

“A historical lens on higher education staffing in France and the UK”

CGHE Conference 2022

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➤ My objectives

- Exploring the evolution of the number and structures of HE workforce in France and the UK (project 7) and potential links with socio-economic fluctuations
- Examining the connections and tensions between the development of the HE workforce and the expansion and differentiation of HE systems (project 2.1)
- 3 complementary perspectives on HE workforce (Labour/capital in general; Public sector; specificities of the HE sector)- I will focus on the 3rd one today.
- Carpentier, V. (2021) “Three Stories of Institutional Differentiation: Resource, Mission and Social Inequalities in Higher Education”, *Policy Reviews in Higher Education*, 5(2), 197-241. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23322969.2021.1896376?src=>

➤ My approach

- History and political economy
 - HE associated to key, at times complementary and at others competing, logics (political, economic, social, cultural)
 - Economic fluctuations and cycles and social change.
 - Reasoned use of history
- Quantitative history
 - New datasets
 - Exploring trends and patterns complementing qualitative studies
- Comparative

➤ Structure

- Debates in France and the UK
- The context of HE: Expansion, funding and differentiation
- The expansion of the HE workforce
- Institutional differentiation
- Working conditions
- Representation

➤ French context

- Originally HE recruitment highly centralised
- 1879: academics control of the process of recruitment around disciplines (nowadays CNU)- the Academic profession and the State manage the system of « configuration universitaire » (Musselin 2004)
- Re-emergence of the universities with the Loi LRU in 2009. Autonomy. New stratification of the academic profession (Barrier and Picard 2020) not as much between prof and MCF but between permanent/non permanent staff and the expansion of academic managers
- Current debates: efficacy/differentiation or Casualisation/?
 - Staff student ratio and issue about resources especially in university
 - Loi programmation recherche (more resources and flexibility versus competition/precarity) led to strikes.
 - Junior professors (tenure track French style)

➤ UK context

- Old story:
 - “Our arithmetical calculations imply that not merely maintenance, but also improvement, of student/staff ratios is in the long run possible. There will exist sufficient persons. Whether the required numbers will actually be forthcoming is another question. The capacity of higher education to attract recruits of the necessary calibre will depend on the conditions of service it offers and on the economic inducements it holds out to those qualified to adopt other careers” (Robbins, 1963).
 - “The rise in student numbers over the last decade, and the continuing pressure on institutional finances resulting in lower staff to student ratios, has meant larger class sizes and less contact time for students” (Dearing, 1997)
 - “Staff-student ratios have fallen from just over 1:10 in 1983 to 1:18 in 2000 and this tends to mean that students write fewer assignments and have less face-to-face contact with staff” (White Paper 2003).
- More decentralised (binary system, institutional autonomy)
- Debates on casualisation, teaching and research assessment, the tensions between autonomy and increased regulation (Marini, Locke and Whitchurch, 2019)
- Recent strikes on pay, casualisation, equality, and workload

Context 1: The HE system: expansion and differentiation

Trends

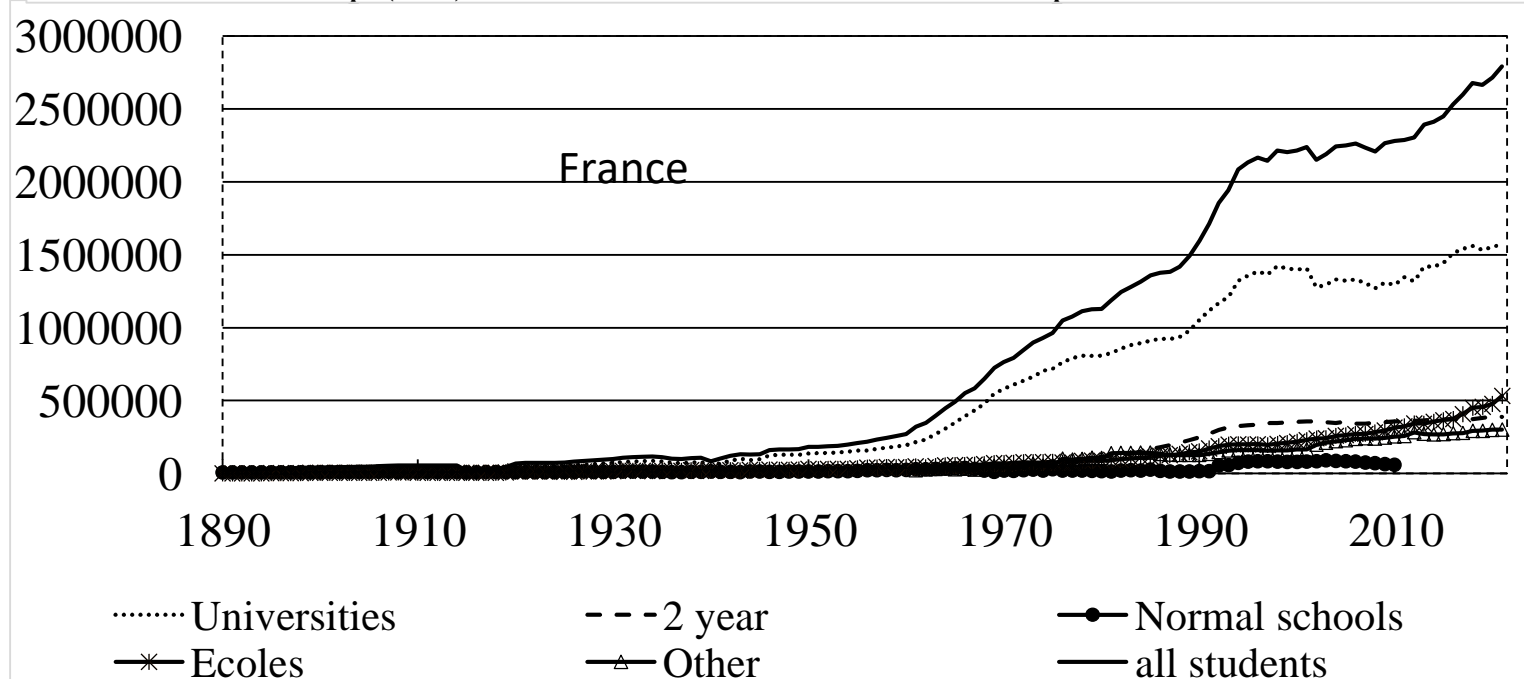
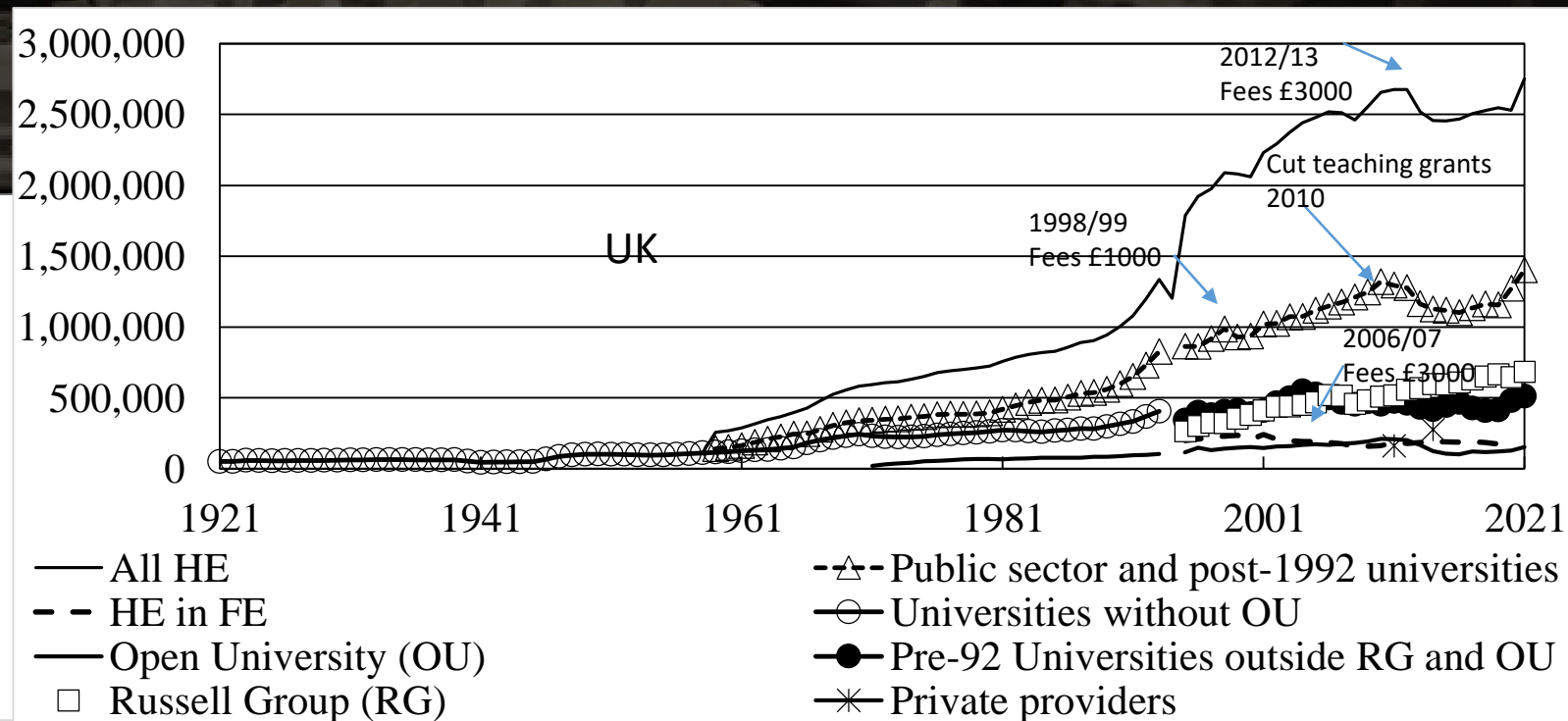
- Strong expansion
- The key role of formal or informal differentiations

UK

- The first expansion driven by a binary system (university/polytechnics)
- The second expansion driven by a unified system (but historical differences persist- vertical differentiation has maintained social differentiation)
- Recent trend: slower growth since 2010 and expansion of the Russell group

France

- A Tripartite system: universities, Grandes Ecoles, two-year provision-(functional and social differentiation despite meritocratic ideal)
- Recent trend: Demographic pressure since 2010 in France (pressure mainly on universities)



Context 2: The changing political economy: the transformation of income structure

Commonalities

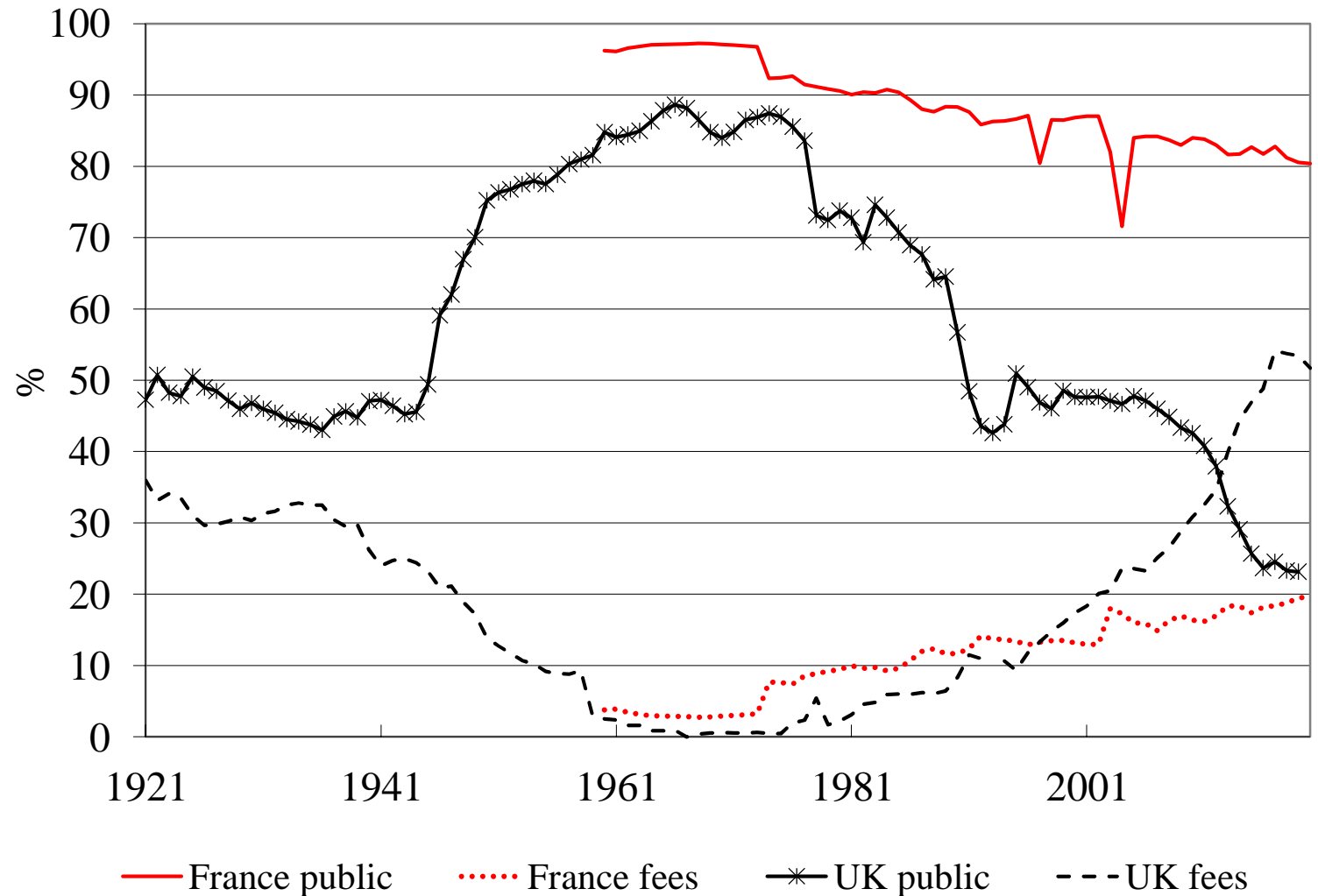
- Retreating public funding
- Effect of economic crises of 1973 and 2008

UK (Carpentier 2021)

- Cost sharing 1998-2006
- 2012-Austerity led to a shift towards public-private substitution

France

- Public underfunding in France (clashing with demography)
- Beginning of a movement towards cost sharing (and potentially substitution) - introduction of international students (Private provision)



Context 3: the HE system: Unequal resources across the sector

- **A long story**

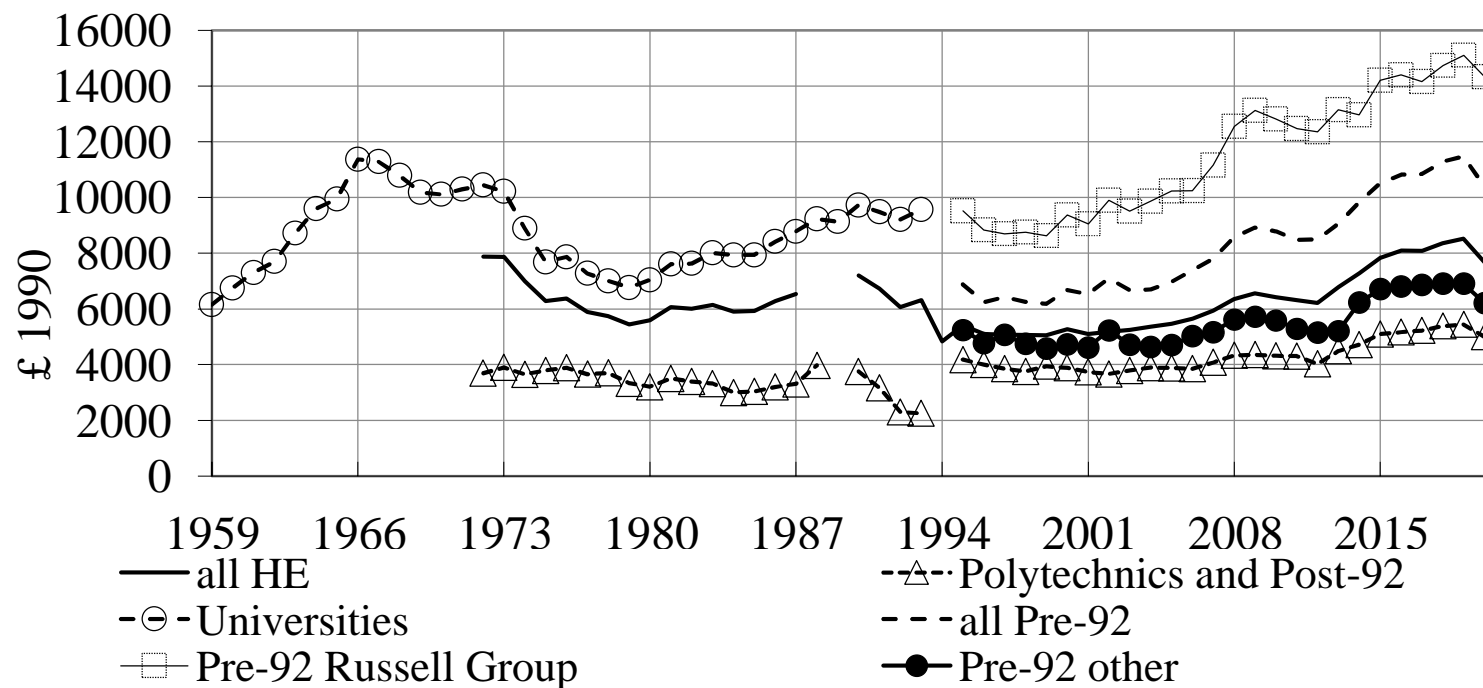
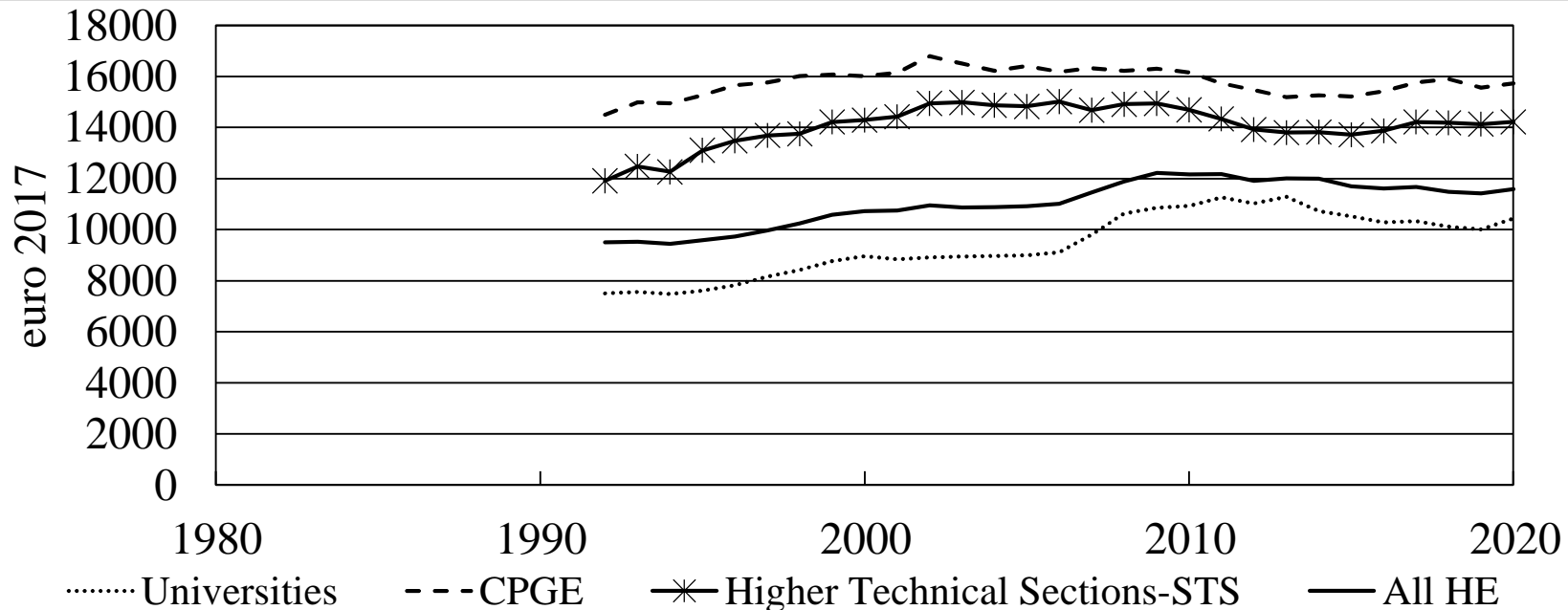
- Overall increase of spending per student
- But persistent inequalities across the system

UK

- Binary system increasingly unequal after the 1980s
- Unification stopped that trend at first until marketisation pushed inequalities further

France

- Strong inequalities too (but no significant changes)
- Universities leading massification and widening participation while being less resourced.



The expansion of the HE workforce

Overall

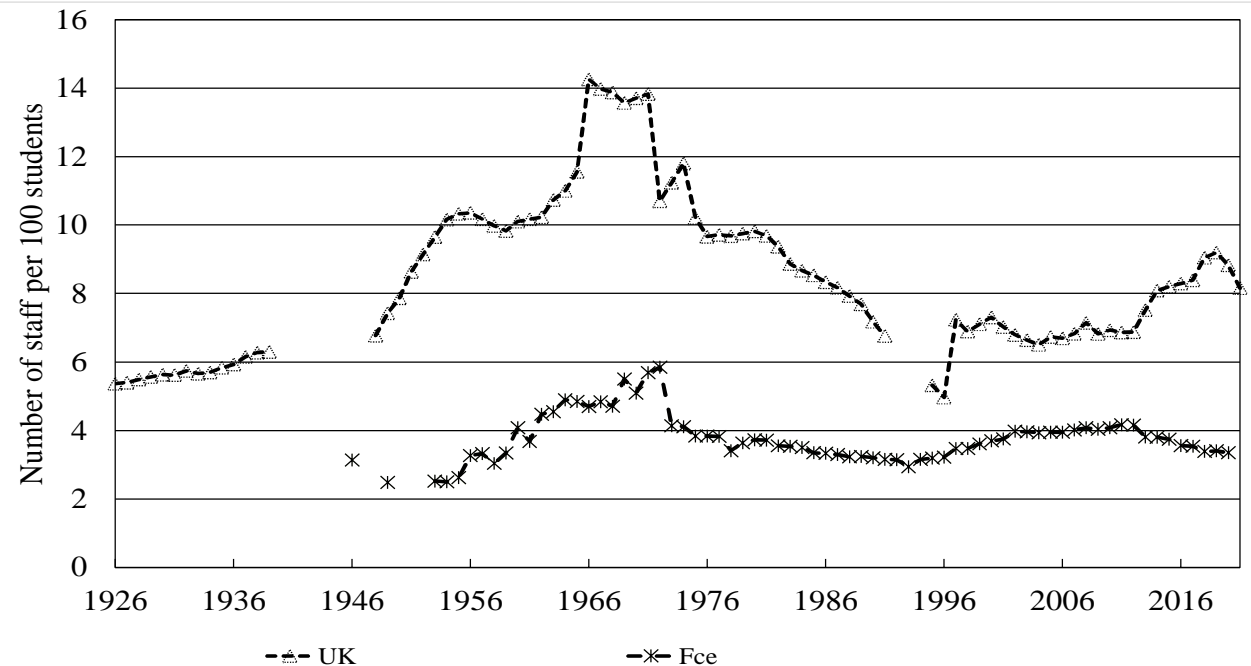
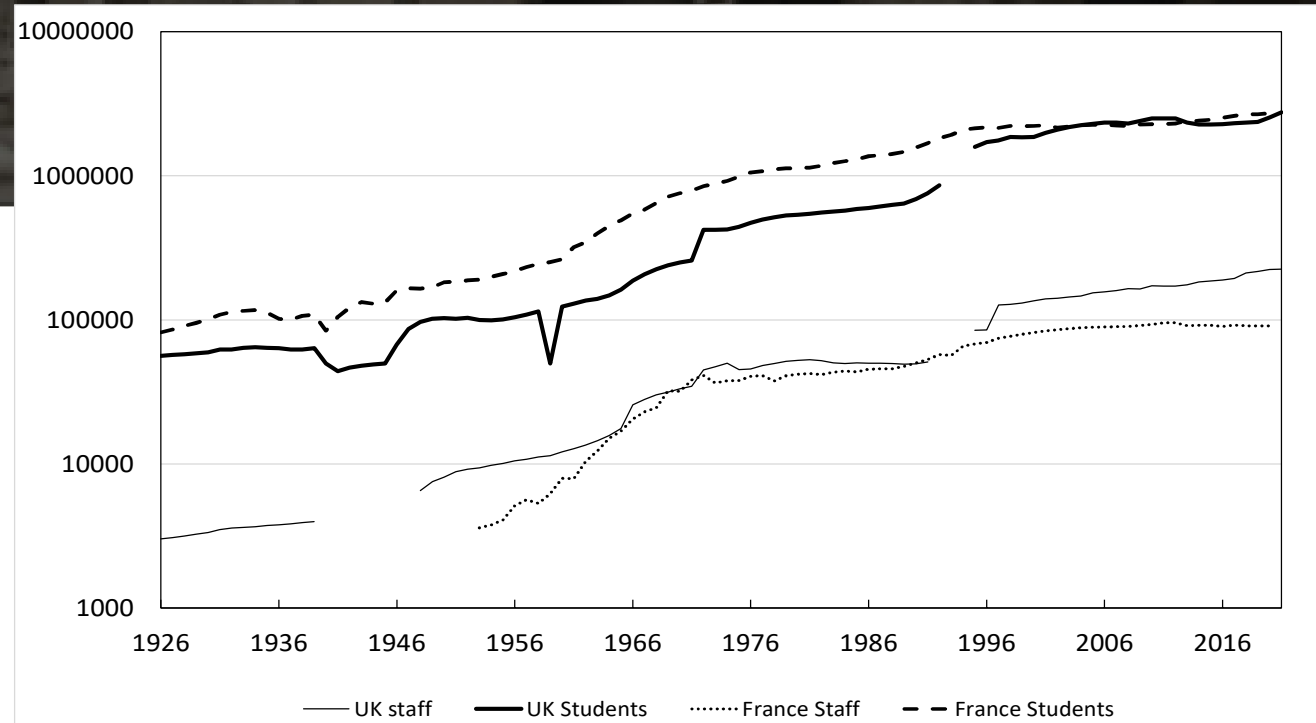
- The expansion of HE systems and their workforce experienced similar trends but at different rates
- HE workforce and staff/student ratio in the UK are twice as big as in France.
- Turning points: the post war era, the 1970s and the post-2000 era

UK

- Declining staff per student ratio after the 1970s crisis.
- Increasing staff per student ratio after unification
- The ratio increase again after 2012 (but this partly the result of a decrease of student numbers due to declining numbers of 18 year old age group)

France

- Staff per student ratio stable over the whole period
- A decline after 2010- the product of underfunding and stable staff recruitment in a context of demographic boom



Institutional differentiation and the workforce

Staff/student ratios and income per student

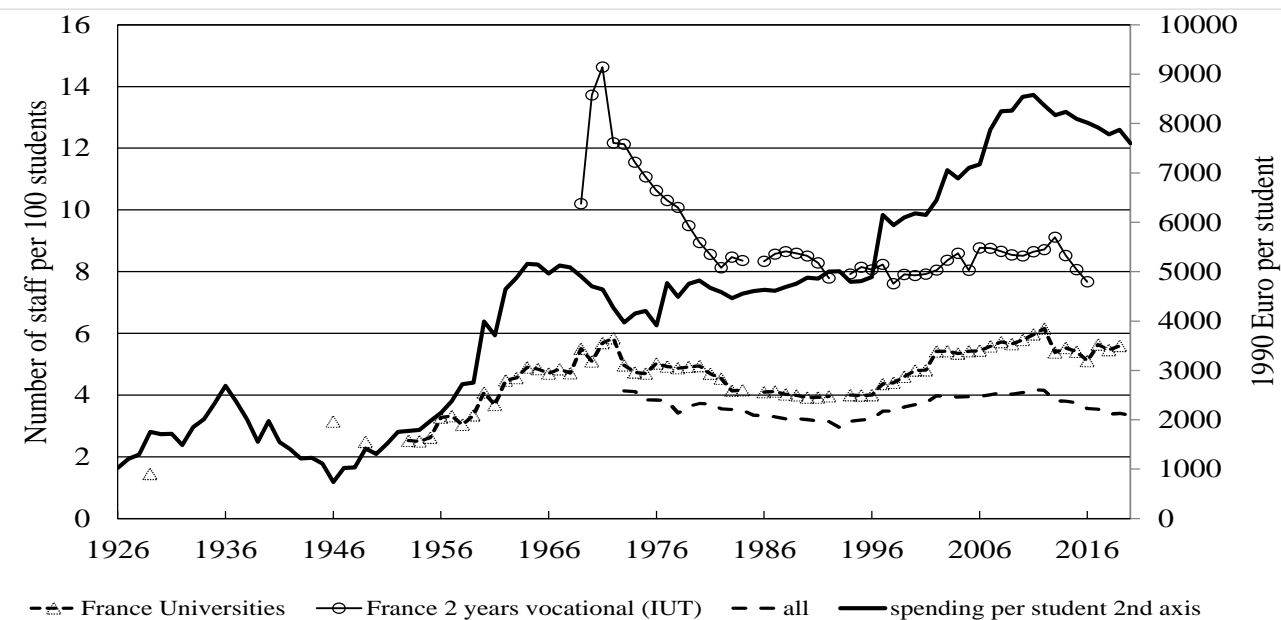
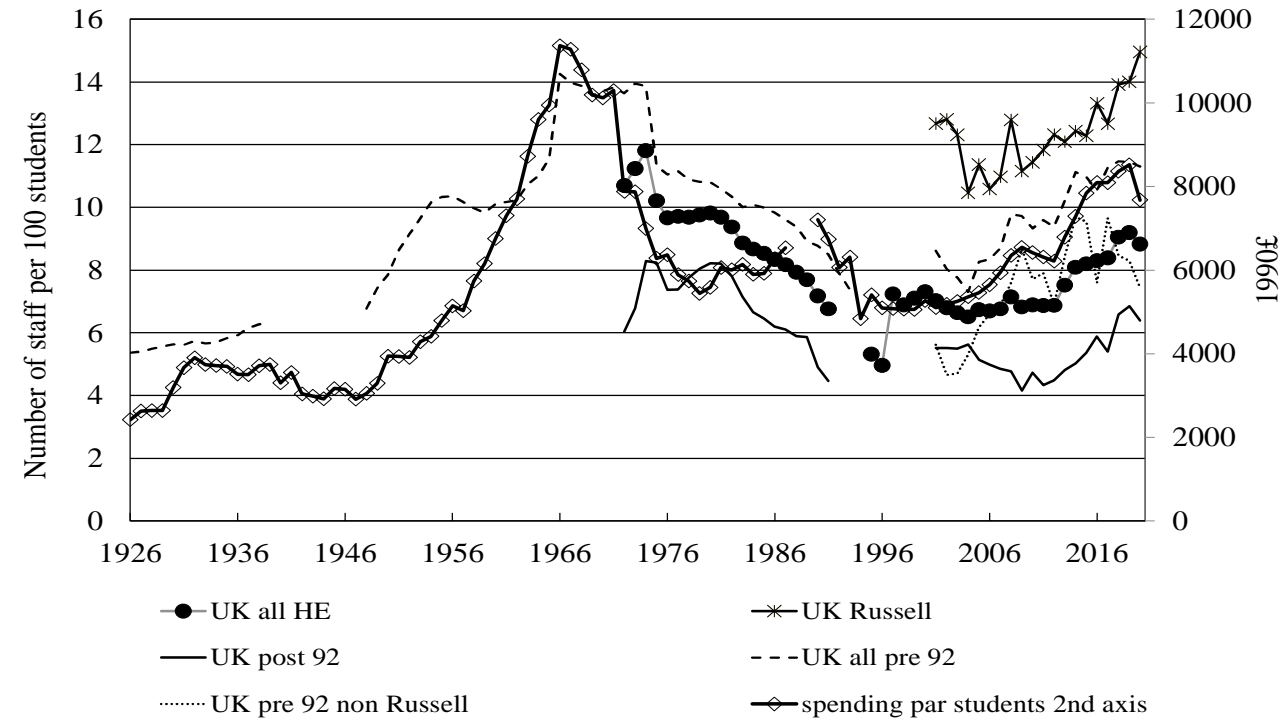
- Correlation between student staff ratio and income per student
- Similar turning points:
 - The post war expansion of enrolment is followed by investment in staff
 - The crisis of the 1970s: decrease of staff per student ratio during the 1980s

UK: Binary, unified systems and the HE workforce

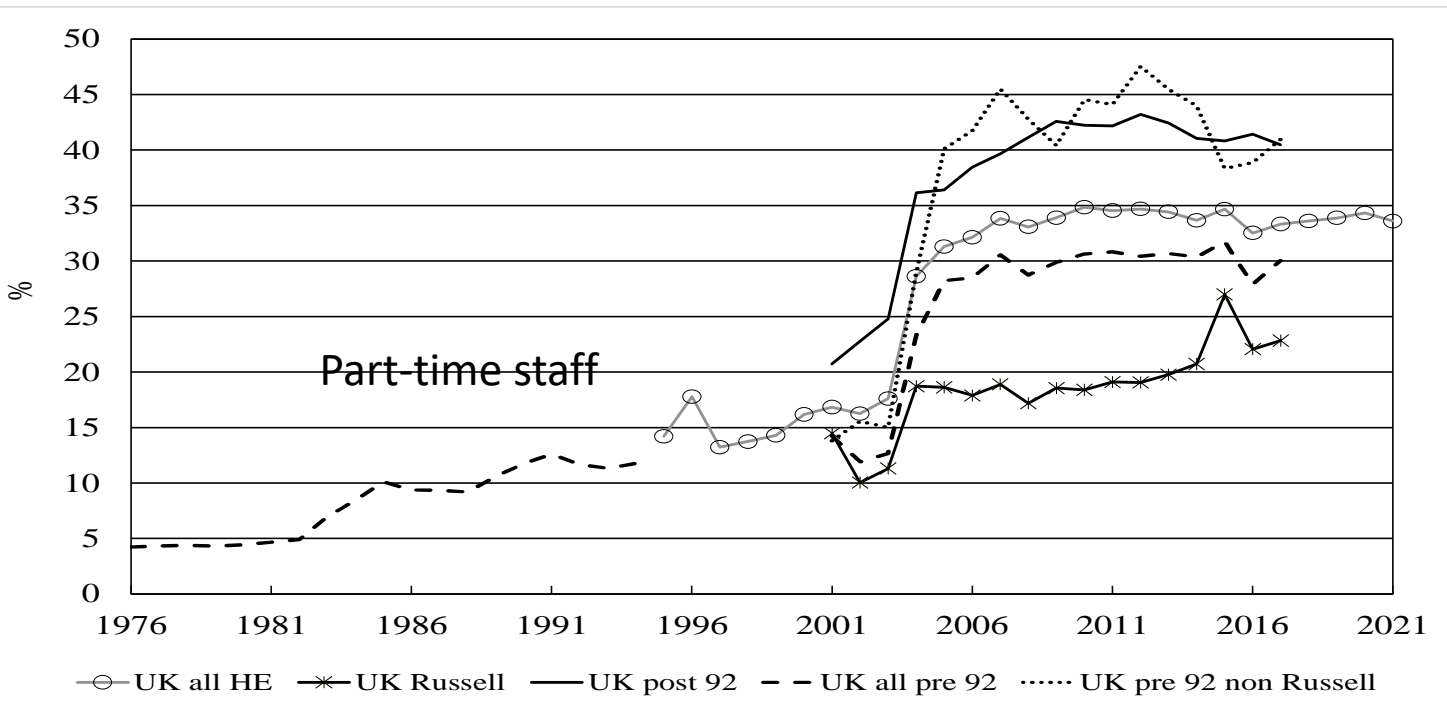
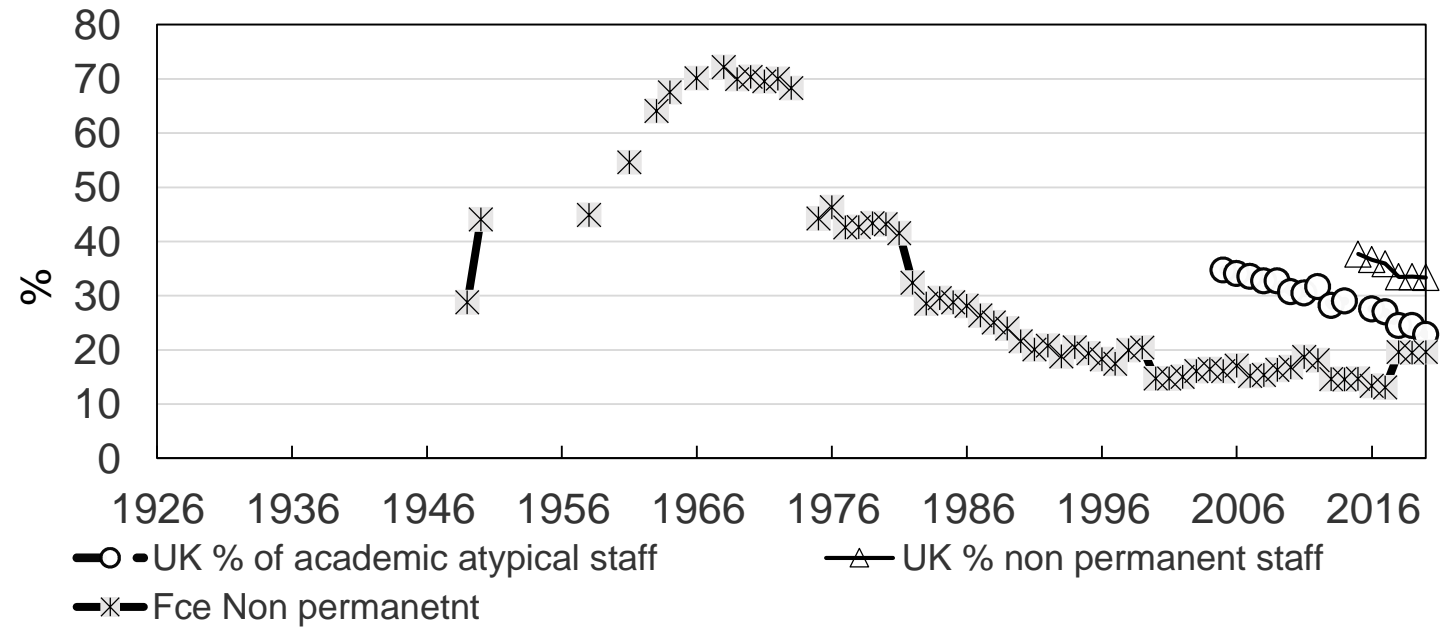
- The binary system: unequal staff student ratios between groups of HEIs
- The gap is reduced by unification in 1992
- Increased by marketisation
- A recent reduction in the gap which remains significant (especially with the Russell group)

France: Universities are key but under pressure

- Staff/student ratio consistently lower in universities than in the rest of the system



Diversification of the workforce or casualisation?



Permanent/non-permanent/atypical

- The share of non permanent staff decreased in France after the mid 1970s. Stable since then at around 15% (recent increase)
- Proportion of non-permanent staff is higher in the UK (around a third of the workforce)+ Atypical staff

Part-time staff

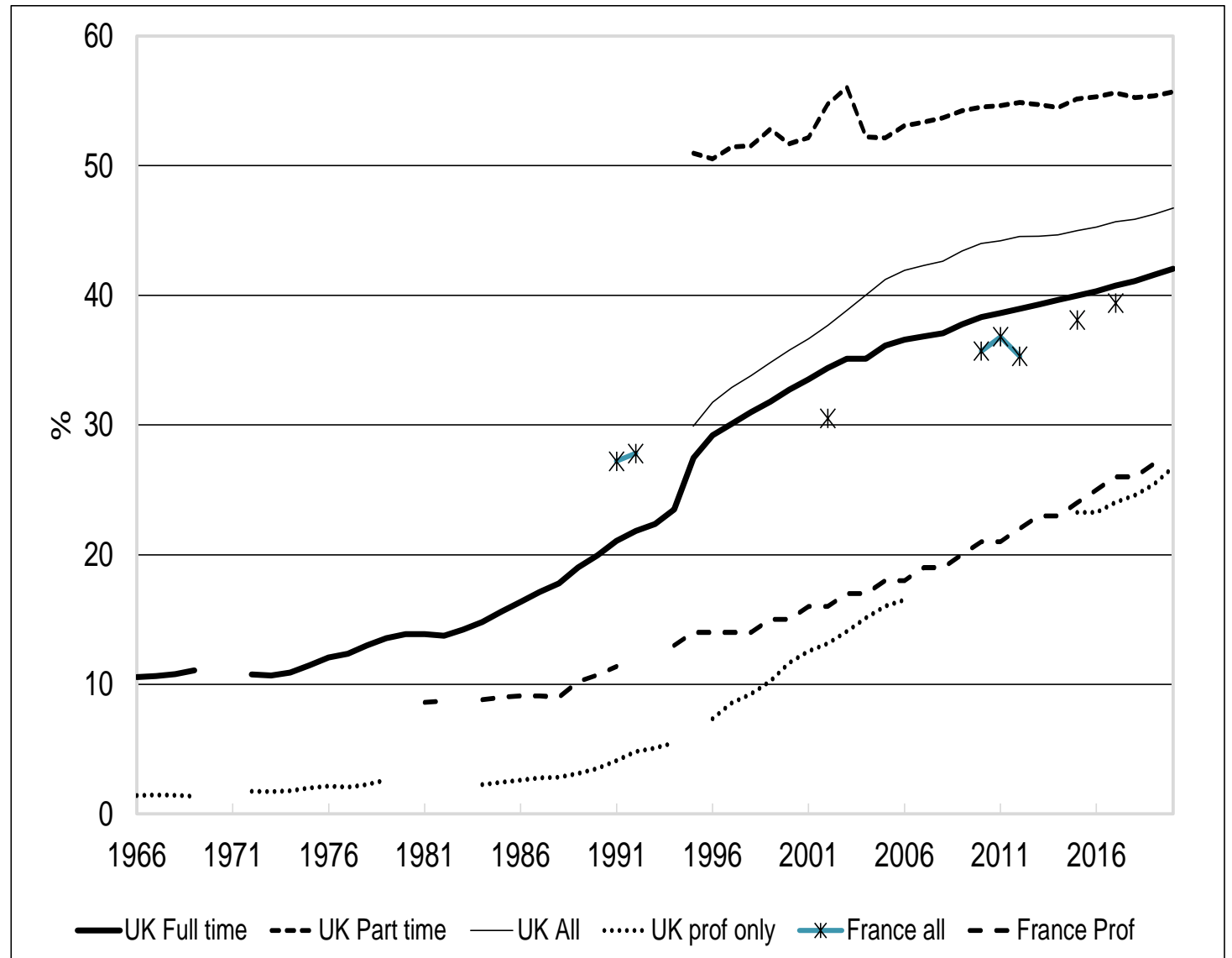
- Limited in France around 8%
- UK: Strong increase since the early 2000s leading to a third of the workforce in PT work today
- Highly differentiated

Representation of the HE workforce

Gender

- A mix of progress but persistent inequalities (quantitative data are about access rather than experience)
- Underrepresentation at professorial level
- Women more represented in part-time jobs

More work on ethnicity to follow



Trends affecting the context of the HE workforce

- Expansion
- Changes in funding level and structure
- Unequal institutional differentiation

Turning points

- The 1973 and 2008 crises
- Public underfunding produced two different kinds of tensions in each system

France

- Staff numbers historically low in France: Not only the historical product of the university system but increasingly the result of public underfunding which put further pressure on staff numbers and increased casualisation and individualisation of career
- Tension between the vision of HE as a national, egalitarian and unified public service in tension with the increasing differentiation of the jobs positions (Barrier and Picard 2020)

UK

- The rise in staff numbers masks increasing inequalities of resources and staffing across the sector, produced further casualisation especially in post 1992
- Persistent underrepresentation with gender and ethnicity differences remaining strong
- Tensions within the marketised system around the distribution of resources, student experiences and staff development

Remarks

- A reversal of public/private substitution is needed to rebalance HE expansion and develop a fairer process of institutional differentiation based on the reduction of the inequalities in resources including staff development
- More data to follow on staff positions, type of employment, working conditions and salaries.

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- Carpentier, V. (2021) “Three Stories of Institutional Differentiation: Resource, Mission and Social Inequalities in Higher Education”, *Policy Reviews in Higher Education*, 5(2), 197-241. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23322969.2021.1896376?src=>
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- Musselin (2004) *The long March of French Universities*
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The *sivistys* or Humboldtian university mission in Finland

Dr Elisa Brewis, University of Oxford, Department of Education

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private good	=	yksityishyödyke
public good	=	julkishyödyke
common good	=	?

*hyöty (noun) = benefit, advantage, profit

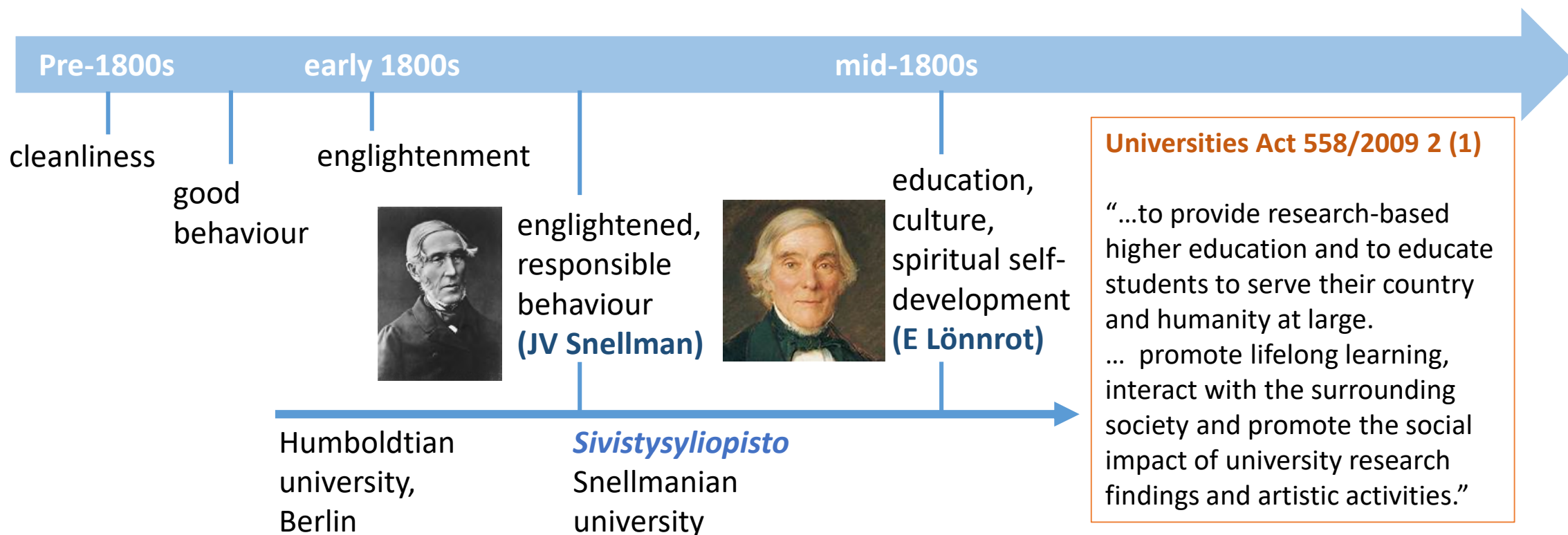
Economics, public policy

Not much **political** or **socio-cultural** significance

Not much relevance to **higher education** debate

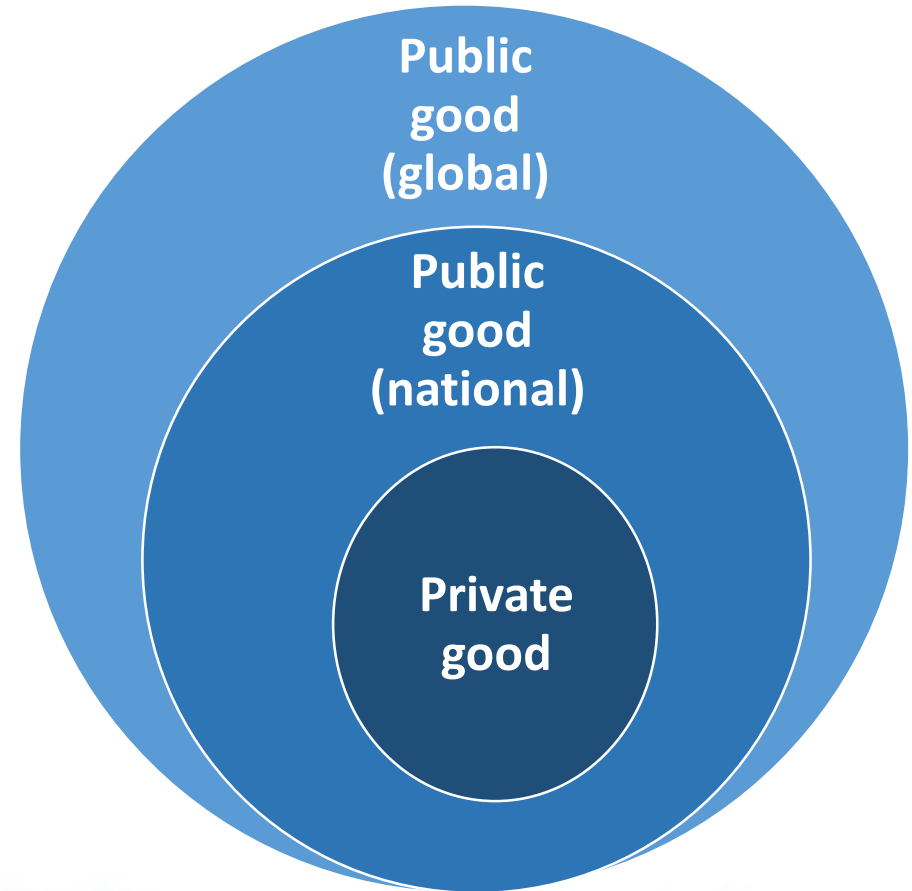
“I think, in the Finnish context the term public good and private good are not necessarily easy to translate. Because, in a society where still the **trust** is very much described with the **relationship** between individuals, the **relationship** between institutions and society, the **relationship** between business companies. In this kind of context, the making a difference between what is private good, meaning how I benefit from higher education personally, or what is public good, how the societies or communities benefit from higher education, it's **not relevant**. These are **not categories in conflict**, they're more like **intertwined**.” (FI10)

Historical origins of *sivistys* and *sivistysyliopisto* (Mutanen, 2012)



[explaining the meaning of *sivistys*]: “...education and culture, which means that we are not only educating the society in a formal way, but also making the culture livelier.

So, we get people who know things in a technical sense, but they also have good values in their minds, so they have, like, education in mind and in heart. You lift the society to a different level, like, a higher level, which is something you can't measure, but you get a country where the values are good, which is taking global responsibility and acting good on average in a big picture.” (F113)



References and further reading

Historical origins of *sivistys* and *sivistysyliopisto*

Mutanen, A. (2012) *Sivistysyliopisto hyödyn tuottajana*, in Matti Vesa Volanen (ed.) *Toiseksi Paras? Tieteentekijät ja uusi yliopisto*. Sastamala: Tieteentekijöiden Liitto. pp. 160-175

Links between the pre-independence nationalist movement and the *sivistys* role of education

Alapuro, R. (2019) *State and Revolution in Finland*. Brill E-books.

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Jalava, M. (2013). 'The Finnish Model of Higher Education Access: Does Egalitarianism Square With Excellence?' in Meyer, H., St. John, E.P., Chankseliani, M. & Uribe, L. (eds.) *Fairness in Access to Higher Education in a Global Perspective: Reconciling Excellence, Efficiency, and Justice*. Rotterdam: Sense, 79-94.

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