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## English Medium Instruction in Scandinavian Higher education: issues and controversies

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# English-Medium Instruction in Scandinavian Higher Education: Issues and Controversies

Dr. Anna Kristina Hultgren  
The Open University

English Medium Instruction: Global Views and Countries in Focus  
Department of Education, University of Oxford

Wednesday 4 November 2015

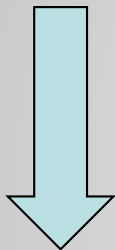
# Outline

- Definition of EMI
- EMI in European higher education
- Scandinavia: the EMI debate
- Conclusions: problems and solutions?

# Definitions of EMI

# EMI programs

Official language use

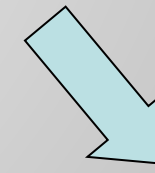


Mono/bilingual

*De facto* language use



Multilingual

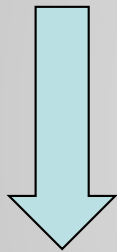


Exogenous

Endogenous

# EMI programs

Official language use



Mono/bilingual

*De facto* language use



*Multilingual*

# EMI programs

Official language use

*De facto* language use

EMI operationalised as:

1. Proportion of HEI offering English-taught programs
2. Proportion of English-taught programs
3. Proportion of students enrolled in English-taught programs

(Wächter and Maiworm 2014)

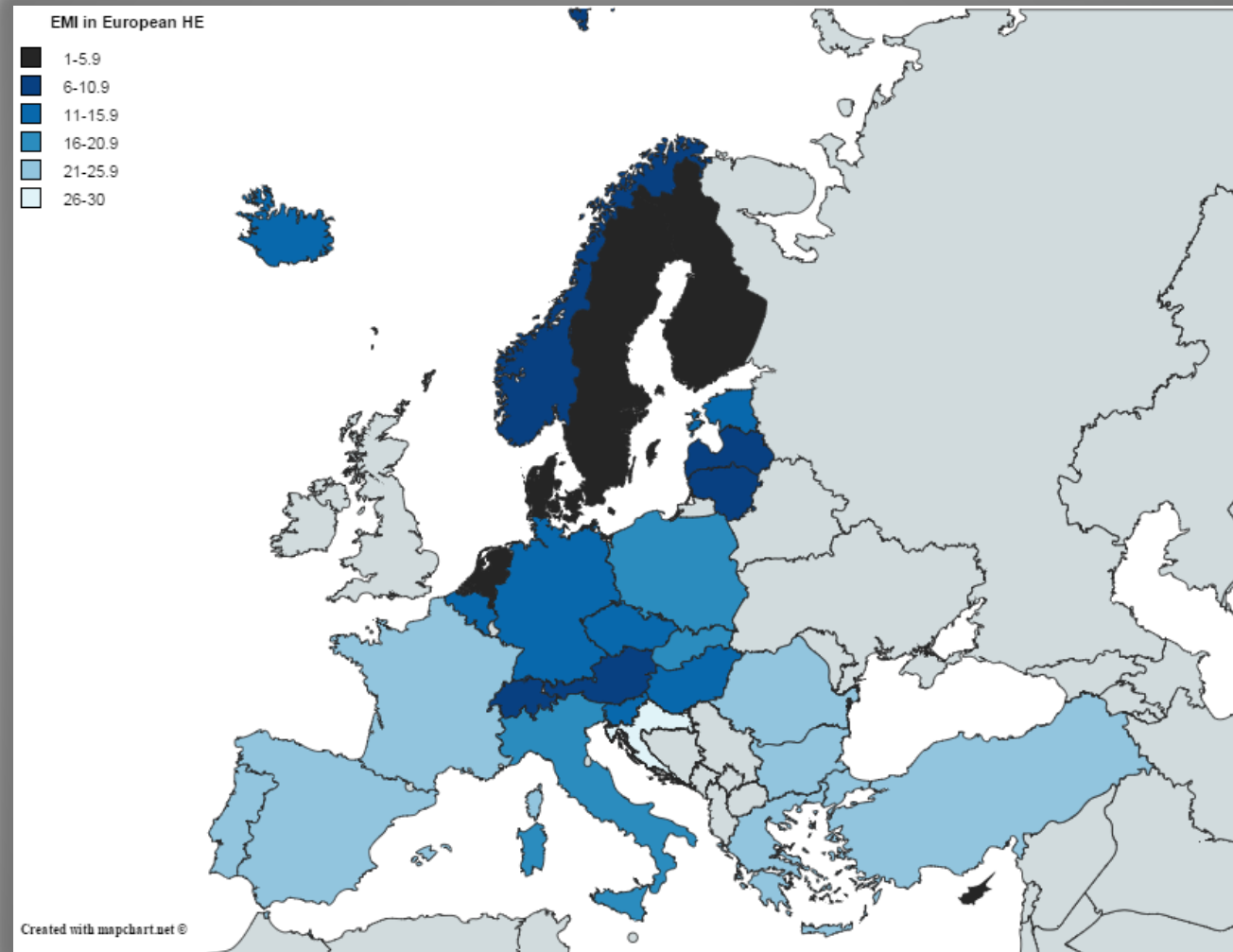


*Multilingual*

# EMI in European higher education

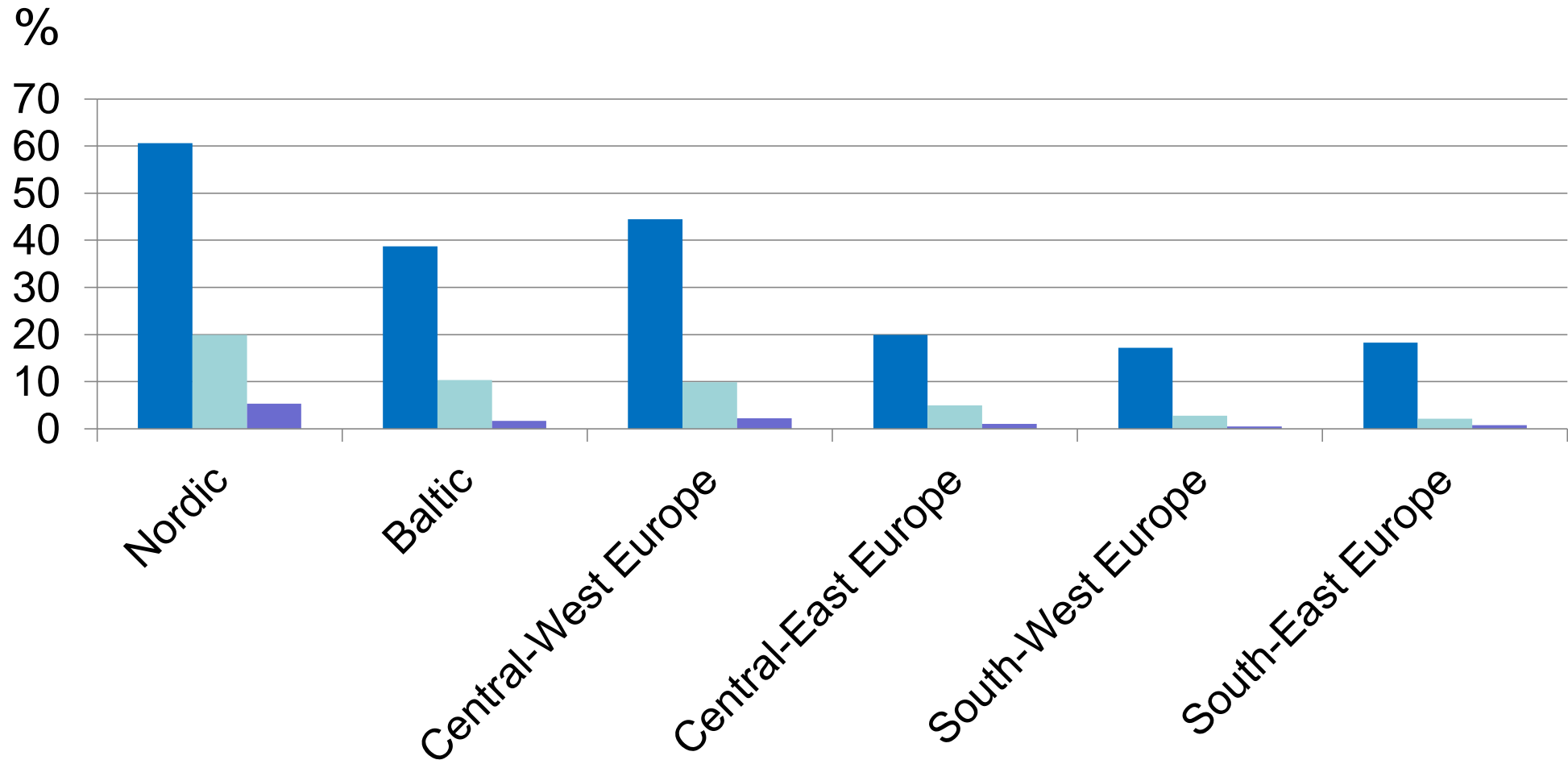


# EMI in European higher education



(Wächter and Maiworm 2014)

# North-south divide in EMI



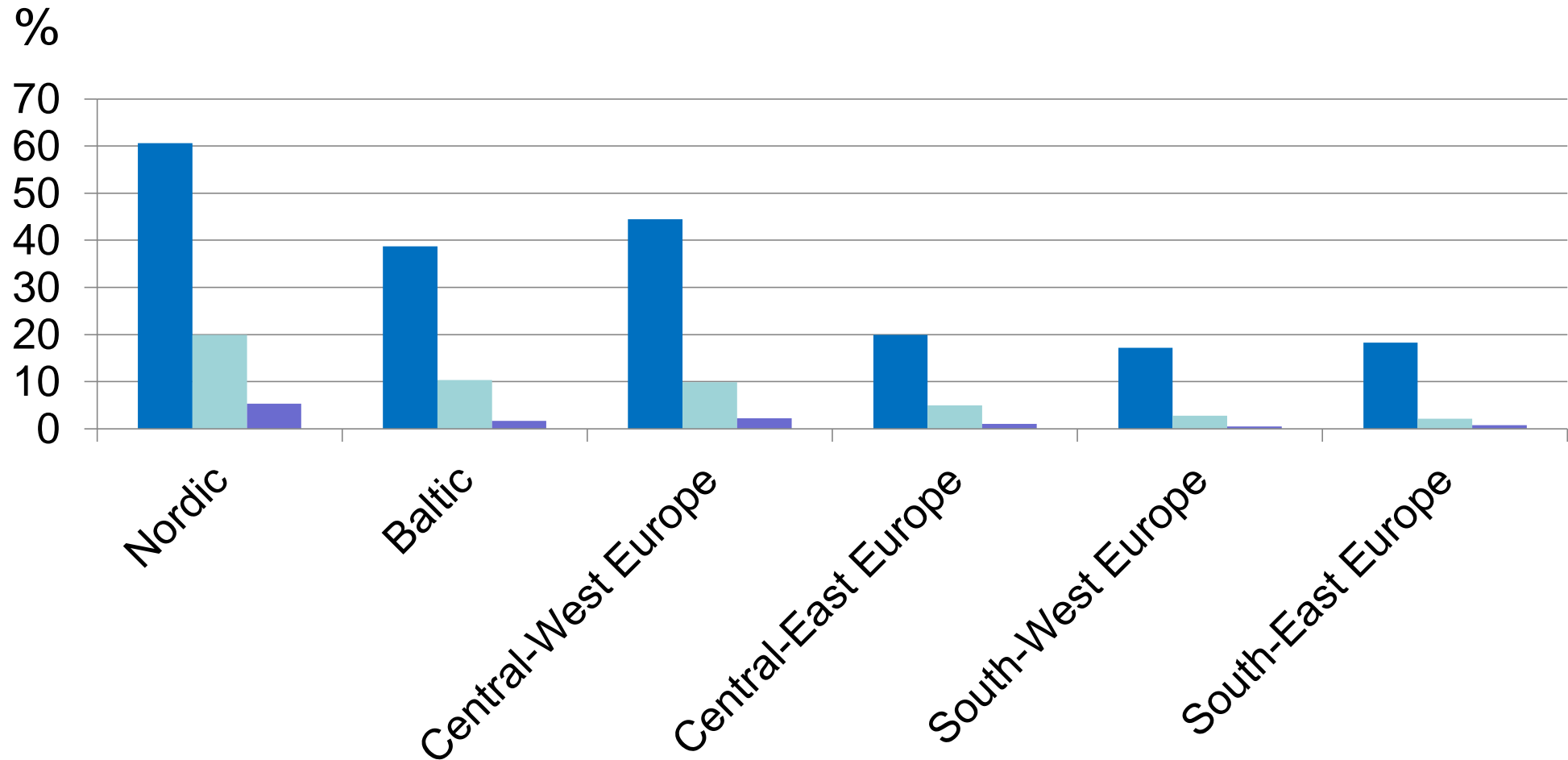
(Wächter and Maiworm 2014)

# Scandinavia: the EMI debate

# Scandinavia: the linguistic context

- Officially monolingual: Swedish, Danish, Norwegian
- English first foreign language
- English proficiency levels high

# North-south divide in EMI



(Wächter and Maiworm 2014)

# EMI debate in Scandinavia

## Pro-national language

- Ministry of Culture
- Language Councils
- Intellectual left
- Far-right politicians
- *Some* researchers

## Pro-English

- Ministry of Science and Education
- University administrators
- Right-wing and centre politicians
- *Some* researchers

# EMI debate in Scandinavia

## Pro-national language

- Ministry of Culture
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## Pro-English

- Ministry of Science and Education
- University administrators
- Right-wing and centre politicians
- *Some* researchers

- The affected?

(Jensen and Thøgersen 2011; Dimova et al. 2014; Hultgren et al. 2014)

# Pro-national language policies

Central to the solution to the challenges faced by universities is the concept of **parallelingualism**. The purpose of a **parallelingual** strategy is to ensure the opportunity for researchers, graduates and students to operate internationally, while continuing to develop a scientific language and terminology in all areas, which is usable in a Danish-medium context.

(Danish Ministry of Culture 2008: 47, my translation)



# Pro-national language policies

The **parallel use of language** refers to the concurrent use of several languages within one or more areas. None of the languages abolishes or replaces the other; they are used in parallel.

(Nordic Council 2007: 93)

# EMI debate in Scandinavia

## Pro-national language

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## Pro-English

- Ministry of Science and Education
- University administrators
- Right-wing and centre politicians
- *Some* researchers

“Pro-English” policies: key words



**KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY**

**HUMAN CAPITAL**

**COMPETITION**

**INNOVATION**

**INTERNATIONALIZATION**

(Holborrow 2013)

“Pro-English” policies: key words



**KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY**

**HUMAN CAPITAL**

**COMPETITION**

**INNOVATION**

**INTERNATIONALIZATION**

(Holborrow 2013)

# "Pro-English" policies: trickle down

## Supranational

- OECD

## National

- Ministry of Education

## Institutional

- Internationalization strategies

# "Pro-English" policies



## **Deliberate EMI**

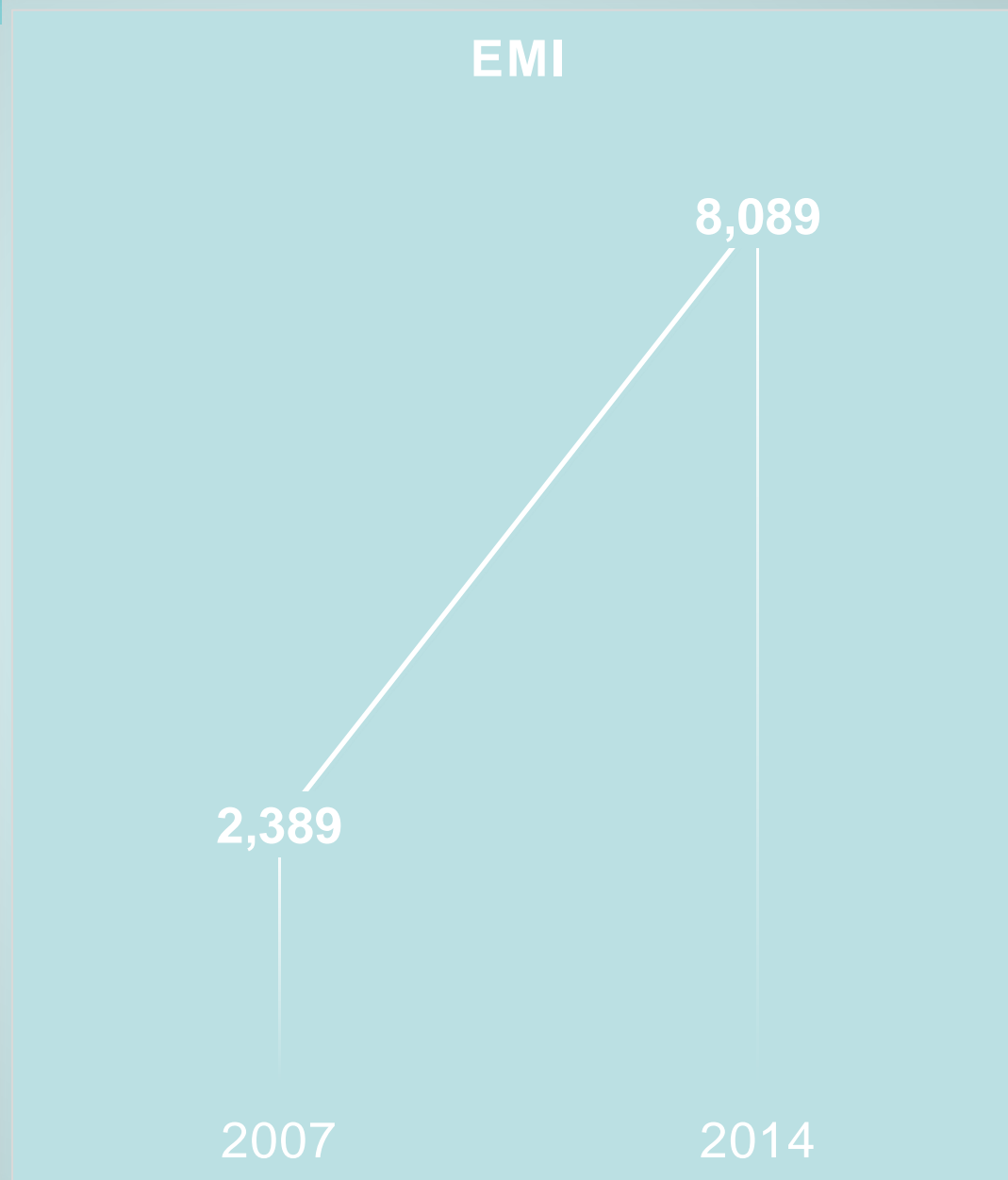
Norway (Ljosland 2015)

## **Non-deliberate EMI**

Denmark (Hultgren 2014)

(Costa and Coleman 2012; Hultgren 2014; Piller and Cho 2013)

# Growth of EMI in European higher education



**239% growth**

(Wächter and Maiworm 2014)

# Conclusion: is EMI a problem?

## Yes

EMI is a 'pandemic'

(Phillipson 2009)

## Neutral

EMI is 'still a rare option for the student population as a whole'

(Wächter and Maiworm 2014)

## No

'The international services must be strengthened'

(University of Copenhagen 2012)

The jury is still out...

...and don't wait for it to come in!



# Conclusion: solutions to EMI?

Pain relief

Cure

# Conclusion: solutions to EMI?

## Pain relief

- 'Translanguaging'
- English language support
- Better preparation

(Thøgersen et al. 2014; Klaassen 2010; Garcia and Wei 2013)

## Cure

- What education systems do we want?
- What is its role in the nation state and in the globalized society?
- What role should rankings and other performance indicators play?
- How can change be brought about in a globally interconnected system?

(Piller and Cho 2013; Ricento 2012; Block et al. 2012)

Thank you!

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