This solution is assuming repairs to the indexing gap and more, overall accuracy of the Scopus database.

currently includes full-time staff only. THE must therefore maintain a standard in how demography is determined within a HEI and apply it to both the indicator calculations and determining the relative size of a particular faculty within a HEI.

Further complicating the demography calculations is the diverse makeup and organisation of faculties and subjects within HEIs. While some subjects such as business and economics and psychology are stand-alone faculties within some HEIs, they belong to social science faculties in others. Such realities must be acknowledged, and attempts made to adjust to such nuances. One way in which this can be done is to eliminate some of the subjects from the overall calculations in cases where some subjects belong to faculties also listed in the subject rankings. That is, if psychology belongs to the social science within a given HEI, the psychology subject ranking should be removed. In such cases, the psychology would contribute to the increased size of the social science faculty and a larger proportion in the overall ranking. However, such solutions could unfortunately compromise the subject-specificities accounting for the unique characteristics of psychology scholarship as if they were counted individually. Another solution is to attempt to separate the particular subjects from their faculties, although this can invite several complications in determining the demography of the subject versus their associated faculty.

This secondary recommendation should be read as an exploration of ideas to include more reflexivity and specificity into the overall ranking score. Without access to the data – it cannot be conclusively determined that the cumulative rankings will have a different outcome than the single-framework method currently used. It is through assumption and estimation that a cumulative score would yield different outcomes given the discrepancy between the weighting of indicators for subjects versus the overall ranking. Without access to the data scores for each indicator in both the overall, and individual subjects, such estimations cannot be confirmed. This recommendation therefore acts as an encouragement to explore different mathematical compositions in the rankings – and should the results based on a cumulative subject score be different from the score attained by the current methodology, this should call for a reconsideration of the methodological structure.

	Indicator	Overall	Arts and Huma-nities	Business and Econo-mics	Clinical and Health	Compter Science	Educatio n	Engineer ing	Law	Life Sciences	Physical Sciences	Psycholo gy	Social Sciences
t1	Teaching Reputation	15.00%	25.30%	21.10%	17.90%	19.50%	20.00%	19.50%	21.00%	17.90%	17.90%	17.90%	21.10%
t2	Student Staff Ratio	4.50%	3.90%	3.30%	2.80%	3.00%	4.50%	3.00%	4.50%	2.80%	2.80%	2.80%	3.30%
t3	Doctorate Bachelor Ratio	2.00%	1.70%	0.00%	1.20%	1.00%	0.00%	1.00%	0.00%	1.20%	1.20%	1.20%	1.40%
t4	Doctorate Staff Ratio	5.50%	4.30%	4.20%	3.30%	3.00%	5.30%	3.00%	4.20%	3.30%	3.30%	3.30%	4.30%
t5	Institutional Income	2.50%	2.10%	1.80%	1.60%	1.50%	2.40%	1.50%	2.50%	1.60%	1.60%	1.60%	1.80%
r1	Research Reputation	18.00%	30.00%	22.80%	19.30%	21.00%	20.00%	21.00%	21.00%	19.30%	19.30%	19.30%	22.80%
r2	Research Income	5.50%	3.60%	4.40%	3.60%	4.00%	4.40%	4.00%	4.40%	3.60%	3.60%	3.60%	4.40%
r3	Research Productivity	5.50%	3.60%	4.40%	3.60%	4.00%	4.40%	4.00%	4.40%	3.60%	3.60%	3.60%	4.40%
c1	Citation Impact	15.00%	7.50%	13.00%	17.50%	13.70%	13.70%	13.70%	12.40%	17.50%	17.50%	17.50%	12.40%
c2	Research Strength	5.00%	2.50%	4.00%	5.90%	4.60%	4.60%	4.60%	4.20%	5.90%	5.90%	5.90%	4.20%
c3	Research Excellence	5.00%	2.50%	4.00%	5.90%	4.60%	4.60%	4.60%	4.20%	5.90%	5.90%	5.90%	4.20%
c4	Research Influence	5.00%	2.50%	4.00%	5.90%	4.60%	4.60%	4.60%	4.20%	5.90%	5.90%	5.90%	4.20%
e1	Industry Income	2.00%	1.50%	2.00%	2.00%	4.00%	2.00%	4.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
e2	Patents	2.00%	1.50%	2.00%	2.00%	4.00%	2.00%	4.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
i1	International Students	2.50%	2.50%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
i2	International Staff	2.50%	2.50%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
i3	International co-authorship	2.50%	2.50%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
i4	Studying Abroad	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Figure 4: THE's Complete Table of Subject Rankings[109]

Chapter 6: Conclusion

University rankings have developed to become a significant feature of the academic landscape, although, as the cases of UU's and UZH's withdrawal from THE's ranking illustrate, many criticise and question their function and their value. However, the reality is that they are not likely to disappear in the near future. Coming to terms with their existence and the role they play does not mean that these rankings should go unchanged or unchallenged. Ranking systems, while facing some inherent limitations, can be developed and improved to increase their representativity and overall quality. This is possible through more contextualisation and increased reflexivity of their methodologies. This thesis has shown that there is need for improvements to recognise field- and disciplinary diversity and meaningfully account for such differences in ranking methodologies. Through examining the case of THE's ranking methodology and its incorporation of humanities-specific scholarship, this thesis demonstrates the need to reevaluate the composition of the ranking system and its methodological structure as it falls short of meaningfully adapting to practices observed within the humanities.

[109] Ross, *THE World University Ranking Methodology*, p. 15.

A paradigm-centred definition of the scholarly field of the humanities is established where methodological pluralism and the absence of a dominant paradigm as core characteristics of the field act as means to delineate the humanities from other fields of scholarship. Additionally, examination of the literature demonstrates the importance of monograph publishing, non-English publishing, and single authorship trends to the scholarly field of the humanities. Based on this observation, this thesis argues that the three themes are crucial to the understanding of humanities scholarship and failing to account for them in any evaluation framework significantly diminishes the representativity of said framework. Therefore, highlighting the shortcomings of THE's methodology, the uncomprehensive Scopus database, and a failure to compensate for such shortcomings results in a ranking that is not representative of humanities scholarship. While THE's ranking methodology does adjust the weighting of its indicators to a given field, or 'subject' as it is referred to, such adjustments are insufficient to accurately accommodate the distinct makeup of humanities scholarship.

One of the primary observations of the literature review is that the lack of representativeness of humanities in university rankings stem from the over-reliance on incomplete datasets. That is, the primary inaccuracies do not stem directly form THE's methodology or the weights given to the components used, but rather the reliance of Scopus for all bibliometric data upon which makes up 35.5% of the overall rankings and 18.6% of the arts and humanities subject rankings. While it is not THE's responsibility to fix flawed databases, it is its responsibility to account and compensate for such shortcomings by adjusting its methodology accordingly.

The identification of flaws in the current presentation of the methodology is followed by recommended adjustments to the framework to increase its representativity to diverse forms of scholarship. The recommendations include expanding the subject rankings to change the nature and number of indicators to better fit the specificities of a given field rather than using the same set of indicators and adjusting their weighting. Additionally, THE is encouraged to explore reversing the structure of the methodology from a top-down, to a bottom-up system where the overall ranking is made up of the composite, adjusted, subject rankings. This is contrast to THE's current methodology where the overall methodology is established first, and the subject rankings are subsequently presented as adjustments and deviations from the overall base.

The focus of this thesis is THE's incorporation of humanities scholarship in its ranking system and the flawed representation brought about in its current methodology. However, the

arts & humanities are one of eleven separated subject rankings in THE's ranking system. A similar exploration should be conducted with each field of study in turn to challenge and encourage THE to reevaluate and improve its methodology to increase its representativeness. That is, it should not be assumed that the humanities is the only field of study misrepresented in THEs rankings, or the only field that requires the inclusion of field-specific elements in the pursuit of more accurate evaluation.

The objective of this thesis is not to place value judgements on the nature of the organisation of the humanities or to claim that they must continue to incorporate monographs, non-English publications, and maintain authorship patterns to the same extent they do today or have in the past. Rather, this thesis argues that evaluation frameworks such as university rankings must account for the compositional makeup of the object of evaluation in real-time. That is, university rankings should adapt their frameworks to what humanities scholarship entails (in broad strokes) for the year of evaluation. Should the number of monographs further decline and represent a smaller portion of academic scholarship, the ranking methodology should reflect such developments. The same goes for both language use and authorship trends. Without such methodological adaptations, the risk is that the humanities scholarship begins to adapt itself to the frameworks, rather than the other way around. Whether such external pressures are positive or negative, or perhaps inevitable in nature, is subject to personal opinions and debate. Incentives for the nature of humanities scholarship to develop are multi-faceted, not easily isolated, and one should tread carefully when allocating causalities to individual forces and factors. While it would be conjecture to state that the lack of representativity of university ranking frameworks conclusively alters the structure of humanities scholarship, it is one of many contributing factors that can influence the future developments of the field. Observing such changes and the environments in which they occur is an important endeavour in and of itself, but also a crucial component for the construction of more representative evaluation frameworks.

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