Three stories of differentiation and the quest for a balanced higher education system

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Project 2.1

Challenging higher education

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Context and approach

- The 2008 crisis and the question of differentiation of higher education systems: tensions around funding, inequalities and the contribution of the various segments to economy and society
- Looking The historical connections and tensions between expansion and differentiation of higher education systems. (Stories? Balanced?)

Three stories of differentiation (focus on the UK)

- Resources differentiation: enrolment and funding across the system. Effects on differentials in resources, equity and quality?
- Mission differentiation: questions the missions and activities across the system (T and R; academic/vocational, intern ationalisation). Horizontal or vertical differentiation? Fair or real competition, division of labour?
- Social differentiation: more opportunities or stratification of inequalities? Inclusion or diversion?

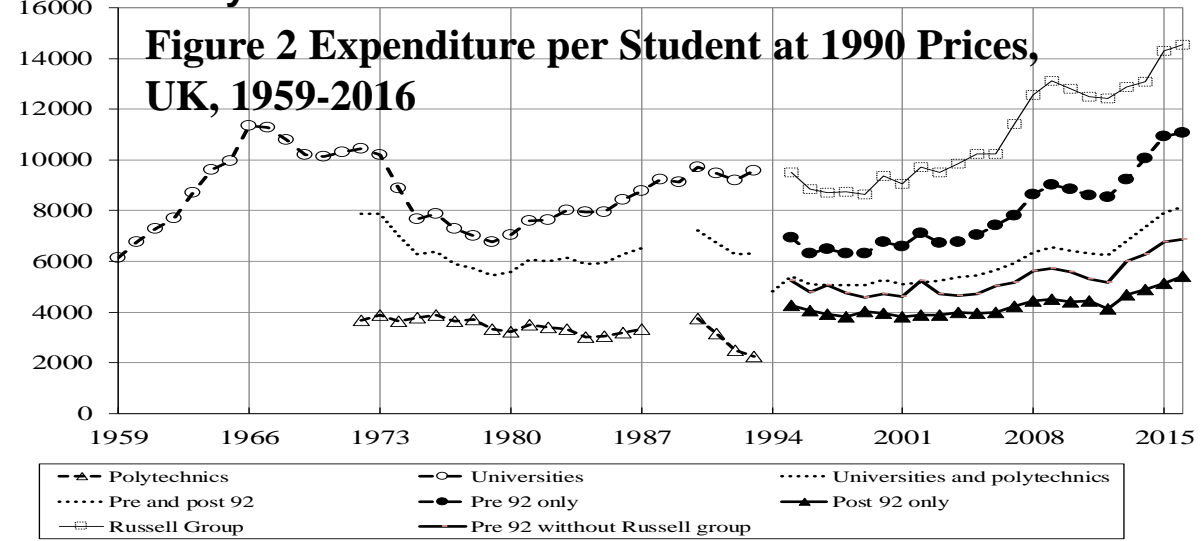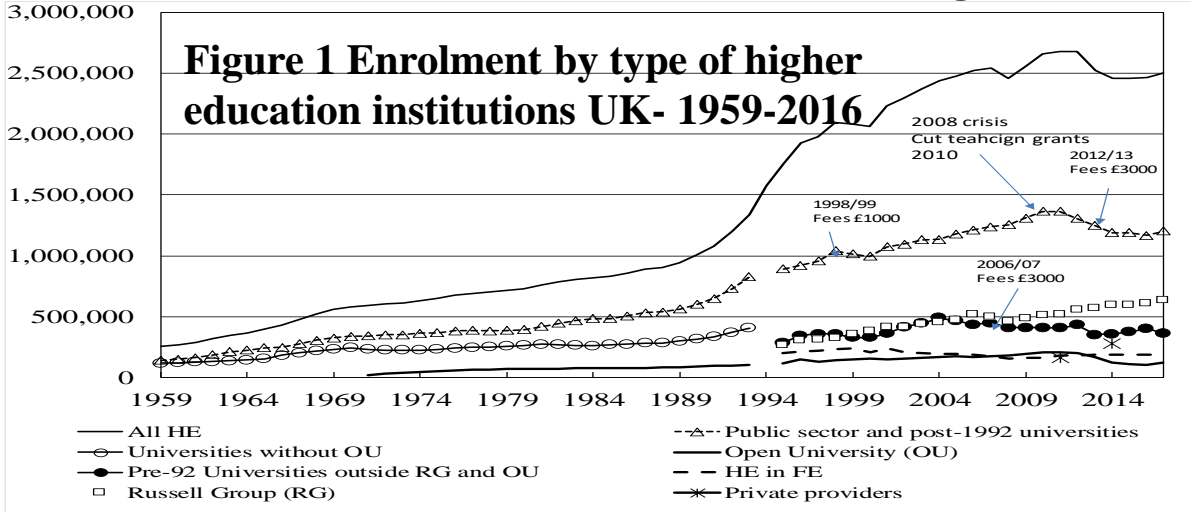**The lenses of political economy and history of education**

- Historical conditions by which the expansion of a system might be driven or constrained by the alignments or tensions between resource, mission and social differentiations and vice-versa.
- Historical contingency: expansion and differentiation and socioeconomic models of wealth creation and distribution- Fordist and post-Fordist and their crisis in 1973 and 2008

Framework and data

Quantitative history: the historical trends of the three types of differentiation

- Resource differentiation is estimated by the funding and enrolment by types of institution

- Mission differentiation is approached by the mode (fulltime/part-time), level (undergraduate/postgraduate) and geographical outlook (domestic/international) of enrolment.

- Social differentiation is estimated by the distribution of enrolment by gender and socioeconomic groups.

- UK Differentiation data
  - the university and public sectors until the unification in 1992
  - post-92 and pre-92 universities and FE in HE afterwards.
  - Data on pre-92 group distinguishes the Open University and the Russell group created in 1994 to represent the (currently 24) elite research universities (no further disaggregation such as Oxbridge…).

Resource differentiation: Number control & funding articulated to economic cycles

Figure 1 Enrolment by type of higher education institutions UK- 1959-2016

- 2008 crisis Cut teahcign grants 2010
- 2012/13 Fees £3000
- 1998/99 Fees £1000
- 2006/07 Fees £3000

Legend:
- All HE
- Universities without OU
- Pre-92 Universities outside RG and OU
- Russell Group (RG)
- Public sector and post-1992 universities
- Open University (OU)
- HE in FE
- Private providers

Figure 2 Expenditure per Student at 1990 Prices, UK, 1959-2016

Legend:
- Polytechnics
- Pre and post 92
- Russell Group
- Universities
- Pre 92 only
- Pre 92 witthout Russell group
- Universities and polytechnics
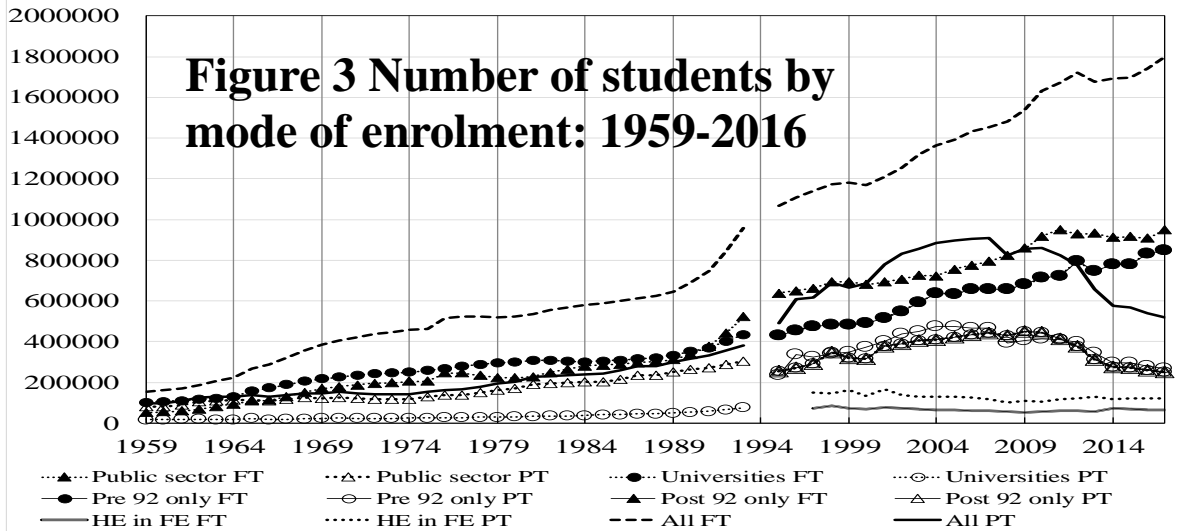- Post 92 only

Fordist Binary system: 1945-1988

- 1960-1973 a combined progression of the public (local) and university sectors driven by Fordist public funding commitment (unit per resources maintained)
- 1973 crisis: distinction between the 1970s (universities (only) time leading expansion without sufficient funding while public sector protected) and the 1980s (a restricted well-funded university sector and an economical expansion of public sector-
- Progressive halt of expansion while rising differentials in resources compromised the binary system's ideal of a public sector as an alternative to university

Post Fordist centralised and unitary system: 1988-?

- Second expansion- also kick-started by public sector and post-92 after unification (without resource convergence)
- 2008 crisis: shift from cost sharing to public/private substitution (end of teaching grants; fees) and end of student number control meant that the slower expansion is driven by the Russell group. Increasing resources per students masking growing differentials (only the Russell group expands both enrolment and funding).
- Differential in resources per students always there-but needs to be interpreted cautiously.

Mission differentiation

Figure 3 Number of students by mode of enrolment: 1959-2016

Figure 4 Proportion of postgraduate students per type of Institution- 1921-2016

All — Russell — Pre 92 universities — Post 92 universities — Pre 92 without Open University

Figure 5 Number of international students, UK, 1920-2012 (Fulltime until 1997 and Full-time and part-time thereafter)

Public sector of HE — Pre 92 unvieristies — Pre and post 92 universities — Russell

1960-1973- The Fordist division of labour? Polytechnics' vocational agenda versus academic drift (national outlook)
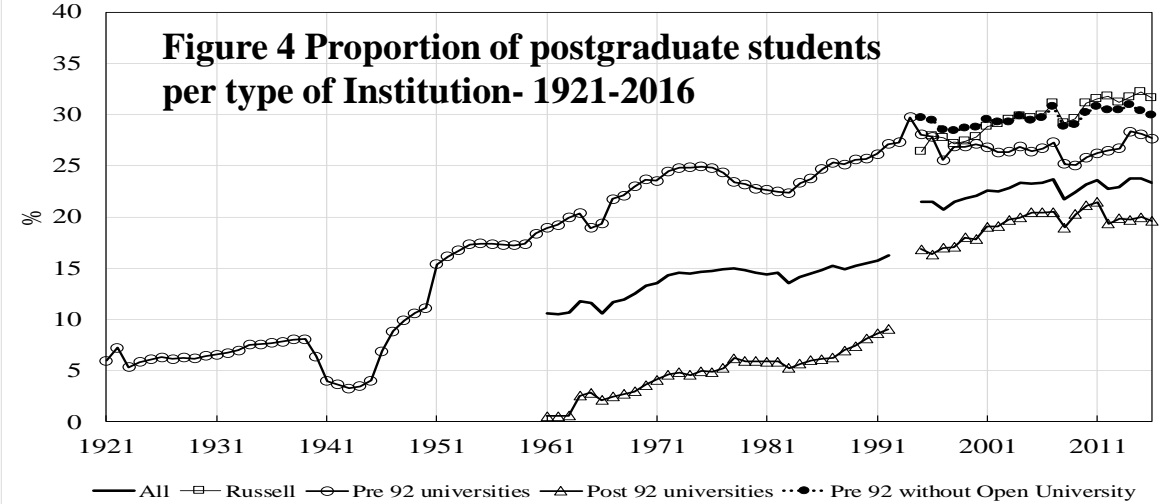
The 1970s downturn: Revived vocationalisation and interruption of the academic drift.

The post Fordist second expansion: unification and slow convergence of missions driven by Polytechnics' 2nd academic drift and changes in the uni sector: towards a lifelong learning and more internationalised system
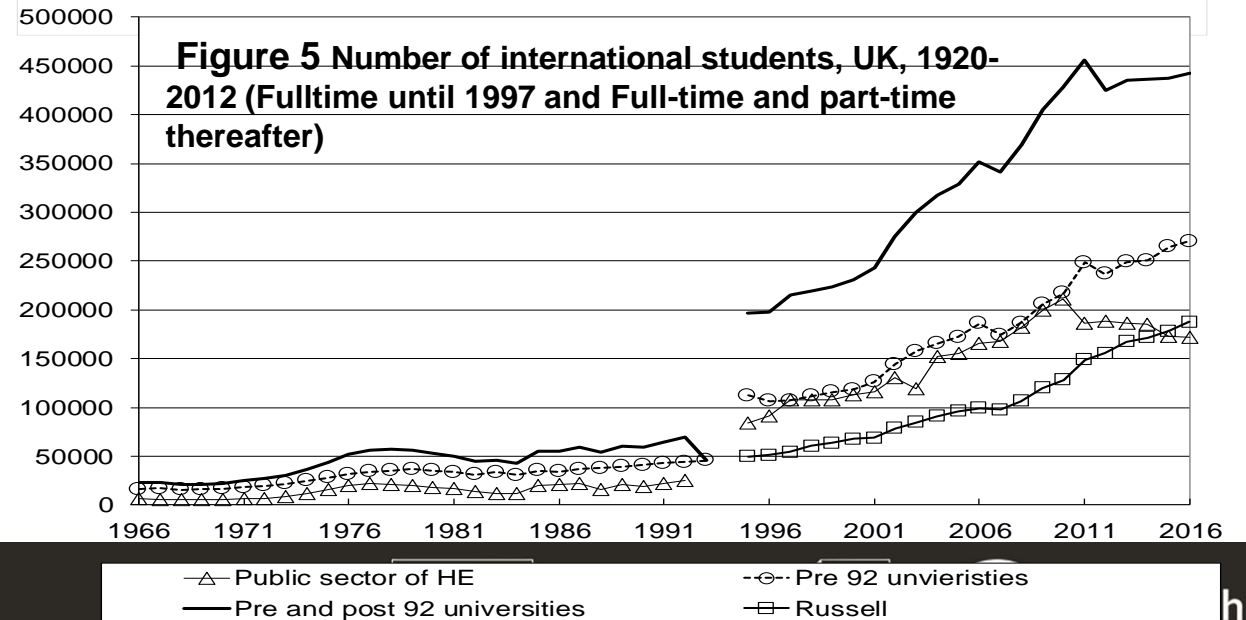
Post 2008- LLL is reversed and vertical differentiation increases. Increasing differential in internationalisation between segments

Both phases of expansion led to convergence between the segments ultimately reversed by both crises (more PT in 1973 and less in 2008)

Social differentiation
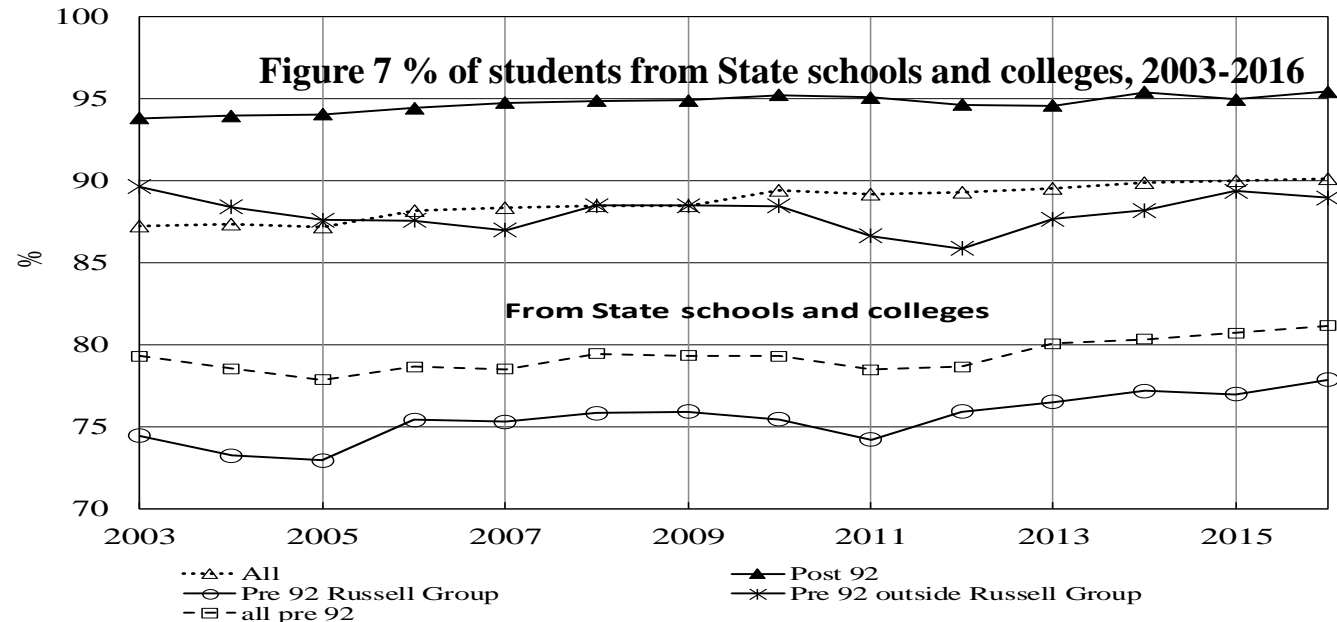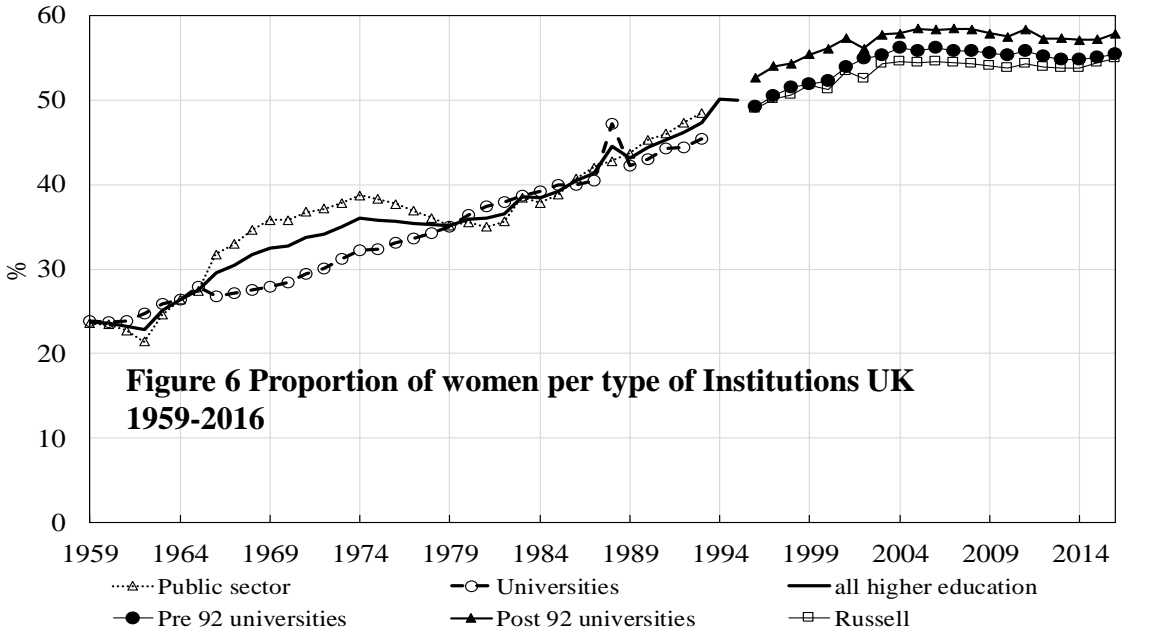
First phase of expansion:
- Key role of the public sector in inclusion (gender and social class) V a shift from academic to social drift (both inclusion and diversion)

- 1973 led to a slowdown in inclusion gender progression in the public sector

Second phase of expansion
- Stratified democratisation of the unified system
- The polytechnics experienced a social drift but not the post 92 (is it good news ? Inclusion? diversion?)
- Since 2008: no clear trend. Status quo. What about the lower middle class?

		No further Education	Universities	Polytechnics	College of Further Education	All
Born 1936-45						
Service		12.4	51.6	32.9	38.6	16.6
Intermediate		30.8	33.5	42.5	36.8	31.6
Manual		56.8	14.9	24.6	24.6	51.8
All		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100
Born 1946-55						
Service		14.3	56.0	38.8	38.2	20.9
Intermediate		31.5	31.1	38.5	37.2	32.5
Manual		54.2	12.9	22.7	24.7	46.7
All		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100
Born 1956-65						
Service		14.9	56.1	40.9	35.3	23.1
Intermediate		34.0	32.4	38.8	36.8	34.7
Manual		51.1	11.6	20.3	28.0	42.2
All		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

Table 1 Distribution of "education attainment" by socioeconomic categories

Figure 6 Proportion of women per type of Institutions UK 1959-2016

Legend: Public sector; Universities; all higher education; Pre 92 universities; Post 92 universities; Russell

Figure 7 % of students from State schools and colleges, 2003-2016

From State schools and colleges

Legend: All; Post 92; Pre 92 Russell Group; Pre 92 outside Russell Group; all pre 92

Conclusion

The 3 stories

- Persistent inequality in resource differentiation exacerbated by crises

- Tensions between missions- the impossible division of labour to the unfair vertical differentiation

- Differentiation as a key driver of inclusion for both phases of expansion slowly reverting to stratified democratisation

The articulation between the stories

- The stories and those tensions are connected and need to be addressed jointly

- A balanced differentiated system might be one that minimises the tensions between resource, mission and social differentiations. This implies a resource differentiation reflecting the diversity of missions without stratifying social inequalities

- The tensions between the stories and economic crises

Final remark

- The importance of disaggregation

- The various meanings of overall spending per student and differentiation

Positive stories of resources high enough to sustain enrolment across the whole system without any quality or equity trade off (both sectors in the 1960s and the early 2000s).

A restricted expansion with stagnating resources (universities in the 1980s or possibly all sectors except the Russell group since 2012).

Declining resources per student might reflect insufficient funding compared to strong expansion (universities in the 1970s and polytechnics in 1980s and all higher education in the 1990s and mid-2000s).

- Comparative perspective: US and France