HIGHER EDUCATION, THE NATION-STATE AND GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

Simon Marginson, University of Oxford
Tsinghua Higher Education Forum
28 October 2023
1. Introduction
2. The climate-nature emergency
3. Role of the state
4. Role of higher education
5. Concluding remarks
GLOBAL SEPTEMBER TEMPERATURE 0.5°C ABOVE PREVIOUS RECORD
WEST ANTARCTIC ICE MELT WILL RAISE GLOBAL SEA LEVELS 5 METRES BY 2100
WILDLIFE POPULATIONS HAVE BEEN REDUCED BY 69% SINCE 1970
DESERTIFICATION IS SPREADING
GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM NEAR TIPPING POINT?
FOSSIL FUELS AND AGRIBUSINESS INCREASINGLY SHAPE CLIMATE-NATURE POLITICS IN THE WEST
UK GOVERNMENT BACKTRACK ON NET ZERO PLEDGES
COP15 BIODIVERSITY SUMMIT WILL BE CHAIRED BY UAE STATE OIL COMPANY
DRIVING US OVER THE CLIFF
LISTEN TO THE SCIENCE
VOLATILE AND UNPREDICTABLE
STATE COORDINATION
GRASS ROOTS AGENCY
EAST AND WEST CONTRIBUTIONS TO MORAL ORDER
HIGHER EDUCATION
1. NO POVERTY
2. ZERO HUNGER
3. GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4. QUALITY EDUCATION
5. GENDER EQUALITY
6. CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7. AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
8. DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9. INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11. SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13. CLIMATE ACTION
14. LIFE BELOW WATER
15. LIFE ON LAND
16. PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
17. PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
MORAL ORDER AND
STUDENT LEARNING
SCIENCE AS TRUTH TELLING
‘… with respect to the political, only nation-states are deemed significant. It is for this reason that the world has only been exploited as a “common” resource and treated as a domain to be fought over and abused … This is especially the case within ideologies of hegemonic nation-states, where other nation-states and even the high seas are conceived of as just so much territory to be dominated’

- Zhao Tingyang 2021, pp. 185, 187
WE SHOULD NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE THE CHANGE THAT IS NEEDED
China’s higher education has a great contribution to make.