

HEA Look Ahead Forum Keynote, Wednesday 31st May 2017

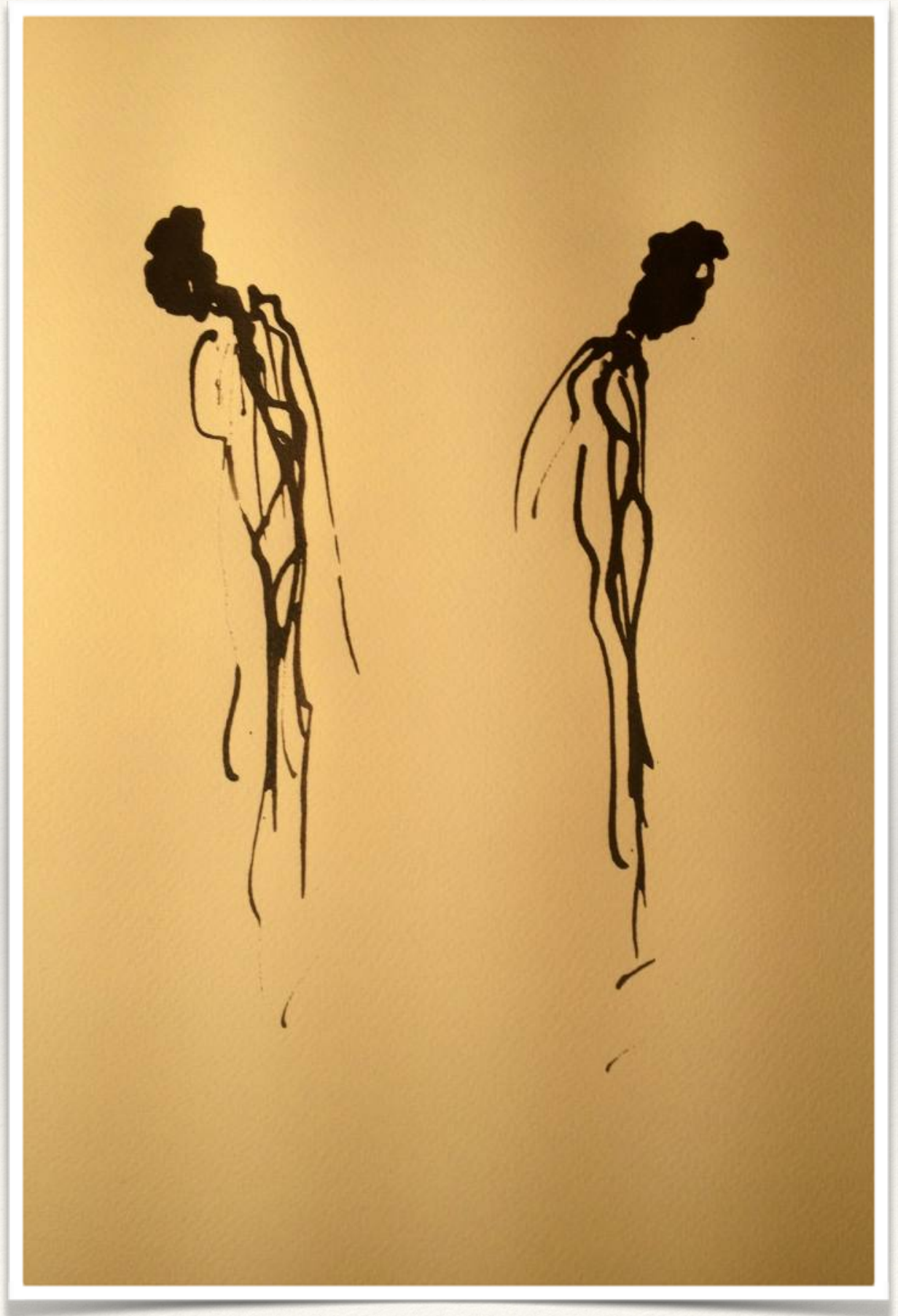
Higher education futures: which
issues and trends are most
significant for Ireland and the HEA?

Stephen Kinsella
University of Limerick

“Separation” By Marta Oppikofer

Three thoughts

Is the trend *really* our friend?
What is education *for* in 2017?
What *might* it be for in 2057?

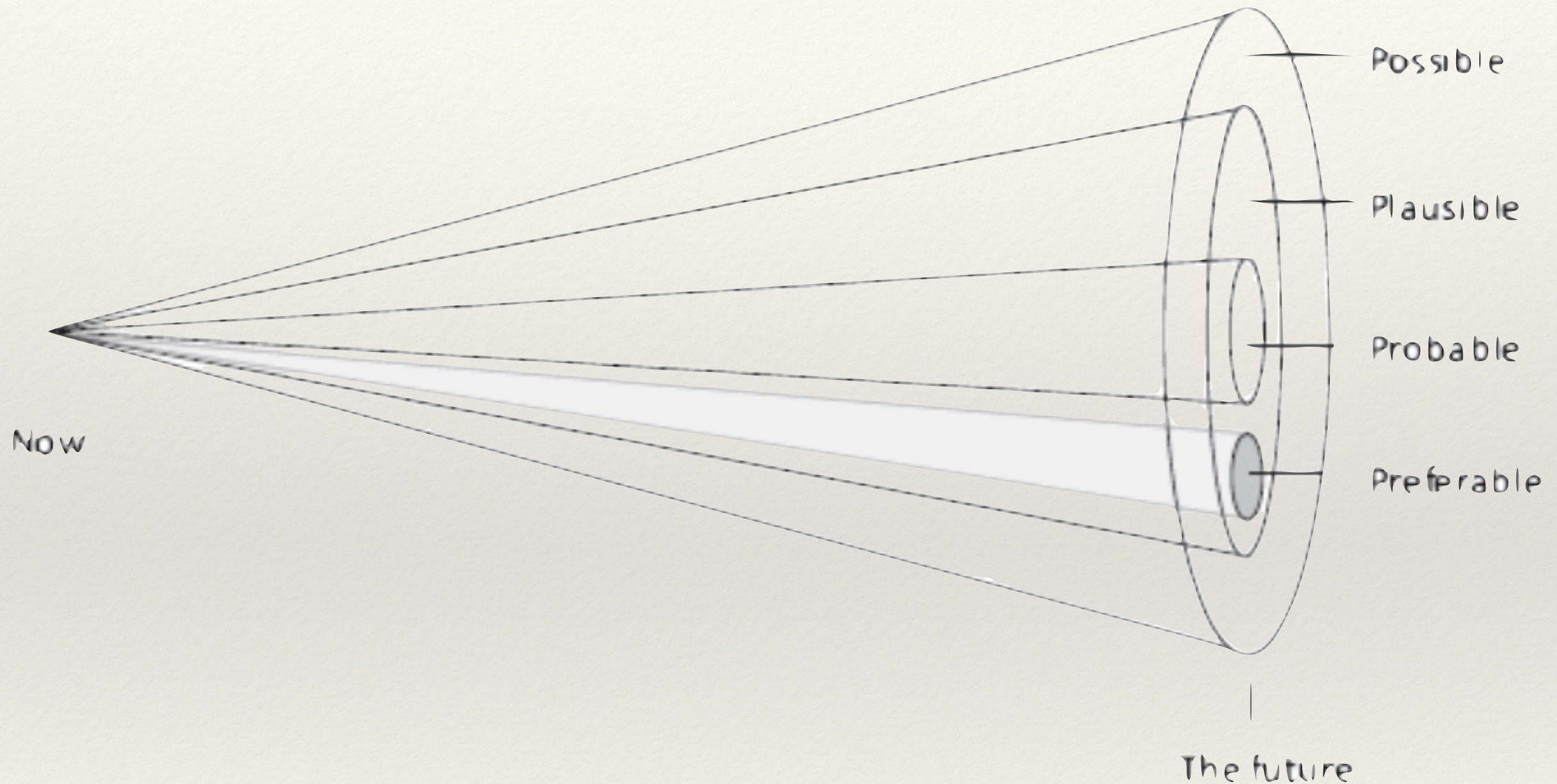


Key texts



- ❖ Clancy, *Irish Higher Education: A Comparative Perspective*
- ❖ Flannery and Cullinan, *Economic Insights on Higher Education Policy in Ireland*
- ❖ Bowen, *Higher Education in the Digital Age*
- ❖ Nichols, *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters*
- ❖ Harry Collins, *Why Democracies Need Science*

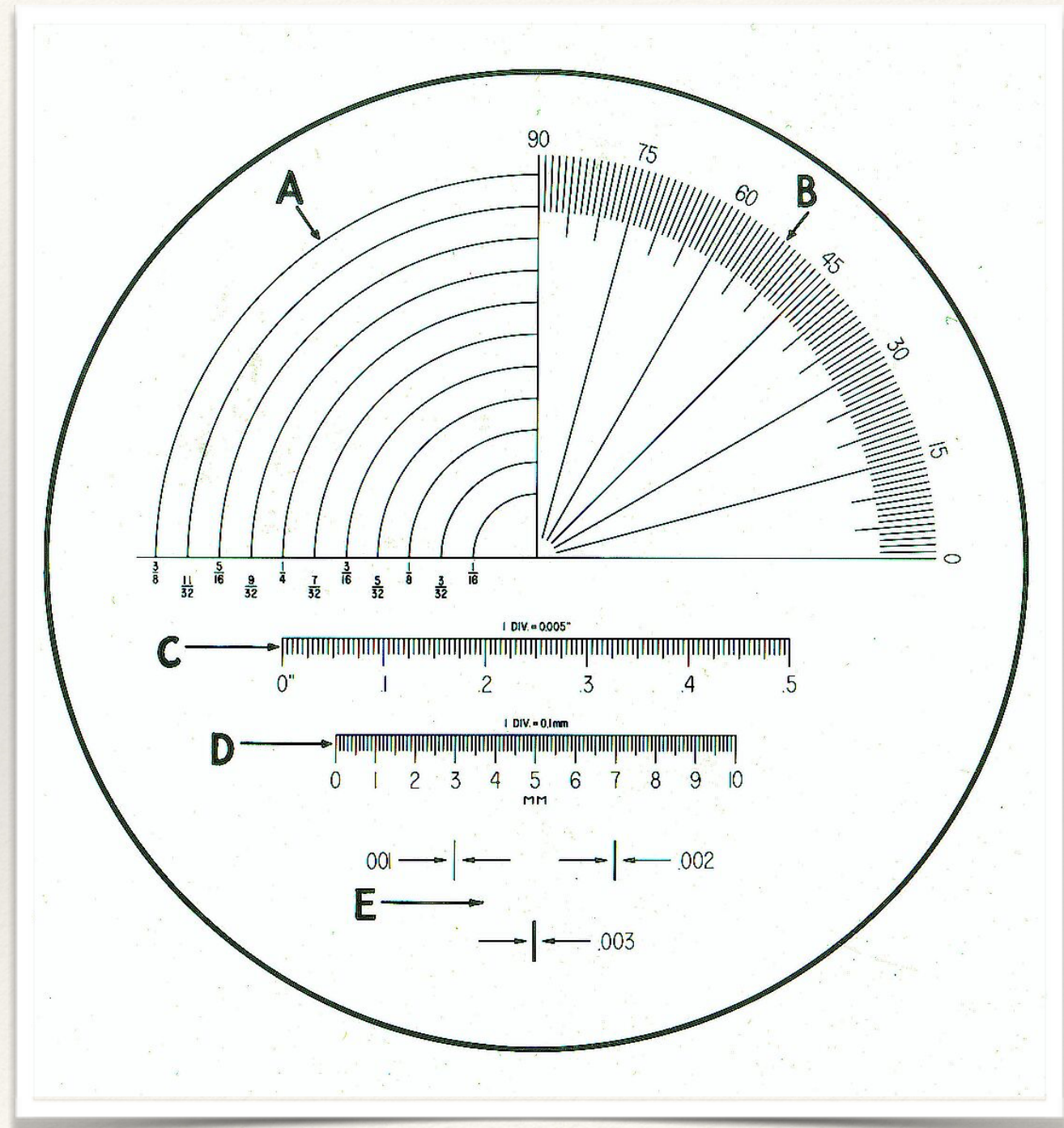
Mega Trends



Megatrend: profound social economic, environmental, technological change occurring on a multi-decadal scale (Naisbitt, 1982)

Three scales to understand key trends

- ❖ *1000 Years. 1088-2088.* Teaching the elites. Scholarship.
- ❖ *100 Years. 1916-2016.* Teaching and Research, democratisation and internationalisation.
- ❖ *10 Years. 2017-2027.* University as policy instrument. Funding forces a move from state-sponsored provision to a hybrid model. Erosion of public trust.



Megatrends in education

- ❖ What is education *for*? Education vs training vs skills.
- ❖ Mode of delivery / Technology: Few to few, many to many, none to many.
- ❖ Introducing debt cycles into Education: The role of Financialisation / Commodification.
- ❖ Erosion of Trust in Institutions.

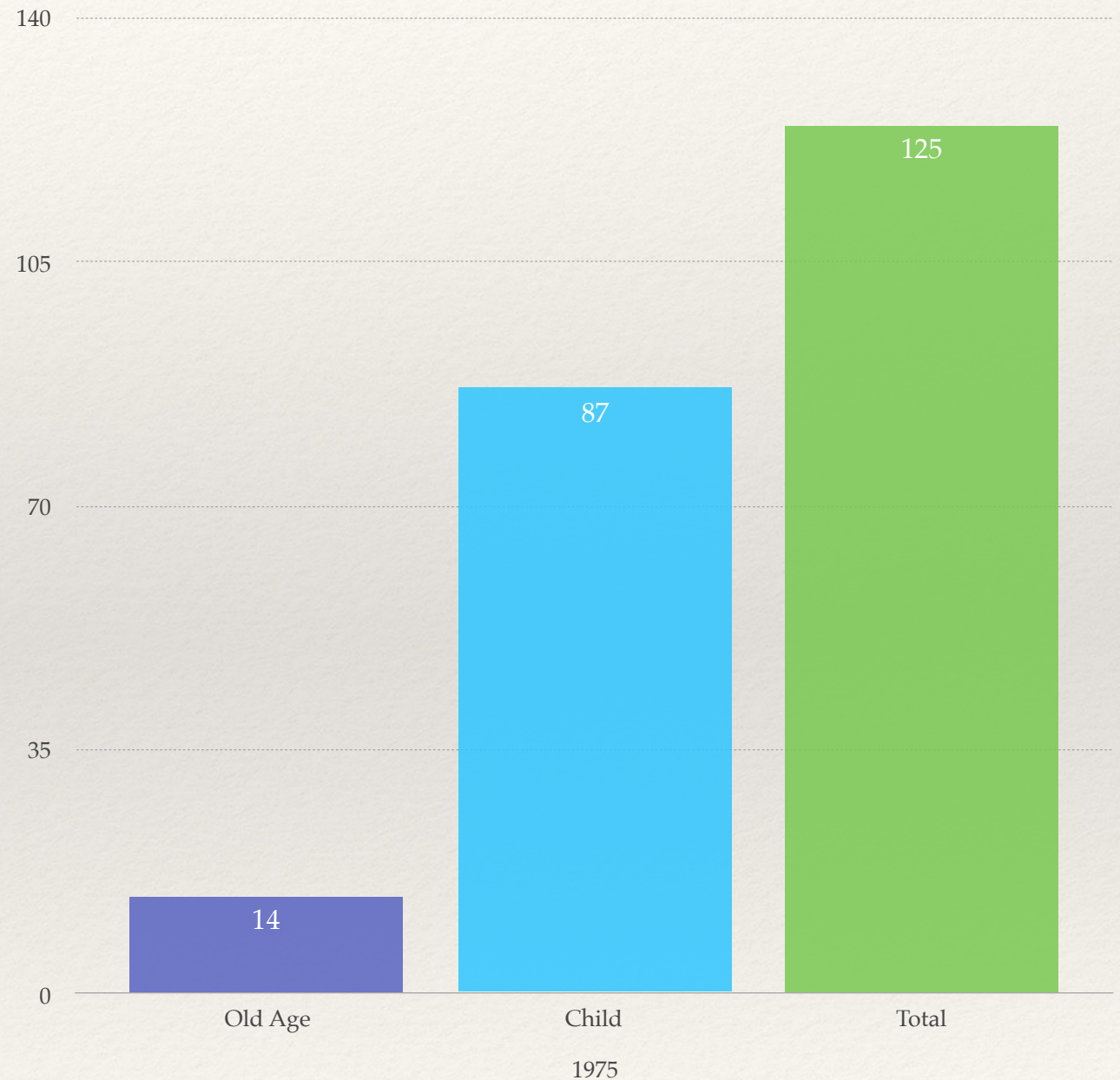
Defining characteristics of Irish HE system

- ❖ Late 20th Century: mostly state funded, mostly full time.
- ❖ Early 21st Century: partly state funded, mostly whatever pays the bills.
- ❖ Mid 21st Century: some private, some public. Key trend is urbanisation, not demographics.

Looking into the future

- ❖ Two major trends from 1950 to 2050.
- ❖ First is demographic.
- ❖ Older (+75 / (25 to 69))
- ❖ Child ((0-24) / (25 to 69))
- ❖ Second trend: funding of education as a public good.

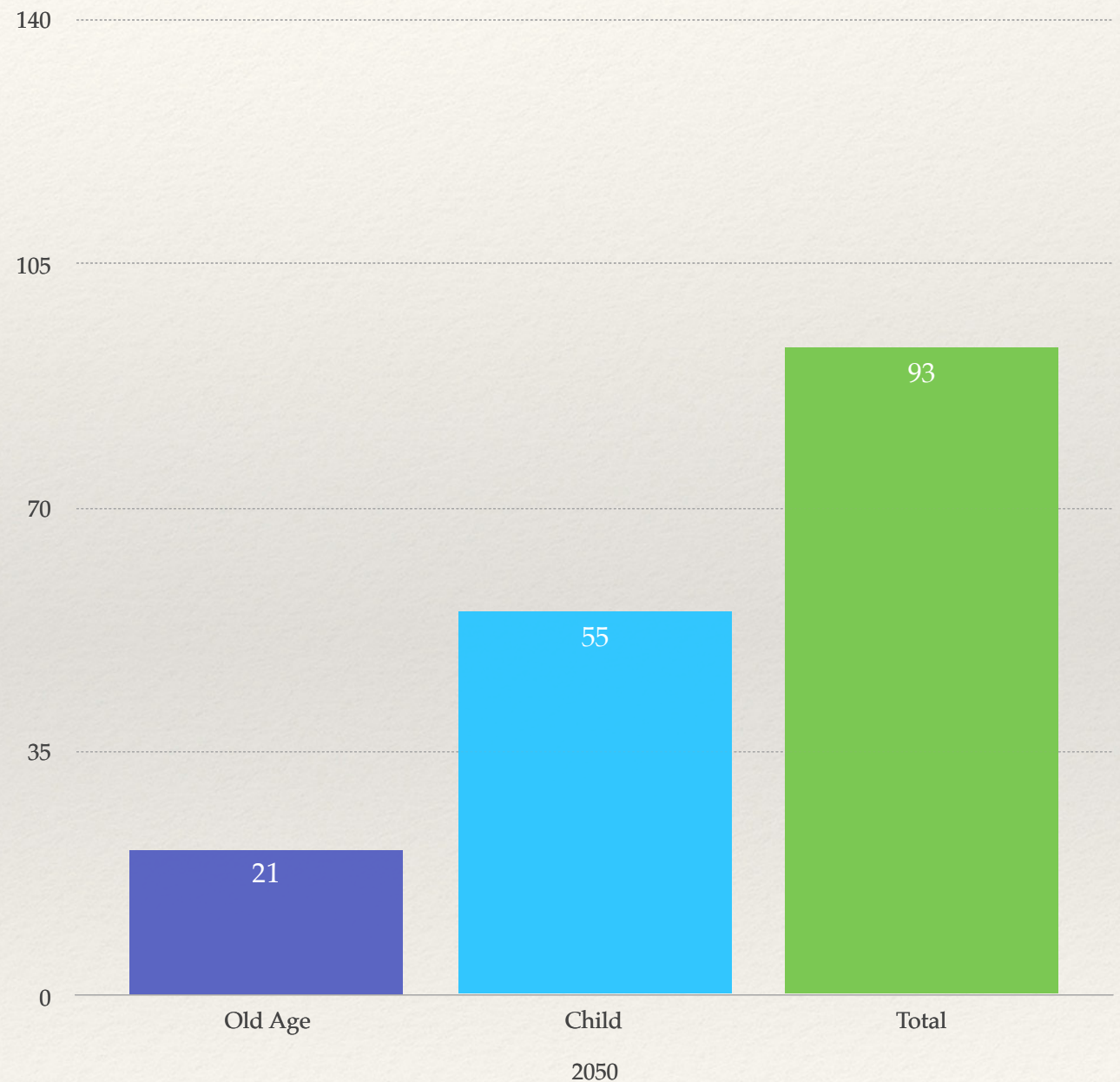
Irish Dependency Ratios. Source: United Nations ESA.



Looking into the future

- ❖ Two major trends from 1950 to 2050.
- ❖ First is demographic.
- ❖ Older (+75 / (25 to 69))
- ❖ Child ((0-24) / (25 to 69))
- ❖ Second trend: funding of education as a public good.

Irish Dependency Ratios. Source: United Nations ESA.



Urbanisation and the IoTs



Why fund universities?

- ❖ Adam Smith used his hat to get paid, lecture by lecture
- ❖ Social return to RD > private return to RD.
- ❖ Role of State historically important; (Mazzucato, *Rethinking Capitalism*, 2016): Government as Venture-Capitalist in a sense as can fund long-tail / deeper innovation. Mostly a US / UK idea.
- ❖ Case for funding HEIs is clear. **Level** of funding is not.
- ❖ Universities in general do not know unit costs, margins, or price thresholds of major courses. Implies ability to plan forward is limited.

Short term: Stylised Facts on Funding

	Income (€m)	State Contribution (% of total)	FTES	€ per student
2007 / 8	1850	78	157,012	11, 783
2015 / 16	1700	63	188,943	8,997

Long term: Returns to Education

	Private (%)	Fiscal (%)
Male	43.5	82.3
Female	32.7	53.9
Average	37.6	69.1

Funding & policy implementation

- ❖ HEIs are **currently** tools of government policy & are regulated entities subject to government control.
- ❖ The **further** government funding falls as % of funding, the **less** responsive HEIs will be to changes in government policy.
- ❖ Move to (largely) private funding model implies changes in the nature of universities.



Universities as Truth Generators

- ❖ Institutions must earn back the public's trust.
- ❖ This can be done via better governance and by being generators of truth.
- ❖ Harry Collins (2017): The notion of 'ubiquitous' expertise as the foundation for a just society.
- ❖ E.G. Jury Service (This is very close to Polanyi's ideas around the scope & characteristic of tacit knowledge).

Universities as Mertonian Norm Generators

- ❖ Merton (1942, *Normative Structure of Science*). Norms of universalism, communalism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism help scientists generate new ideas.
- ❖ Can we move universities towards this? I.e. not trying to become rich, try to become famous via good works.
- ❖ Stops erosion by institutional damage.

Summary: How the HEA can help

- ❖ Pursue Integration of higher education (HEA) and further education (SOLAS) agencies to improve both FE and HE at scale & with technological changes.
- ❖ Sponsor and Institute of Governance to advise HEIs on appropriate structures for HEIs to win back trust.
- ❖ IoTs & Unis will become less responsive to government policy as funding sources change & government funding remains roughly constant. Some HEIs may fail, some may become fully private. HEA can alter policy to slow down or speed this process up.

HEA Look Ahead Forum Keynote, Wednesday 31st May 2017

Higher education futures: which
issues and trends are most
significant for Ireland and the HEA?

Stephen Kinsella
University of Limerick
