



# How to imagine the future?

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**WHY TO IMAGINE THE FUTURE?**

Education is  
fundamentally  
about the  
future

Our schools need to prepare students for jobs that do not exist yet...

Using technologies that have not been invented yet...

In order to solve problems that haven't even been identified yet...

We are  
doomed to be  
free

(J.P. Sartre)

More social mobility

More freedom to choose

Identity

Life style

Profession

Less social rules and control

Boundaries are dissolving

States

Spheres of life

Organisations

Complex  
problems have  
simple, easy to  
understand,  
**wrong** answers

(H.L. Mencken)

De-centralisation

More stakeholders

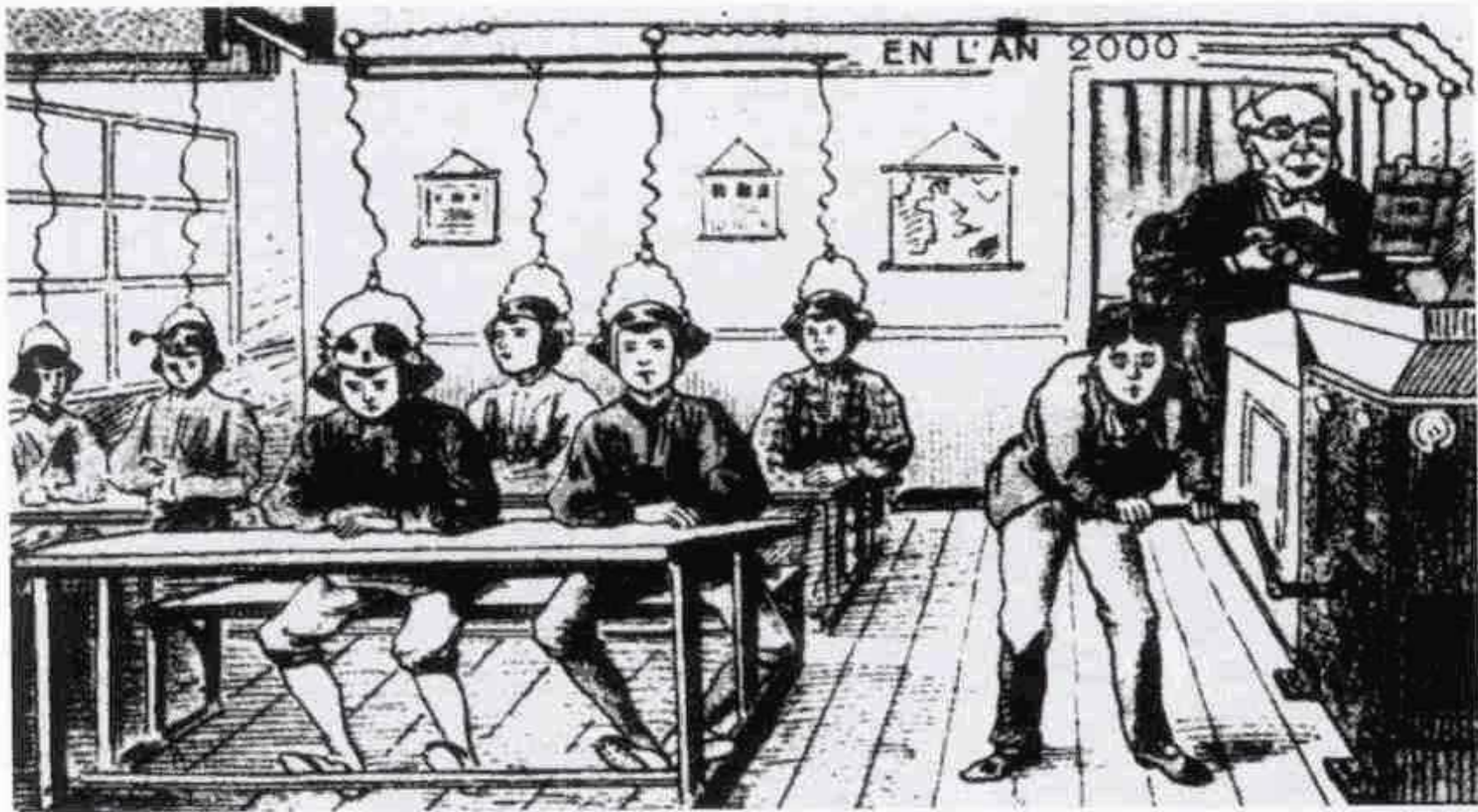
More objectives

Diverse student bodies

Diverse workforce

Demand-sensitivity

Personalisation



**IMAGINING THE FUTURE IS DIFFICULT**



“Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau.”

*Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics, Yale University*

*Just before the 1929 Wall St. Crash*



“Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value.”

*Maréchal Ferdinand Foch*

*French Marshall during WW 1*







**HOW TO IMAGINE THE FUTURE?**

# What can we do

Scenario method

Horizon scan

Environmental scanning

Back casting

Visioning

Cyclical Pattern Analysis

Trend Impact Analysis

Delphi method

*and many, many more  
methods...*

# Types of Uncertainties

	Slow Pace	High Pace
Unpredictable	Climate change	Youth culture
Predictable	Urbanization	Aging populations

# What can we do?

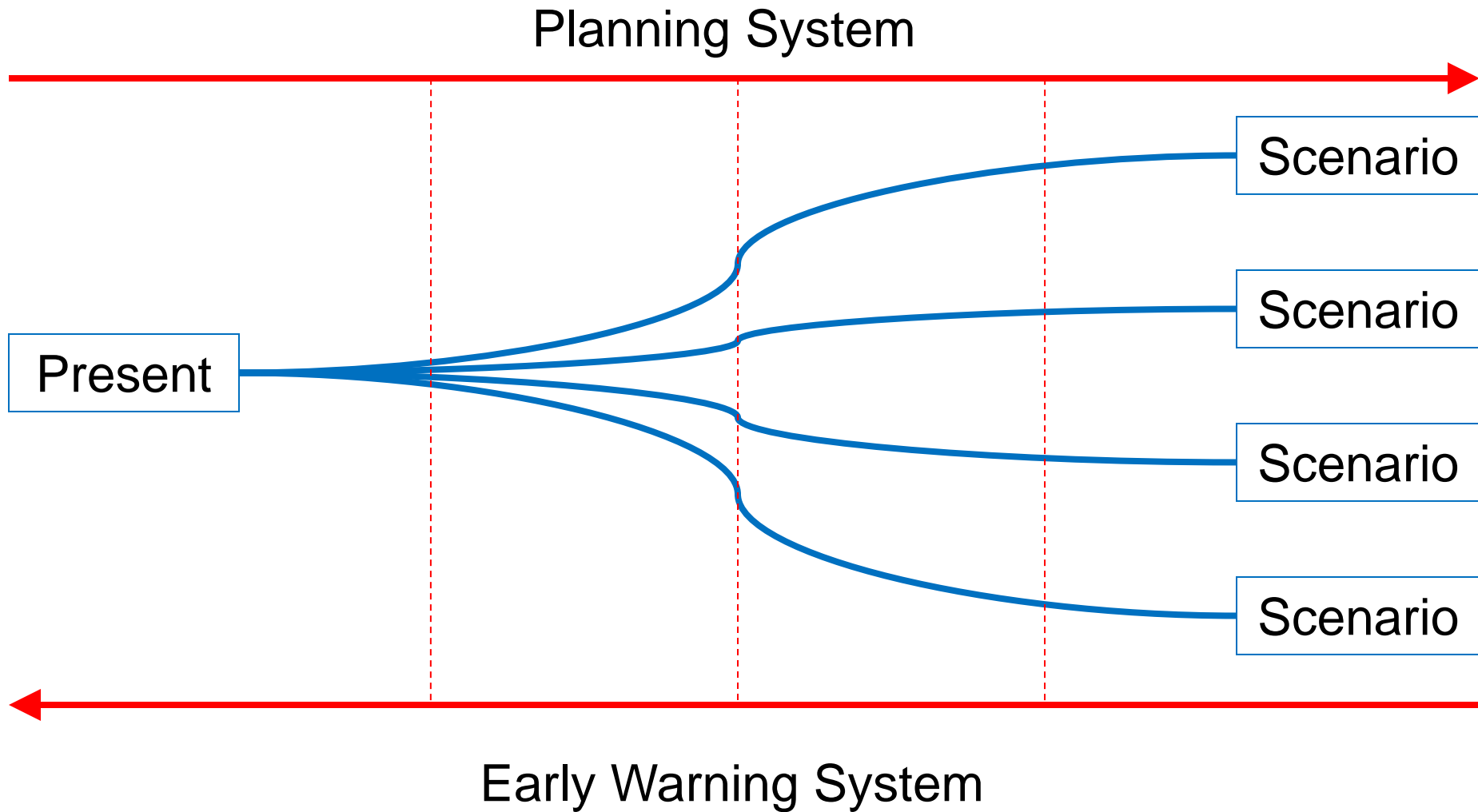
Use trends to

- Register historical change
- Understand context for future change
- Help to focus on the big transformations

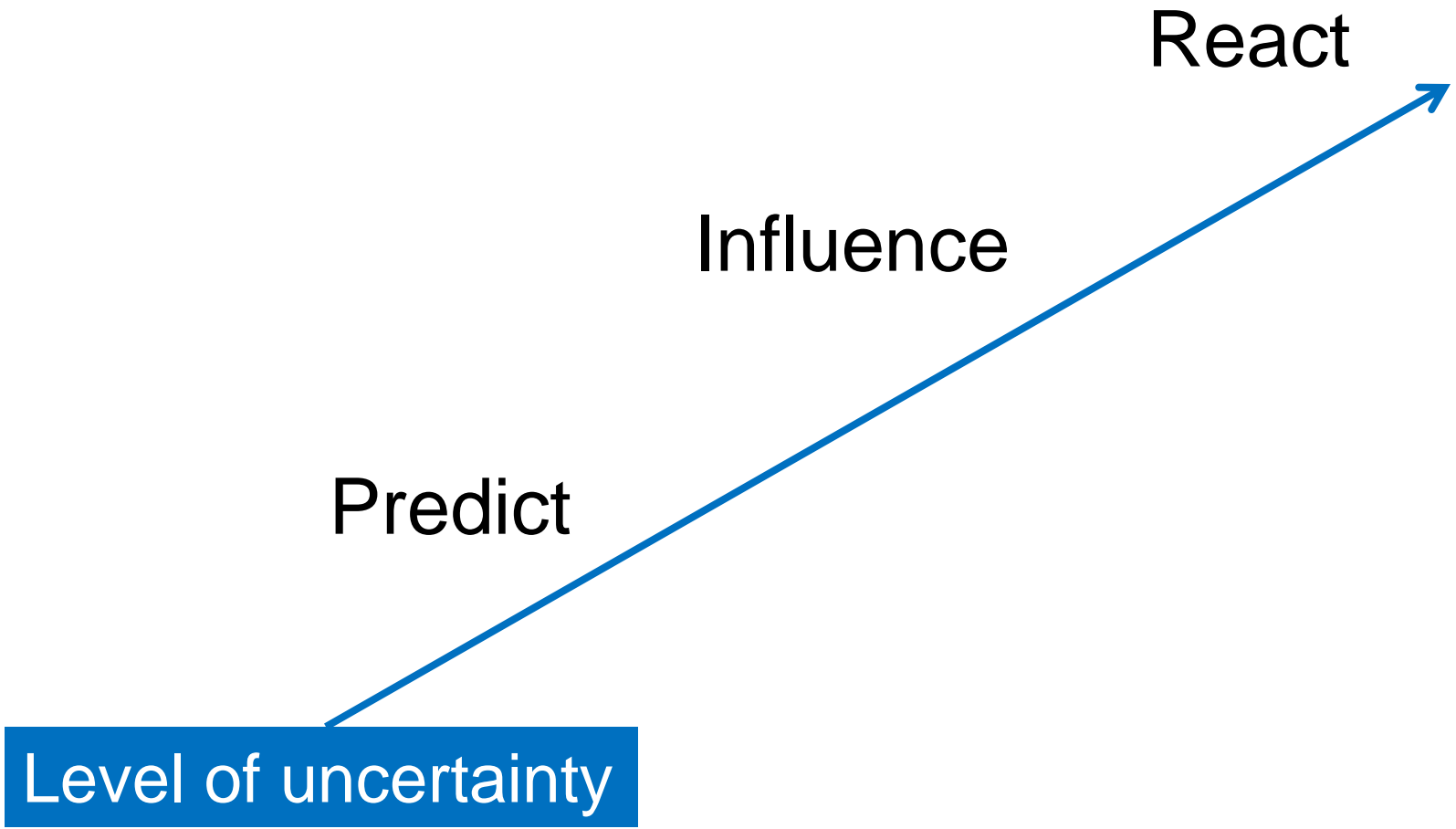
... and create scenarios when the future is too volatile and unpredictable

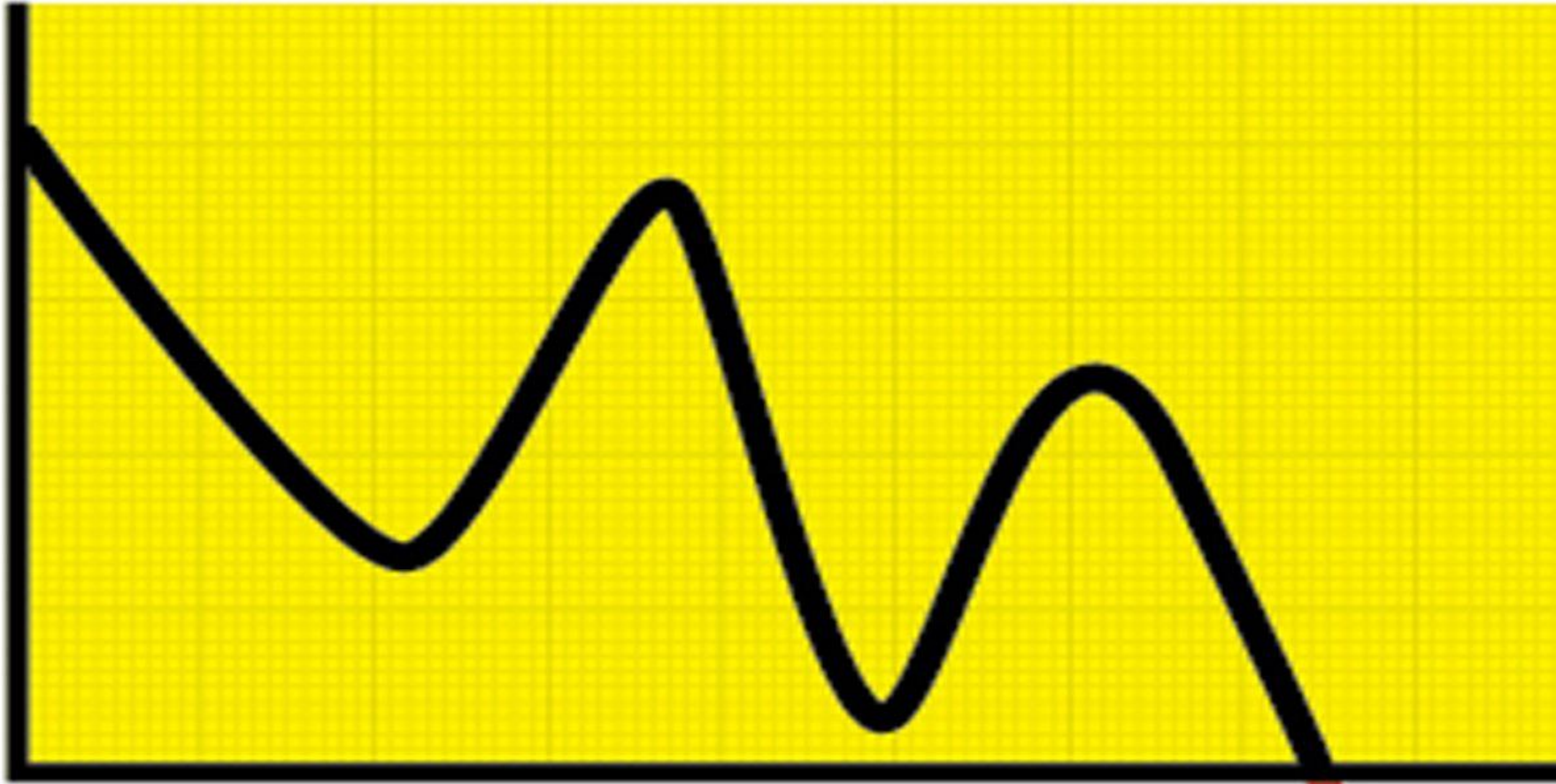
In order to imagine the future creatively *and* rigorously

# Using Scenarios



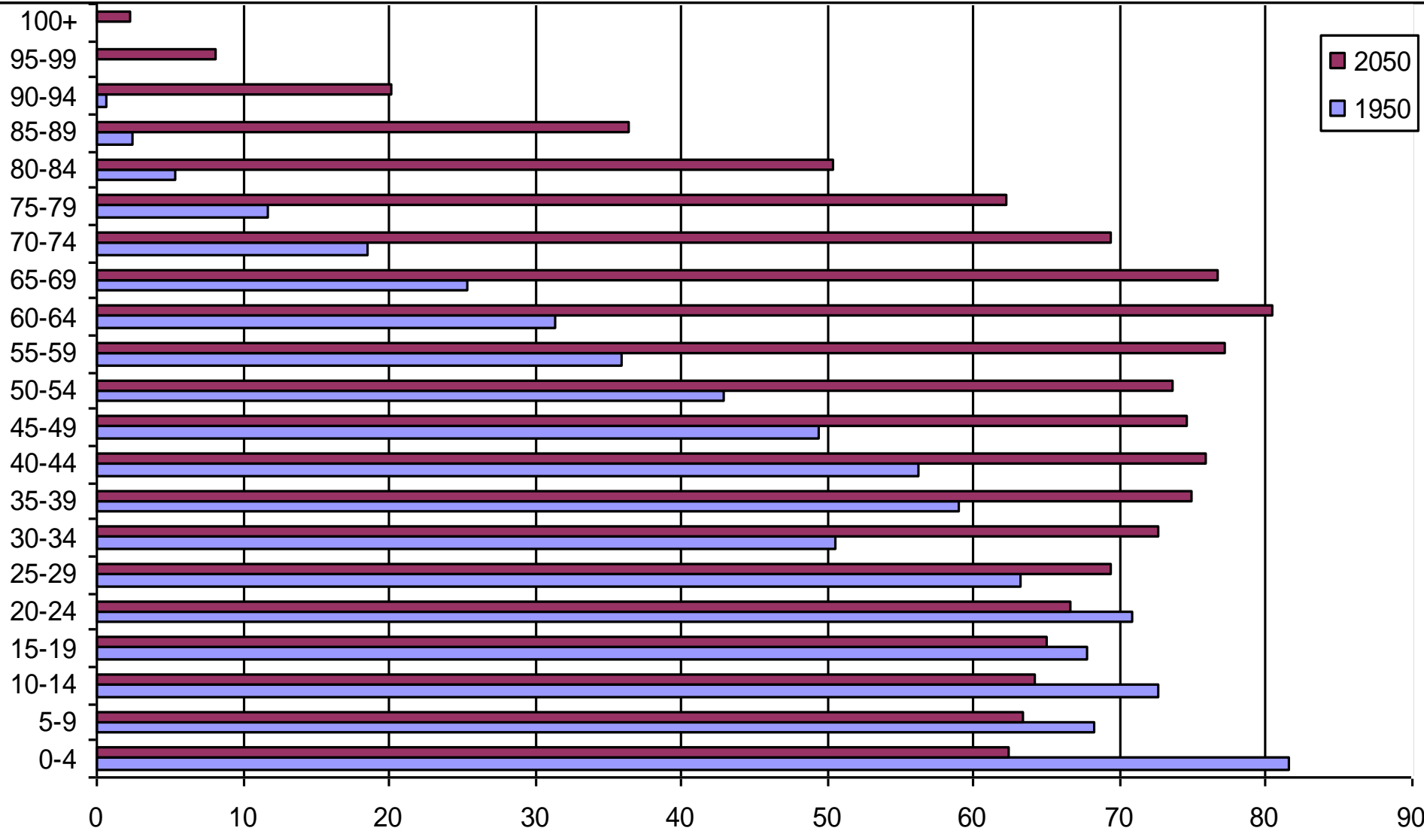
# Dealing with uncertainty





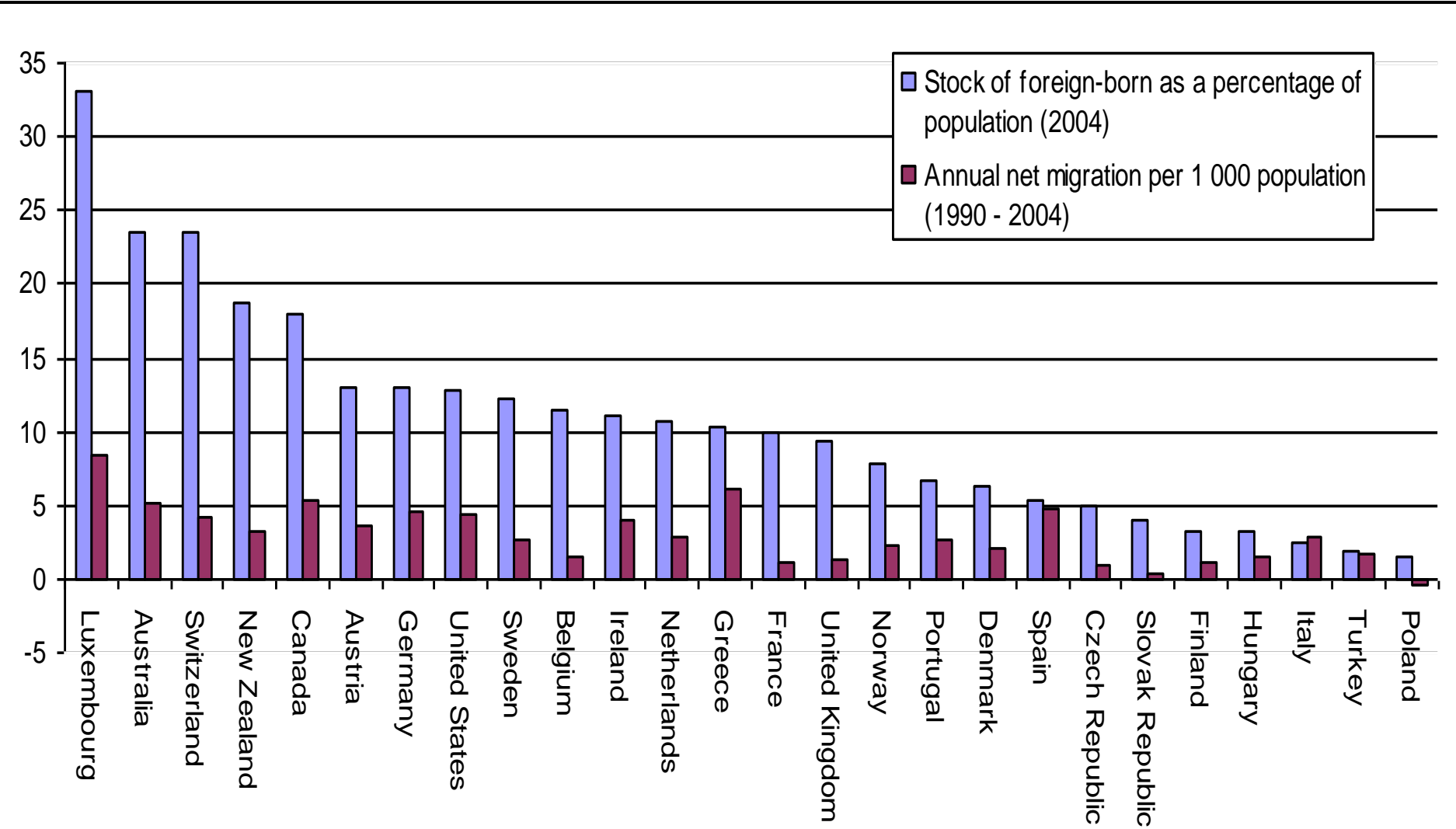
**SOME TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE**

# From “bottom-heavy” to “top-heavy” age structures

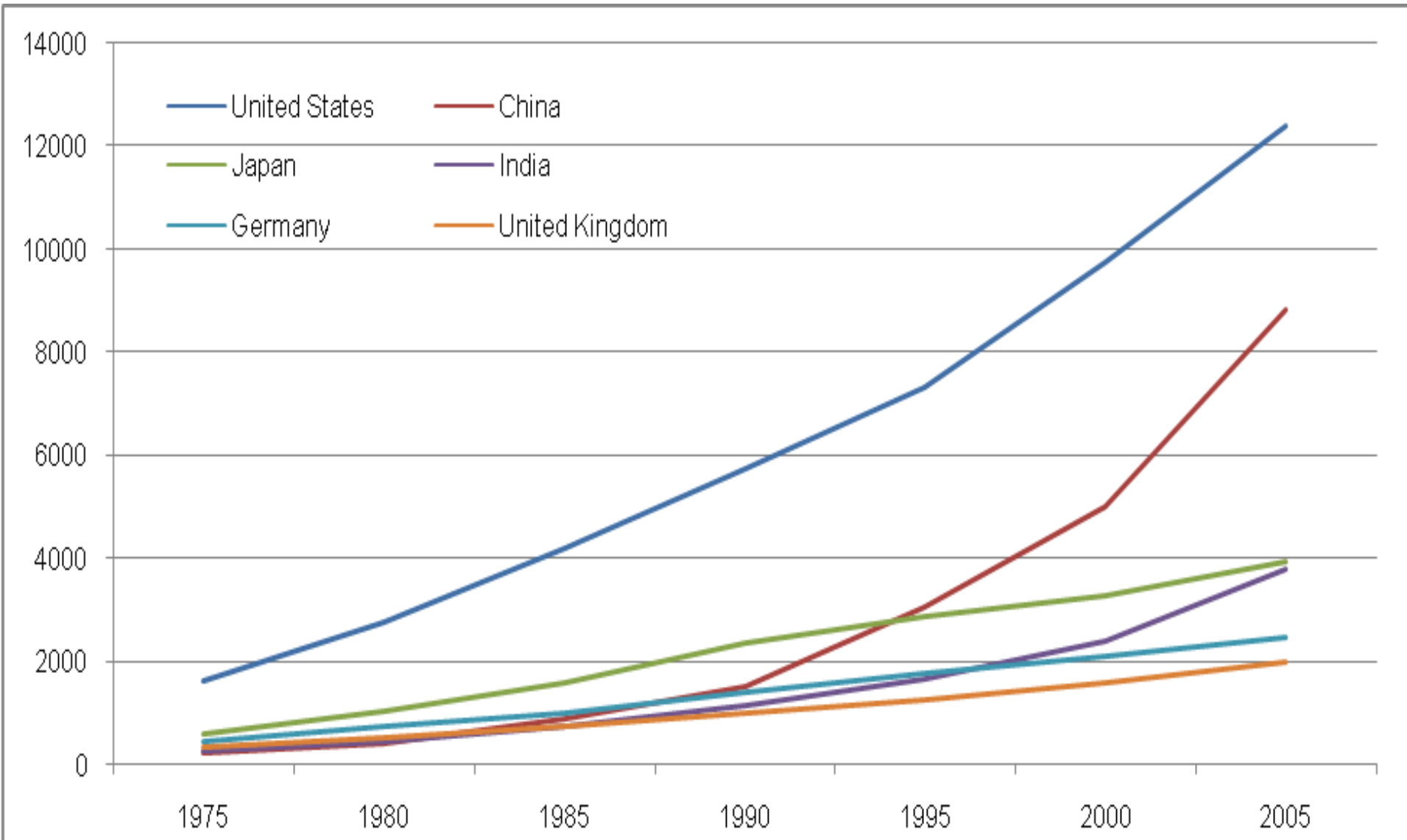




# More enter than leave OECD countries, with substantial numbers now “foreign born”

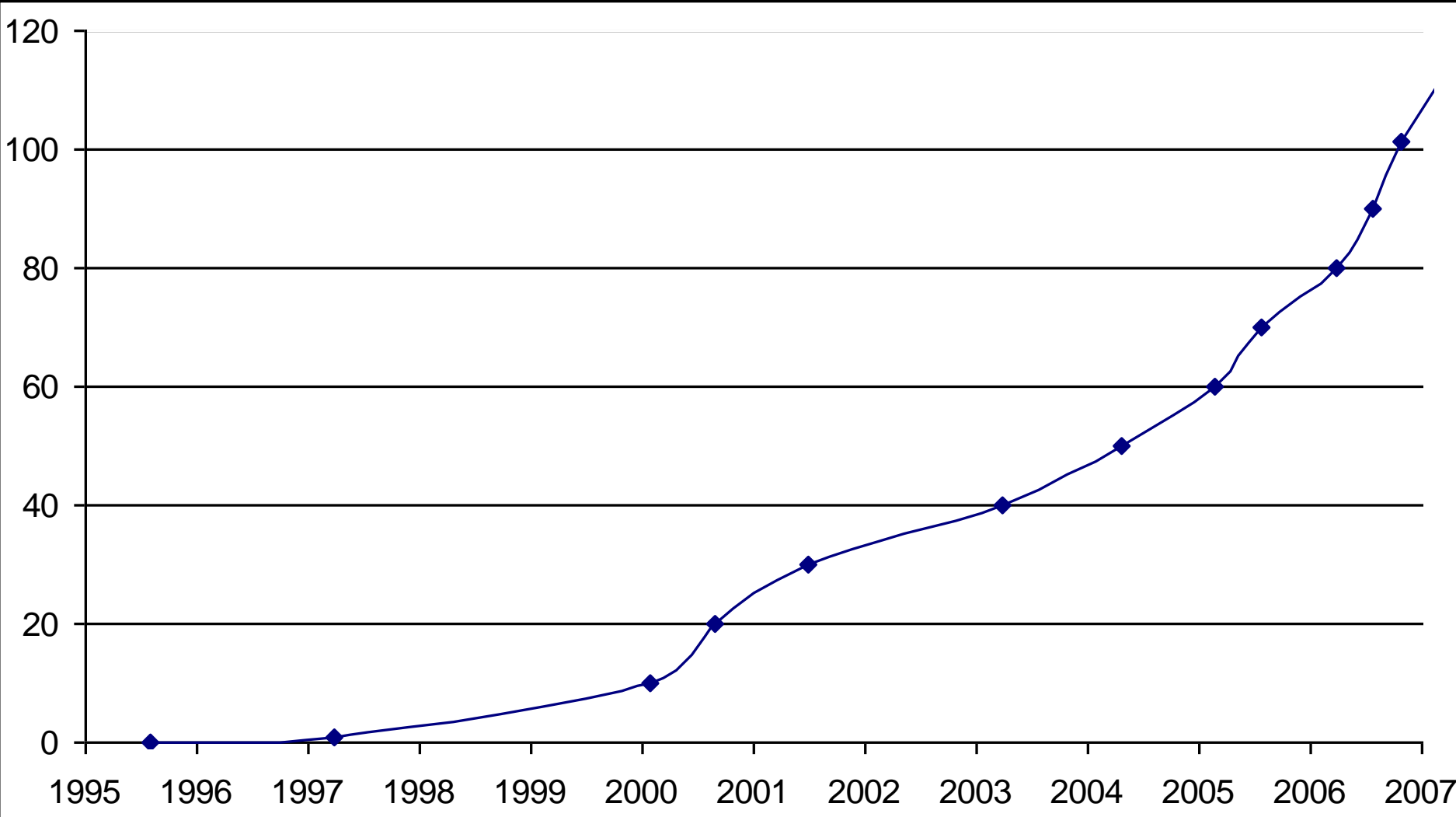


# China and India are Catching Up

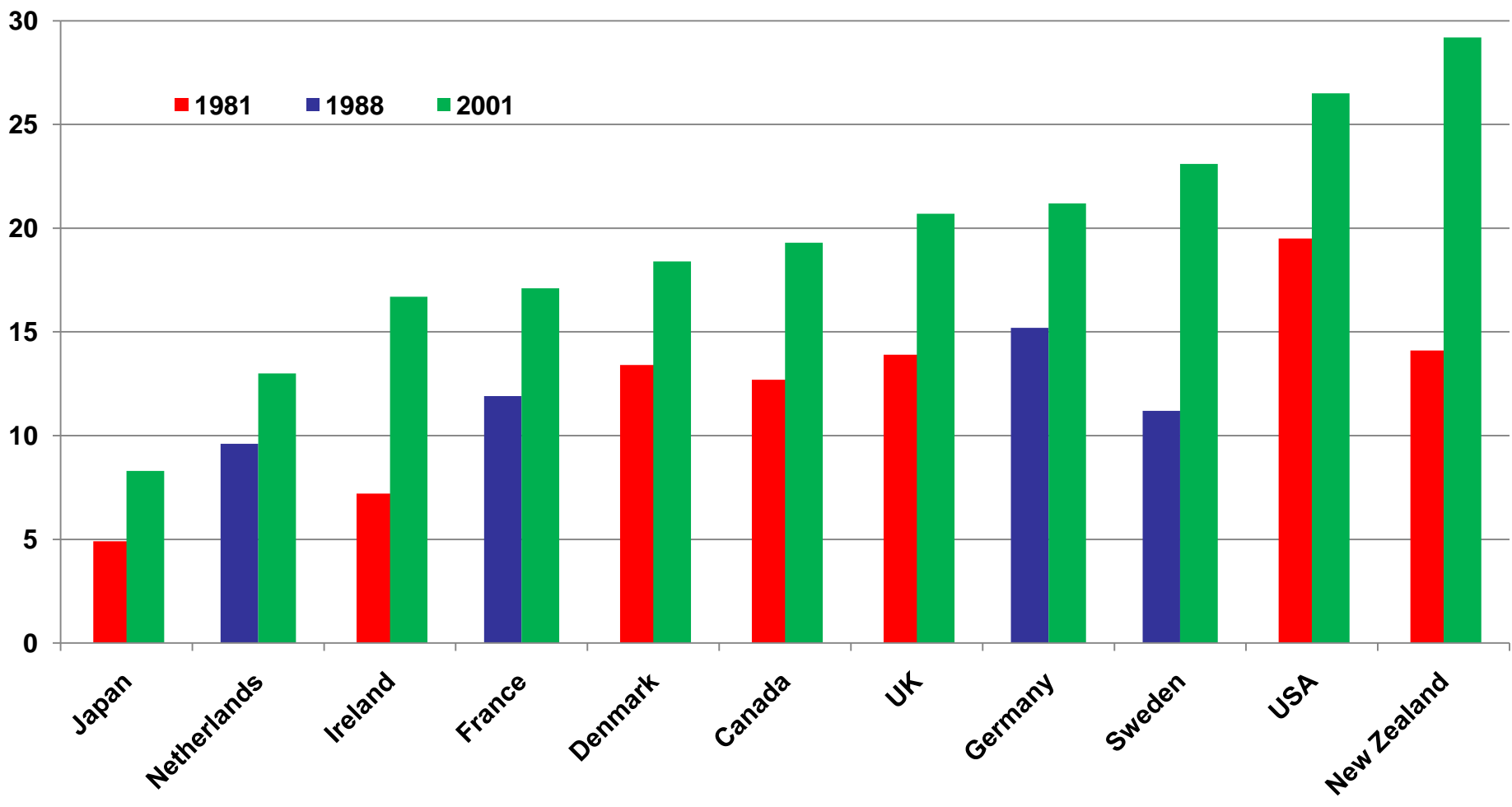




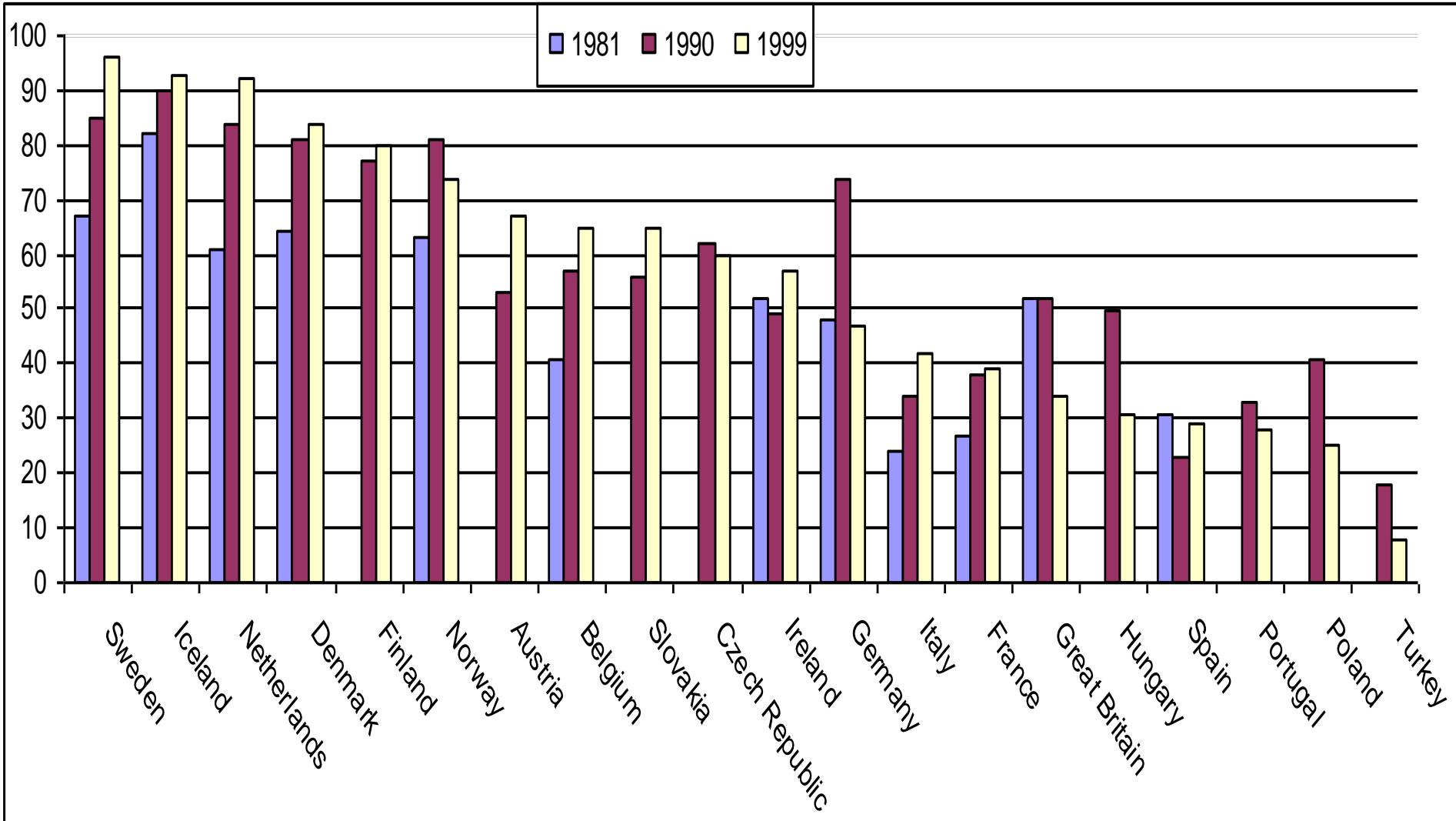
# Number of websites worldwide increasing rapidly



# More single-parent families



# No General Decline in Membership of Voluntary Organisations





**FROM IMAGINING TO IMPACT**

# What can futures thinking do?

Future thinking to

Create dialogue

Ontario

Build capacity

Victoria

Inform Policy and Strategy

Finland, Alberta

# When does it work?

Future thinking  
needs

Political support

Strong leadership

Independence

Strong networks

Existing momentum

Readily available capacity

Tools and materials



# By way of conclusion

Education  
councils could

Develop knowledge agenda

Ask the big questions

Act as knowledge brokers

Act as radar screens