

Repurposing Science Communication



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Royal Scientific Society



Science in the Swiss Public
The State of Science
Communication and Public
Engagement with Science
in Switzerland



- The Swiss population associates "science and research" mostly with medicine and STEM disciplines.

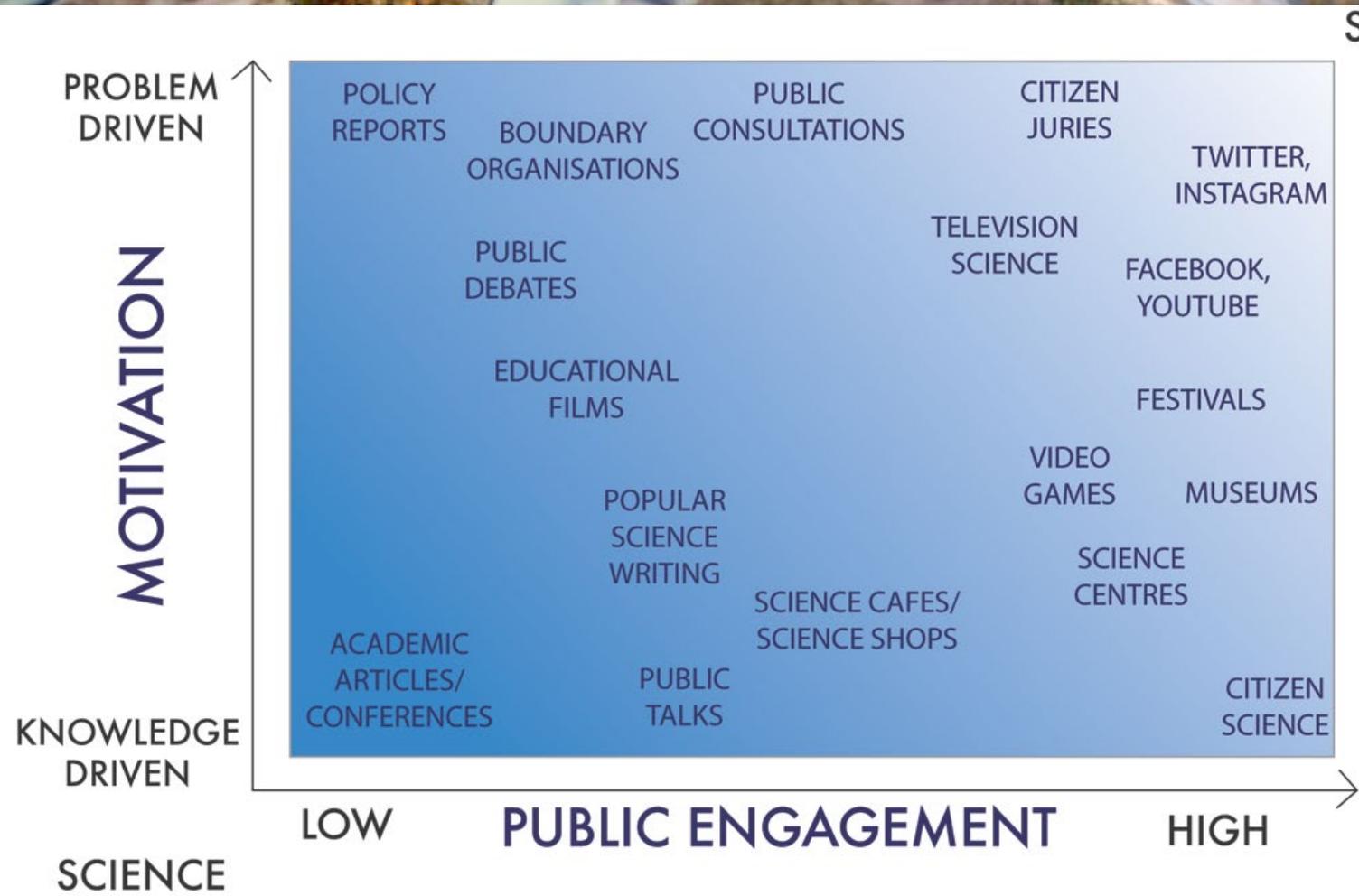
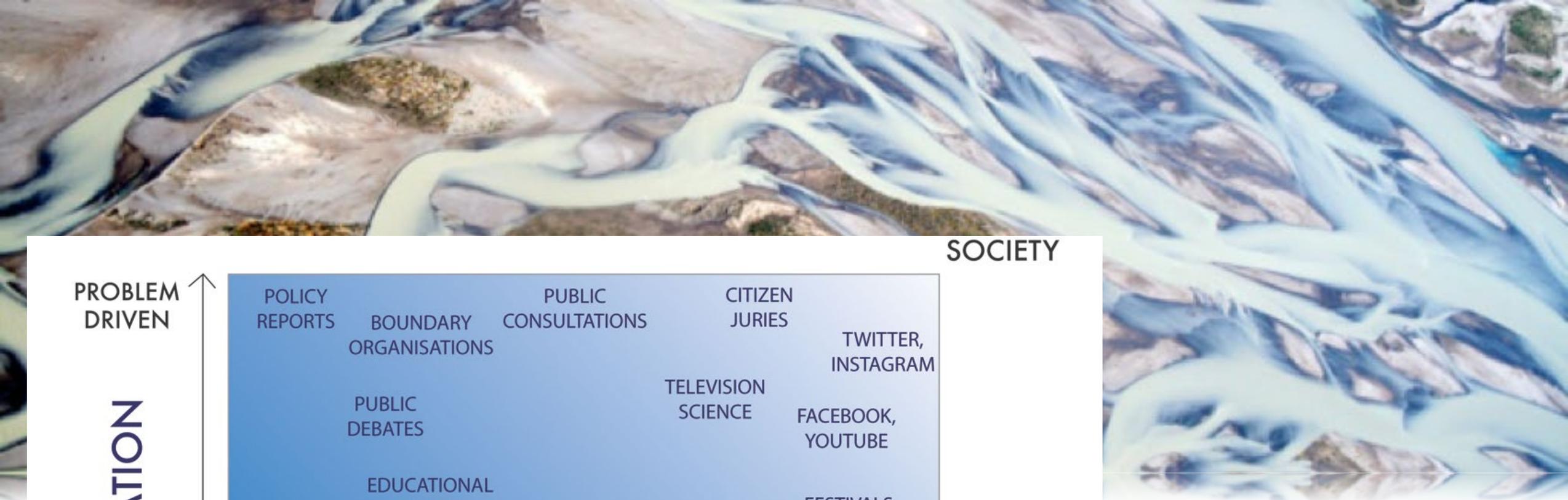
- The Swiss population perceives science positively. Trust in science and scientists in Switzerland is high and seems stable over time.

- Most Swiss residents are knowledgeable about science and well equipped to understand science-related content.

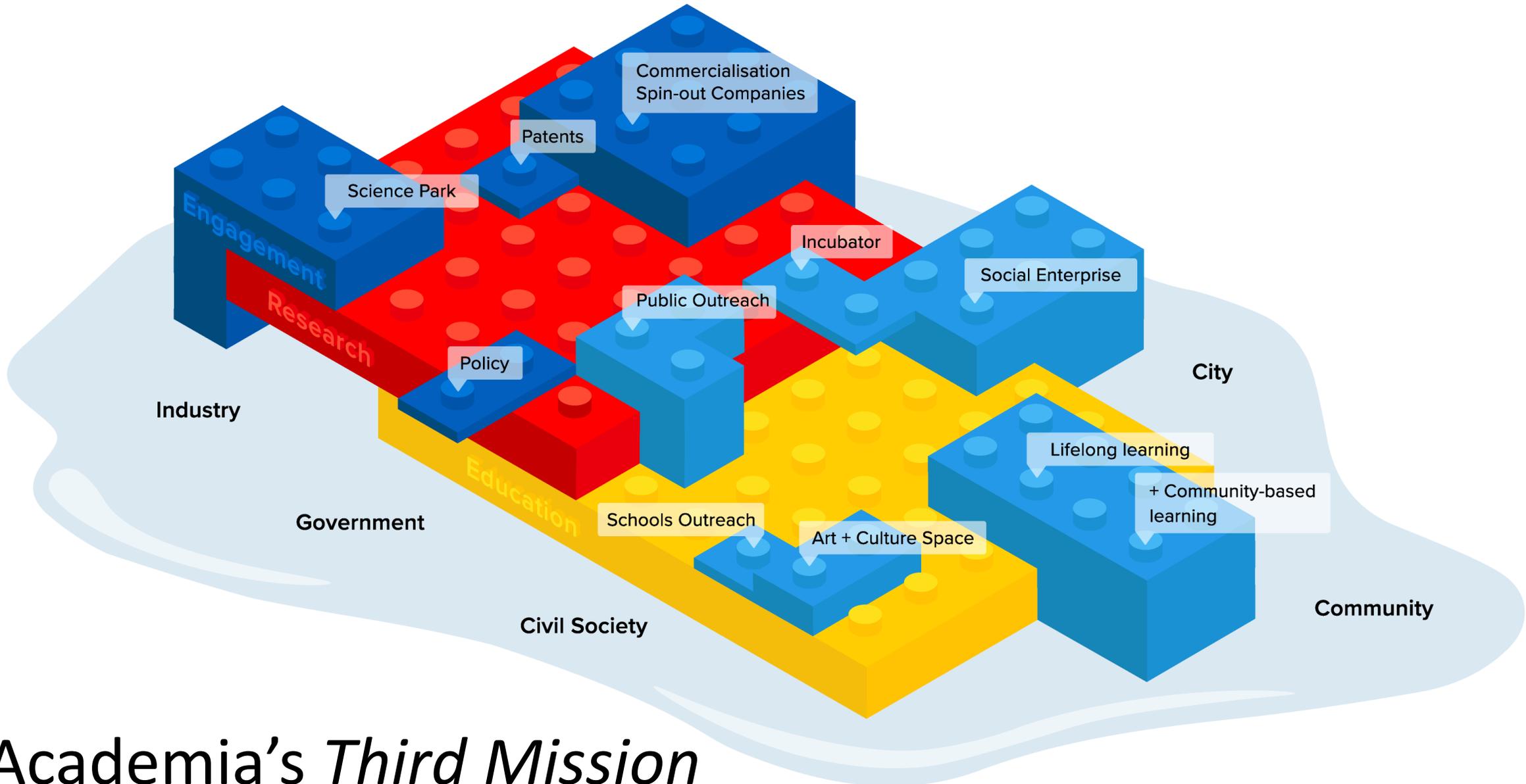
- The Swiss population expects scientists to communicate to the public.

- But while public attitudes towards science are favorable in general, perceptions vary between different scientific topics and different subgroups of the population.

- The Swiss population regularly encounters science in their lives and through a broad set of media – most often online.



The Science Communication Landscape

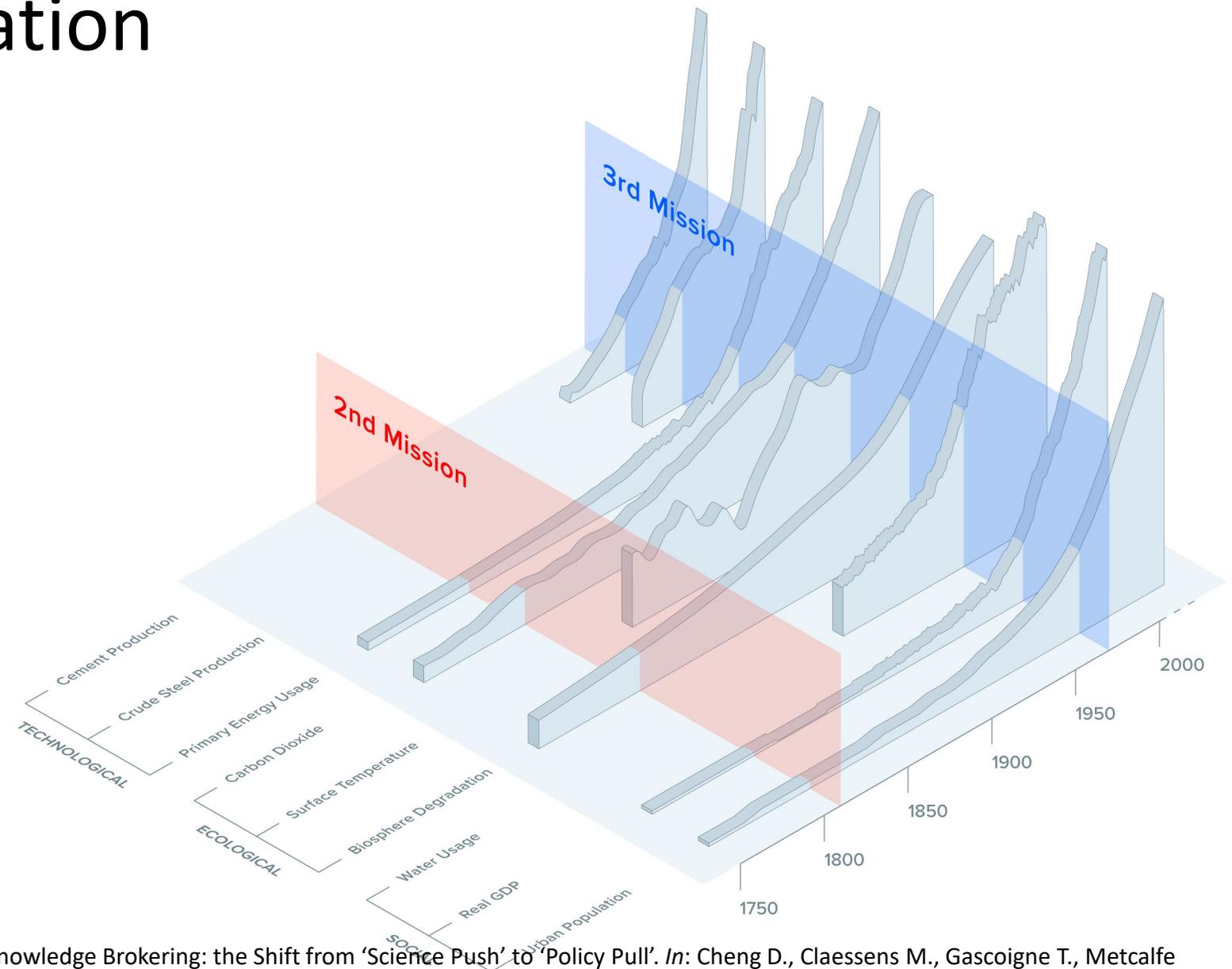


Academia's *Third Mission*

The Great Acceleration

‘...the emphasis on science communication as broadcasting and the drive for consistency and simplicity in messaging do not well serve the needs of either science-based governmental organizations, or the public at large, when dealing with messy, contested issues such as sustainability.’

(Bielaik et al. 2008, p.202)



Bielaik A.T., et al. 2008. From Science Communication to Knowledge Brokering: the Shift from ‘Science Push’ to ‘Policy Pull’. In: Cheng D., Claessens M., Gascoigne T., Metcalfe J., Schiele B., and Shi S. (eds) *Communicating Science in Social Contexts*. Springer, Dordrecht, 201-226.



‘In the not too distant past, researchers toiled in ivory towers, presenting findings at meetings of learned societies and publishing in obscure journals, often entombing information. As the need for stakeholder and public accountability grew, public relations and ‘big C’ communications departments flourished. They trumpeted the scientific discoveries of their institutions to demonstrate the excellence or relevance of their research and, of course, to generate more funding. In government settings, in particular, their role evolved from broadcasting or ‘pushing’ the scientific advances of their parent organizations to creating and ensuring consistent, overarching messaging about those institutions—both internally and to the public at large. This resulted in ‘closing down’ the science communications process, effectively burying uncertainty and staving off debate.’

Problem driven

Motivation for research

Knowledge driven



Make and Sell

Public Participation

High

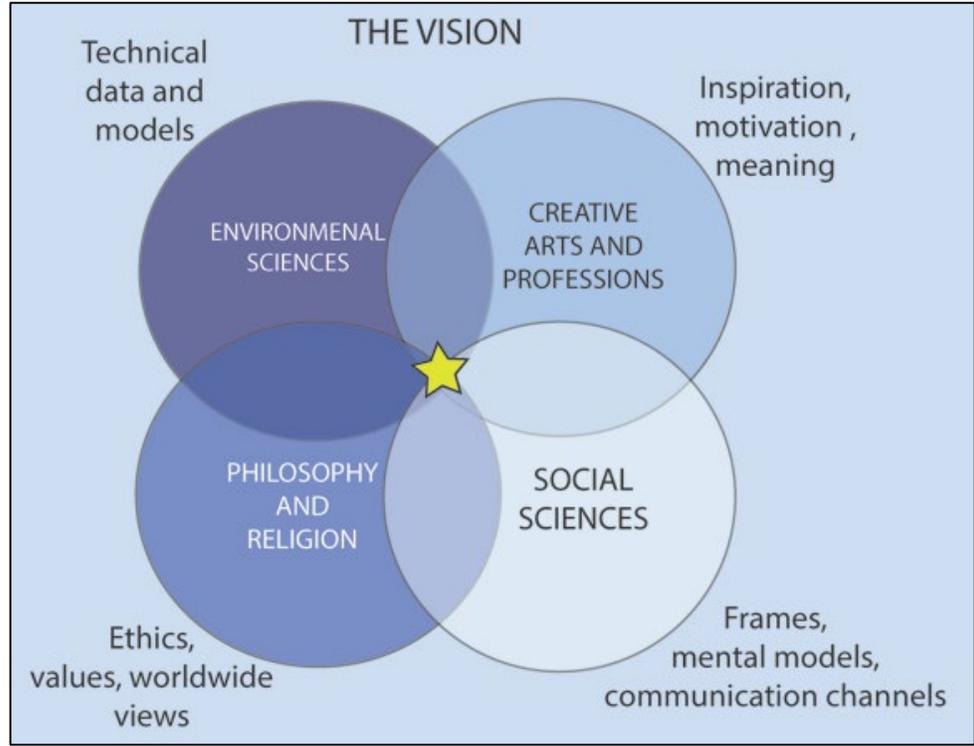
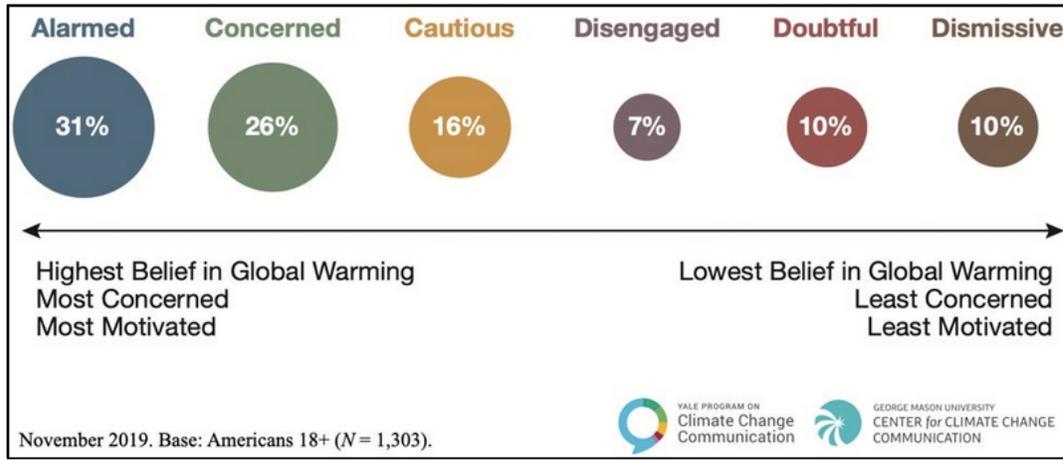


Public Understanding of Science (PUS)

- science journalism
- popular storytelling



Problem driven



Motivation for research

Knowledge driven

Make and Sell

Sense and Respond

Public Engagement (PE)

Low

Public Participation

High



Problem driven

Motivation for research

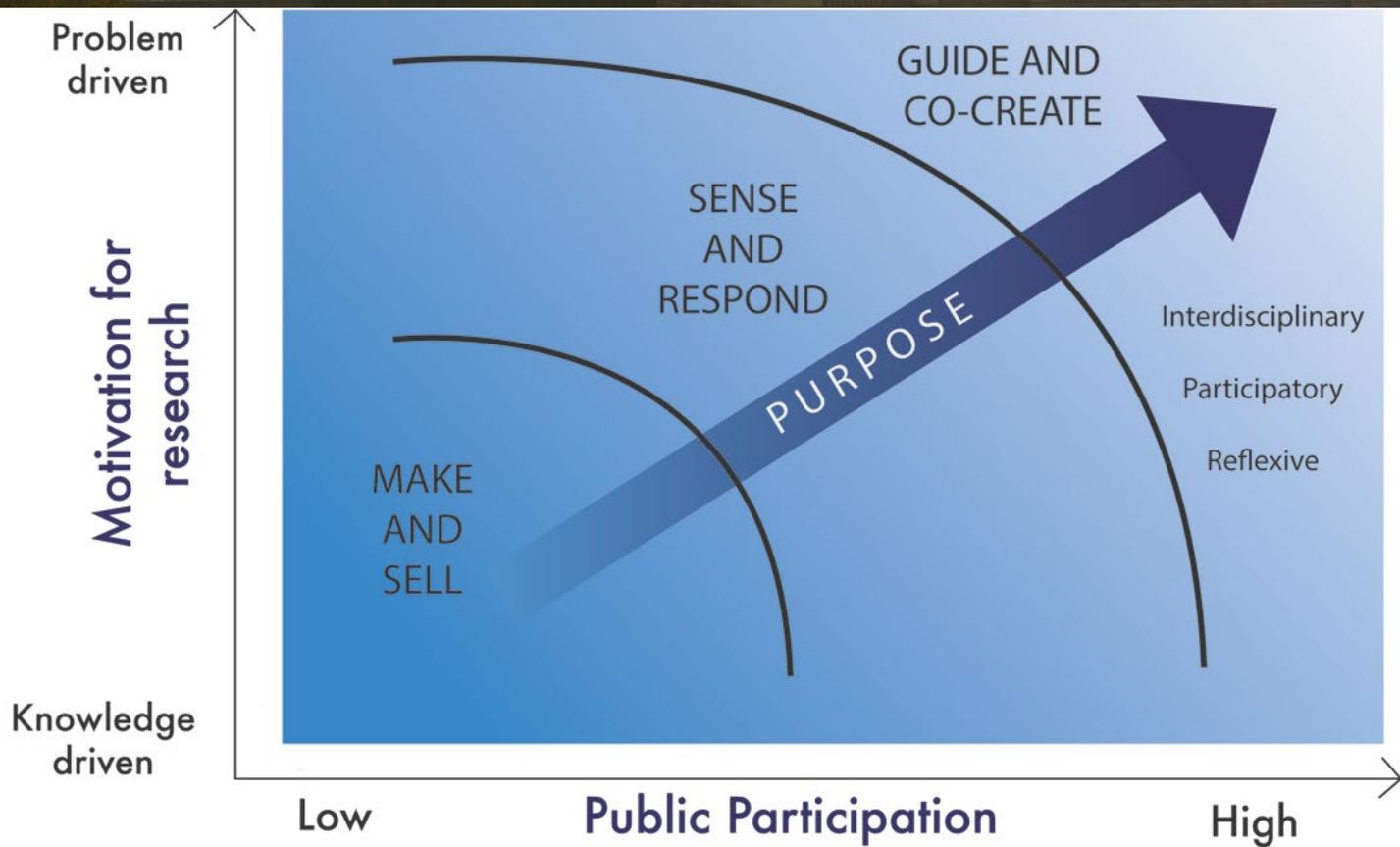
Knowledge driven

Low Public Participation High

Make and Sell

Sense and Respond

Guide and Co-create



PURPOSE

pursuit of an ambitious, clear, enduring and overarching goal which is motivating

Science in the Swiss Public
**The State of Science
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**CHAPTER 6 → Recommendations for Science
Communication and Public Engagement
with Science in Switzerland**

- Science communication should be an accepted part of science and valorized accordingly. Scholars should be offered training and social, psychological and legal support where necessary.
- Science communication should be dialogical where possible. Scholars should understand the perspectives of the public.
- Research into science communication should be fostered and translated into evidence-based science communication.
- Communication between science and politics needs to be strengthened and institutionalized.
- Science journalism needs to be strengthened – in public service and traditional media houses and among freelancers.
- A news funding infrastructure is needed to support science journalism in Switzerland.



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Where /
what
is the
purpose?