

Peking University Graduate School of Education
Lecture 2 on 12 June 2019

Higher education and common good(s)

Simon Marginson

Department of Education, University of Oxford
ESRC/HEFCE Centre for Global Higher Education
Higher School of Economics, Moscow

The problem of 'public' or 'social' goods in higher education

We can think we can measure private goods associated with higher education, such as augmented earnings ...

(though the extent to which they are really caused by the higher education? that's another story ...)

... but public good, or public goods, or 'social goods', are more elusive, especially goods collectively consumed.

These public goods tend to be under-recognised, and hence are probably under-funded and under-provided

NON-INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS ARE HARD TO DEFINE AND MEASURE AND ARE NEGLECTED BY POLICY

“Assessing this wider value is very difficult”

“Value to society

“We have used the available data to consider the economic value for students and the economy of different higher educational routes, for different people. However, we are clear that successful outcomes for both students and society are about more than pay. Higher levels of education are associated with wider participation in politics and civic affairs, and better physical and mental health. We also understand the social value of some lower-earning professions such as nursing and social care, and the cultural value of studying the Arts and Humanities. The earnings data enable us to make economically defined value calculations, not value judgements. Assessing this wider value is very difficult but government should continue to work to ensure that wider considerations are taken into account in its policy and funding decisions.”

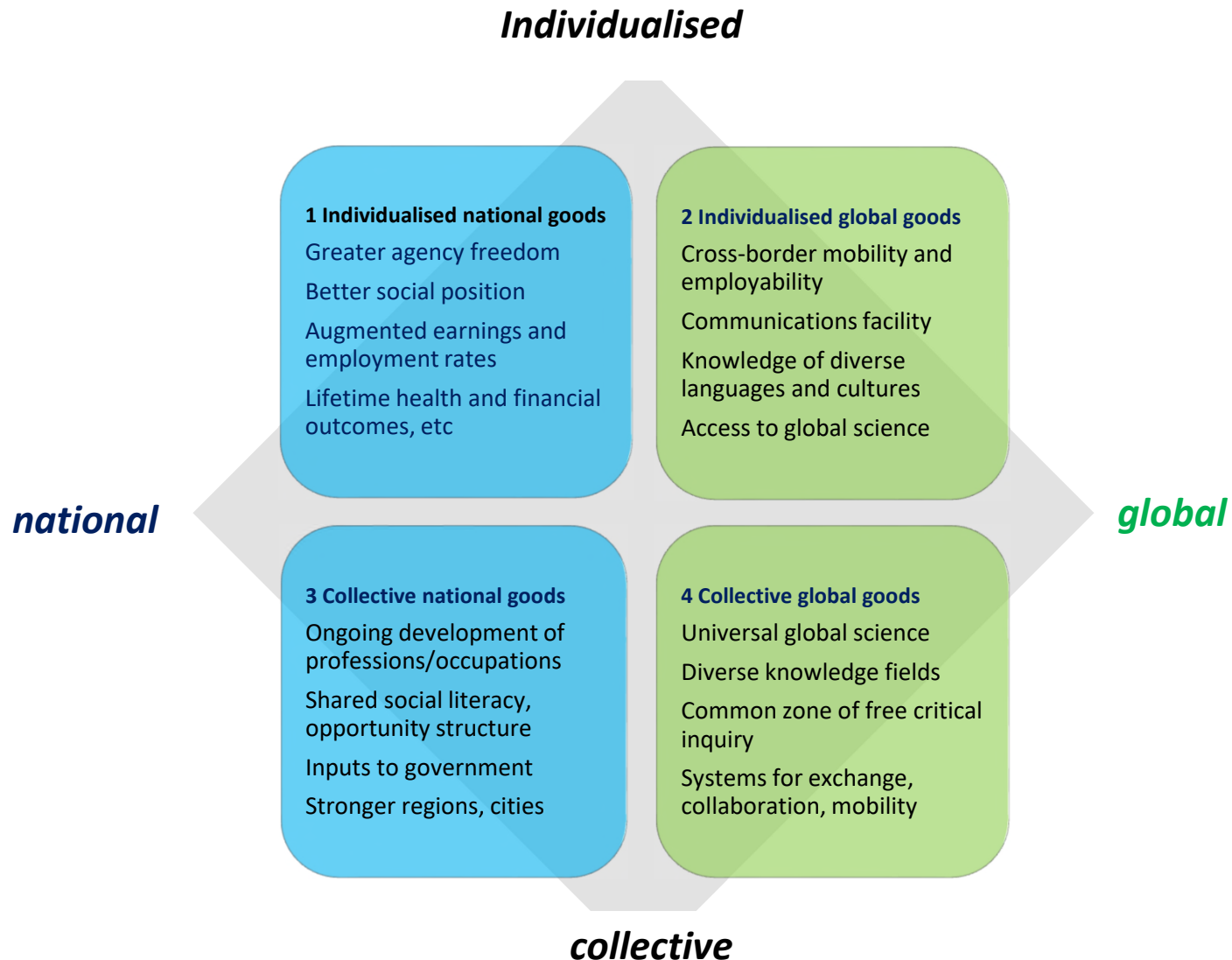
- Independent panel report to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding (Augur report), UK, 30 May 2019, p. 87

Higher education and common good(s):

coverage of the lecture

- Contributions of higher education – individual and collective
- Higher education as a public sphere
- Higher education as public good(s)
 - Economic definition
 - Political definition
 - Combining the two definitions
- Higher education as common good(s)
- Global public and common good(s) in higher education
- Concepts of ‘public’ and ‘common’ in China

Mapping the contributions of higher education: Individualised and collective



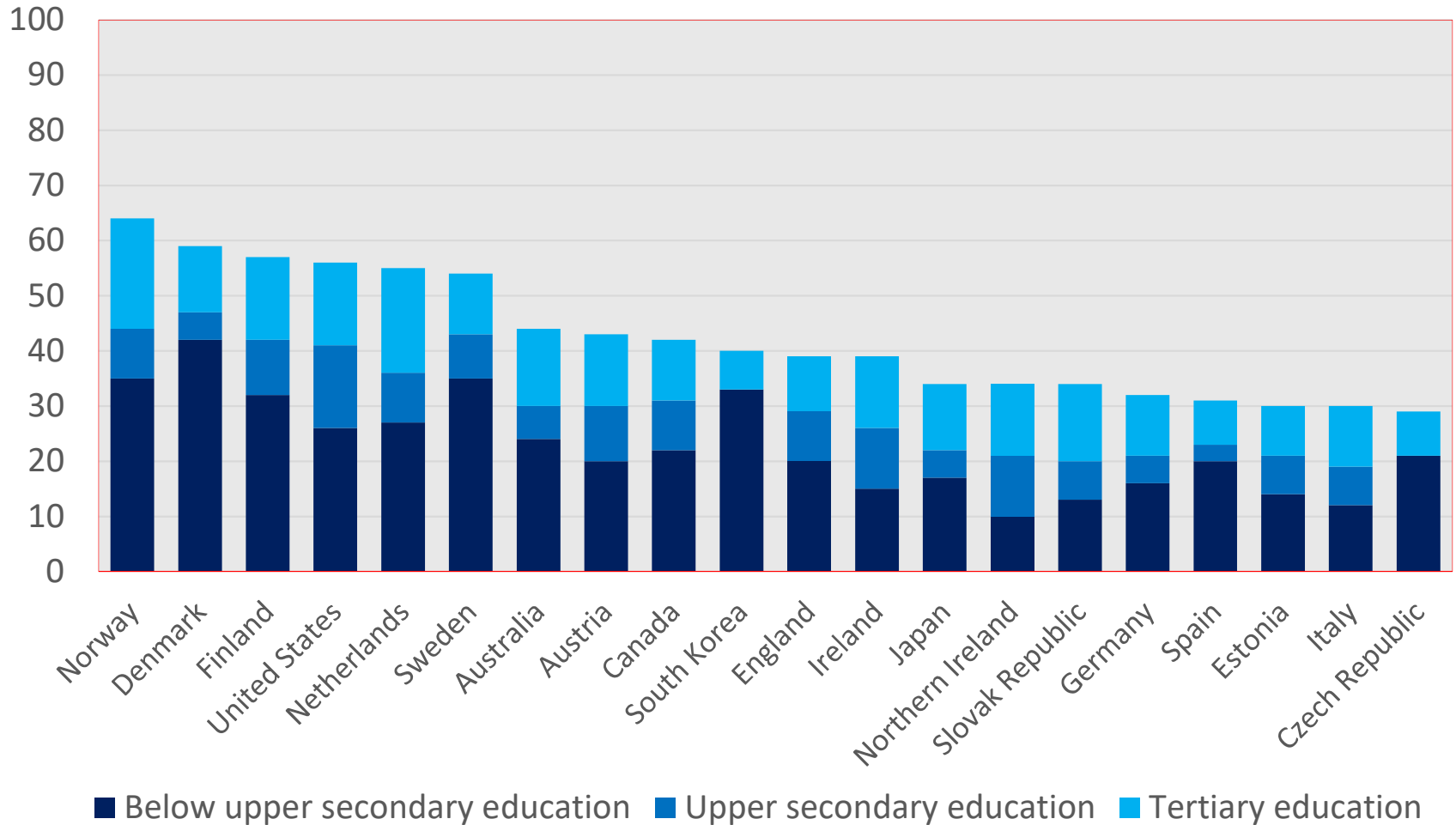
1. Individualised national-local goods

goods of self-formation, many affecting social relations
[bold = measurable]

- Greater agency freedom, the capacity for confident autonomous action
- Capability in dealing with 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)



2. Individualised global goods

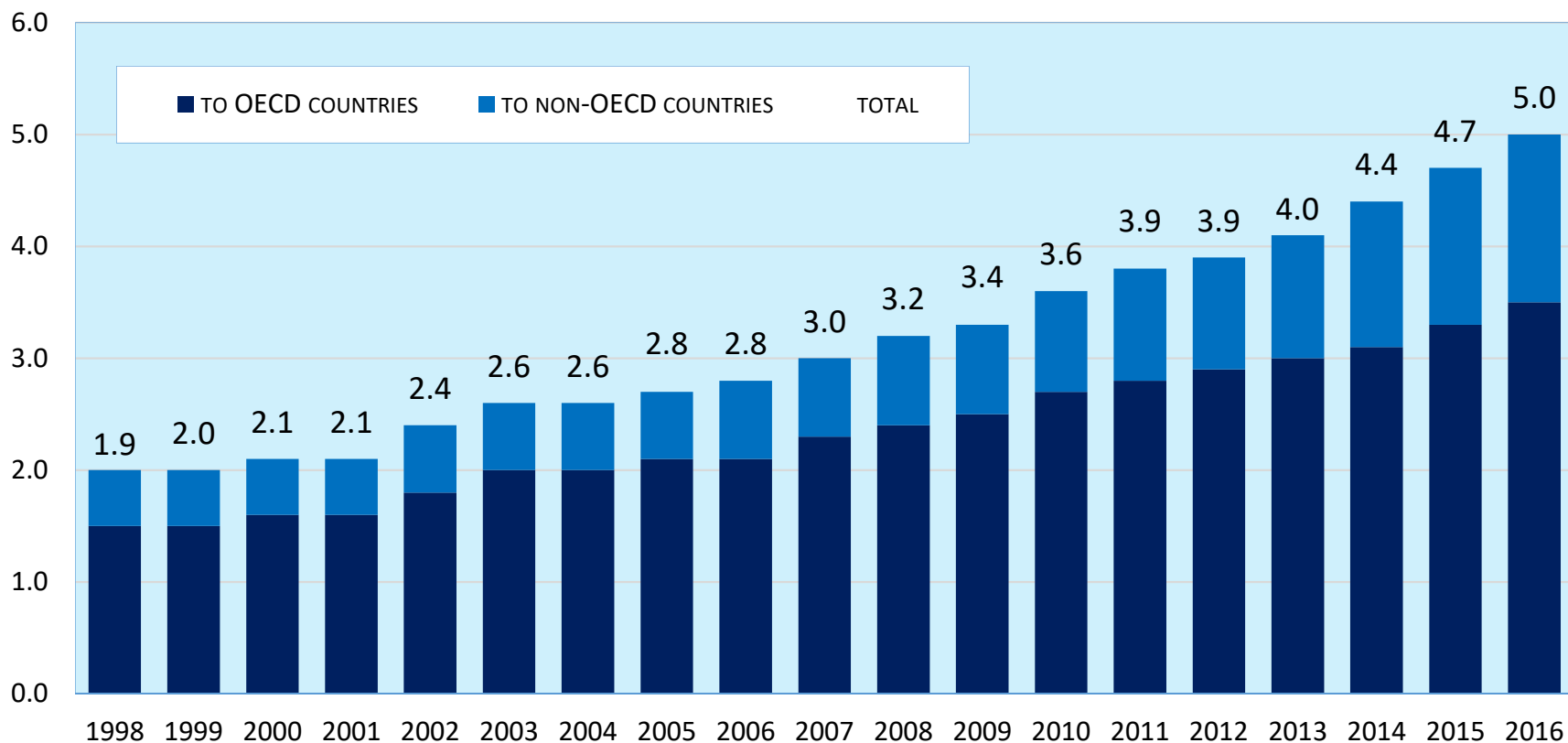
Goods of self-formation in global society (global systems and cross-border mobility)

- 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)

Total international/ foreign students in tertiary education, 1998-2016 (millions)

OECD data 2018



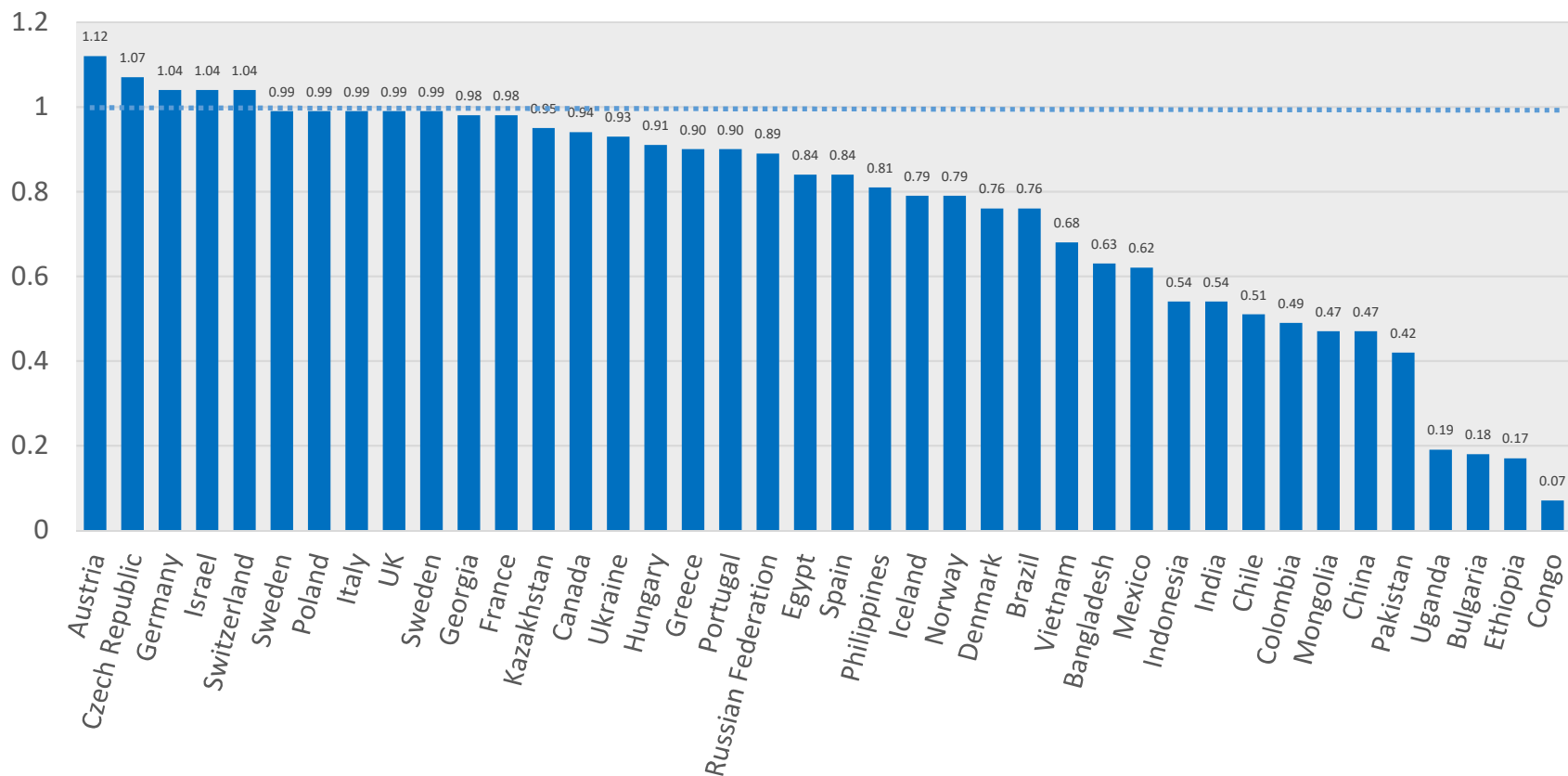
3. Collective national-local goods

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 that constitutes common social benefits (e.g. in health care, education)
- **Shared social literacy**
- **Nationally-specific knowledges (e.g. in professional fields such as law)**
- ***Higher education as an opportunity structure that delivers [?] socially just outcomes***
- ***Academic inputs to government policy and regulation***
- ***Economic, social and cultural building of localities, cities, regions [but unequalising]***

Rural disadvantage in school completion

Ratio of rural end-school completion rate to urban completion rate
2009-2014, selected countries. UNESCO data



■ ratio of rural school completion rate to urban completion rate

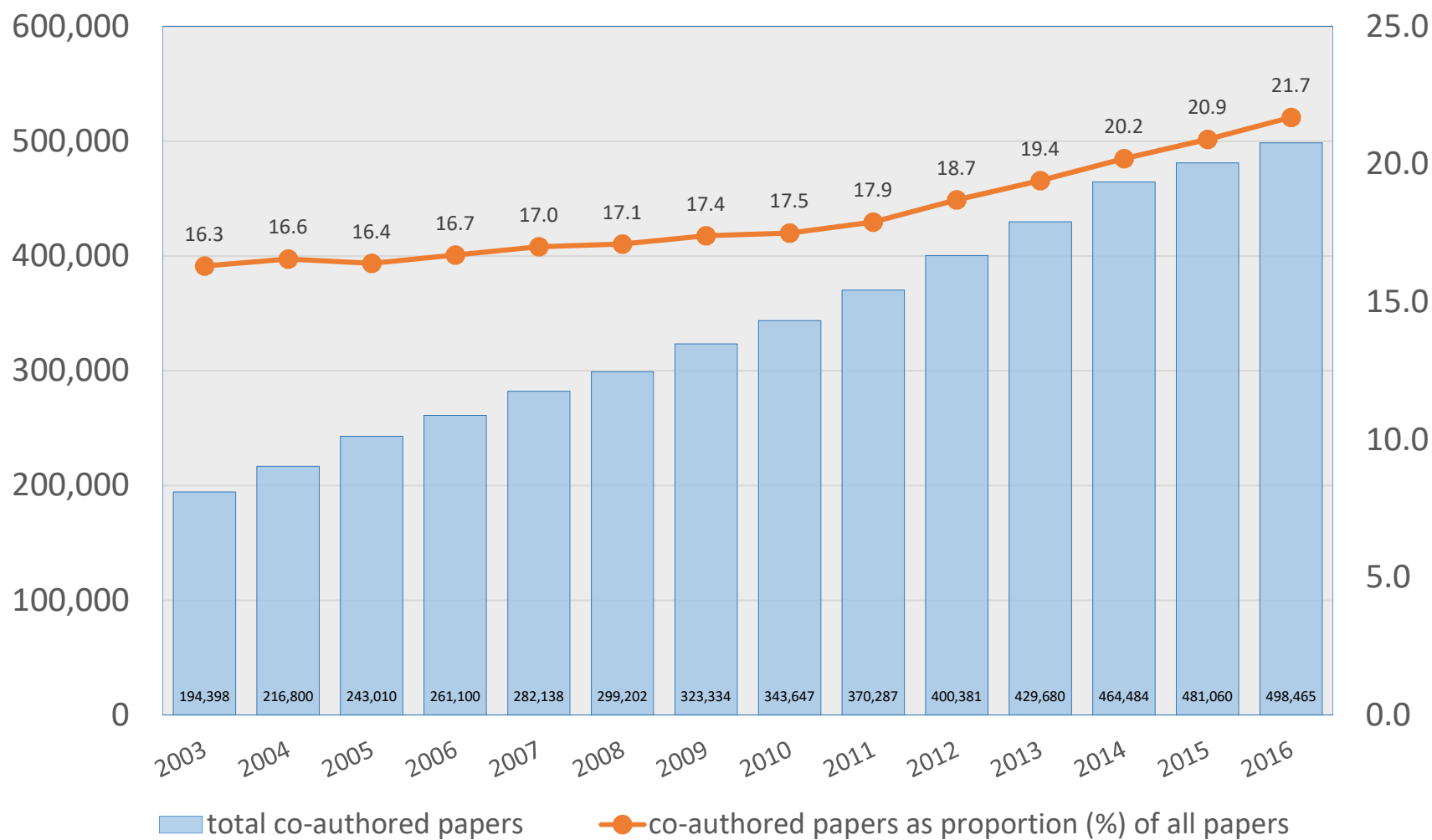
4. Collective global goods

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, with 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

Growth in internationally co-authored science papers, all countries: 2003-2016



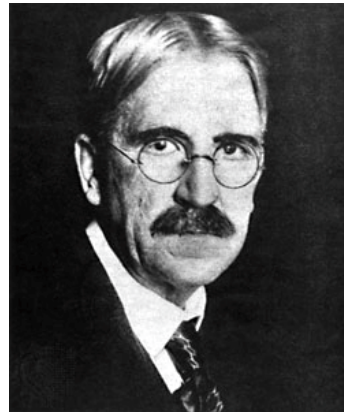
Higher education as a 'public sphere'

- Jurgen Habermas's 'public sphere' in 17th century London—the network of semi-independent sites on the edge of the state (salons, coffee houses, newspapers etc) incubating criticisms and ideas for policy and state renewal.
- Calhoun (2006) and Pusser (2011) apply this to the university. At best research and expert information help both government and 'the public' to reach considered opinions, in quadrant 2.
- Because of its capacity to (1) form self-altering agents, and engender critical intellectual reflexivity; (2) provide conditions for collective political action; and (3) move easily across traditional boundaries, at times higher education has incubated advanced democratic formations. One test of the public character of a university in this sense, is the extent it provides space for criticism, challenge, and organised community

Differing uses of the term 'public'

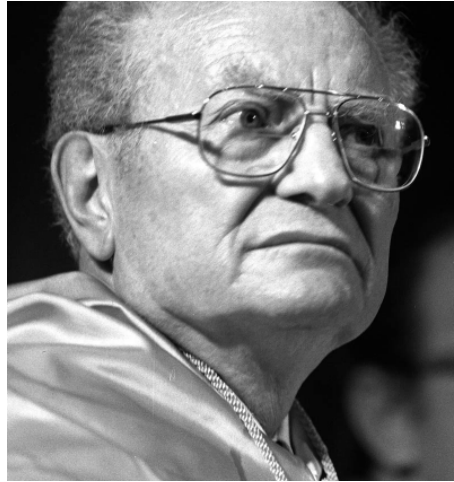
- The public sphere as a zone of communicative rationality and open debate (Habermas's reworking of the Kantian idea)
- The normative 'public good', meaning the collective welfare
- The public/private distinction in political theory, a distinction between state and non-state
- The public/private distinction in neo-classical economics, a distinction between market and non-market
- The caricature of public/private in neoliberal ideology, in which it is represented as a distinction between state and market. This is strictly meaningless, as it omits the role of non-market private actors (families, philanthropy in higher education), and the use of markets as an instrument of government (e.g. public enterprise in China, neoliberal quasi-markets in education policy)

Political (nation-state) definition of 'public' e.g. by John Dewey (1927)



- Most social transactions/relations are in the private sphere. But some are relational matters of broader 'public' interest. There are consequences for other people who are not involved in the direct transaction. Such matters need to be addressed by politics and managed by the state.
- *This public/private distinction is a distinction between state and non-state production*

Neo-classical economic definition of 'public' by Paul Samuelson (1954)



Public goods are non-rivalrous and/or non excludable.

They are under-produced or unproduced in economic markets

Economic public goods are non-rivalrous and non-excludable

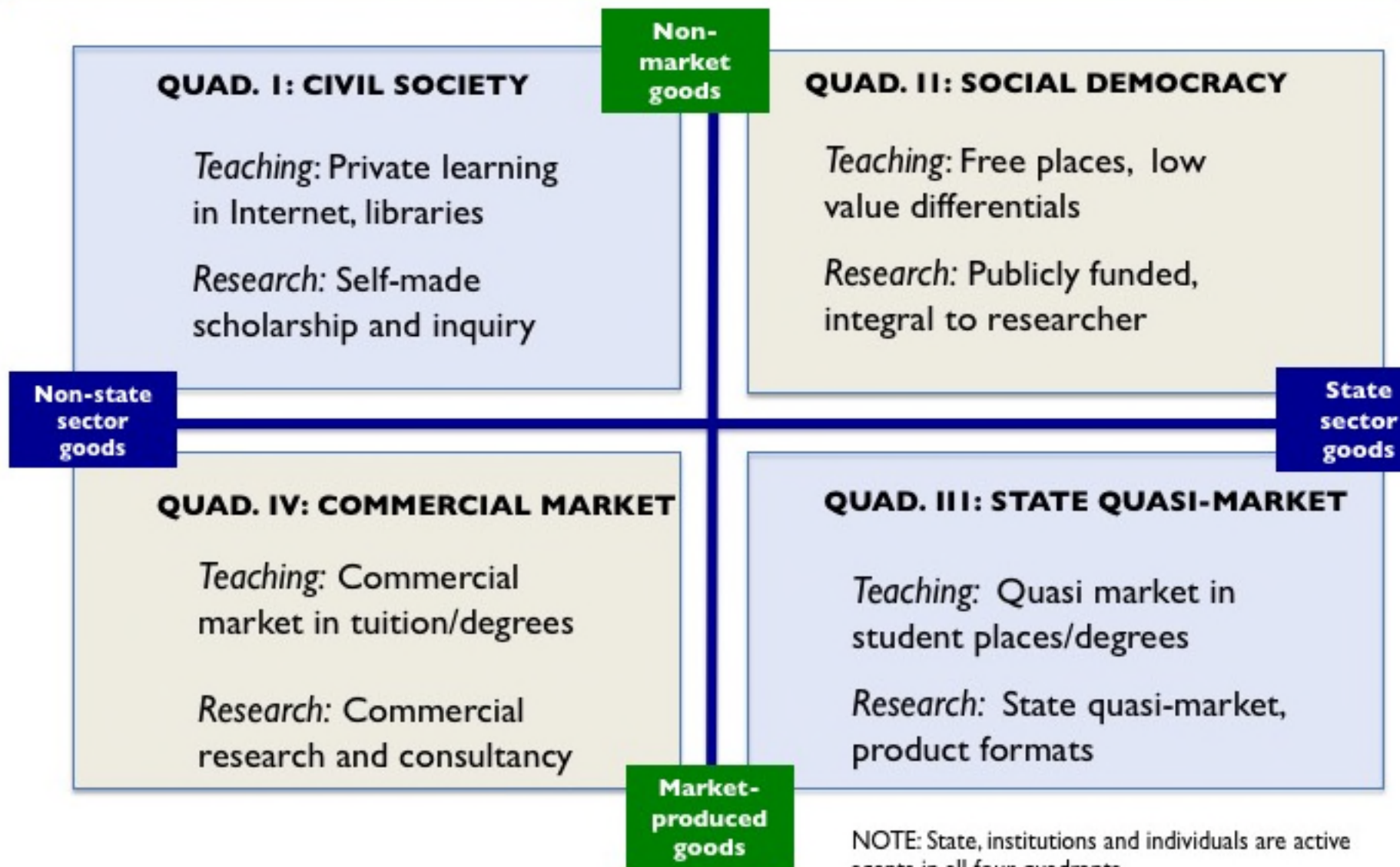
- Goods are non-rivalrous when consumed by any number of people without being depleted, for example knowledge of a mathematical theorem, which sustains its use value everywhere, indefinitely, on the basis of free access
- Goods are non-excludable when benefits cannot be confined to individuals, eg clean air regulation, national defence
- Private goods are neither non-rivalrous nor non-excludable. Private goods can be produced, sold and bought as individualised commodities in economic markets
- *Here the public/private distinction is a distinction between non-market production and market production*

Life isn't always either/or.

Let's put the two definitions together

- Dewey gives us a state/non state definition of public/private
- Samuelson gives us a non-market/market definition of public/private
- For Samuelson higher education is public unless it can be produced in a market outside the state. For Dewey any or all aspects of higher education can be public or as private
- The economic and political definitions each have virtues, but also create gaps. On its own each is *ambiguous*
- Putting them together creates *four unambiguous categories* which can be used to explain the different kinds of higher education and research (different in terms of political economy, that is)

Public and private goods: the four variations



Common goods in and from higher education

- *Common goods* are one kind of collective political public good. These are relational social goods. They are about the qualities of a shared community, e.g. social solidarity, equality, human rights, democratic self-determination, social and geographic mobility (freedom of movement), shared knowledge and conversations
- They can only be produced jointly. Some are experienced by individuals (e.g. human rights) and some by groups (e.g. laws)
- ‘The shared action is intrinsic, as well as instrumental, to the good itself and ... its benefits come in the course of that shared action. Goods of that kind are, therefore, inherently common in their “production” and in their benefits’

– Severine Deneulin and Nicholas Townsend (2007). Public goods, global public goods and the common good. *International journal of Social Economics* 34 (1/2), pp. 19-36

Shanghai Jiao Tong research on the public good role of higher education in China

- “Though higher education in China is largely government-led and regulated its contributions to people, society and the whole nation receive wide attention. Culturally, higher education is seen as a collective endeavor. Politically, it is common to all people... describing it in terms of ‘common’ good(s) may be more comprehensible than the term ‘public’. Moreover, given that higher education in China is neither a pure public good nor a pure private good, describing it as a common good(s) may be more reasonable for that reason.
- “Common good(s) are defined in terms of a given group/community, socially embedded with a common interest, and require collective participation. Global common good(s) relate to all people worldwide. The Chinese concept of ‘a community of shared future for mankind’ (*ren lei ming yun gong tong ti*) implies that all humans live in the same planet and they shoulder the same responsibility to make their lives better...”

- Tian, L. and Liu, N. (2019). Rethinking higher education in China as a common good. *Higher Education*, 77 (4), pp. 623-640

What of *global* public and common goods?

- ‘Global public goods are goods that have a significant element of non-rivalry and/or non-excludability and made broadly available across populations on a global scale. They affect more than one group of countries, are broadly available within countries, and are inter-generational; that is, they meet needs in the present generation without jeopardizing future generations.’

~ Inge Kaul, I. Grunberg and Marc Stern (Eds.), *Global Public Goods: International cooperation in the 21st century*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 2–3

- ‘Global common good’ is ‘participation of all persons in a diverse and differentiated, yet solidaristic and collaborative, world society’ – Deneulin and Townsend (2007), p. 29

Common and private goods in the global

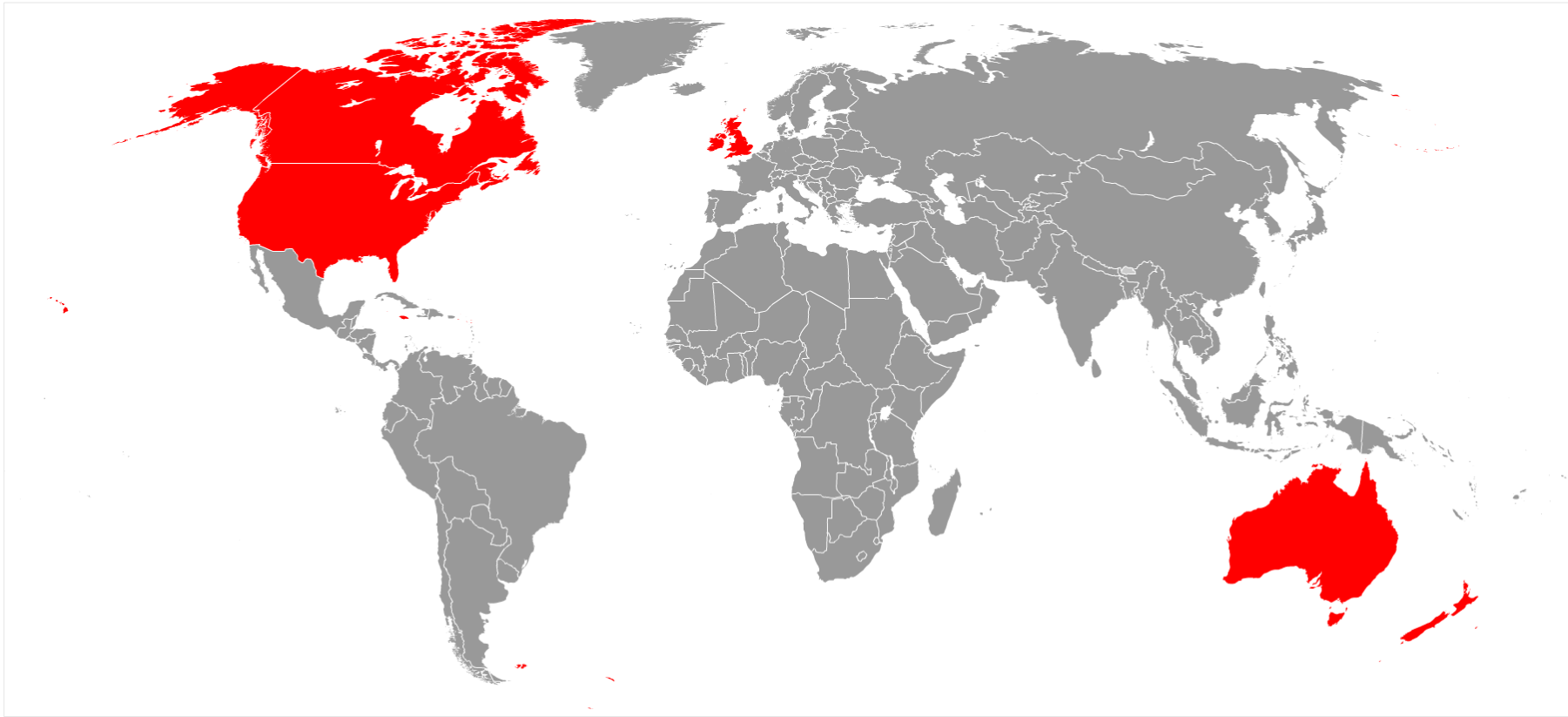
- Global public goods are goods whose provision cannot be let to the market or to any one national government.
- In the global sphere there is no state, though there are unstable multilateral forms and 'state-like agencies' such as United Nations and OECD. Here we are primarily talking about *economic* public goods, as in Samuelson
- The world research system and communicative ecologies provide great scope for global common goods, though note than with companies such as Google or Elsevier, common knowledge intersects with commercial goods
- Cross-border mobility is a global common good that enables many private goods (but note it can augment social stratification and inequality), and national public goods

Who decides what is a 'global good' or 'common good'? Whose global good is it?

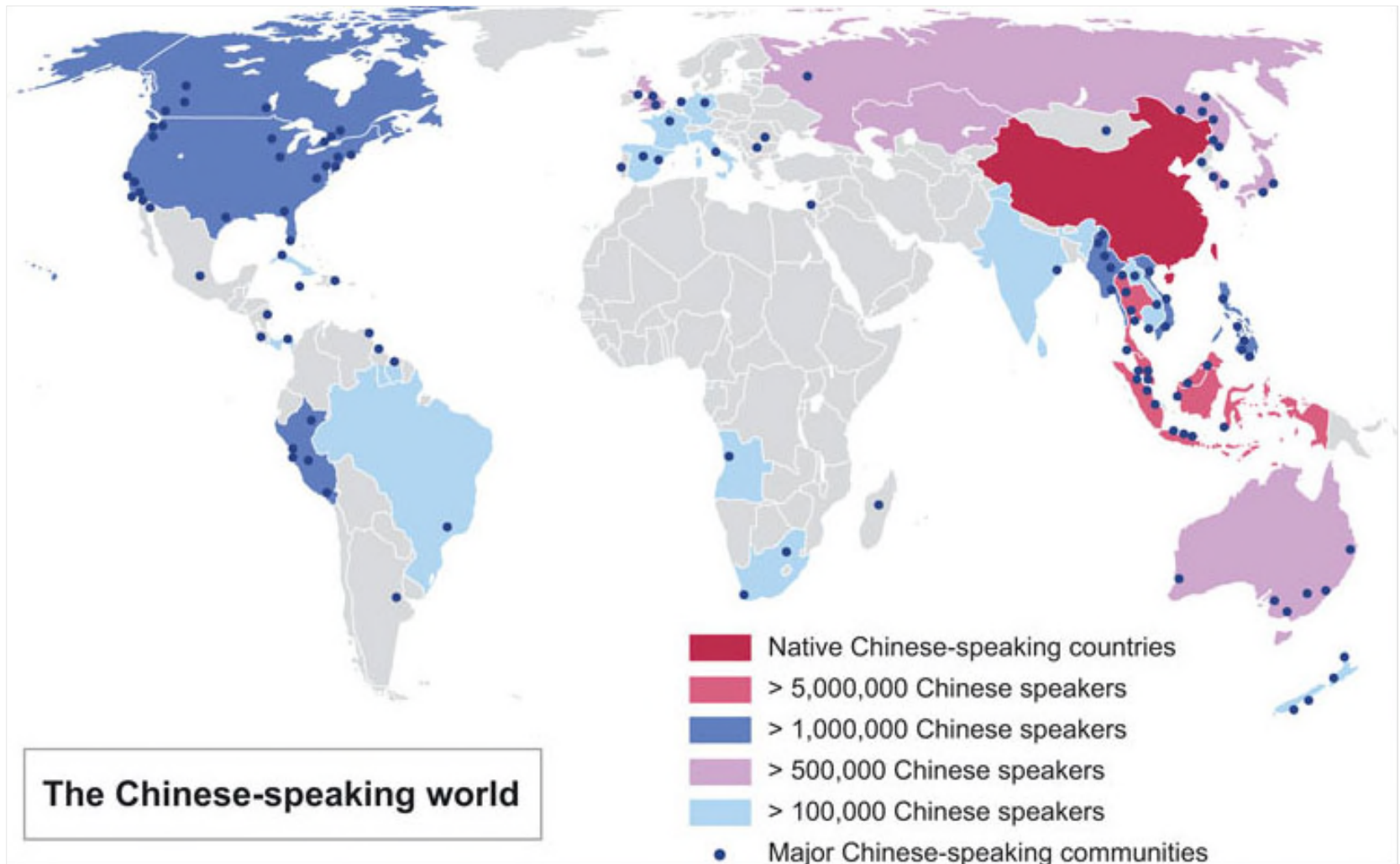
- Is there a generic/worldwide 'public good' or common good in higher education? Or is public good in the eye of the beholder...
- Which tradition of 'state' and 'public' should we use and which understanding of the public role of the university—the Anglo-American, Nordic, German, Chinese, Latin American, etc?

As scholar-researchers, should we go on ignoring this problem, and continue to impose our own national idea of what is global public good – or should we devise a *composite* idea of global public good, a more truly global idea?

Countries where over 50% of people are English first language speakers



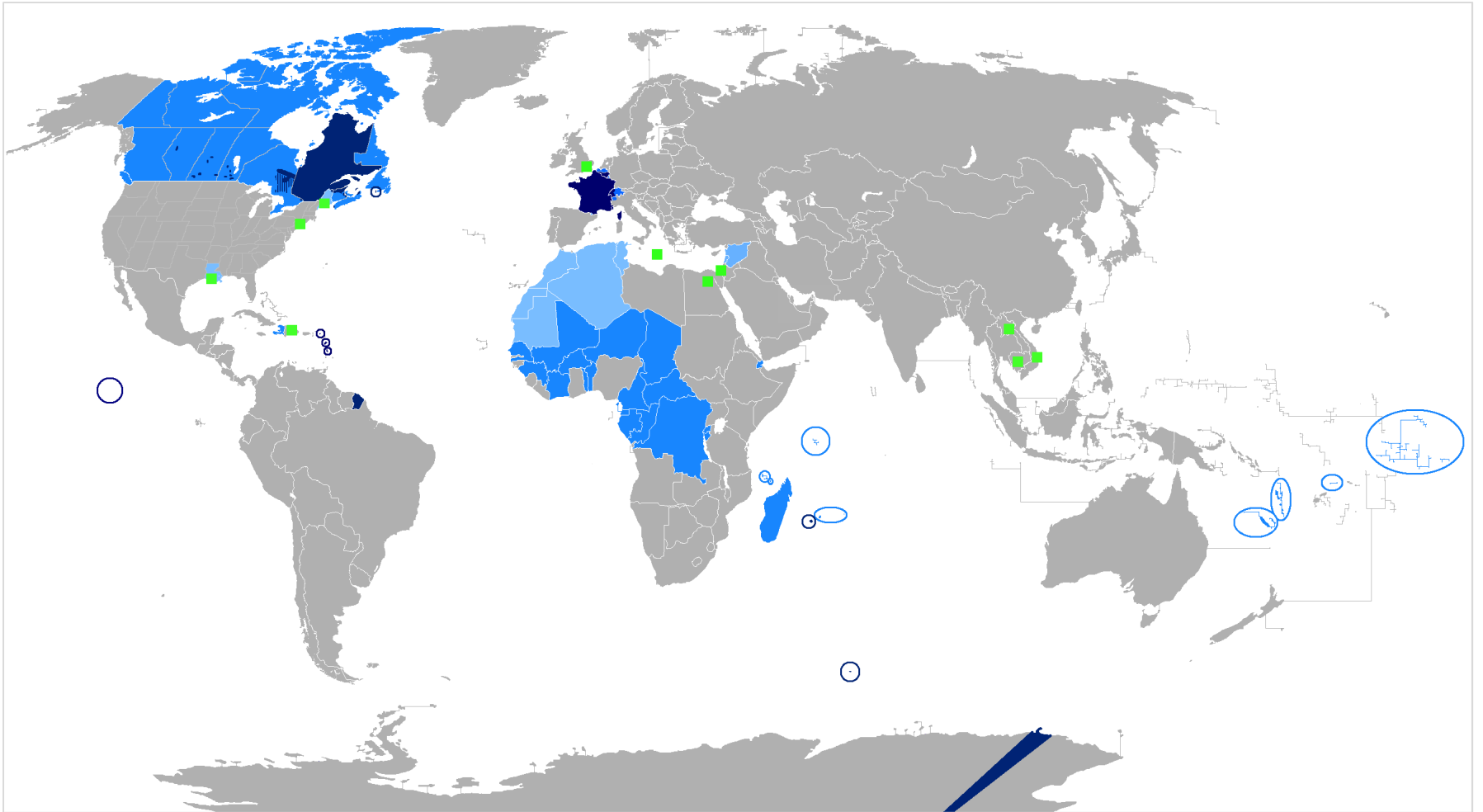
Chinese language use



The Spanish speaking world



The French speaking world



Arabic speaking countries



National and cultural variations

- Understandings of 'public' and 'common' varies between nations, and regional cultures
- Often, in languages other than English there is no direct translation of these concepts. Accordingly, understandings of the social role of higher education will be different also. Other languages may embody insights that take us beyond the limitations of the global English terminology
- This diversity needs more empirical investigation. An Anglo-Chinese lexicon is currently in preparation

Extracts from Chinese-Anglo Lexicon

公 Gong	Public; common; justice; for all's benefits; altruism and selfless spirit; state; social; international; openly; official; equally divided; male; Duke	There are no explicit explanations of '公' in Chinese, similar to 'public' in English. It has different meanings in varied situations
-----------	--	--

individual	个人：单独一个人，与集体相对应而言；某个特定的人；单一个体。	Translates, but Anglo term more 'individualistic' in connotation
collective	集体/集体的：代指由多人组成团体的；有集体主义特点的。	High degree of overlap
public goods	公共利益；公共物品；国有利益/物品	The Chinese term is narrower
private goods	私人利益；私人物品；商业产品和服务	The Chinese term is narrower
global public good	世界公共物品/利益；在世界层面上可获得的公共物品/利益（经济学） 公益；世界公益	The Chinese term is narrower
common good	共同利益；公益；公用资源	High degree of overlap
global common good	世界公益	High degree of overlap