

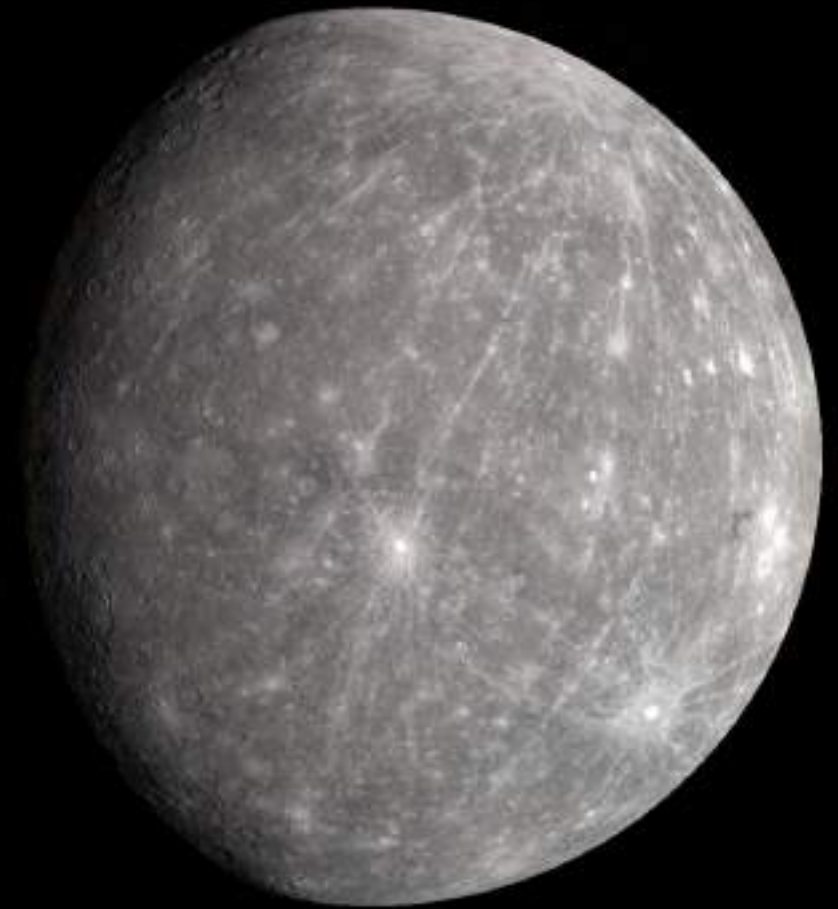
# THE GLOBALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Is it neo-imperialism run amok,  
or the hope of the world?

Simon Marginson, University of Oxford

Harvard University webinar, 15 June 2022

1. *Proto-globalizations*
2. *World making*
3. *Globalization of higher education since 1990*
4. *Relations of power in global higher education*
5. *Final thoughts*



“Hey, hey Woody Guthrie, I wrote you a song  
Bout a funny ol' world that's a-comin' along  
Seems sick an' it's hungry, it's tired an' it's torn  
It looks like it's a-dyin' an' it's hardly been born”

~ *Song to Woody*, Bob Dylan, 1962

# GLOBALIZATION

- Processes of convergence and integration in the planetary scale, at the level of the world as a whole or large world regions
- World imagining, world making
- There are many possible kinds of globalization – economic, political, cultural, religious, educational etc; American, French, Chinese etc

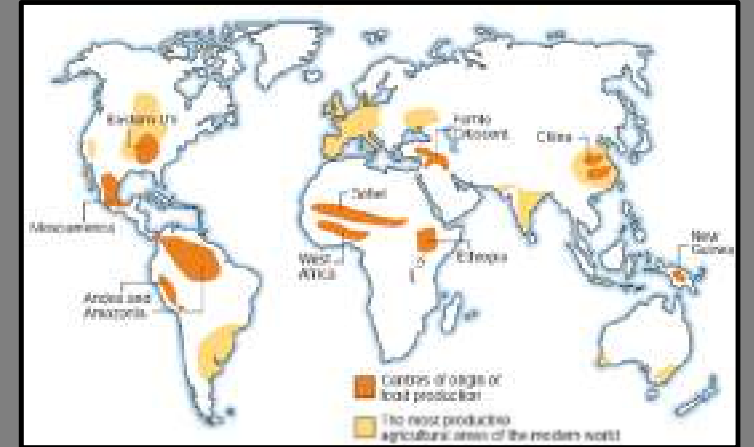


# I. PROTO-GLOBALIZATIONS

- Historical transformations that have swept the world (with varying degrees of completeness)
- The globalization of higher education and knowledge since 1990 is the latest of these



# WORLDWIDE RADIATION OF AGRICULTURE IN THE HOLOCENE FROM C. 10,000 BCE ONWARDS

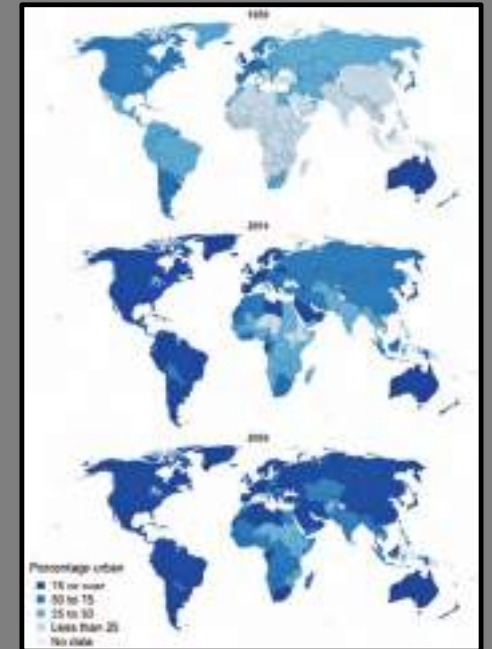


# URBANIZATION FROM C.10,000 BCE ONWARDS

BY 2100, 75% OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLE WILL LIVE IN CITIES



Mumbai

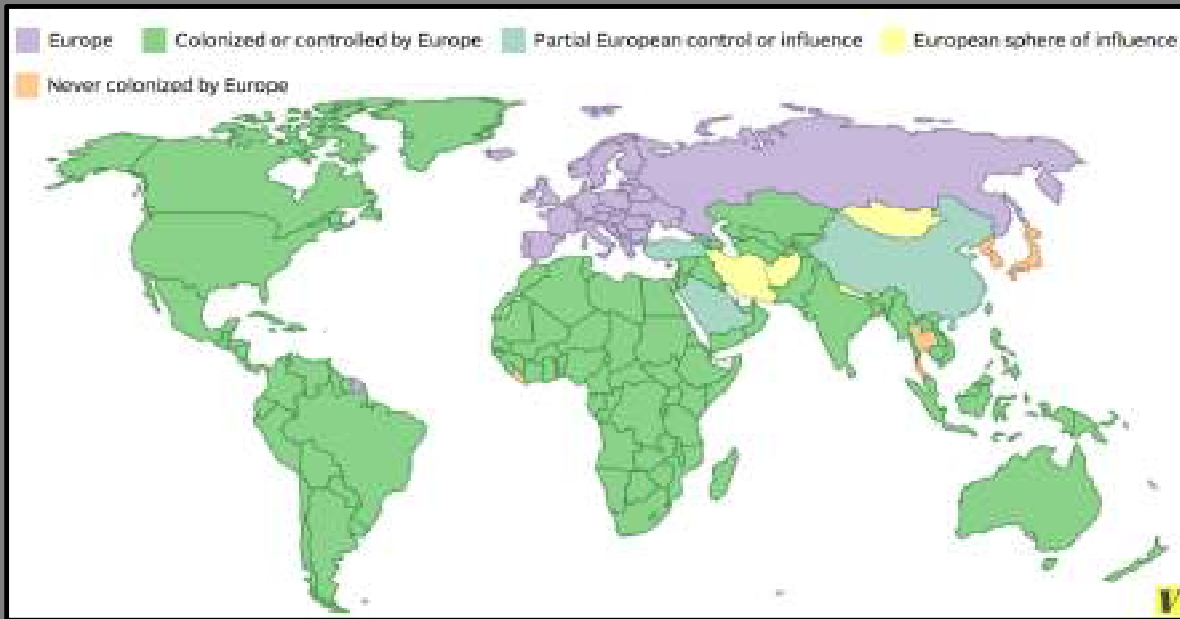


# THE RADIATION OF PRINTING EAST AND WEST AFTER THE PRE-SONG DYNASTY INNOVATION IN THE 9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CE



# EURO-AMERICAN CONQUEST CAPITALISM AFTER 1492

IN THE ERA OF GUNS AND BIBLE IMPERIALISM THAT PEAKED IN THE EARLY 1900S, ONLY FIVE COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD DID NOT COME UNDER EURO-AMERICAN POLITICAL CONTROL



# FOSSIL FUELS AND LATER, ELECTRIFICATION ENABLE RAPID MOVEMENT THROUGH PHYSICAL SPACE





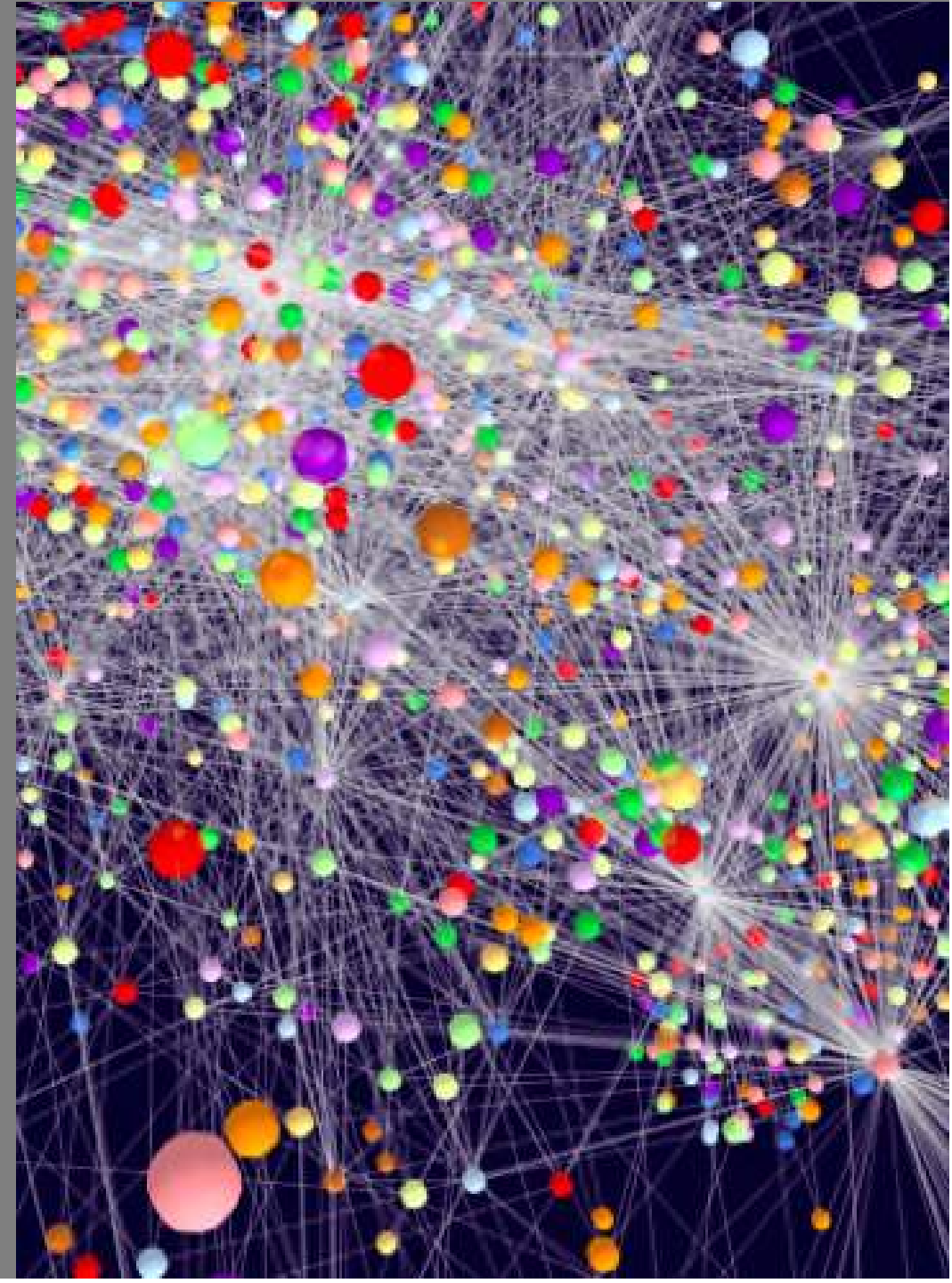
# RAPID EVOLUTION OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNICATIVE SPACE AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE INTERNET IN 1989

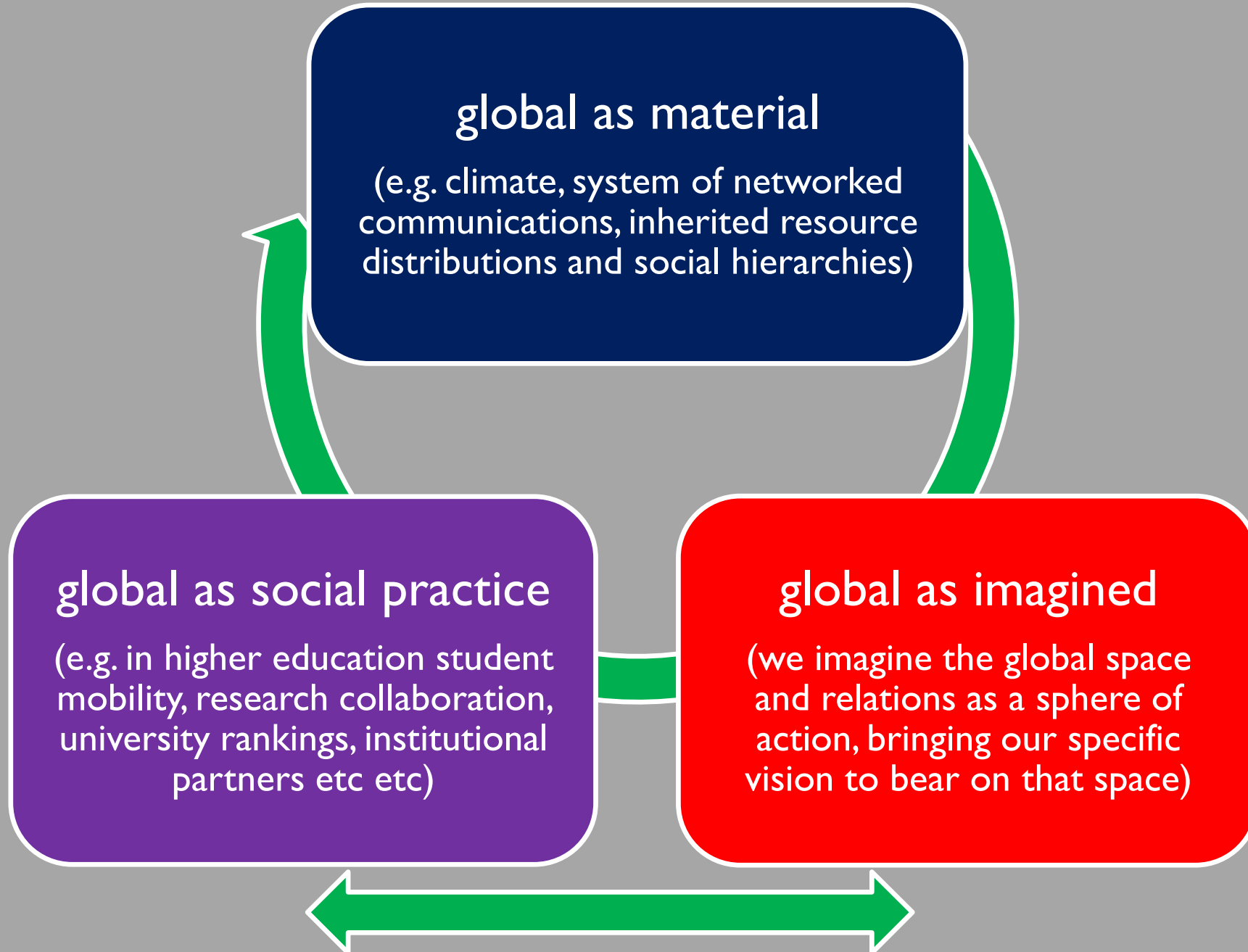


In *Theory of Society* Niklas Luhmann (2012) remarks that the decisive step towards world society was 'the full discovery of the globe as a closed sphere of meaningful communication' (Volume I, p. 85)

## 2. WORLD MAKING

- In all these processes the sense of the world as a whole has been advanced
- Geo-cognitive scales such as ‘the global’ (or ‘the national’) are brought into being by human and institutional agents who co-create these conditions of possibility. There are three intersecting elements:
  - material (e.g. climate, resources, technologies)
  - imaginings and interpretations
  - social practices (e.g. in higher education university models, global science, cross-border mobility, online programs, university partnerships, rankings)
- But agentic capability in world making is unequal!
- And a global sense of the world as a whole can be imperial, or reciprocal and respectful of the other





“SPACE IS THE SPHERE OF  
THE POSSIBILITY OF THE  
EXISTENCE OF PLURALITY,  
OF THE CO-EXISTENCE OF  
DIFFERENCE”

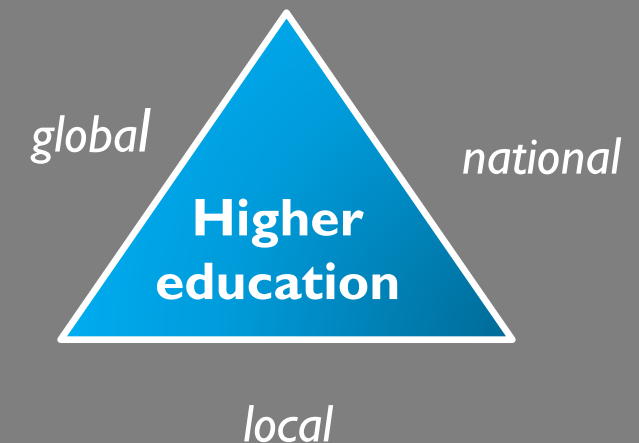
~ DOREEN MASSEY

Joan Miro, *Barcelona*



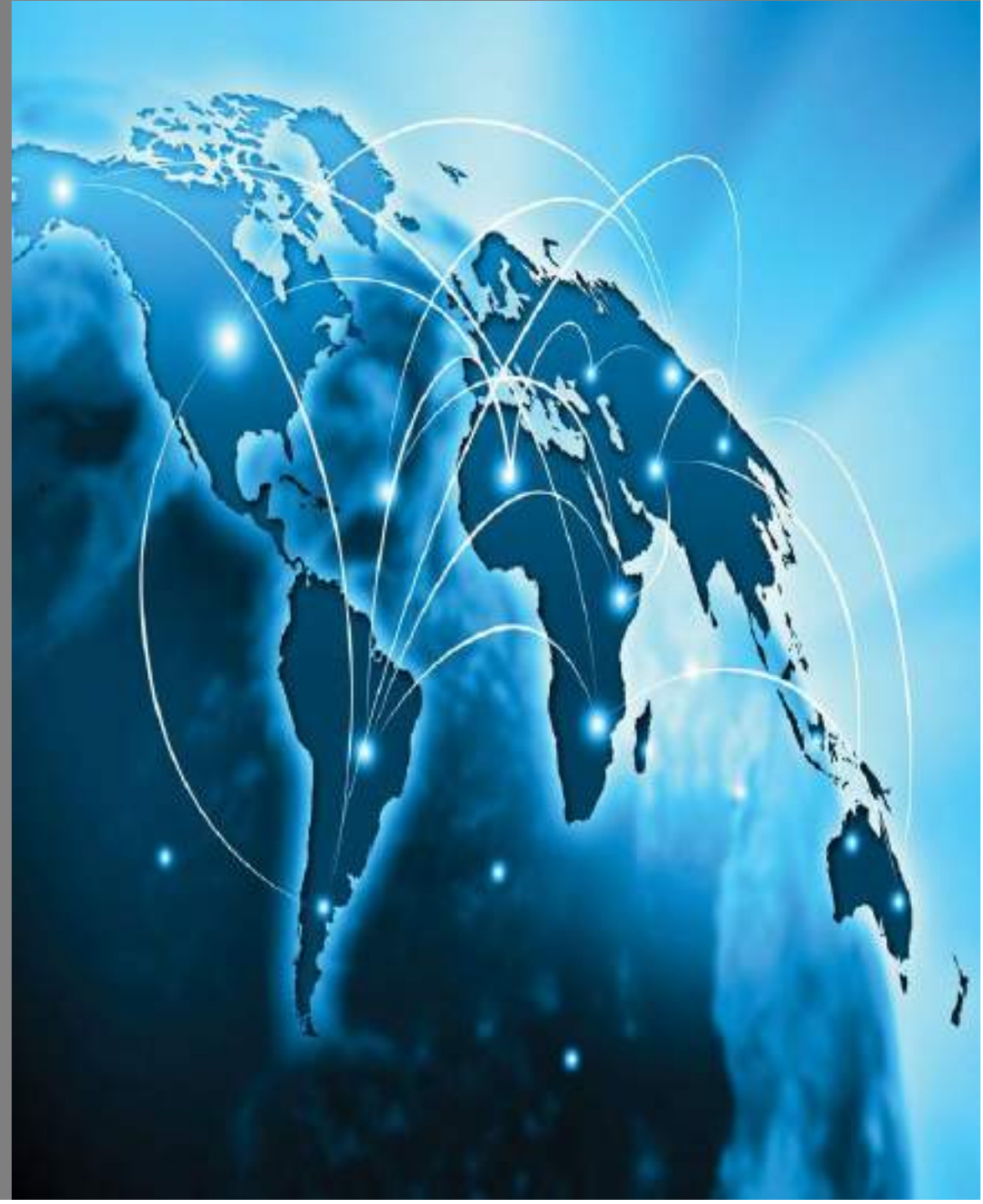
# HIGHER EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE ARE PRACTISED IN A *MULTI-SCALAR* SETTING

- Higher education agents are simultaneously active in global, national, and local scales ('glonacal'). Avoid single scale lenses - "methodological nationalism" and "methodological globalism"
- Pan-national regional (e.g. EU) and city scales also matter
- Scales are not contained one inside another. They are autonomous. Global, national and local conditions, activities and mentalities can be very different, e.g. the national scale everywhere is normed by nation-states, in the global scale there is no state and agents operate beyond boundaries
- Though the global scale has become more important in the Internet era no one scale is necessarily dominant. Research and knowledge tend to be more global than the education function of universities



### 3. GLOBALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SINCE 1990

- Each university visible to all others. Global rankings regulate a global market hierarchy and normalise the Anglo-American science university
- Networked global science system (though with many exclusions), paper growth of 5.15% per year, a quarter of papers now internationally co-authored
- Internationally mobile students increase from 1 million to more than 6 million; immense growth in cross-border mobility of researchers and faculty
- World-spanning online education and MOOCs
- University partners, consortia, hubs, branch campuses



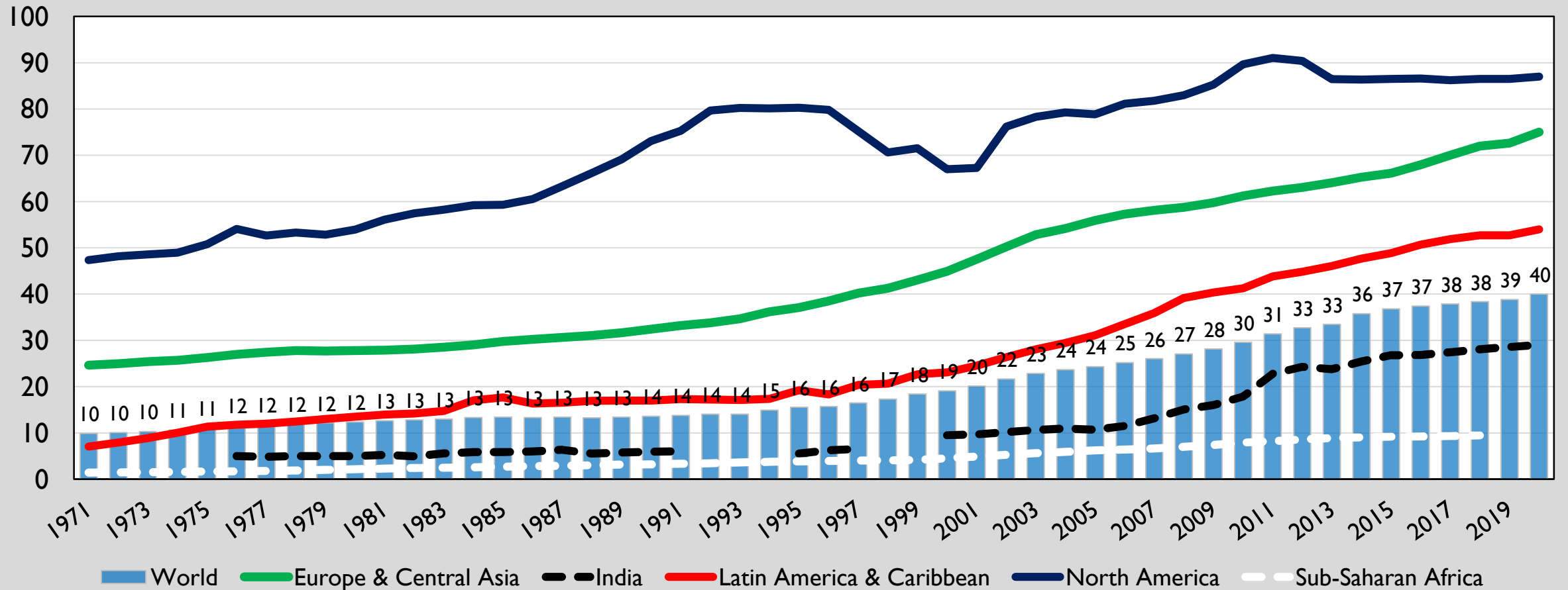
# GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION IS CONSTRUCTED IN THREE KINDS OF SPATIAL-SOCIAL PRACTICE

- **Cross-border connections**, e.g. student and faculty mobility, research partnerships, university agreements
- **Global diffusion** of policies, practices, ideas and models, e.g. neo-liberal competition, the spread of the model of the comprehensive science-oriented “multiversity”
- **Global systems** based in world-spanning linkages and relationships, e.g. global bibliometric knowledge and global science, networked academic communications, global comparisons and rankings



# SPREAD OF HIGH PARTICIPATION HIGHER EDUCATION 1971-2020

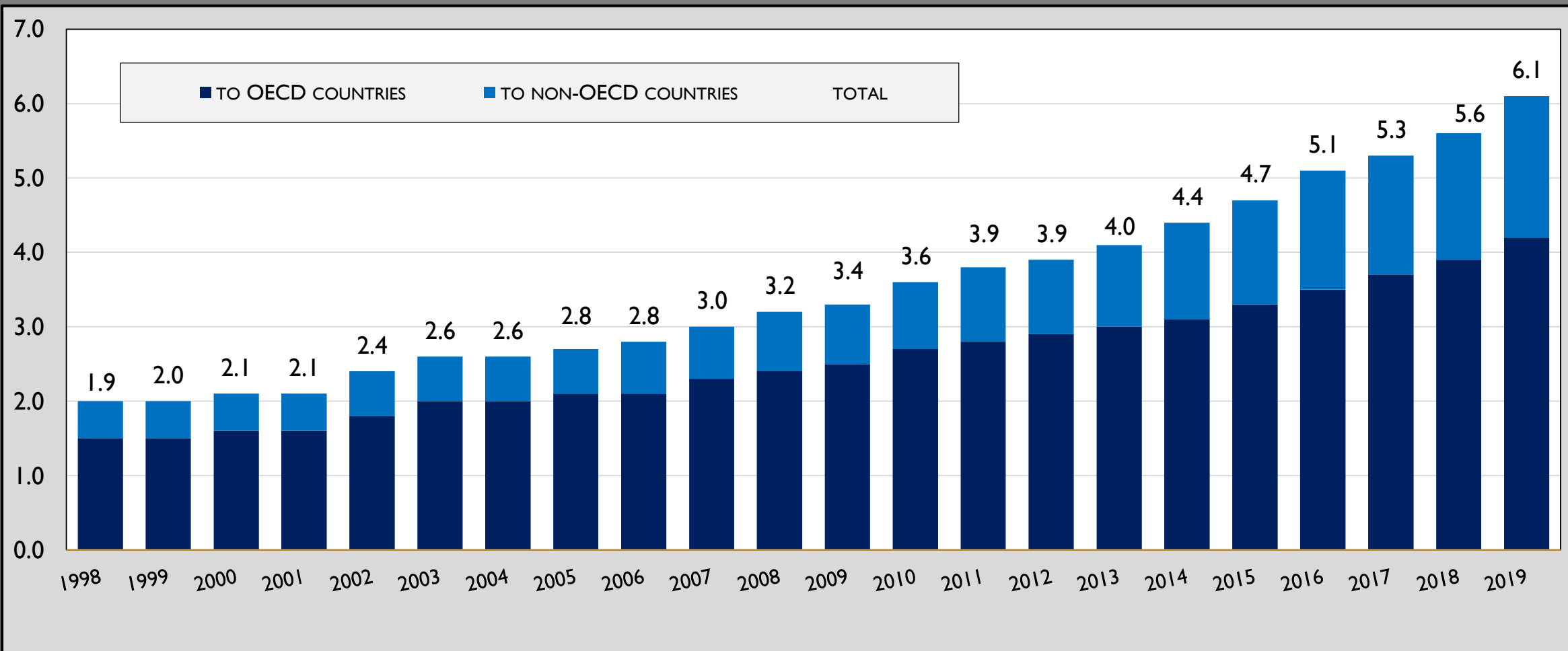
GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO (%) BY SELECTED WORLD REGION 1971-2020 – UNESCO DATA



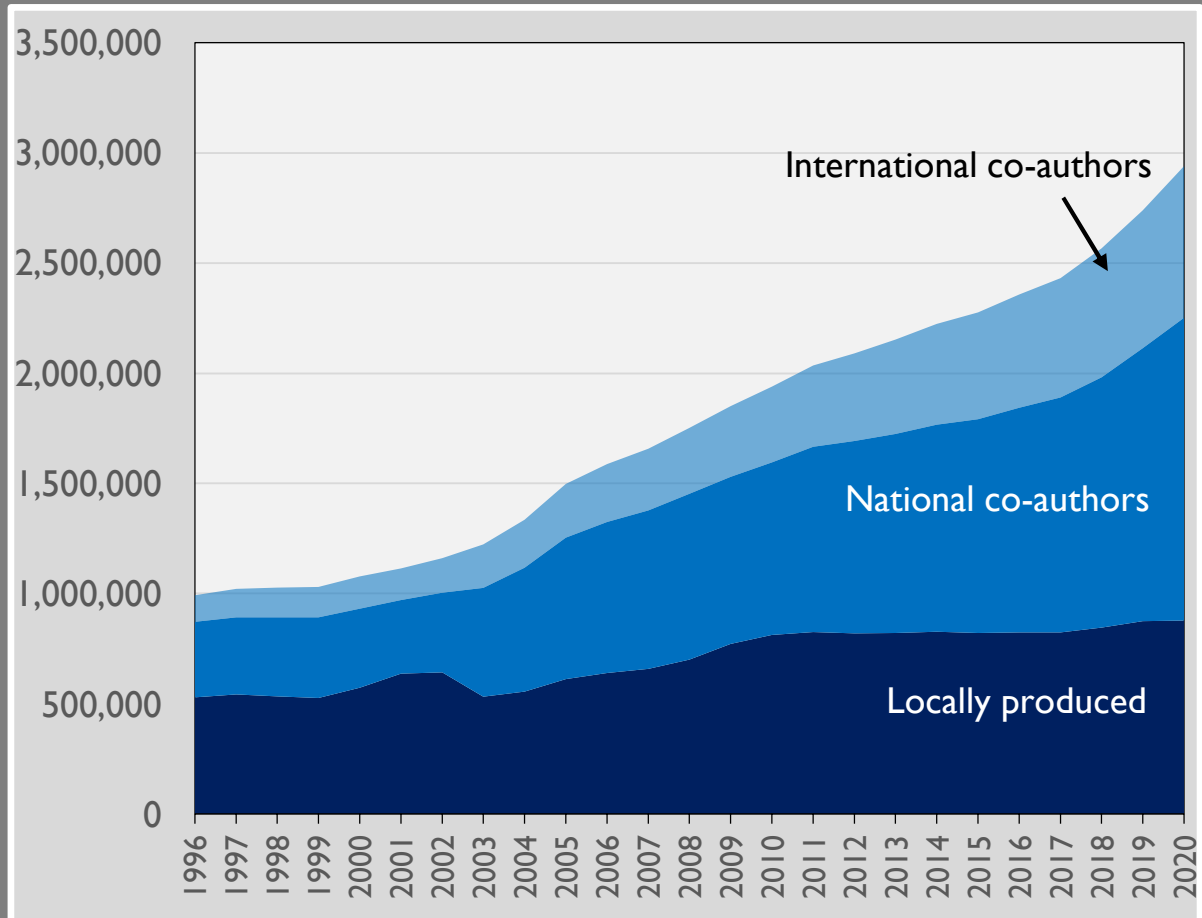


# MOBILE STUDENTS INCREASED BY 5.5% PER ANNUM 1998-2019

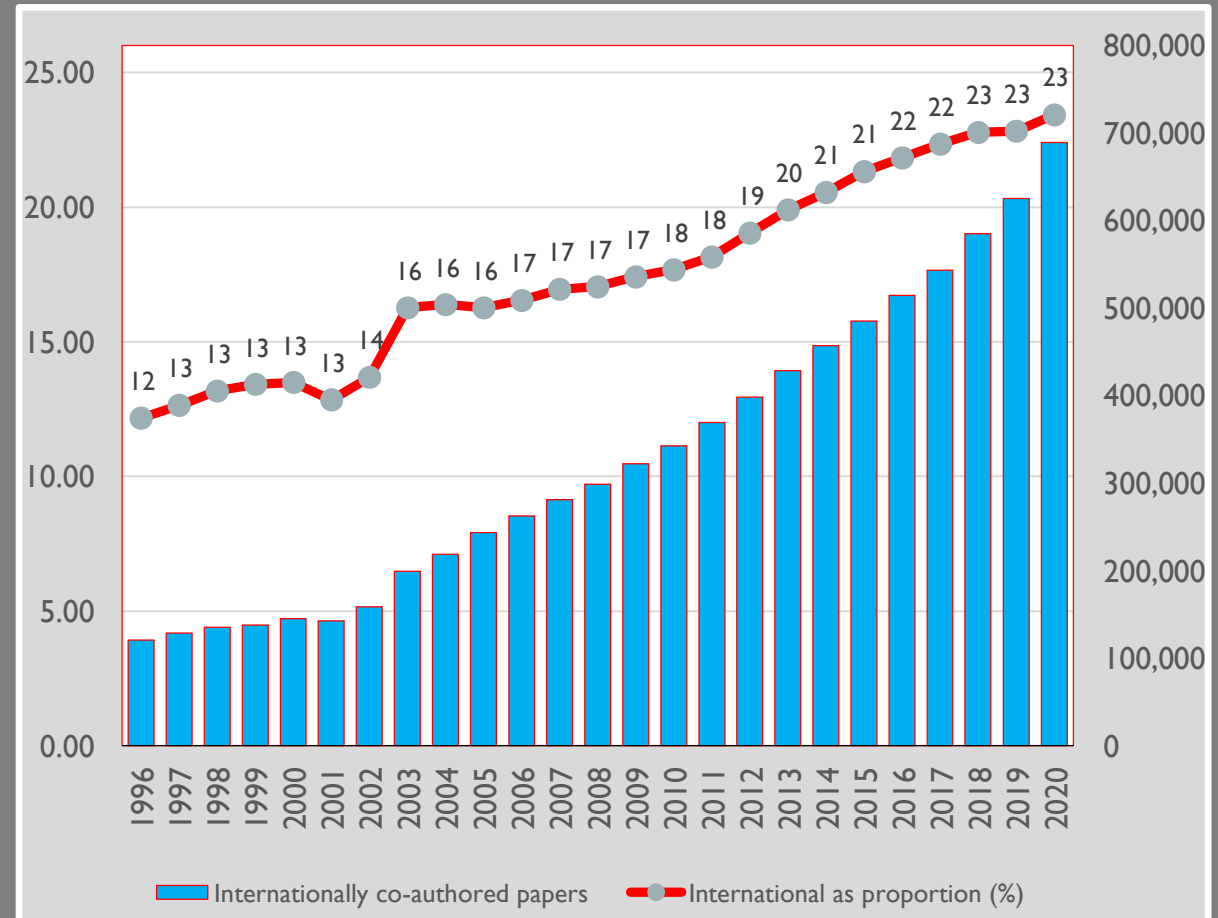
INTERNATIONAL OR FOREIGN STUDENTS, TERTIARY EDUCATION, WORLD (MILLIONS) – UNESCO DATA



# NUMBER OF SCIENCE PAPERS IN SCOPUS, BY TYPE OF COLLABORATION, WORLD: 1996-2020 - NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD



# NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF INTERNATIONALLY CO-AUTHORED PAPERS, WORLD: 1996-2020 - NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD



# INTERNATIONALLY COLLABORATIVE PAPERS:2016-2019 - LEIDEN




university	country	Cross-border papers	Cross-border % 2006-09	Cross-border % 2016-19
<b>Harvard U</b>	USA	44,071	36.0	53.4
<b>U Oxford</b>	UK	28,903	54.6	70.2
<b>U Toronto</b>	CANADA	27,583	43.7	58.2
<b>U College London</b>	UK	27,194	50.4	67.5
<b>U Cambridge</b>	UK	24,954	50.7	70.9
<b>Imperial College London</b>	UK	22,749	53.9	70.6
<b>Sorbonne U</b>	FRANCE	20,970	54.0	68.3
<b>U Copenhagen</b>	DENMARK	20,427	55.5	66.6
<b>Johns Hopkins U</b>	USA	19,835	33.3	46.2
<b>National U Singapore</b>	SINGAPORE	19,575	46.6	69.0
<b>U Melbourne</b>	AUSTRALIA	19,143	40.9	58.2
<b>Stanford U</b>	USA	18,714	31.8	46.9
<b>U Sao Paulo</b>	BRAZIL	18,638	31.0	48.2
<b>U Glasgow</b>	UK	9,769	47.8	65.0

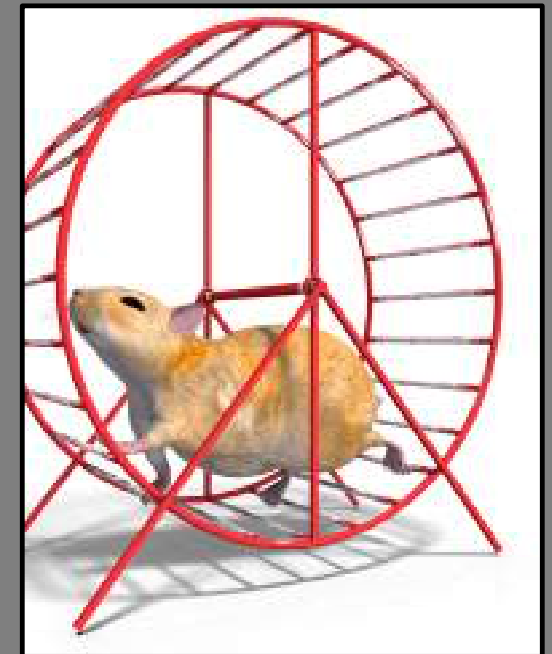
## 4. RELATIONS OF POWER IN GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION

- Imperialism is selectively global where it suits the interests of nation and capital
- Normalisation of global hierarchy and the neoliberal market model
- Anglo-American higher education is the 'whitest of the white', as in the colonial period
- Exclusion of non-English and indigenous knowledge from the global knowledge pool
- *BUT* (1) growing multi-polarity with more distributed national power; and (2) global openness and much scope for national, institutional and individual agency



# USE OF SCIENCE BIBLIOMETRICS IN GLOBAL RANKINGS FIRMLY STRATIFIES HIGHER EDUCATION ON THE BASIS OF RESEARCH PERFORMANCE

Rankings	Publication-related indicators as proportion %	Databases
Shanghai Jiaotong Academic Rankings of World Universities (China) 	70.0	Clarivate Analytics' Web of Science
Times Higher Education World University Rankings (UK) 	38.5*	Elsevier's Scopus
QS World University Rankings (UK) 	20.0*	Elsevier's Scopus
Leiden Ranking (Netherlands)	100.0	Clarivate Analytics' Web of Science
Best Global Universities (US)	72.5	Clarivate Analytics' Web of Science



Source: The methodology pages on above rankings' websites, updated on 21-January-2021.

\* Research performance has a further, indirect but important, effect through its impact on the surveys used by THE and QS, and in THE data on postgraduate studies and income – in total research is more than two thirds of the THE index

# UNIVERSITY RANKINGS NORMALISE THE “CAMBRIDGE MODEL” AND ENTRENCH A WORLDWIDE PROCESS OF IMITATION (AND ALSO FOSTER HIGHER INVESTMENT IN SCIENCE)

Shanghai ranking (ARWU) Indicator	Weight	Source for Data
Nobel Prizes and Field Medals won by alumni (sliding scale, more recent prizes score higher)	10%	
Nobel Prizes and Field Medals won by current members of academic staff	20%	
Members of academic staff who are HiCi researchers, in top 250 in world field by citations	20%	Clarivate (SCI, SSCI)
Number of papers published in <i>Nature</i> and <i>Science</i> in previous five years	20%	<i>Nature</i> (UK) and <i>Science</i> (US)
Articles indexed in Science Citation Index (SCI) and Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), previous year	20%	Clarivate (SCI, SSCI)
Per capita indicator: above indicators divided by number of full-time equivalent academic staff	10%	



# GLOBAL STRATIFICATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

PAPERS IN TOP 5% OF THE FIELD BY CITATION RATE, 2016-19 PAPERS - LEIDEN USING WOS

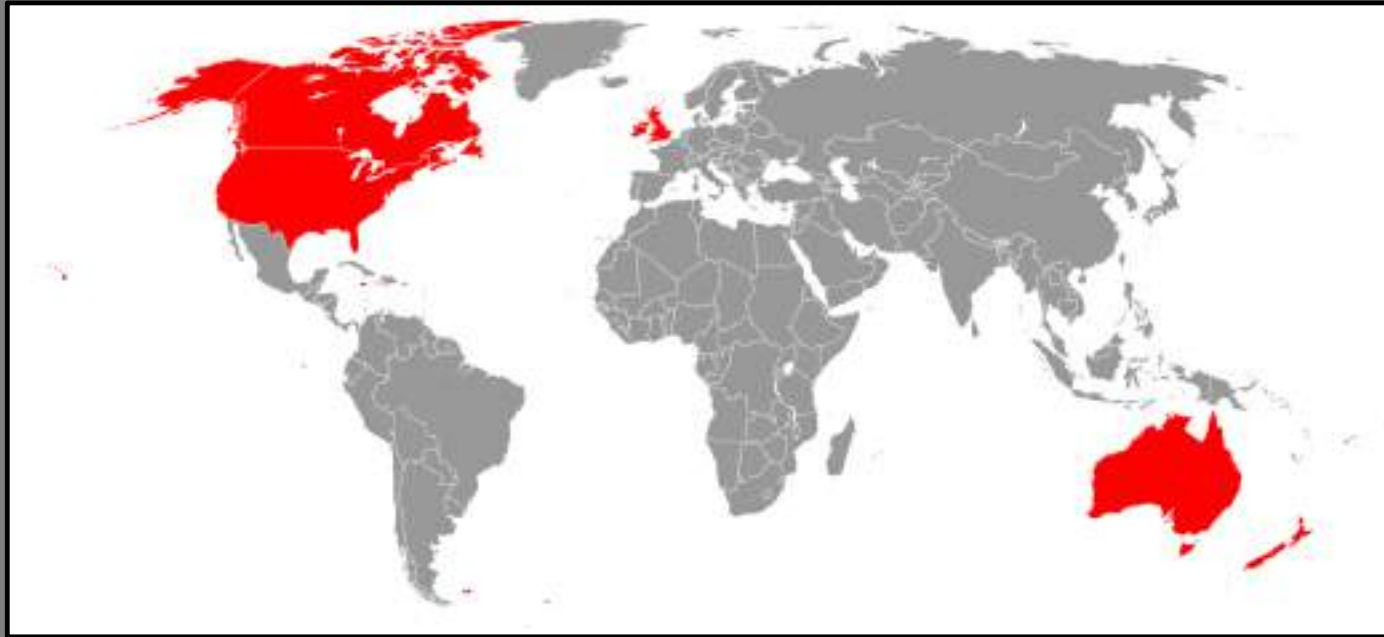
university	country	Top 5% papers	all papers	% of all papers in top 5%
<b>Harvard U</b>	USA	4230	34,234	12.4%
<b>Stanford U</b>	USA	2117	16,454	12.9%
<b>U Oxford</b>	UK	1696	16,088	10.5%
<b>U Toronto</b>	CANADA	1691	23,454	7.2%
<b>MIT</b>	USA	1586	10,507	15.1%
<b>Tsinghua U</b>	CHINA	1574	21,225	7.4%
<b>U Michigan</b>	USA	1490	18,756	7.9%
<b>U Cambridge</b>	UK	1440	14,080	10.2%
<b>Johns Hopkins U</b>	USA	1439	17,337	8.3%
<b>U College London</b>	UK	1430	14,923	9.6%
<b>Zhejiang U</b>	CHINA	1427	25,964	5.5%
<b>U Pennsylvania</b>	USA	1290	13,568	9.5%
<b>U Washington , Seattle</b>	USA	1288	14,807	8.7%
<b>Columbia U</b>	USA	1234	12,558	9.8%
<b>U California, Berkeley</b>	USA	1225	10,006	12.2%



# STITCHING IT UP FOR GLOBAL ENGLISH

ENGLISH IS THE FIRST LANGUAGE (L1) OF 5% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION AND THE L2 OF 10%.

98% OF PAPERS IN WEB OF SCIENCE AND 96% IN SCOPUS ARE IN ENGLISH. THESE PAPERS ARE "UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE"... OTHER KNOWLEDGE IS MERELY "LOCAL", AS UNDER COLONIALISM



Countries where English is the L1 of more than half the population





# “WHITENESS AS FUTURITY”: WHY ARE THE USA AND UK SO ATTRACTIVE TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND FAMILIES?

- The United States and the UK have magnetic, centralising force in global student flows. In these countries total numbers are determined by visa supply not student demand. They could readily double incoming students
- Yet English-language education is available in many countries. The US is wealthy and provides career opportunities but is not as economically superior as it was, and the UK is neither very wealthy nor easy for migrants to enter. Why do they still dominate student flows?
- Shahjahan and Edwards (2021) argue that the globalisation of international education reproduces the racialised cultural hegemony of the US and UK, the ‘whitest of the white’. International students and families across the world invest in ‘whiteness as futurity’. The compelling desire for proxy whiteness, animating non white families, continues the colonial relation



Shahjahan, R.A., Edwards, K.T. (2021) Whiteness as futurity and globalization of higher education. *Higher Education* . <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-021-00702-x>

# BUT IN THE LAST TWO DECADES CAPACITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH HAS DEVELOPED RAPIDLY IN MIDDLE INCOME AND SOME LOWER INCOME COUNTRIES

- The political economy of global higher education is becoming more plural
- Though the culture of global higher education remains (very) neo-imperial
- Economic power matters, and over time the culture of global higher education will become more diverse

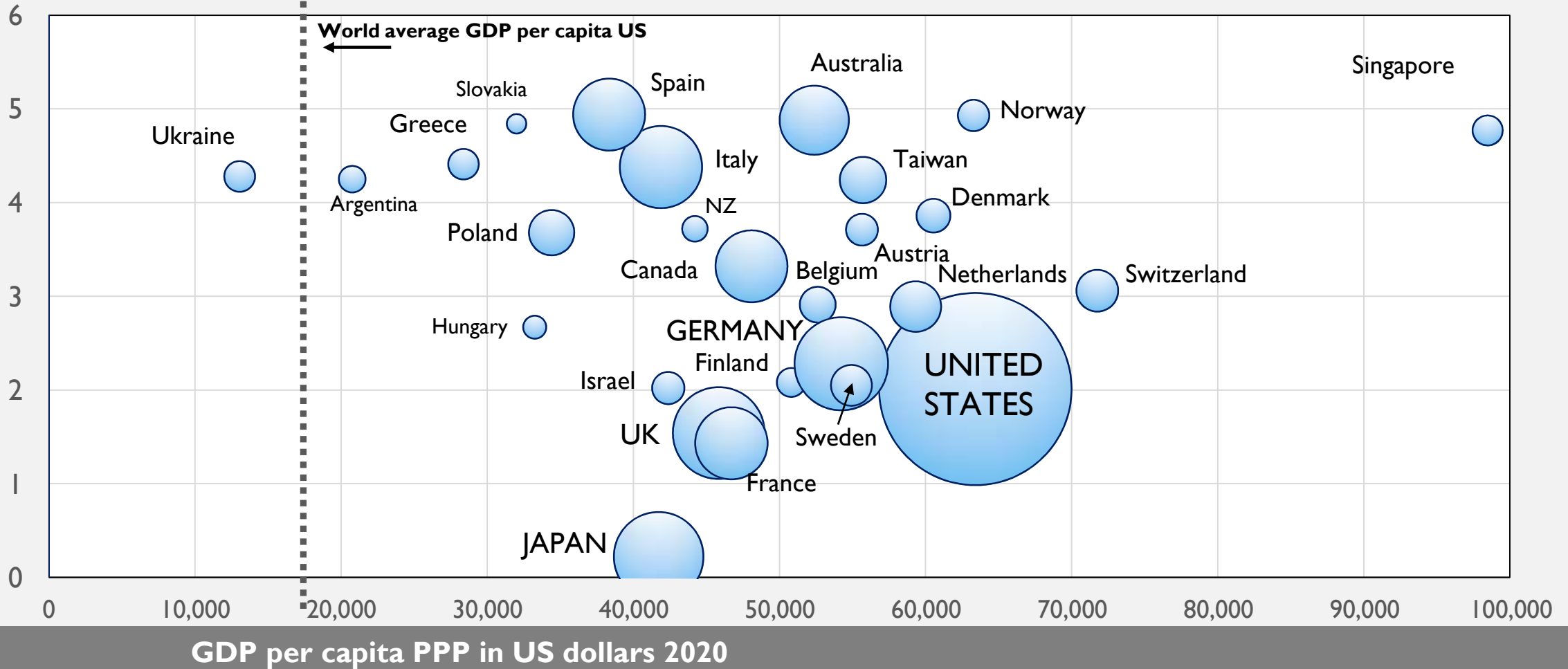


# SLOWER GROWING SCIENCE SYSTEMS IN THE PERIOD 2000-2020

NATIONAL OUTPUT OF SCIENCE PAPERS GREW SLOWER THAN THE WORLD AVERAGE RATE OF 5.15% PER YEAR BETWEEN 2000 AND 2020 - COMPARED TO WORLD AVERAGE GDP PER CAPITA PPP (US \$17,083 IN 2020)

Science systems with 5,000 papers or more in 2020. Scopus data, fractional counting (NSF 2021). Current price GDP, PPP = purchasing power parity (World Bank 2022).

Growth  
p.a.(%)  
science  
papers

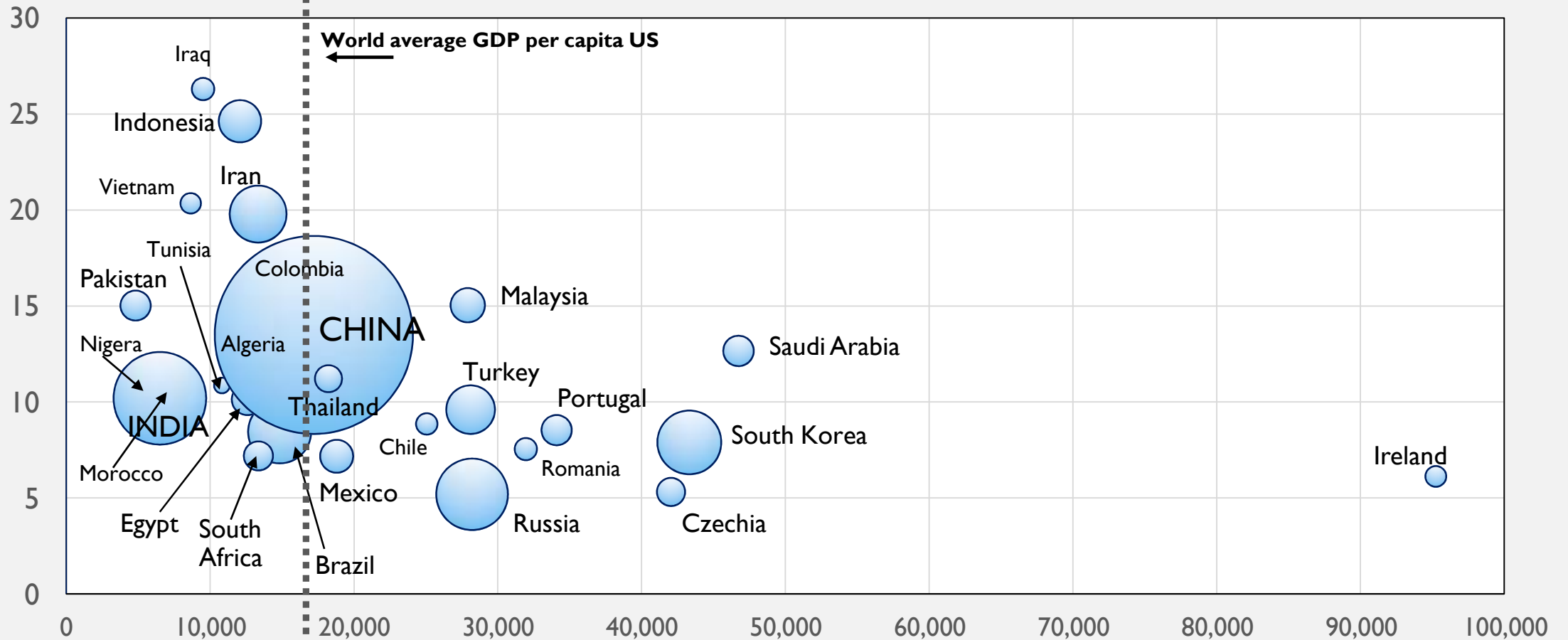


# FAST GROWING SCIENCE SYSTEMS IN THE PERIOD 2000-2020

NATIONAL OUTPUT OF SCIENCE PAPERS GREW FASTER THAN THE WORLD AVERAGE RATE OF 5.15% PER YEAR BETWEEN 2000 AND 2020 - COMPARED TO WORLD AVERAGE GDP PER CAPITA PPP (US \$17,083 IN 2020)

Science systems with 5,000 papers or more in 2020. Scopus data, fractional counting (NSF 2021). Current price GDP, PPP = purchasing power parity (World Bank 2022).

Growth  
p.a.(%)  
science  
papers



GDP per capita PPP in US dollars 2020

# TOP UNIVERSITIES IN STEM RESEARCH, LEIDEN RANKING

(1) PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING, (2) MATHEMATICS & COMPUTING: PAPERS IN TOP 5% BY CITATION RATE: 2016-2019

University	System	Physical sciences & engineering
<b>Tsinghua U</b>	CHINA	909
<b>MIT</b>	USA	683
<b>Zhejiang U</b>	CHINA	622
<b>Nanyang TU</b>	SINGAPORE	566
<b>U Science &amp; T.</b>	CHINA	556
<b>Harbin IT</b>	CHINA	545
<b>Stanford U</b>	USA	541
<b>Shanghai JT U</b>	CHINA	513
<b>Xi'an Jiaotong U</b>	CHINA	512
<b>Huazhong U S&amp;T</b>	CHINA	502
<b>Harvard U</b>	USA	487
<b>National U</b>	SINGAPORE	455
<b>U Calif., Berkeley</b>	USA	449
<b>Peking U</b>	CHINA	444

University	System	Maths & computing
<b>Tsinghua U</b>	CHINA	292
<b>U Electronic S&amp;T</b>	CHINA	275
<b>Harbin IT</b>	CHINA	269
<b>Huazhong U S&amp;T</b>	CHINA	231
<b>Xidian U</b>	CHINA	221
<b>Beihang U</b>	CHINA	215
<b>MIT</b>	USA	205
<b>Zhejiang U</b>	CHINA	194
<b>Southeastern U</b>	CHINA	193
<b>Nanyang TU</b>	SINGAPORE	187
<b>Shanghai JT U</b>	CHINA	178
<b>Northwestern P. U</b>	CHINA	164
<b>Wuhan U</b>	CHINA	161
<b>Beijing IT</b>	CHINA	159

# GROWING IMPACT OF POPULISM AND GEO-POLITICS

- US-China decoupling in science
- ‘Securitisation’ in science takes priority over collaboration, university autonomy, academic freedom
- Nativist politics: pushback against ‘globalism’ and in some countries, against international students, artificially fostered culture wars in universities
- Brexit takes UK out of Erasmus and Horizon research, weakens academic mobility
- Many Ukraine universities decimated
- Russia closes up internally and breaks with international university networks

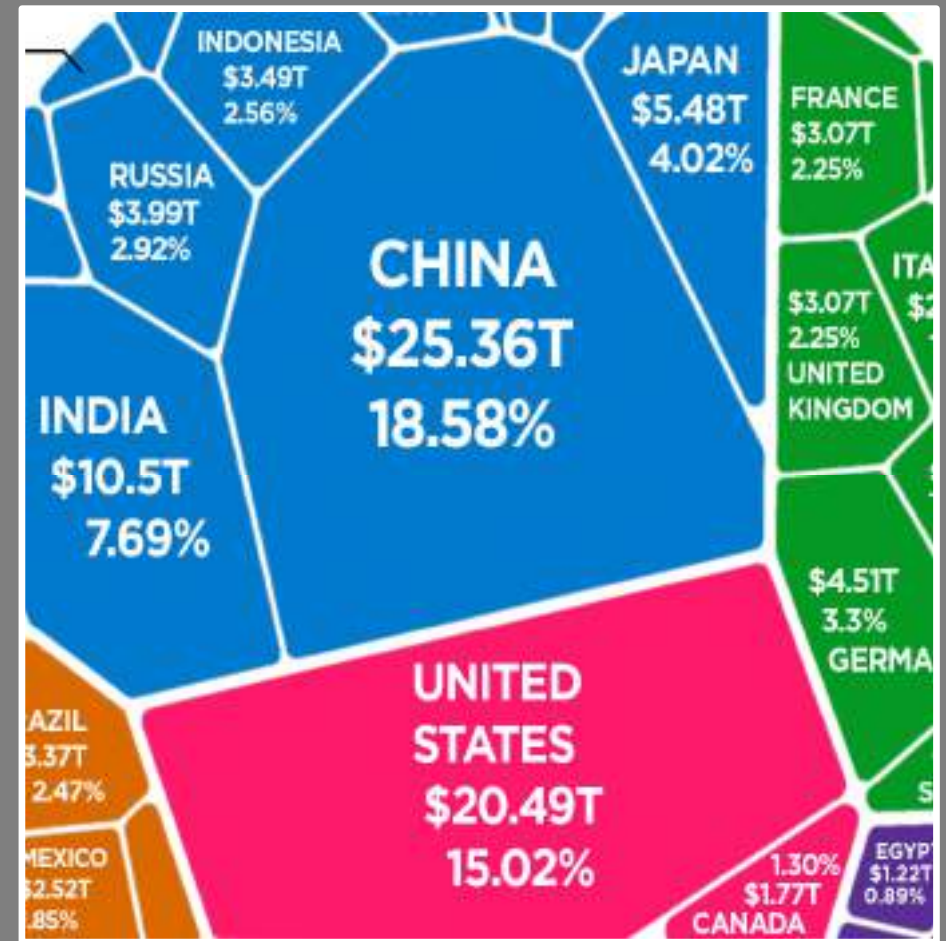
‘Scientific discovery, which is fundamentally borderless, is being politically bordered. Geopolitical tensions between the United States and China have spilled over into academic science, creating challenges for many scientists’ ability to fully engage in research and innovation’ – Jenny Lee and Xiaojie Li, *Racial profiling among scientists of Chinese descent*, 2022



# GLOBAL CONVERGENCE AND MULTI-POLARITY

- ‘The new swing of the pendulum ... is going to lead to a world where no one will be dominant... What is different about our time is that globalization forces us to live all jumbled together and yet we have very different visions of what this common world should look like. [Political scientist] Charles Kupchan writes: “The next world will hardly be the first one in which the different great powers operate according to different conceptions of order. But, due to the onset of global interdependence, it will be the first time that such a diverse set of orders intensely and continuously interact with each other.”

- Bruno Macaes, *The Rise of Eurasia*, Penguin, 2018, p. 2.



## 5. FINAL THOUGHTS





# CONFLICTING WAYS OF EXPLAINING “THE GLOBAL” IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Teleological** (explaining phenomena in terms of the purpose they are said to serve, rather than what they are and what causes them to be). There are two narratives

- the global in higher education is *necessarily* neo-imperial and racist, *OR*
- the global is essentially flat, open and democratising, as in the ideal network

**Critical realist** (explaining phenomena in terms of what they are)

- global higher education is neither intrinsically imperial nor intrinsically democratic. It includes both practices. It is able to focus on the global common good, but there are no guarantees

The answer to the question ‘Is it neo-imperialism run amok or the hope of the world?’ is – of course - ‘both’.

In many respects global higher education and knowledge are restricted by neo-liberal and neo-imperial models and practices, e.g. the closed character of global science, ordering by global ranking, the commercialisation of study abroad in some countries, the English language shut-out, its cooperation with fossil fuels.

Nevertheless, potentials of global higher education are always open and there is much scope for agency

# EITHER WAY THE POSSIBILITIES ARE OPEN – AND GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE WILL CHANGE GREATLY

In 1990 no-one foresaw the Internet, Pax Americana, the rise of China, the global science system, global rankings, or the pandemic

“All things are in flux, like a river . . .  
Everything flows”

“we cannot foresee the future – the known way is a dead end”

~ Heraclitus of Ephesus (544-484 BCE)



WHAT WILL BE THE FUTURE  
RELATION BETWEEN NATIONAL AND  
GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION—  
AND WHAT WILL GLOBAL HIGHER  
EDUCATION DO?

How much will agents in higher education and research continue the exploitation of the world?  
How much will they care for the world as a whole?

“The worldview of imperialism views the world as an object to be conquered, dominated and exploited – never recognising the world as a political agency in its own right”

No-one takes responsibility for it. It is a “non-world ... Anyone can abuse and plunder its resources... It is just a contested and damaged living space”

~ Zhao Tingyang, 2021, *All under heaven: The tianxia system for a possible world order*. University of California Press.

