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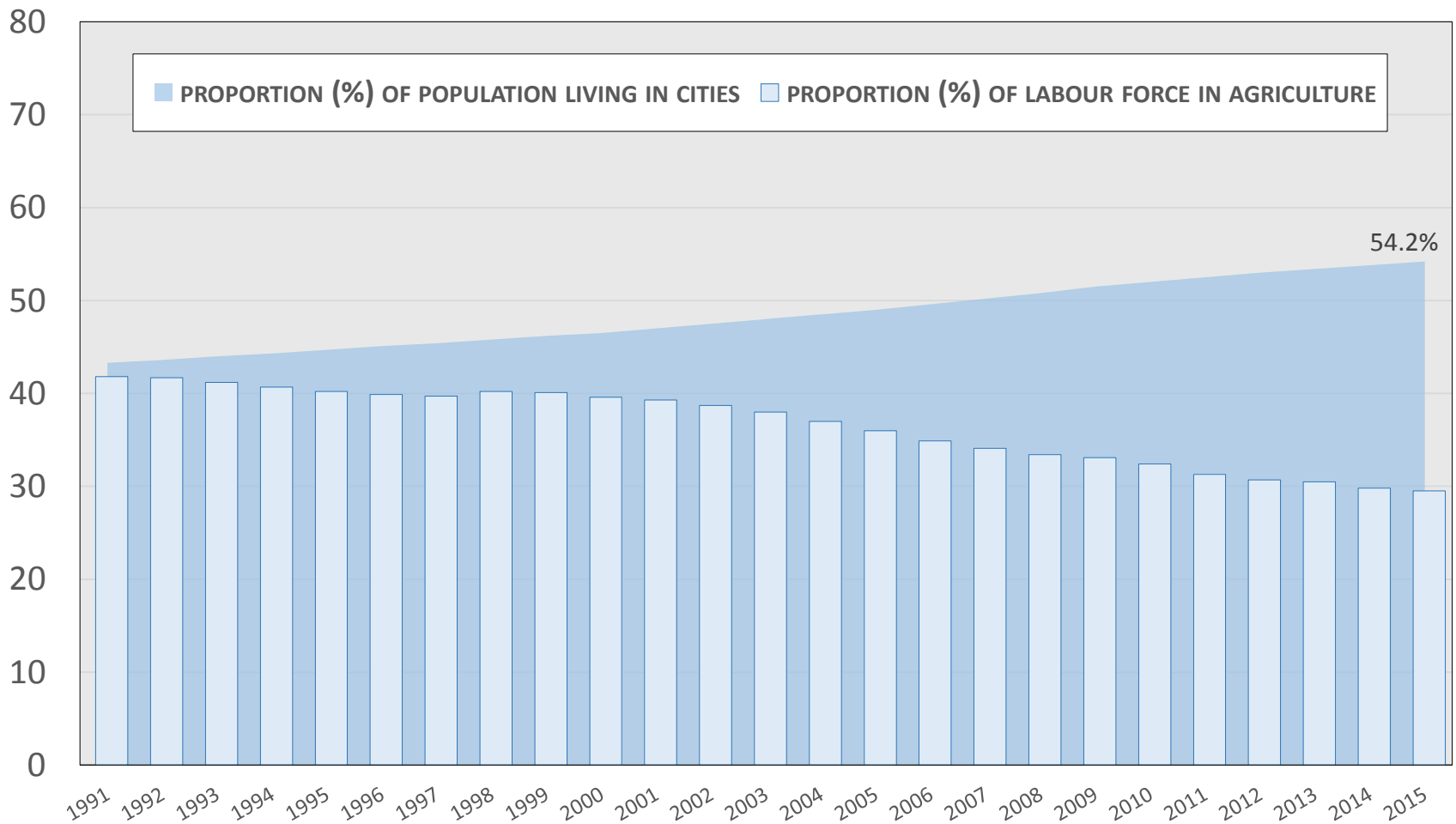
The contributions of higher education: *Towards a comprehensive framework for analysis*

Simon Marginson

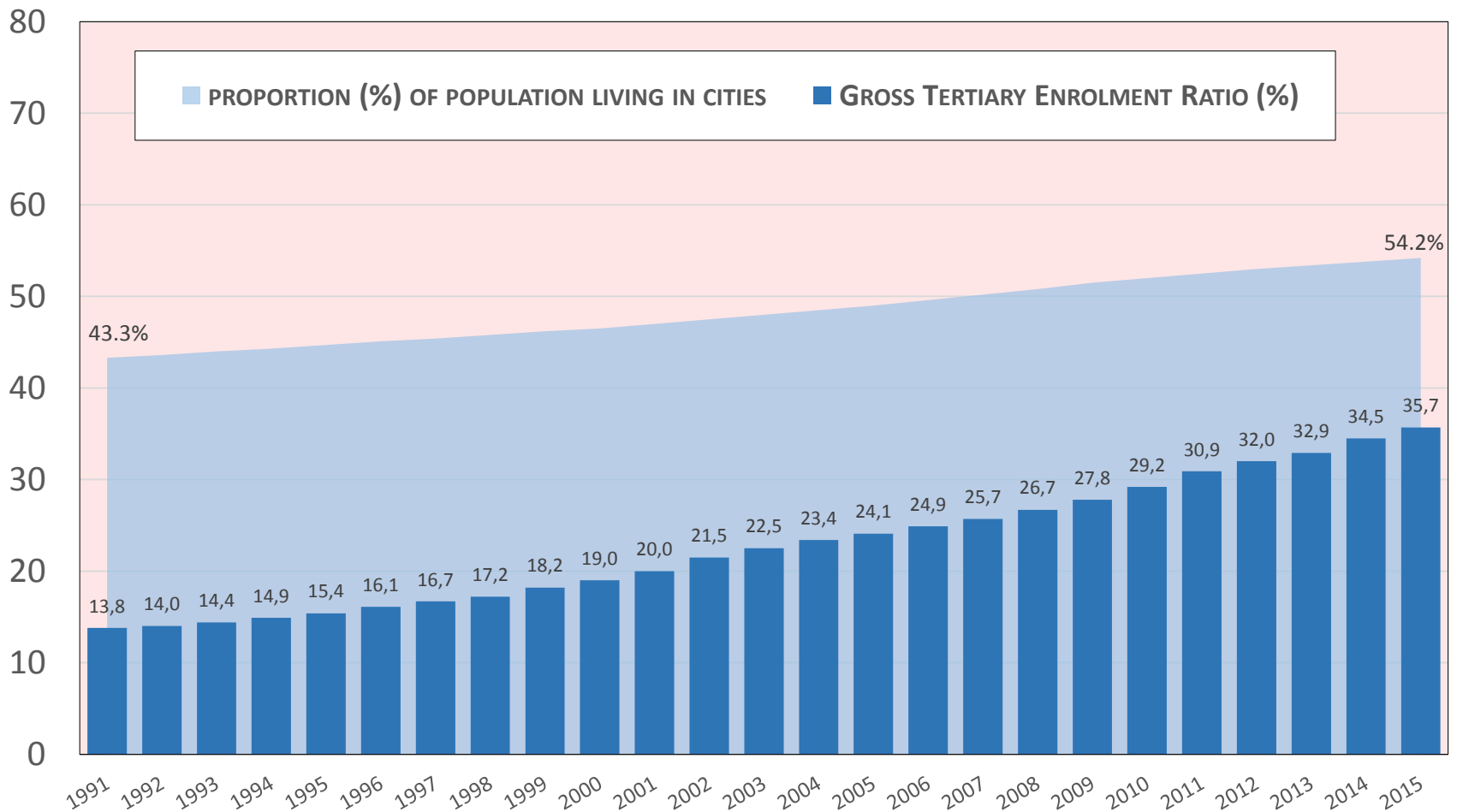
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Q. Why does it matter, to understand the *contributions* of higher education?

World urban population (%) and proportion of labour force in agriculture (%) : 1991-2015



World urban population (%) and Gross Tertiary Enrolment Ratio (%): 1991-2015



World regional Gross Tertiary Enrolment Ratios (%): 1970, 1990, 2010 and 2014

	1970 (%)	1990 (%)	2010 (%)	2014 (%)
World	10.0	13.6	29.3	34.5
North America/ W. Europe	30.6	48.6	76.9	76.4
Central and Eastern Europe	30.2	33.9	67.9	74.4
Latin America and Caribbean	6.9	16.9	40.9	44.7
East Asia and Pacific	2.9	7.3	27.3	39.1
Arab States	6.0	11.4	25.5	28.9
Central Asia	n.a.	25.3	26.7	25.7
South and West Asia	4.2	5.7	17.4	22.8
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.9	3.0	7.7	8.2

‘Contributions’: Project starting points

- Completion of project on High Participation Systems of Higher Education (*Oxford University Press*, 2018)
- Conceptual framing of new project on ‘The contributions of higher education’, organised by HSE
- Comprehensive contributions of higher education: public and private, individual and collective, local/national/global
- Project will both establish empirical findings, and further develop theory/concepts/methods
- Producing both (1) advice for policy, and (2) long-term knowledge, to some extent in different parts of the project
- Both a Russia project and an international project, and several distinct ‘work packages’
- Distinguish between potential and achievement
- Under what conditions?
- In whose interests?
- Distinguish higher education effects from family etc
- Daria (Dasha) Platanova and Anna Smolentseva

Personal starting points

- This project is about ‘what is higher education?’ ***IT IS NEW***
- Both objective *and* relevant: part-separation of explanatory and normative approaches (c/f *The Enterprise University*)
- Social science doesn’t have all the answers to the ‘contributions’ problem –
 - we have better tools for some parts than others
 - several disciplines can and do contribute
 - all disciplines, and theories, give us *partial truths*
- Empirical observation and measurement are vital *but* some social relations are not readily observed (Andrew Sayer)
- At the beginning of a project, all questions are open. This is conceptual mapping at start of project – this session is not ‘definitive’, and will benefit from your input, your answers

Q. What theories, ideas, knowledge tell us something about the 'contributions' of higher education and research?

We have parts of the puzzle. None provide a *general* theory of higher education

- Learning theory in psychology – the most education-specific
- Human capital theory, higher education as employability (Gary Becker et al), very influential but just part of the story)
- Higher education as social allocation of positional goods (Randall Collins, Lester Thurow, Fred Hirsch, et al)
- Studies of higher education, R&D, innovation and - regions, cities, industries, etc (Leiden, OECD, Goddard, Yang Po et al)
- Measure of scientific output and impact, theorisations of knowledge networks and flows
- Studies of the impact of higher education on individuals including social attributes - such as personal finances and health, use of technology, mobility, global competence, social trust, political participation, etc (Walter McMahon etc)

Gaps and problems

- Zero-sum contest within social science about the ‘contributions’ of higher education. There is a babble of competing *particular* claims for universal explanation
- The contributions of higher education to *collective goods* (jointly consumed) – from global health to knowledge to national defence to social literacy to civil order etc etc – are hard to define and measure, at least on an exhaustive basis
- The contribution of higher education to *global goods* is likewise difficult to define and measure, except in specific areas (e.g. research collaboration) – and tends to be neglected in national policy frameworks and social science

Towards at an over-arching approach:

1. Gert Biesta (2009)

Good education in an age of measurement: on the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education, *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability* (2009), 21, pp. 33–46

- Uses ‘purpose of education’ as the organising framework
- ‘When we engage in discussions about what constitutes good education we should acknowledge that this is a composite question... we need to acknowledge the different functions of education and the different potential purposes of education... three functions of education to which I refer as qualification, socialisation and subjectification’ (p. 33, p. 41).
- ‘A more precise focus on what constitutes good education is crucial for the way we approach all dimensions of education, and particularly for those aspects where we engage most explicitly with questions of values, such as in the fields of assessment, educational evaluation, and ... accountability.’ (p. 36).

- ‘A major function of education – of schools and other educational institutions lies in the *qualification* of children, young people and adults. It lies in providing them with the knowledge, skills and understanding and often also with the dispositions and forms of judgement that allow them to “do something” (p. 39).
- ‘The *socialisation* function has to do with the many ways in which, through education, we become members of and part of particular social, cultural and political ‘orders’... for example with regard to the transmission of particular norms and values, in relation to the continuation of particular cultural or religious traditions, or for the purpose professional socialisation...[and it happens whether explicitly intended or not through] the hidden curriculum’ (p.40).
- ‘Education also impacts on what we might refer to as processes of individuation or, as I prefer to call it, processes of *subjectification* – of becoming a subject (p. 40).

Missing in Biesta?

- *Knowledge*-formation (in general, in students) is the feature which distinguishes higher education from other social institutions, the closing point made by Bob Clark's *The Higher Education System* (1983). The three functions involve immersion in knowledges, which are diverse, with diverse effects (though Biesta does acknowledge the diversity).
- And *research* production is a very important aspect of higher education. Maybe as important as the education function?
- Arguably the *global* contributions of universities are distinct, under-recognised, and need to be made explicit in any summation of the contributions of higher education

Towards an over-arching approach:

2. Simon Marginson (2018)

Higher Education as Self-Formation. Inaugural Professorial Lecture at the UCL Institute of Education. <https://www.ucl-ioe-press.com/books/higher-education-and-lifelong-learning/higher-education-as-a-process-of-self-formation/>

- In this paper higher education is modelled as as ‘self-formation and the expansion of freedom’. It is argued that higher education should be valued in terms of its contribution to the growth of *self-determining persons in relational settings*.
- ‘Higher education as self-formation rests on the irreducible fact that while learning is conditioned by external factors, by the learner’s background and resources, the institution, the curriculum, teaching and other circumstances, only the learner does the learning... Autonomous agency has been called the key concept of modernity’.

- ‘Higher education as self-formation does what the consumption paradigm pretends to do but does not do. It puts the student at the centre of the frame.’
- Self-formation has antecedents in the Kantian/Humboldtian idea of *Bildung* and in *Confucian* practice of learning as self-cultivation. *Dewey* and the American pragmatists work with a variation of this idea.
- ‘Self-formation in Kant’s definition of the Enlightenment meant “man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage through the exercise of his own understanding”. The role of education was to cultivate the inner self in both intellectual and ethical terms, to form citizens in public rationality who would constitute emerging civil society. Kant emphasised that *Bildung* would not occur by itself, it required education.’

- Bildung implies an educational process dedicated to being and becoming, to the open-ended evolution of human potential, not static measures of skills and knowledge. Its notion of perfectibility resembles Confucian self-cultivation: the goal is never achieved. Self-formation, a never-ending responsibility, opens new horizons as it proceeds. The educability of the self-forming learner is not fixed but is continually expanding.
- Like Confucianism in the Han dynasty, the German Bildung idea became annexed to state formation. Von Humboldt wanted a formative curriculum that was broad and deep, grounded in history, classical languages and literature, linguistics, science and research, while also placing the University at the service of the state, though on the basis of academic freedom/university autonomy.

- Two factors that distinguish self-formation in higher education from the other social sites in which self-formation takes place: *teaching*, and *immersion in knowledges*. Students form themselves through the meaning they attribute to knowledges, which vary by discipline.
- All student self-formation is historically grounded, subject to relations of power and specific to contexts. The hard issue is *socially nested* self-formation— the relation between individual self-formation and the larger social setting, the role of higher education in social formation. Which social project should be annexed – or should this be open, left to the individual learner to determine? Confucian self-cultivation is more consistently social and socially normative than is Bildung. *Ren* [= human being + 2], Confucian humanism, embodies relationships.
- For Vygotsky self-formation and social-formation are simultaneous – the child's early relational speech installs reflexivity, a double-coded self, socially separated *and* socially embedded.

Self-formation is broadly inclusive

- Compared to Bildung, Dewey and Confucian self-cultivation, the market-consumer paradigm drastically shrinks the value of higher education to both individuals and societies.
- But some students do invest in themselves as human capital, calculating their lifetime earnings, even seeing themselves as consumers (munch, munch). Nearly all want employability. Many hope to achieve social position through education
- There are also many other ways in which students expand themselves, their resources and their projects. Some love the subjects they study: knowledge as an end in itself. Some intensively engage in cultural or political action on campus. Some care about the common good and want to work on global problems. Some want to make a marriage. Many are just finding themselves while moving into adult life.

- Some', 'many', 'much', 'most'. Not 'all'. No paradigm (human capital, consumer, social position, love of learning, social activism, etc) apply to *all* students, *all* the time, everywhere. None is a universal or sufficient explanation of the contribution of higher education to students, society or the economy.
- Yet that is how human capital theory, the consumer paradigm, the theory of positional goods, Bourdieu's capitals, even liberal education, present—as both necessary *and sufficient*. They are contending claims for the status of single transcendent truth.
- Each of these contributions is necessary but not sufficient. The framing of higher education should encompass all of these phenomena, *all of these contributions* to the person
- The common element is the self-forming student. This includes all the different ways that students build agency, and by augmenting themselves extend their effective freedoms
- We cannot measure self-formation, but we can measure many of the manifestations and aspects of it.

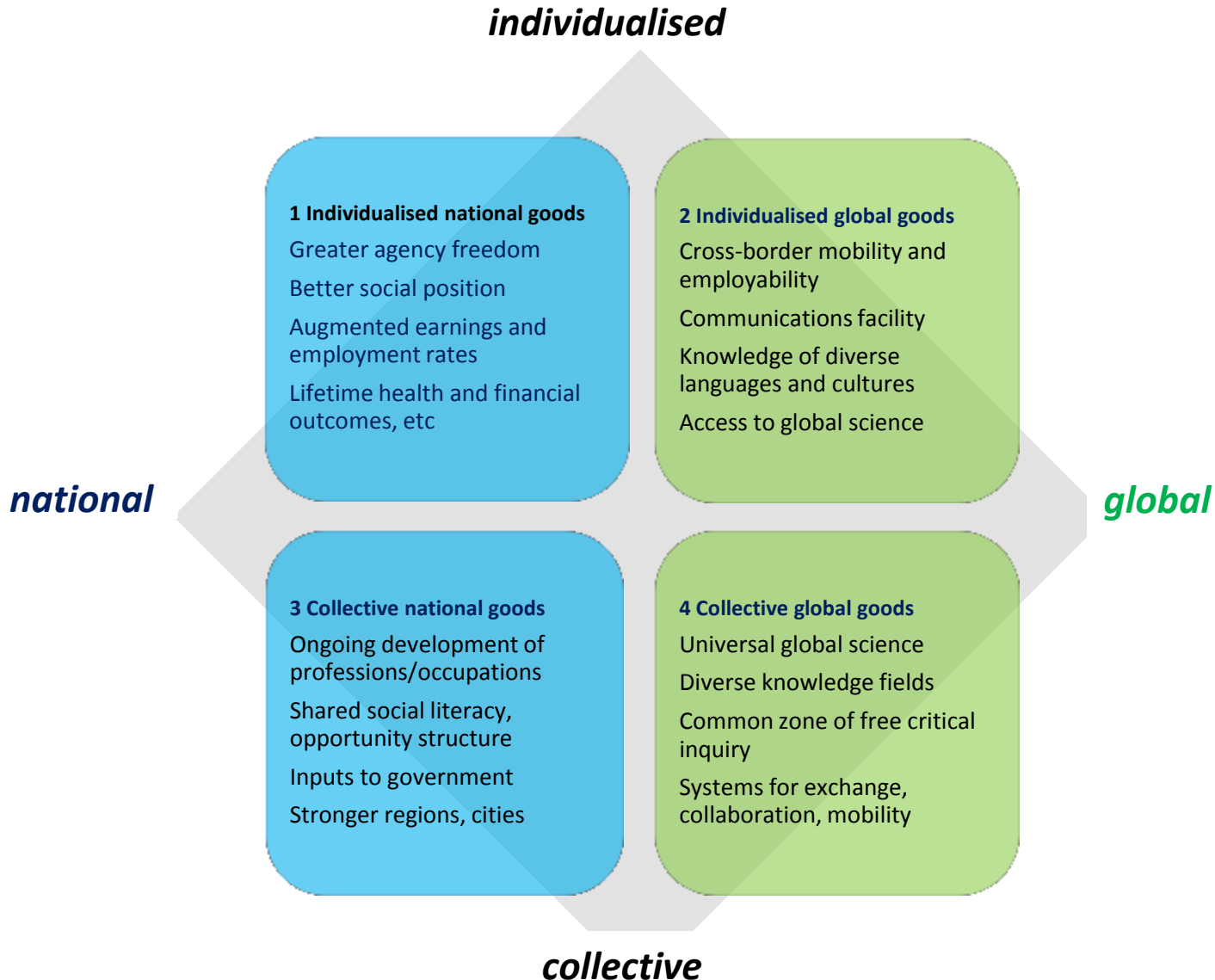
Q. What does 'higher education as self-formation' leave out?

[help me improve my work!]

Missing in the self-formation idea

- There is a bias towards the individual side of the contributions of higher education. Unlike Biesta, higher education as self-formation more clearly encompasses the differering effects of knowledge in self-formation, but unlike Biesta, whose qualification and socialisation are social, in self-formation the *social dimension* is partly external. Social relationships and values fostered by higher education must be brought back in, specifically chosen.
- *Research* production and cooperation are left out but are very important aspects of higher education.
- Arguably the *global* contributions of universities are distinct, under-recognised, and need to be made explicit in any summation of the contributions of higher education

Individual and collective contributions



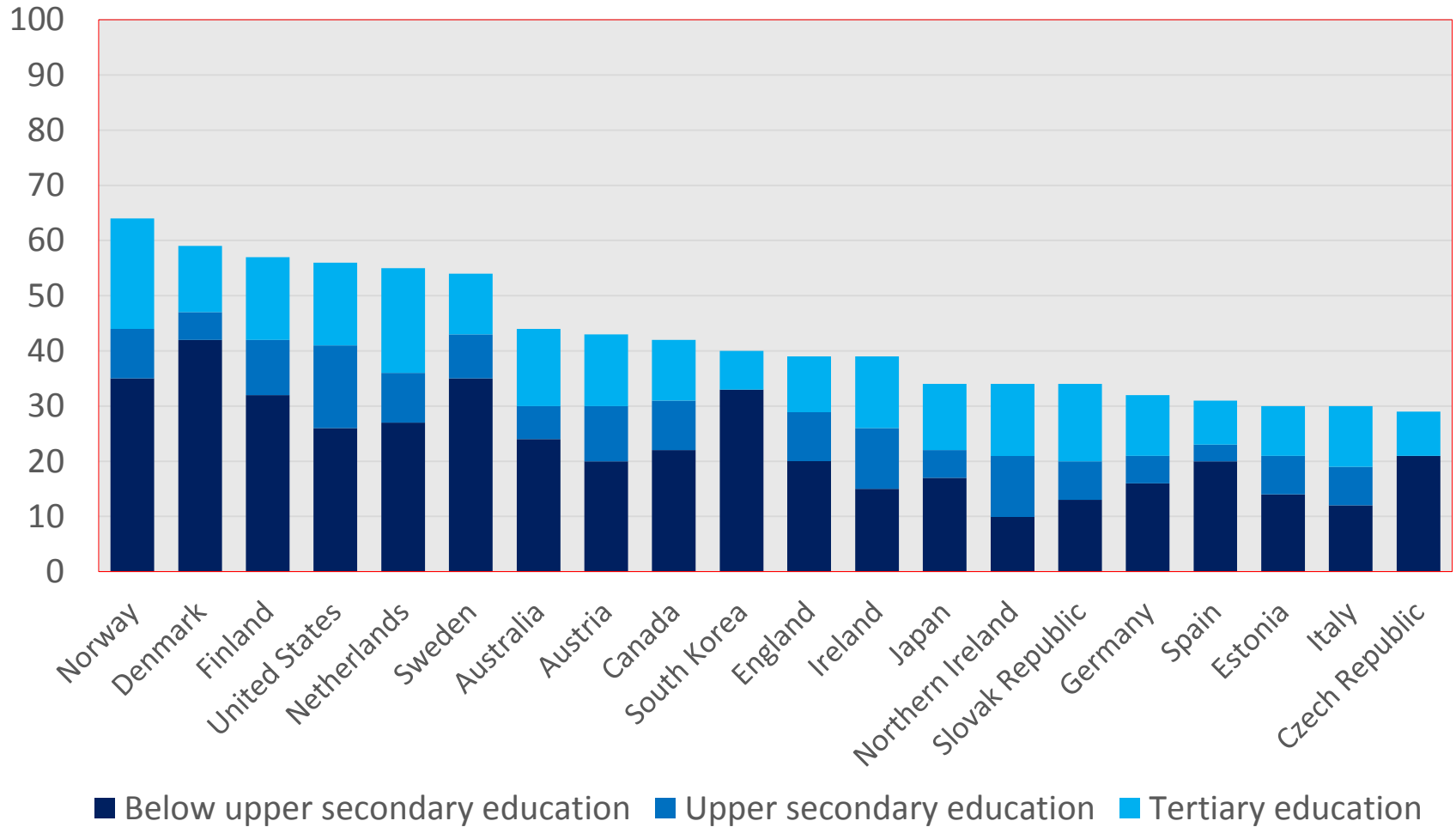
1. Individualised national-local goods

goods of self-formation within commonly inhabited society
[bold = measurable]

- Greater agency freedom, the capacity for confident autonomous action
- Negotiation of states, markets, institutions
- **Augmented earnings and employment rates**
- **Better social position**
- **Lifetime health outcomes**
- **Personal financial management**
- Augmented social-relational capabilities – **capacity to communicate, use technology, understand and tolerate cultural difference, trust other people**
- Augmented **political participation**

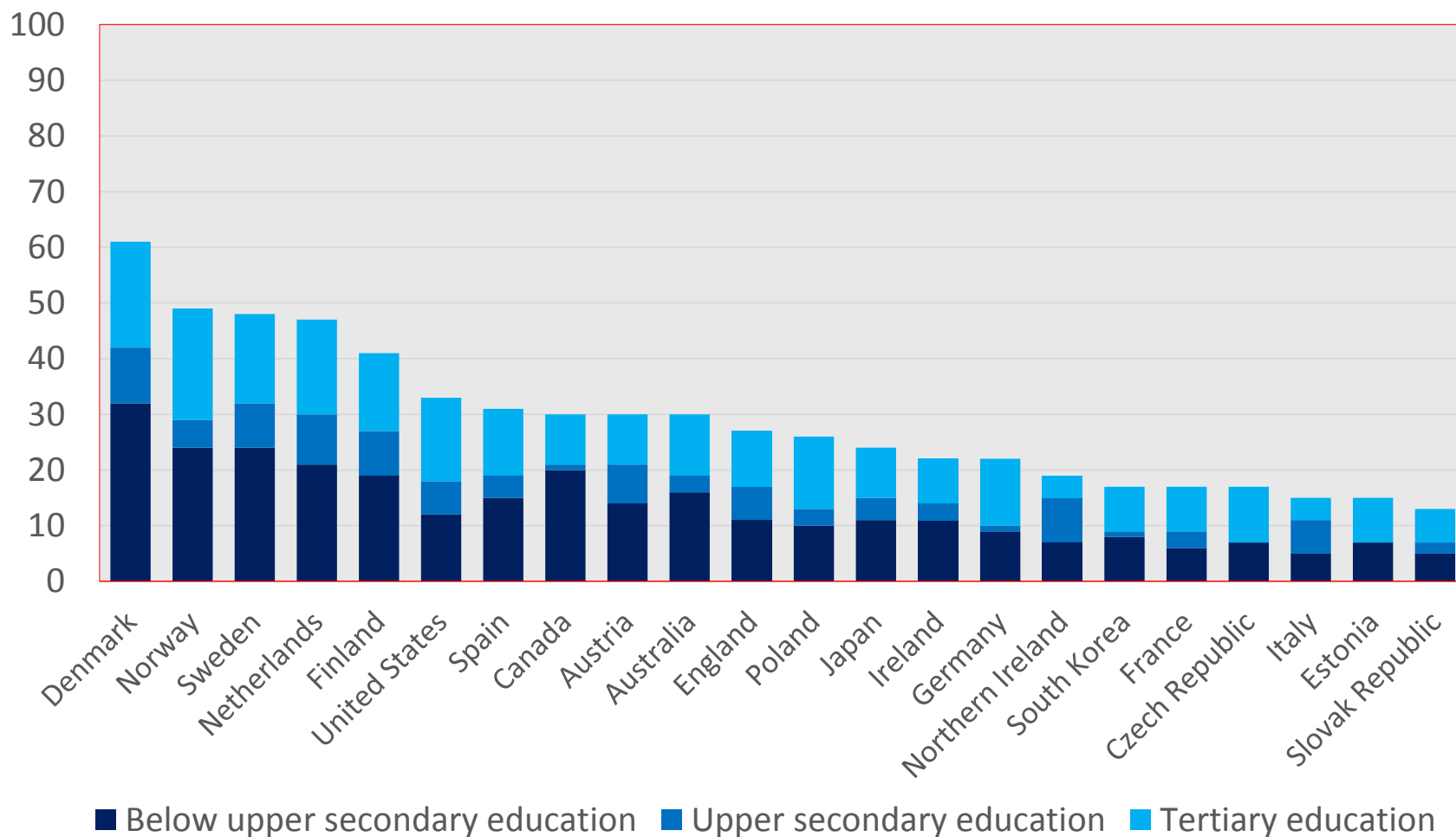
Level of education and political connectedness

Q. 'Do you believe you have a say in government?' % 'Yes' (OECD 2014)



Level of education and interpersonal trust

Q. 'Do you trust other people?' % 'Yes' (OECD 2014)



Q. Can you name some individualised *global* goods produced in higher education?

2. Individualised global goods

Goods of self-formation in global society (global systems and cross-border mobility)

- Greater agency freedom, the capacity for confident autonomous action, in global society
- **Capacity for cross-border mobility**
- Negotiation of unfamiliar sites and institutions
- **Global employability and augmented earnings**
- **Facility in cross-border communications and cooperation**
- **Knowledge of diverse languages and cultures**
- **Other global competences including understanding, tolerance and negotiation of cultural difference**
- Access to global science and other knowledges

- OECD, Perspectives on Global Development 2017: International migration in a shifting world (2016)

3. Collective national-local goods

Goods that are jointly consumed (some of which are jointly produced)
[bold italics = partly measurable, or at least observable]

- Ongoing development of the professions/ occupations as cooperative social activity
- Graduate work as constituting common social benefits (e.g. health care, education)
- **Shared social literacy**
- **Nationally-specific knowledges (e.g. in professional fields such as law)**
- *Higher education as an opportunity structure which [is meant to!] deliver just outcomes*
- *Academic inputs to government policy and regulation*
- *Economic, social and cultural building of localities, cities, regions* [but unequalising]

Q. Can you name some collective *global* goods produced in higher education?

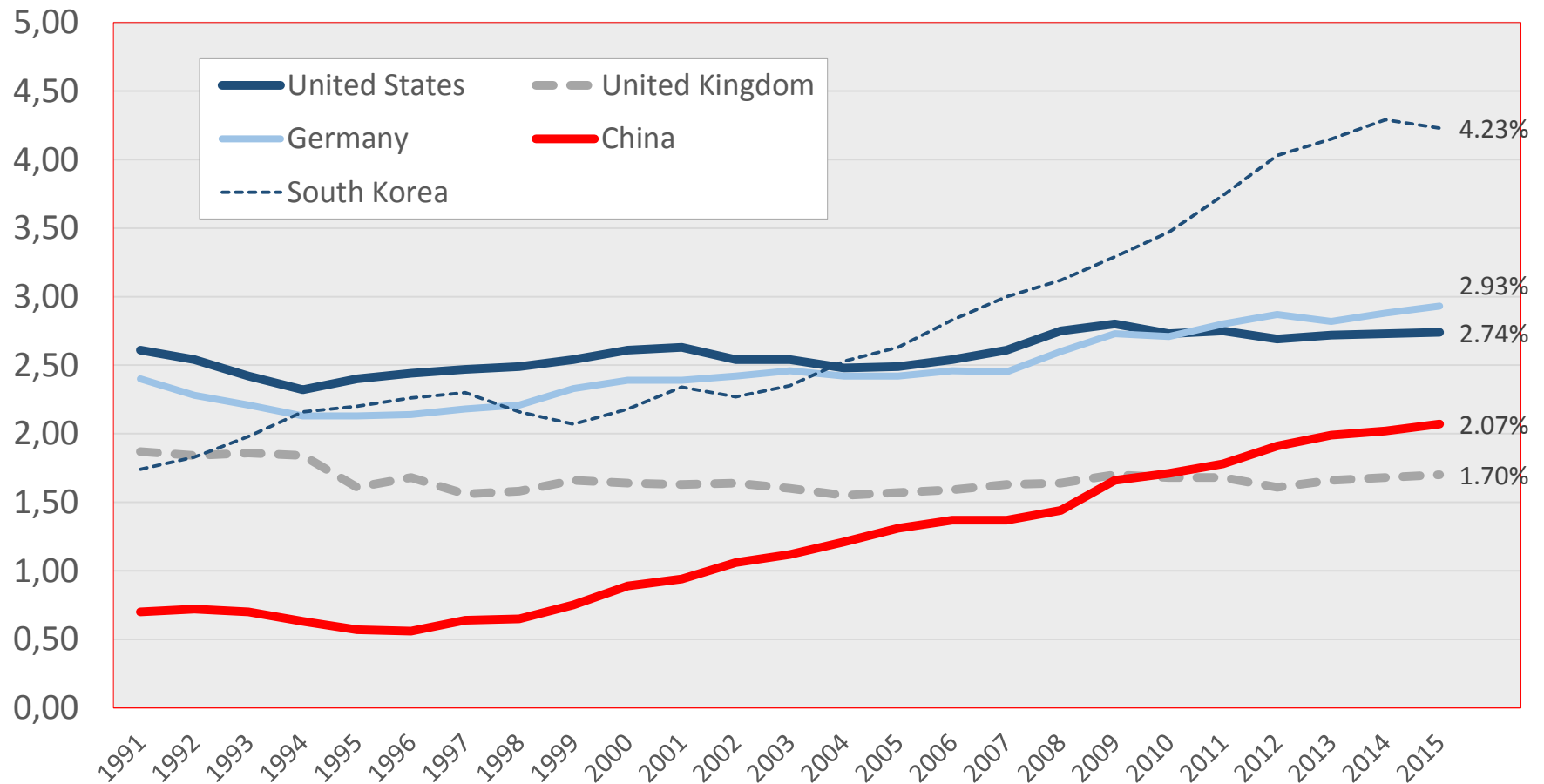
4. Collective global goods

Goods that are jointly consumed (some of which are jointly produced)

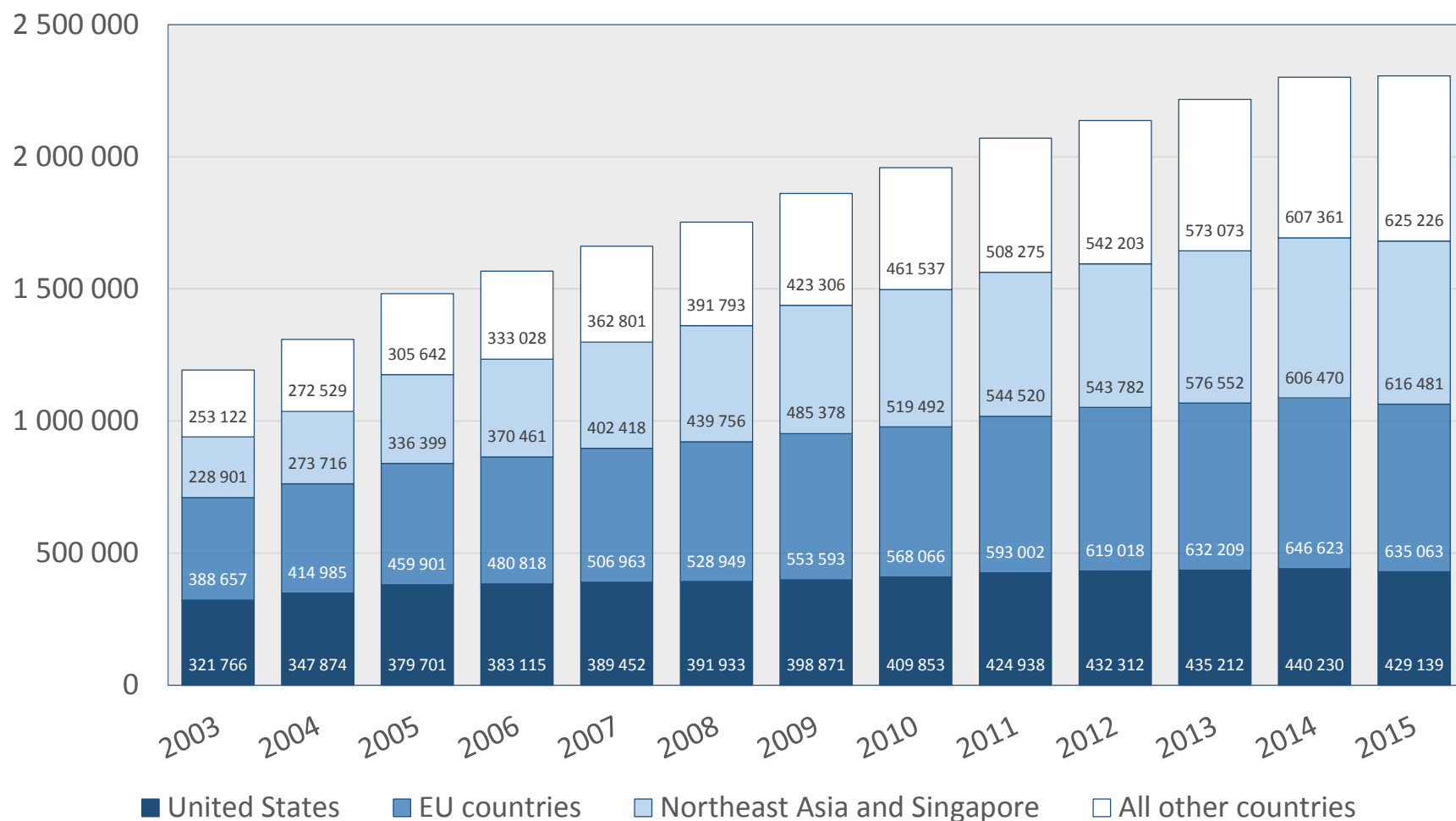
- **Global knowledge, in diverse fields especially in science** [but biases, omissions]
- ***Systems of universal global science, including publishing, certification protocols***
- ***Fostering of global cooperation in research including that on common global problems***
- Common global zone of free critical inquiry, sustained by cross-border disciplinary networks
- ***Systems for international collaboration, exchange, mobility between universities*** (recognition protocols, Erasmus, etc)

Extensive data available on research outputs and cooperation patterns

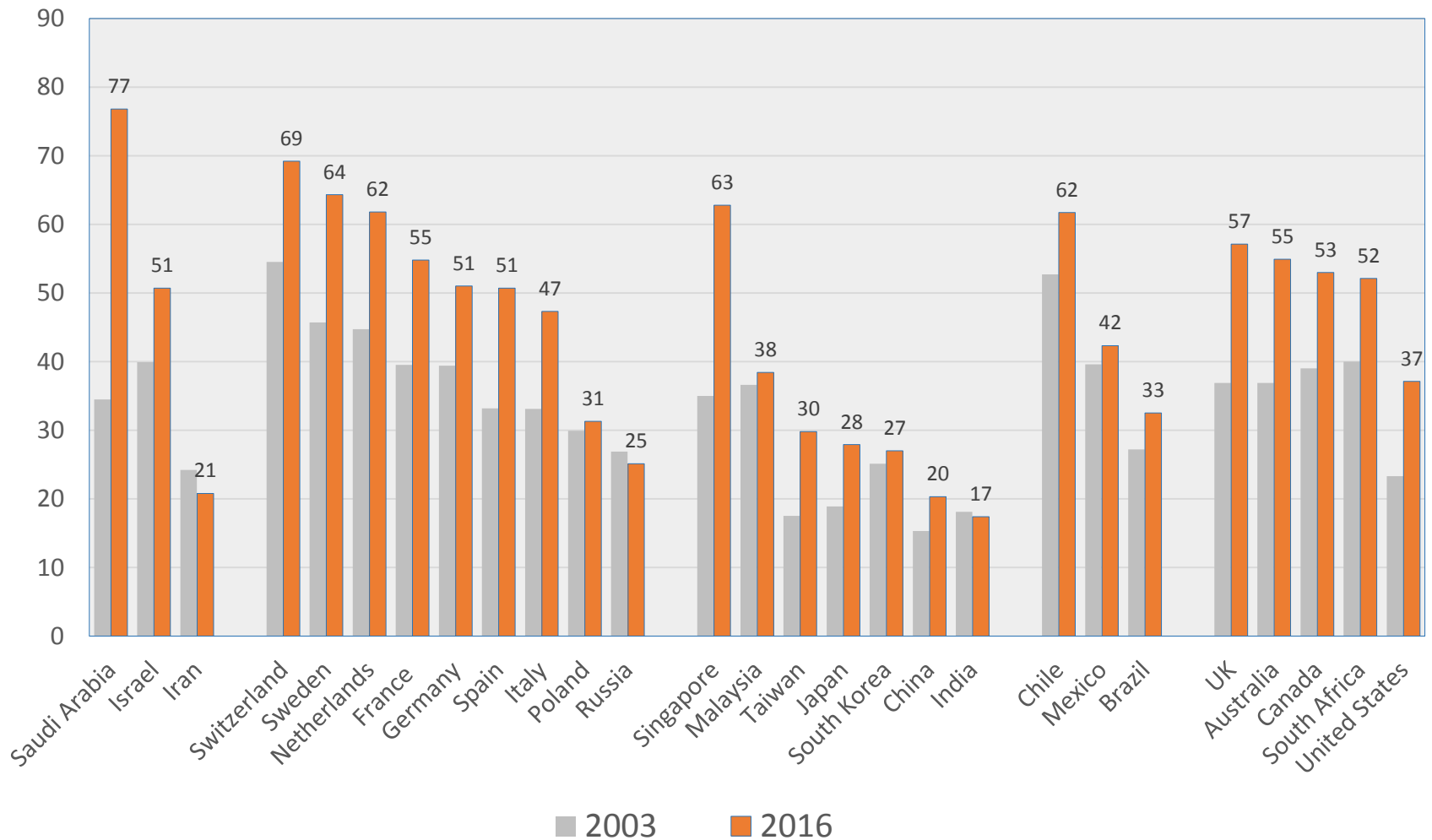
R&D as a proportion (%) of GDP, USA UK, Germany, China, South Korea: 1991-2015



Number of science papers, USA, Europe, East Asia and Singapore, rest of world: 2003-2015



Percentage of all papers internationally co-authored, selected countries: 2003 and 2016



A lot of possibilities for research here ...

