

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

SANTIAGO, 16 NOVEMBER 2023

Simon Marginson, University of Oxford



HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

SANTIAGO, 16 NOVEMBER 2023

Simon Marginson, University of Oxford

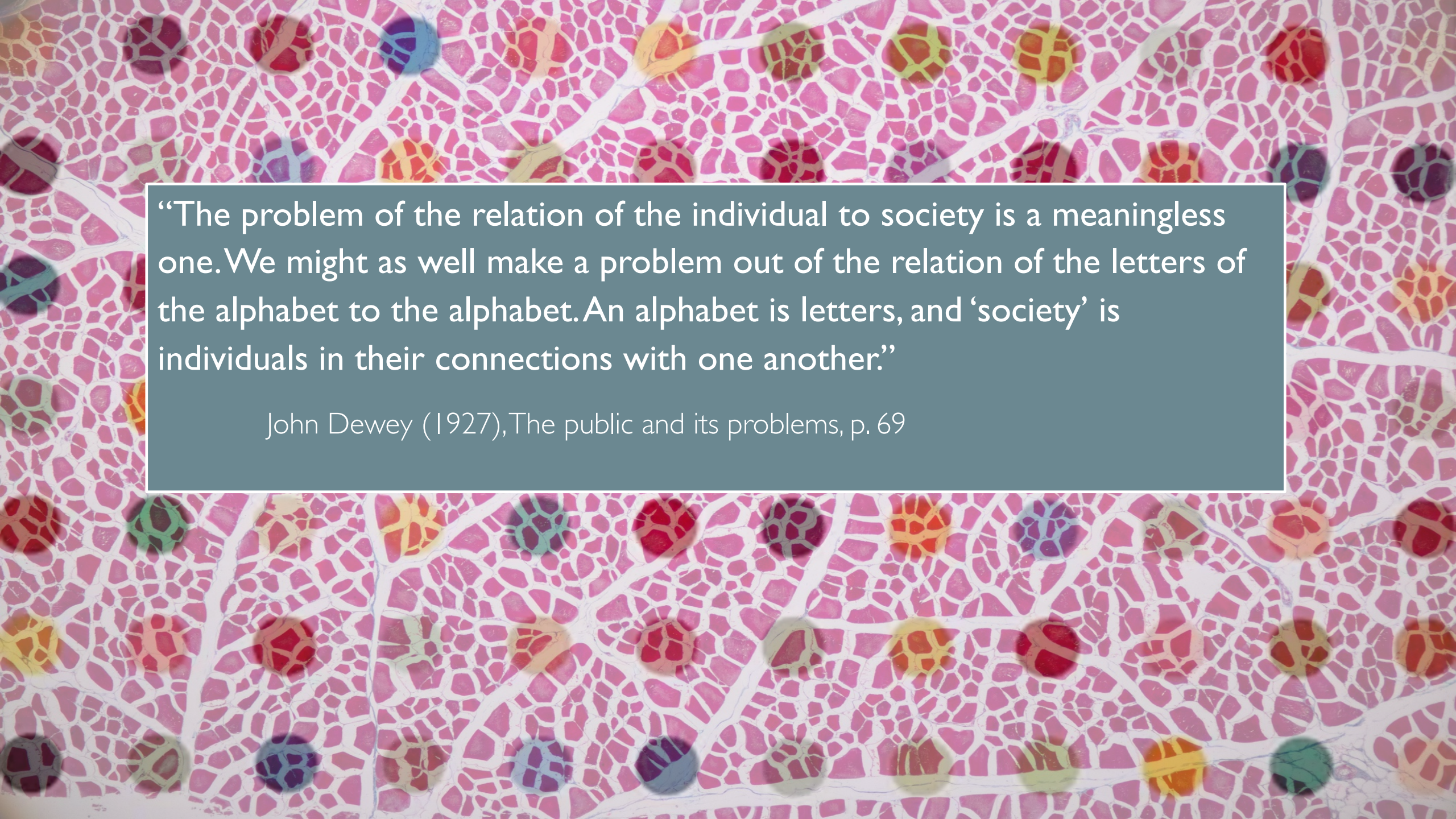
- Individual and social
- Differing kinds of 'public' and public good in higher education
- Neoliberal economics radically reduces our understanding and practices of 'public'
- Rebuilding public good in higher education, in a contested space

WHAT IS SOCIETY?
¿QUÉ ES LA SOCIEDAD?









“The problem of the relation of the individual to society is a meaningless one. We might as well make a problem out of the relation of the letters of the alphabet to the alphabet. An alphabet is letters, and ‘society’ is individuals in their connections with one another.”

John Dewey (1927), *The public and its problems*, p. 69

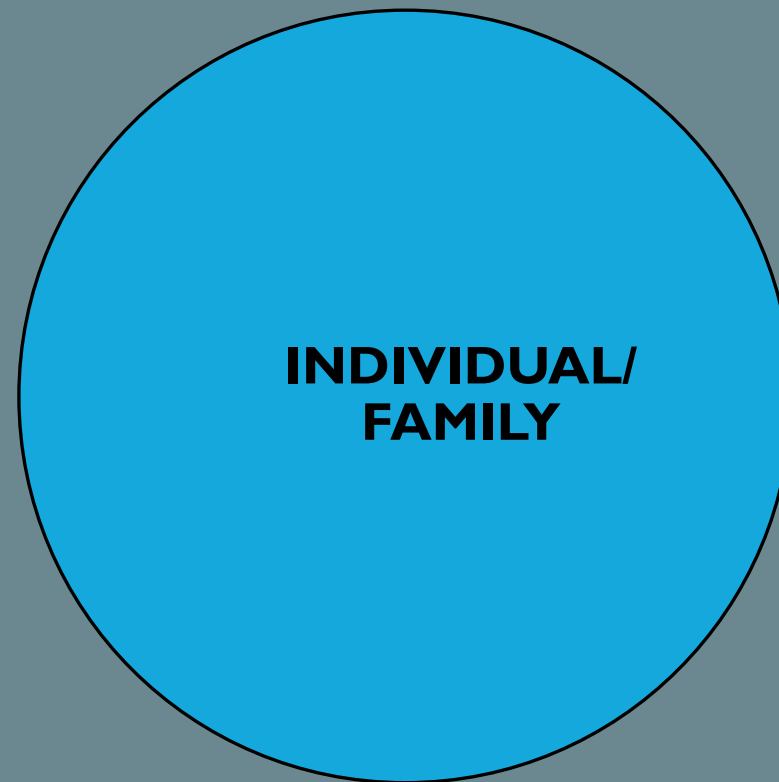
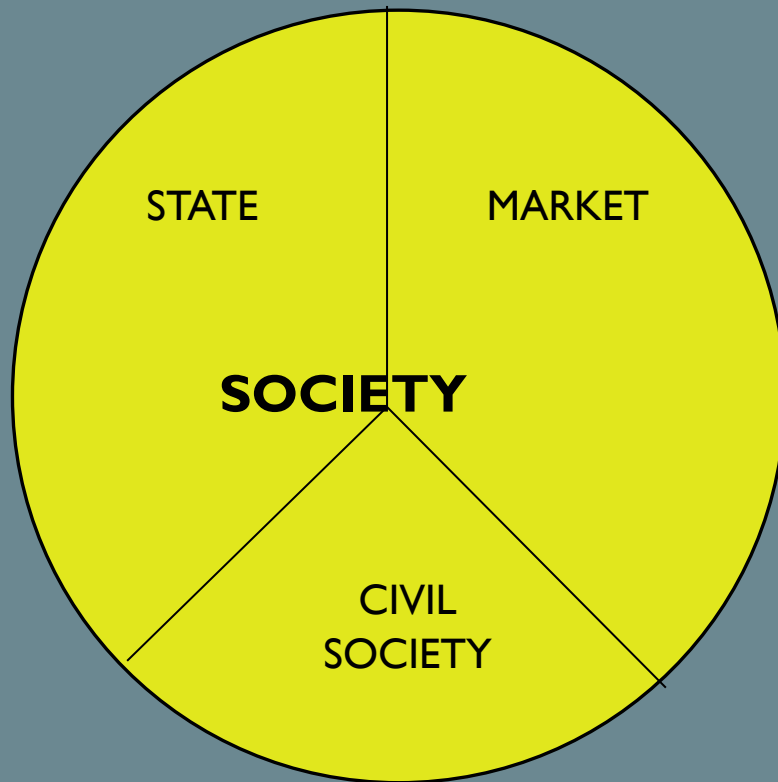
DOMINANT WESTERN NOTIONS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, STATE, MARKET AND CIVIL SOCIETY



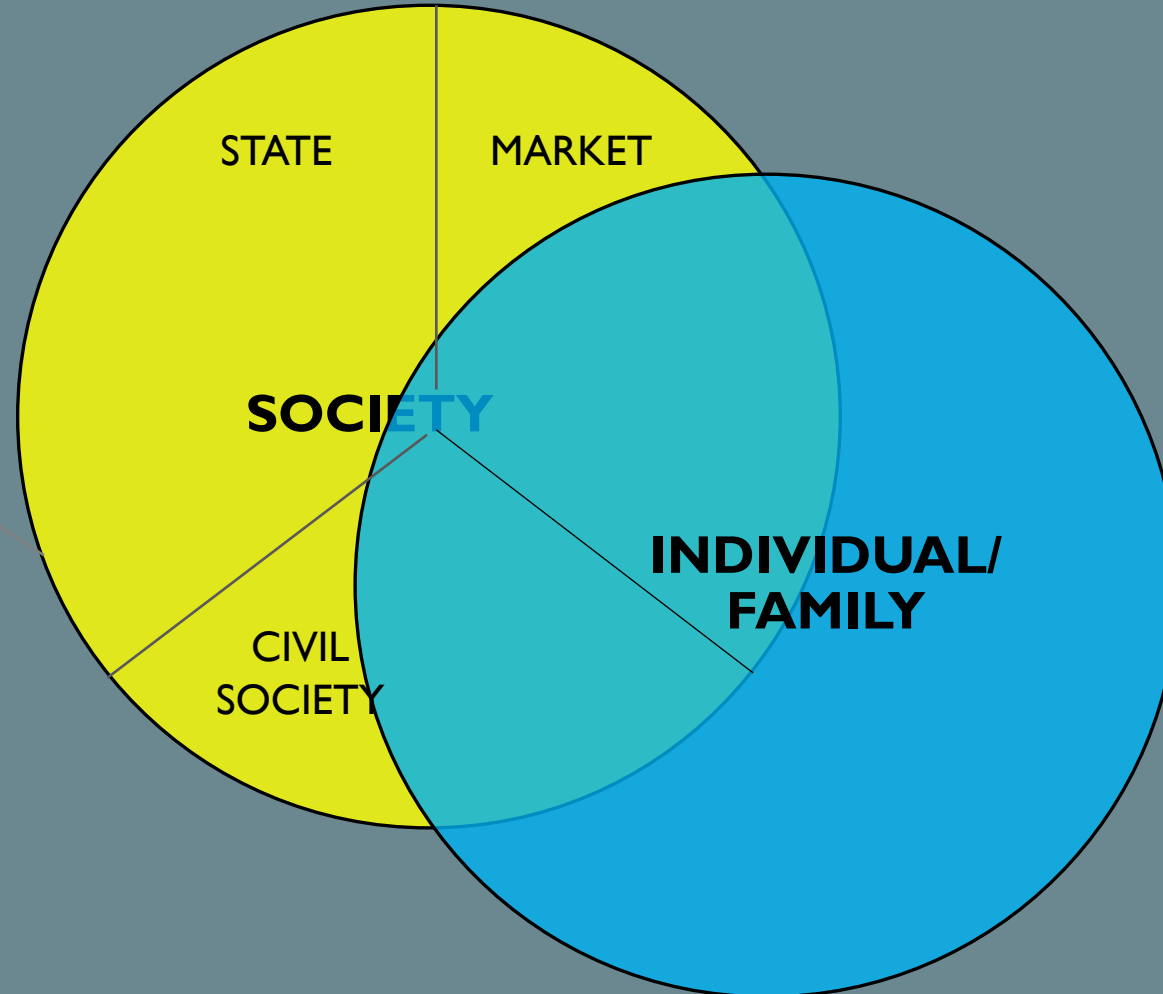
SOCIETY

**INDIVIDUAL/
FAMILY**

DOMINANT WESTERN NOTIONS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, STATE, MARKET AND CIVIL SOCIETY



DOMINANT WESTERN NOTIONS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, STATE, MARKET AND CIVIL SOCIETY



IN THE NORDIC MODEL STATE AND SOCIETY ARE
EQUIVALENT. THE STATE GUARANTEES EQUALITY,
SOLIDARITY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

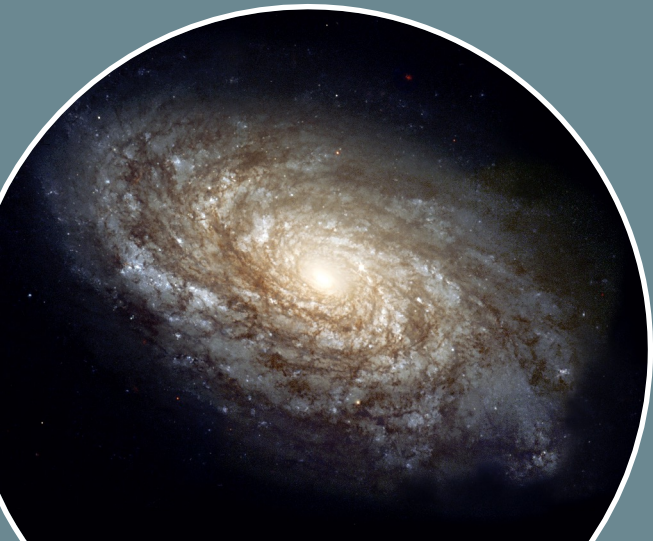
SOCIETY AND STATE

INCLUDES INDIVIDUALS, AND
THEIR SOCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

WESTERN LIBERAL IDEAS OF 'PUBLIC' AND 'PRIVATE'



C. Analytic/economic:
public private dualism
(public and private
exclude each other)



**A. Normative-universal
'public good':**
public contains private



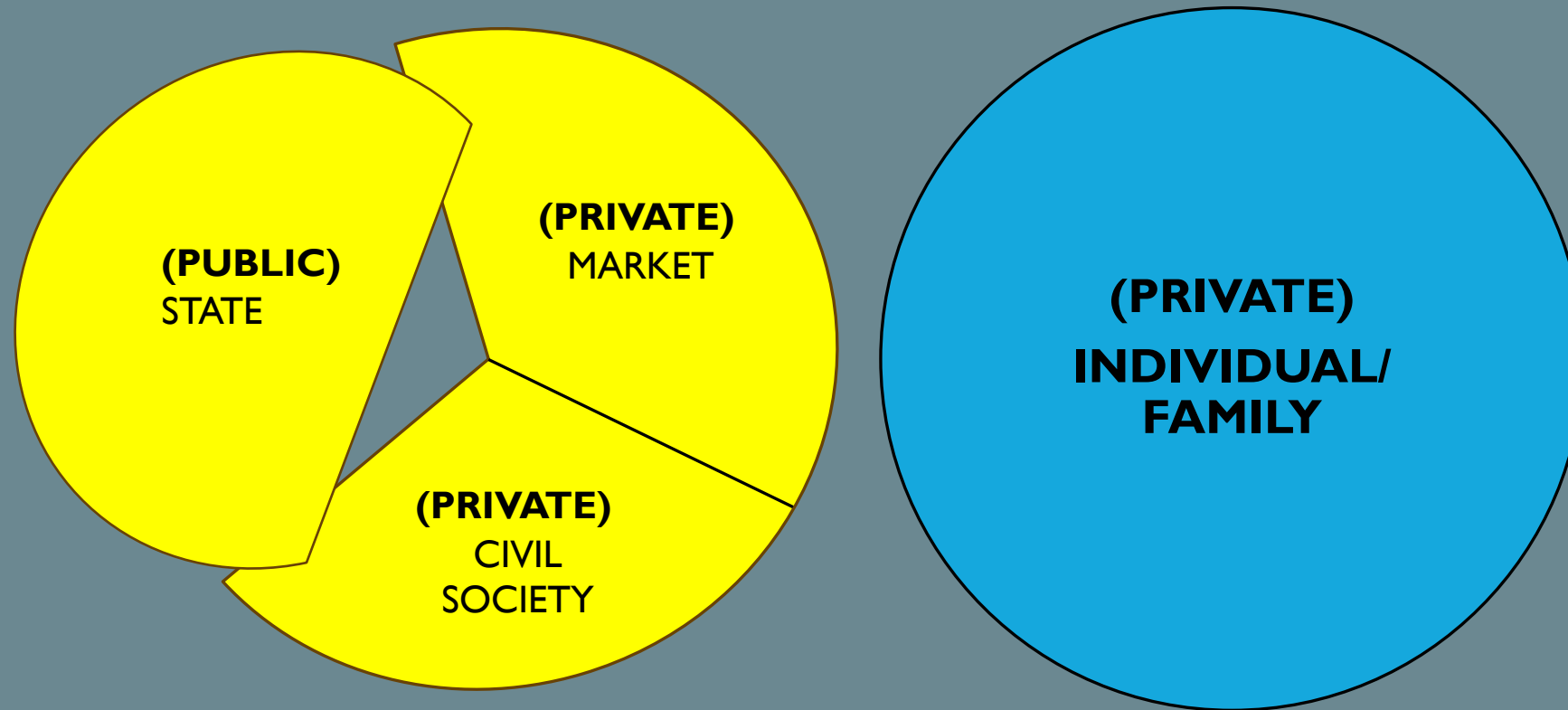
**B. Communicative-
inclusive 'public':**
public includes and links
to all the private units

THE PRIVATE REALMS CONTAINED AND NUTURED IN THE
BROAD PUBLIC REALM (AGAIN, THE NORDIC MODEL)

**SOCIETY AND STATE
(PUBLIC)**

INCLUDES (PRIVATE)
INDIVIDUALS, MARKET AND
CIVIL SOCIETY

ZERO-SUM RELATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE (AS IN NEOLIBERAL ECONOMICS)



THE UNIVERSAL PUBLIC GOOD

pono

THE SOCIALLY-INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIVE PUBLIC



THE UNIVERSITY AS A CRITICAL PUBLIC SPHERE



PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE GOOD (THE ZERO-SUM RELATION)



Political dual:

Public = state/government
(as in 'public sector')

Private = spheres of home, family,
economic market, corporate sector

Economic dual:

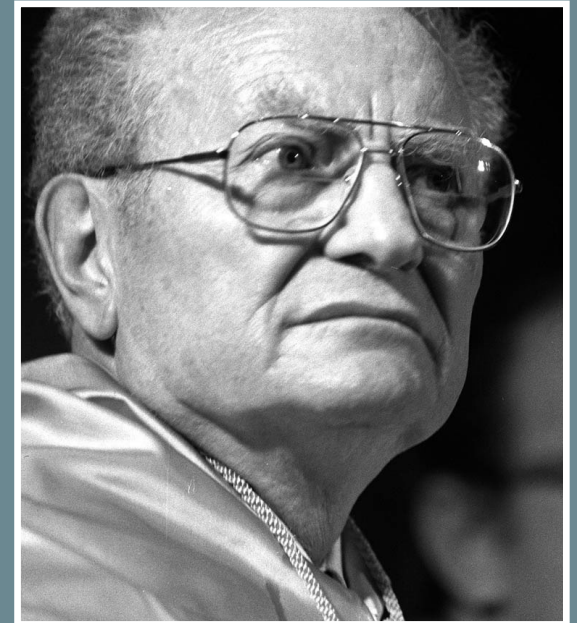
Public goods = non-excludable or
non-rivalrous goods, can't be
produced profitably in market

Private goods = everything else

PUBLIC/PRIVATE DUAL: THE ECONOMIC VERSION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GOODS (SAMUELSON 1954)

- Public goods are non-rivalrous and/or non excludable. They are subject to market failure and must be financed by governments or philanthropy
- Goods are *non-rivalrous* when consumed by any number of people without being depleted, for example knowledge of a mathematical theorem, which sustains its use value everywhere, indefinitely, on the basis of free access.
- Goods are *non-excludable* when benefits cannot be confined to individuals, e.g. clean air regulation, national defence, basic research
- Private goods are neither non-rivalrous nor non-excludable, and can be produced and sold in economic markets as individualised commodities

(Common-pool goods, are rivalrous but non-excludable, such as a fishing zone. Club goods are excludable but non-rivalrous until congestion occurs. Merit goods are rivalrous and excludable, but subsidised by government because otherwise the goods will under-consumed, e.g. because the private benefits are diffuse and long term)



Paul Samuelson (1954.) The pure theory of public expenditure. *Review of Economics and Statistics* 36 (4), pp. 387–9

**PUBLIC GOOD CAN BE A CONTAINER OF PRIVATE
GOOD. THEY DO NOT HAVE TO BE ZERO-SUM**

“A tenable conception of the public sphere would countenance not the exclusion, but the inclusion, of interests and issues labelled as ‘private’”.

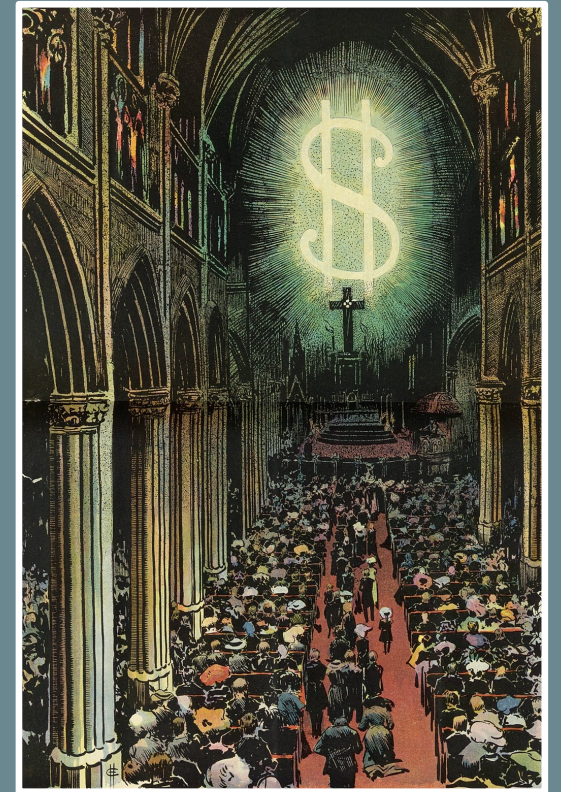
Nancy Fraser (1990), Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text*, 25/26, pp. 56-80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/466240>

MILTON FRIEDMAN AND JAMES BUCHANAN



SAMUELSON'S FORMULA LEADS TO MARKETISATION WHILE MINIMISING THE COSTS TO GOVERNMENT

- The economic public/private dual is a distinction between non-market and market production. It maximises the scope for capitalist economy while sustaining a limited liberal state with residual functions. In this market-ideal world, markets produce everything except a small group of outcomes which cannot be produced for profit on a market basis.
- This is a neo-liberal mechanism for limiting public spending. In education and health **government chooses** whether to provide the service as a universally accessible public good (e.g. primary schooling in many countries) or private good (e.g. higher education in England). Samuelson's economics allows economic policy makers to define teaching/learning as a private good where the benefits are individualised and the student/graduate pays the cost. The claimed private/public split of outcomes is mapped onto a private/public split of costs



MARKETISATION CHANGES EDUCATIONAL BEHAVIOURS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Cyndi Lauper



“Money changes everything
Money, money changes everything
We think we know what we're doin'
We don't pull the strings
It's all in the past now
Money changes everything

”They say we'll be your friends
We'll stick with you till the end
Ah! but everybody's only looking
out for themselves
And you say well who can you trust
I tell you it's, just, nobody else”



SOCIETIES, POLITICAL SYSTEMS, GOVERNMENTS
HAVE A POLICY CHOICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

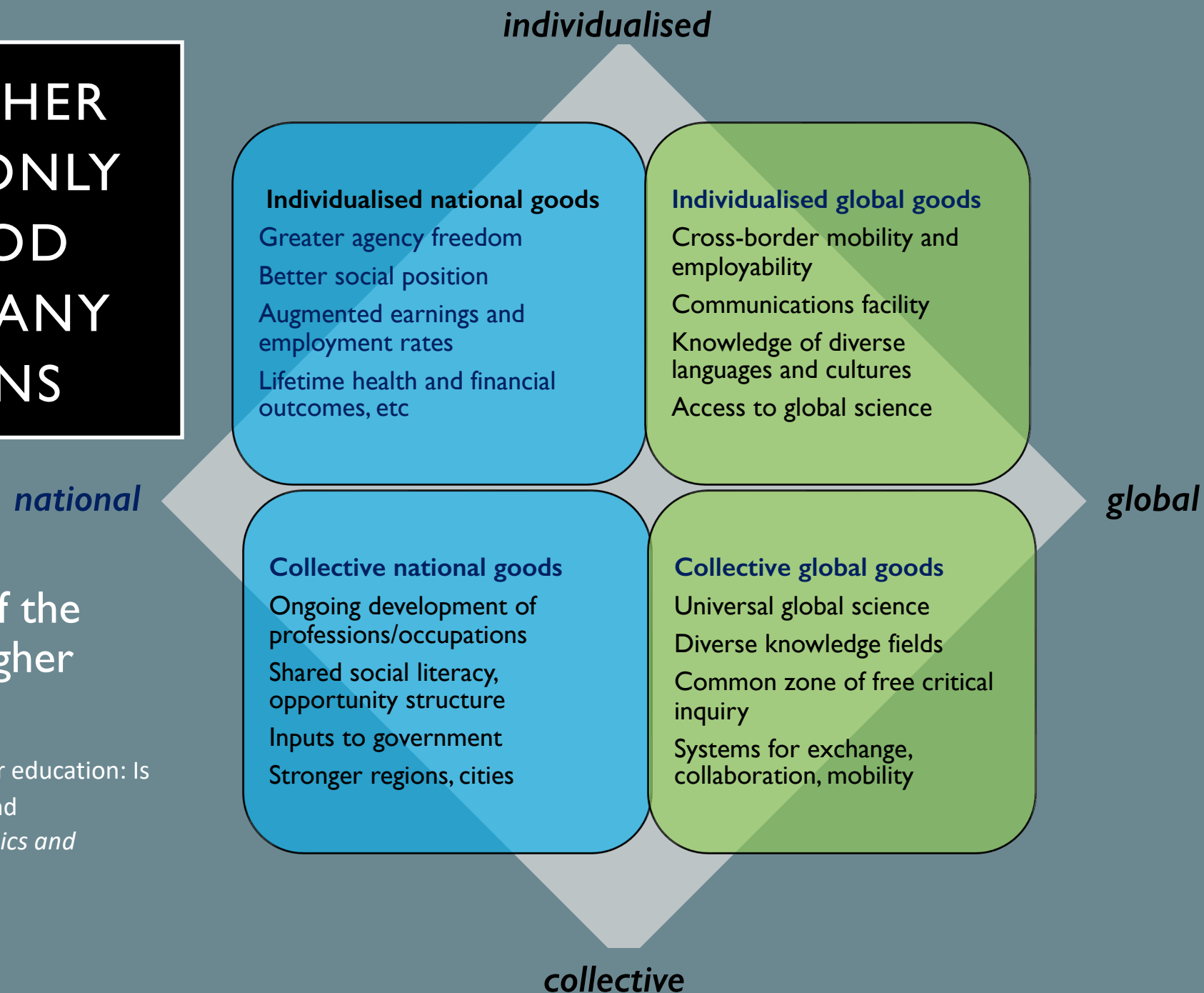


**MODELLING HIGHER
EDUCATION AS ONLY
A PRIVATE GOOD
NEGLECTS ITS MANY
CONTRIBUTIONS**

For an economic account of the multiple contributions of higher education to society see –

McMahon, W. (2018). The total return to higher education: Is there underinvestment for economic growth and development? *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance*, 70, pp. 90-111.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.qref.2018.05.005>

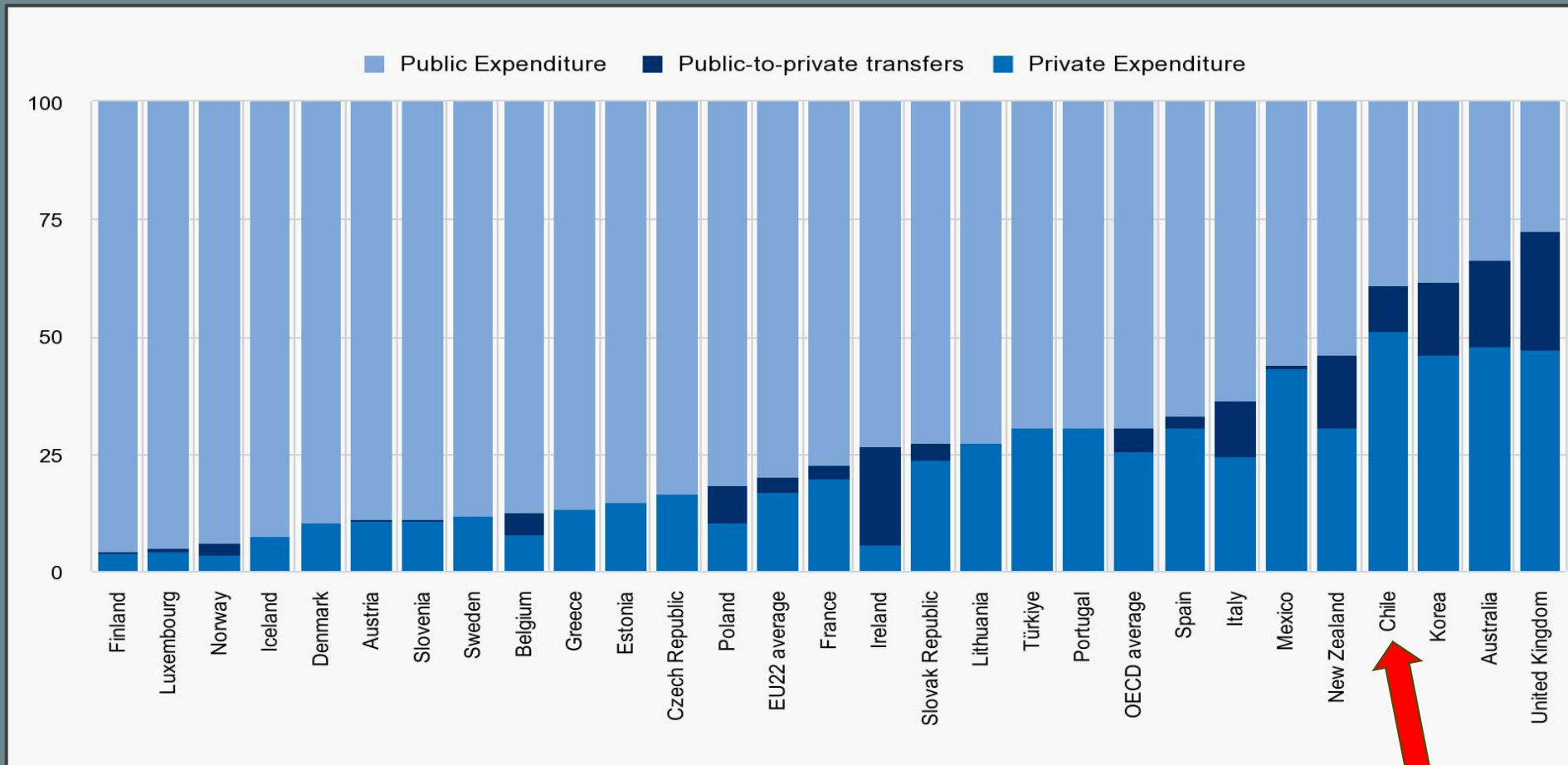


THE MORAL PROBLEM: CORRUPTION OF THE MISSION



PUBLIC/PRIVATE SPLIT OF TERTIARY FUNDING, OECD, 2019

CHILE WAS THE FOURTH MOST PRIVATISED SYSTEM IN FUNDING TERMS



Source: OECD, *Education at a glance 2022*, p. 266

CONCLUSIONES

- Todas las naciones tienen una opción política sobre el bien público en la educación superior.
- La elección de una nación está determinada por la cultura política, especialmente las relaciones entre la sociedad y el Estado.
- Para ampliar el bien público en la educación superior, centrarse en el público universal y en el público inclusivo y comunicativo, y rechazar el dualismo público/privado.
- Para alejarse decisivamente del neoliberalismo es esencial construir un amplio consenso público en la educación superior.
- Esto requiere un Estado comprometido con la justicia social y la justicia climática-naturaleza. Estas son las cuestiones del bien público en nuestro mundo.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

SANTIAGO, 16 NOVEMBER 2023

¡Gracias por escuchar!

