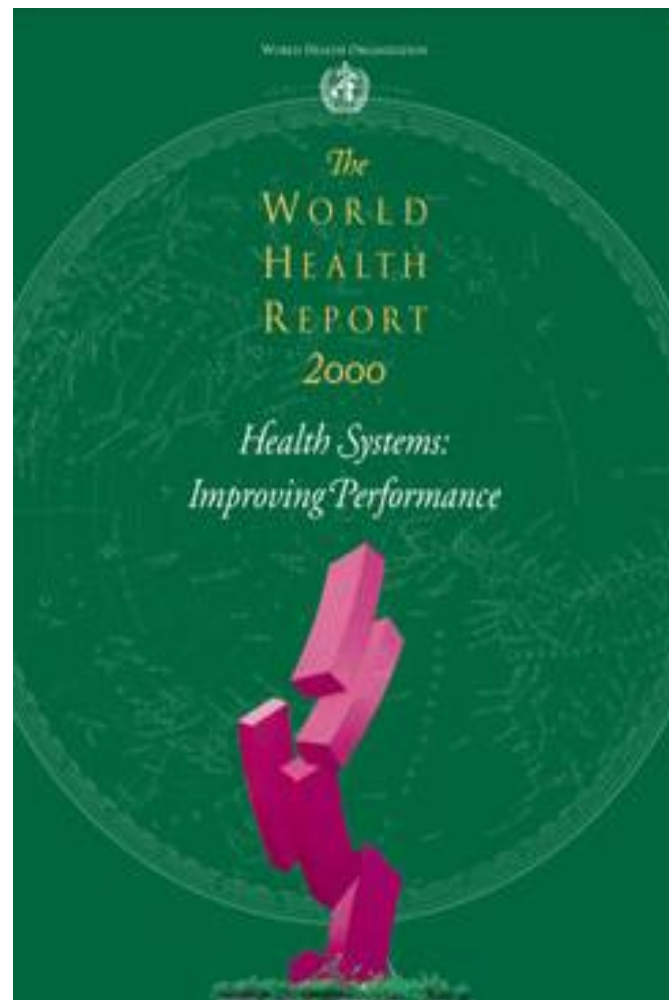Health Systems Performance Assessment for Policy: Uses and Abuses
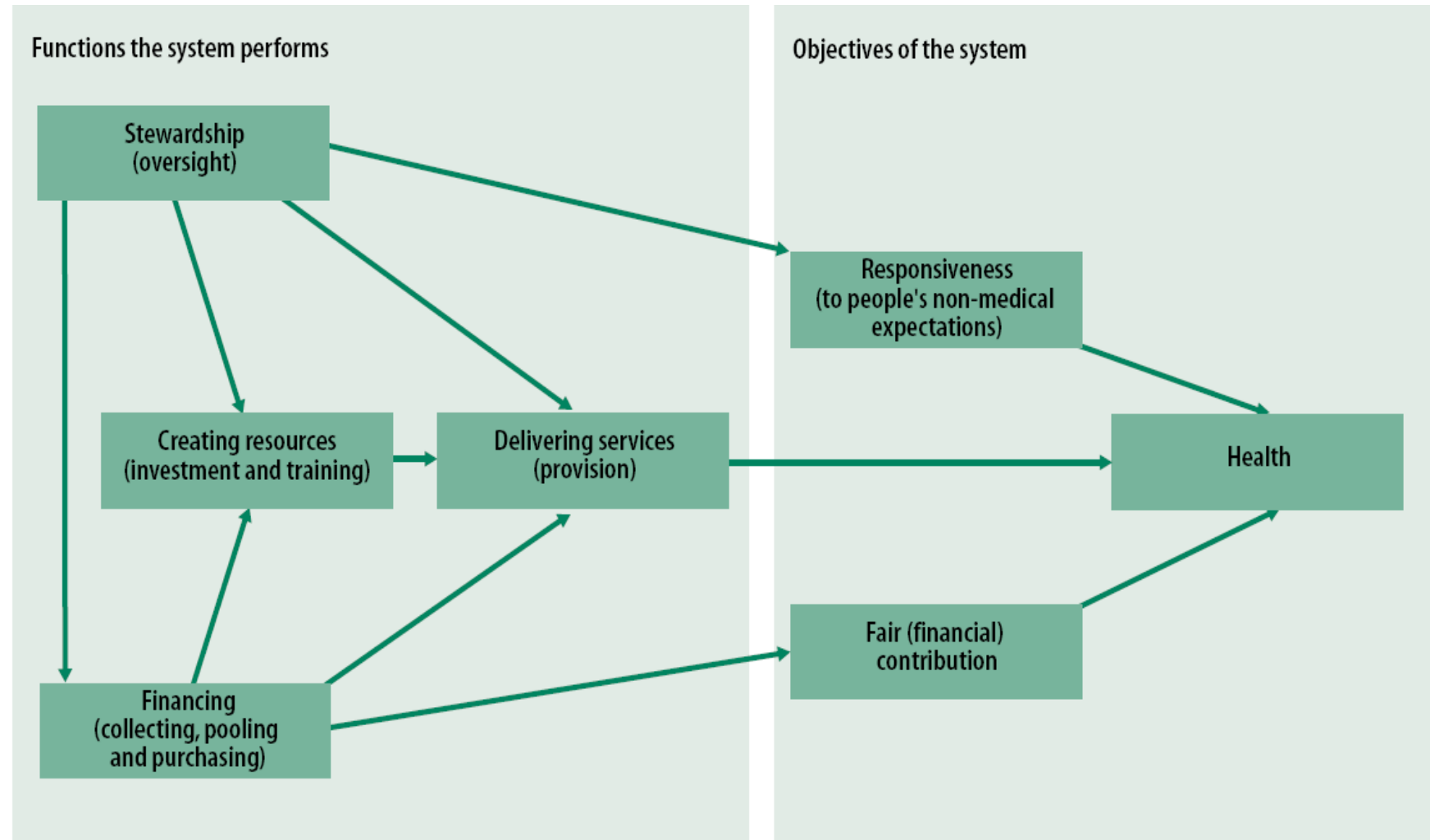
Reinhard Busse

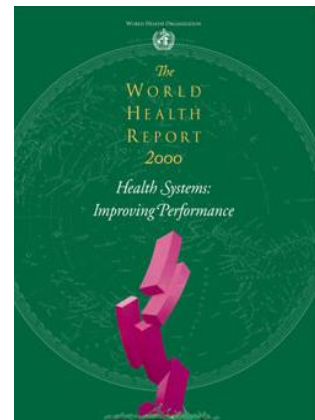TU Berlin & European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies

Why Health System Performance Assessment?

Health policy-making and reform require, first and foremost, a sound understanding of how a health system is performing.
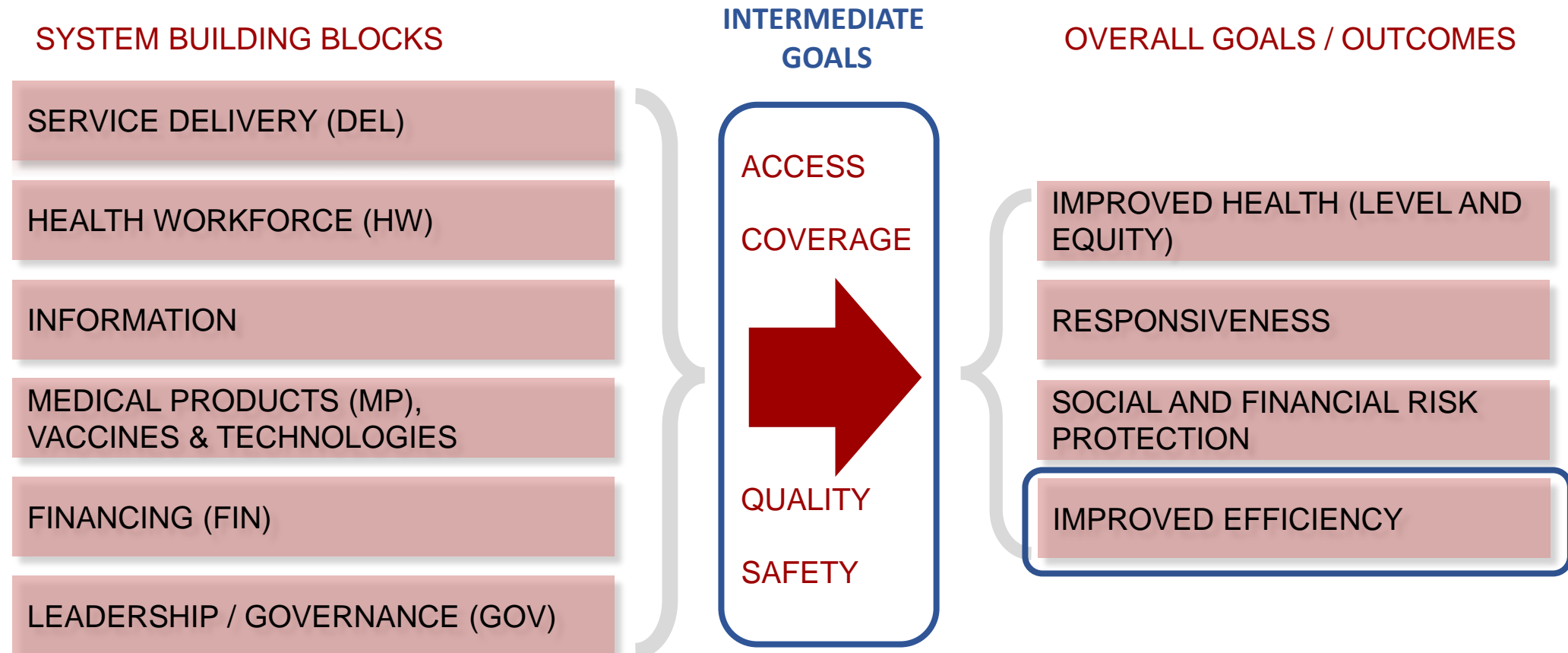
"Performance" needs an agreement about objectives and which elements (e.g. "functions") contribute to achieving them
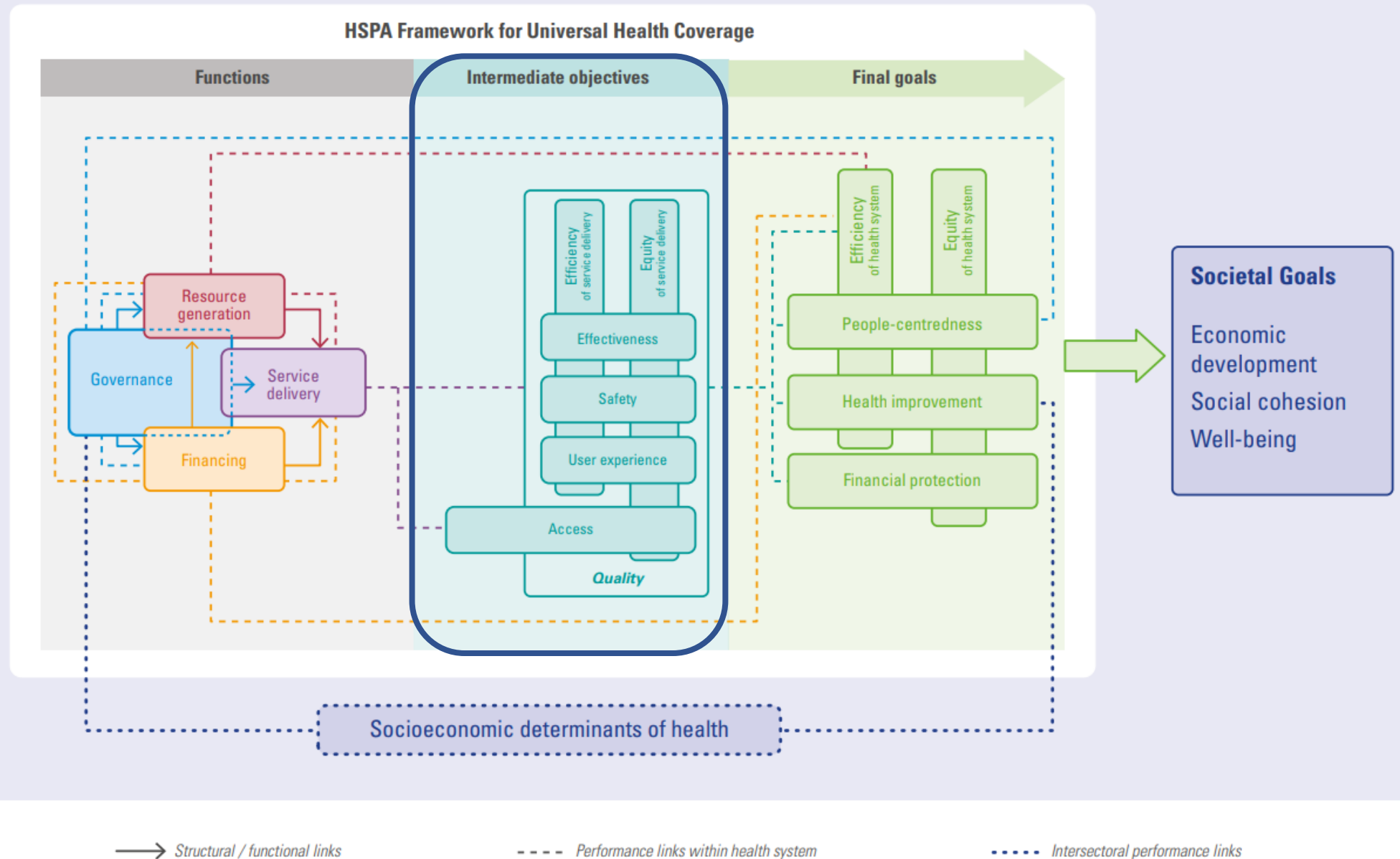

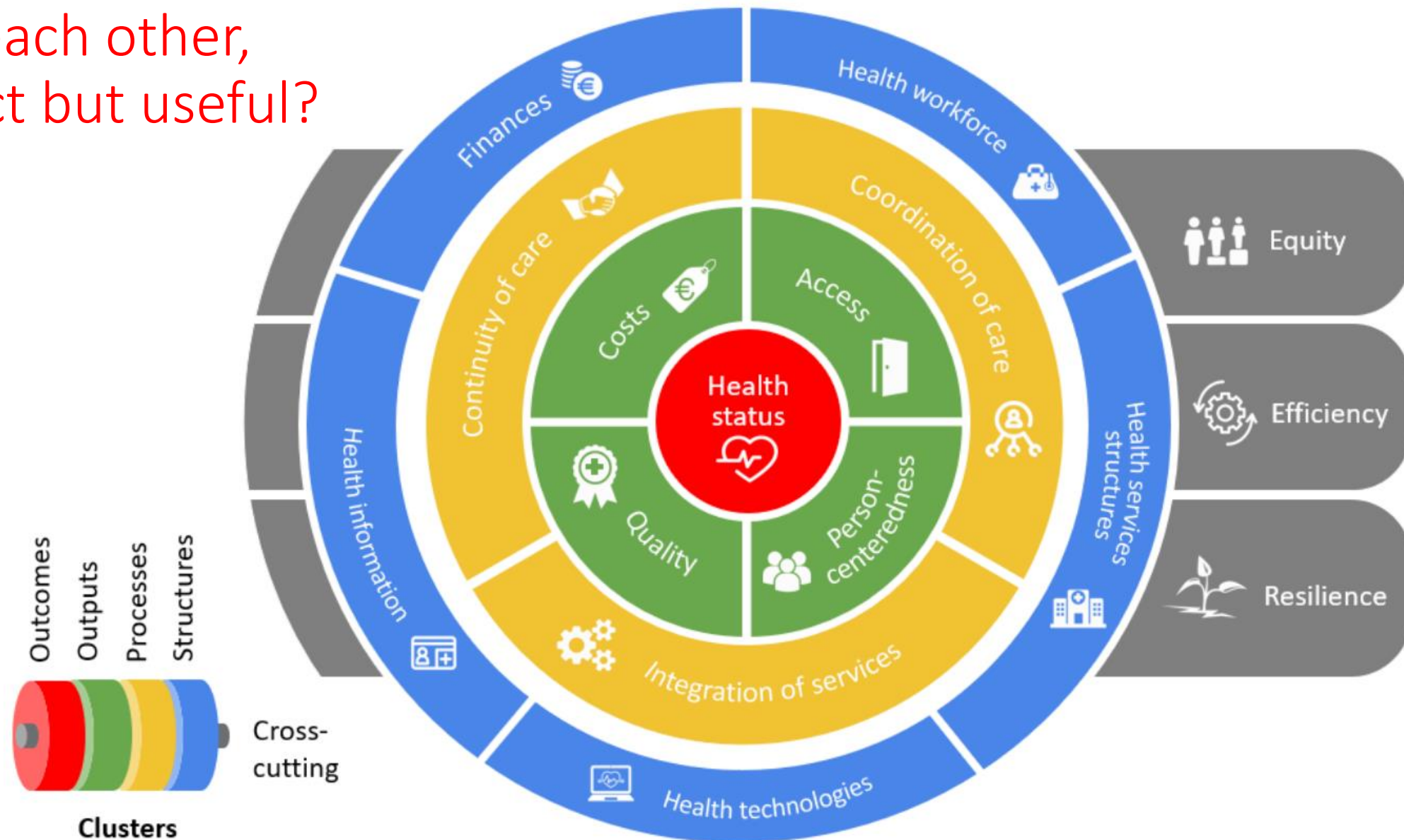→ *But many disagreed, in principle – or due to details*

Useful additions were made to improve

SYSTEM BUILDING BLOCKS

SERVICE DELIVERY (DEL)

HEALTH WORKFORCE (HW)

INFORMATION

MEDICAL PRODUCTS (MP), VACCINES & TECHNOLOGIES

FINANCING (FIN)

LEADERSHIP / GOVERNANCE (GOV)

INTERMEDIATE GOALS

ACCESS

COVERAGE

QUALITY

SAFETY

OVERALL GOALS / OUTCOMES

IMPROVED HEALTH (LEVEL AND EQUITY)

RESPONSIVENESS

SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL RISK PROTECTION

IMPROVED EFFICIENCY

Source: World Health Organization (WHO) (2007) *Everybody's business: Strengthening health systems to improve health outcomes. WHO's framework for action.* Geneva: WHO Document Production Services.

CAVE: Further (necessary) details may complicate its usefulness for policy-makers
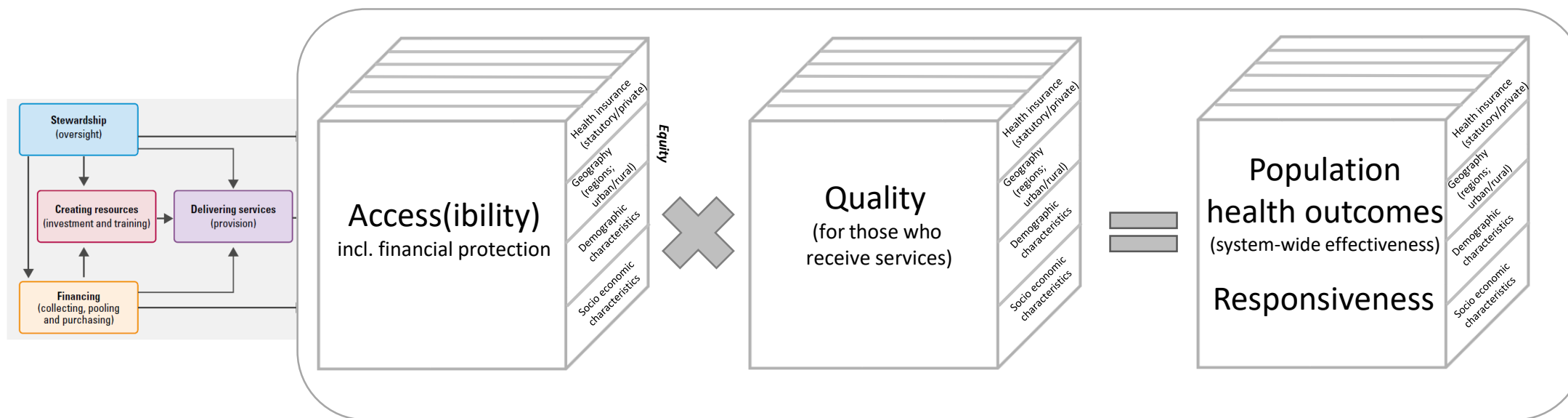

HSPA Framework for Universal Health Coverage

Others argue that everything is related with each other, correct but useful?

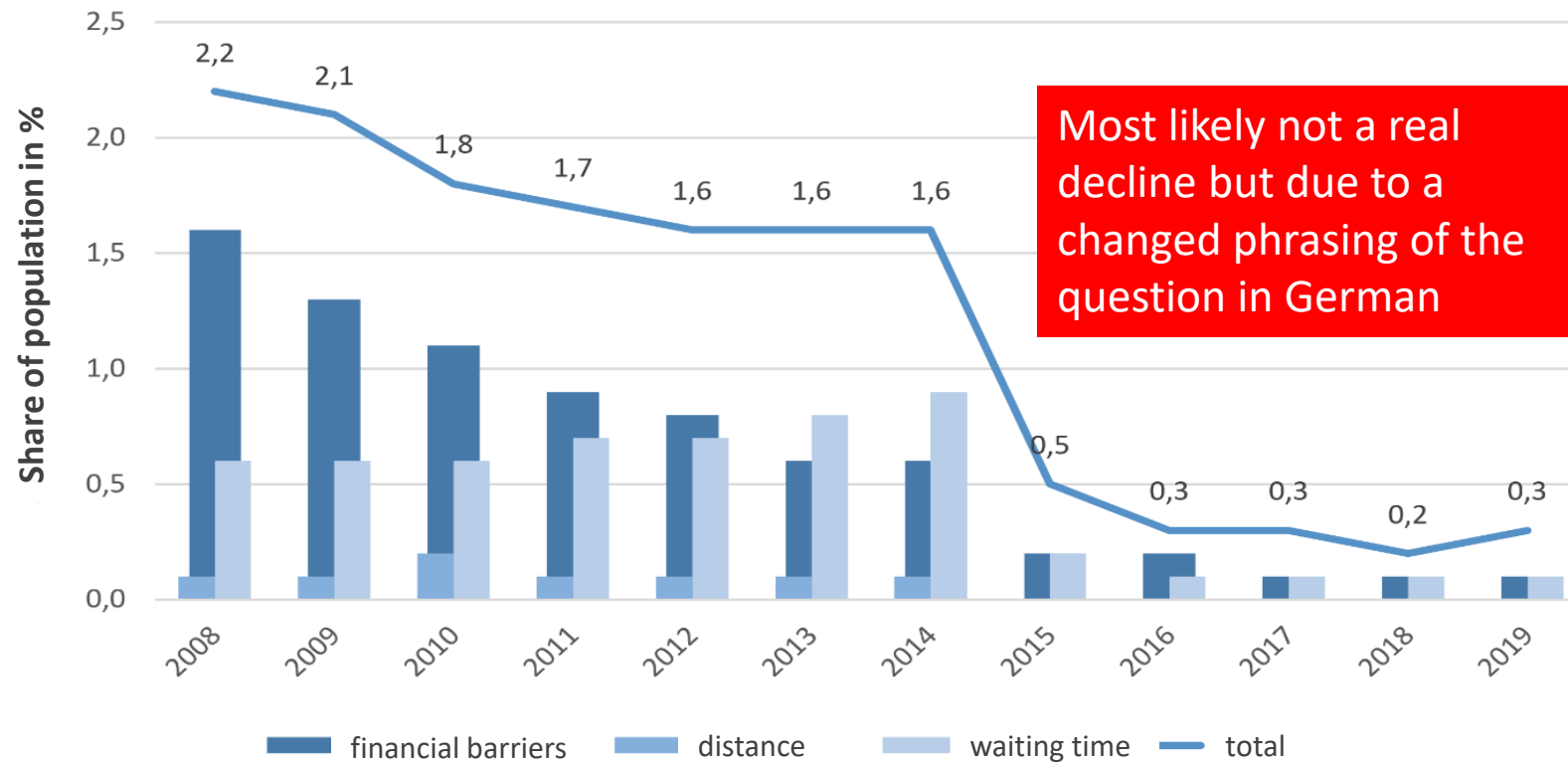While again others argue that easy-to-understand relationships are key for benchmarking performance …

… but (1) validity of indicators and underlying data and (2) attributability to functions/ building blocks remain issues

Ad data interpretation: here an example for Germany with abuse potential

A.9 Self-reported unmet needs for medical care (key indicator for the Access dimension)

Trend in the share of population with unmet needs for medical care, differentiated by reason
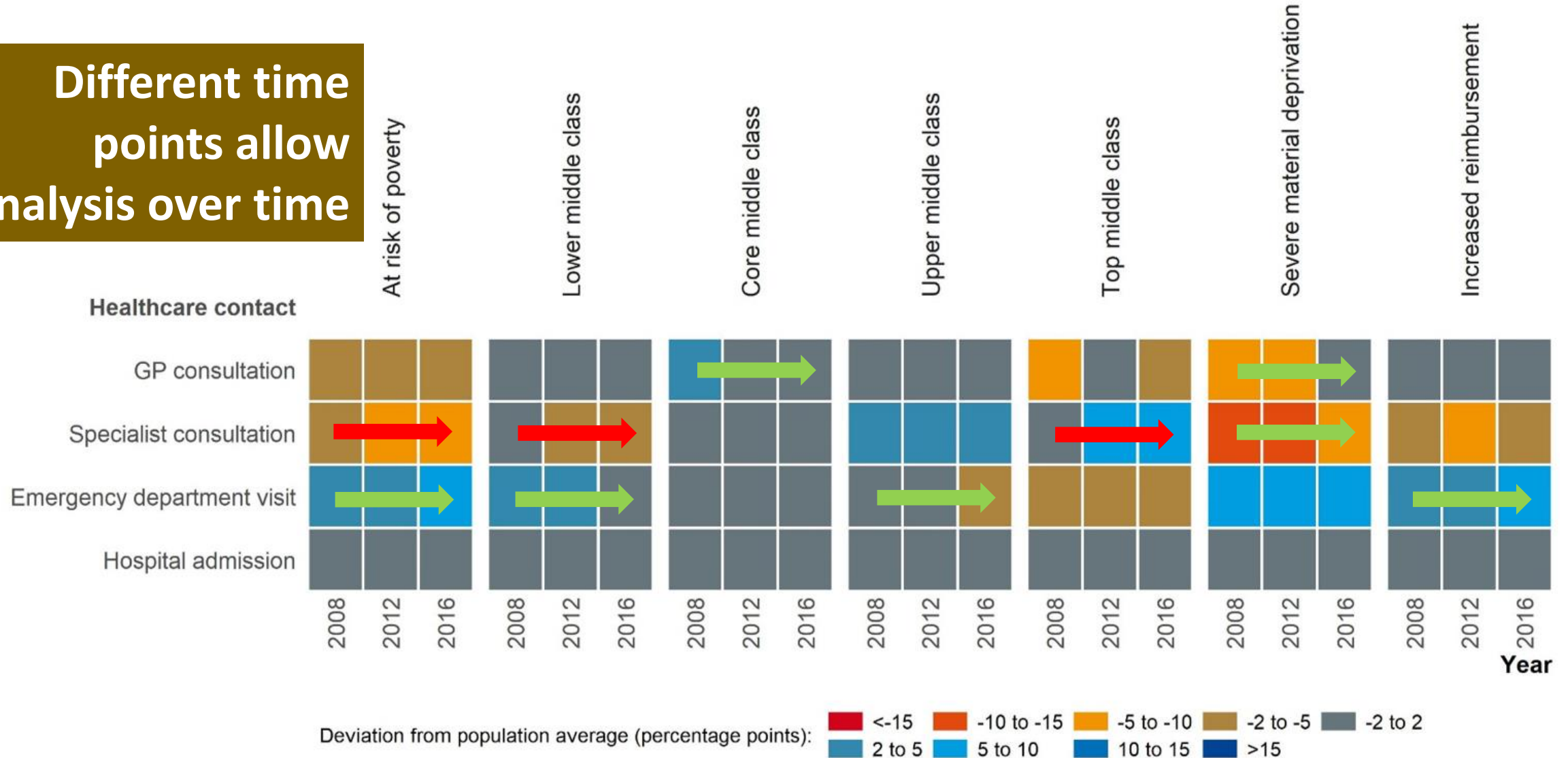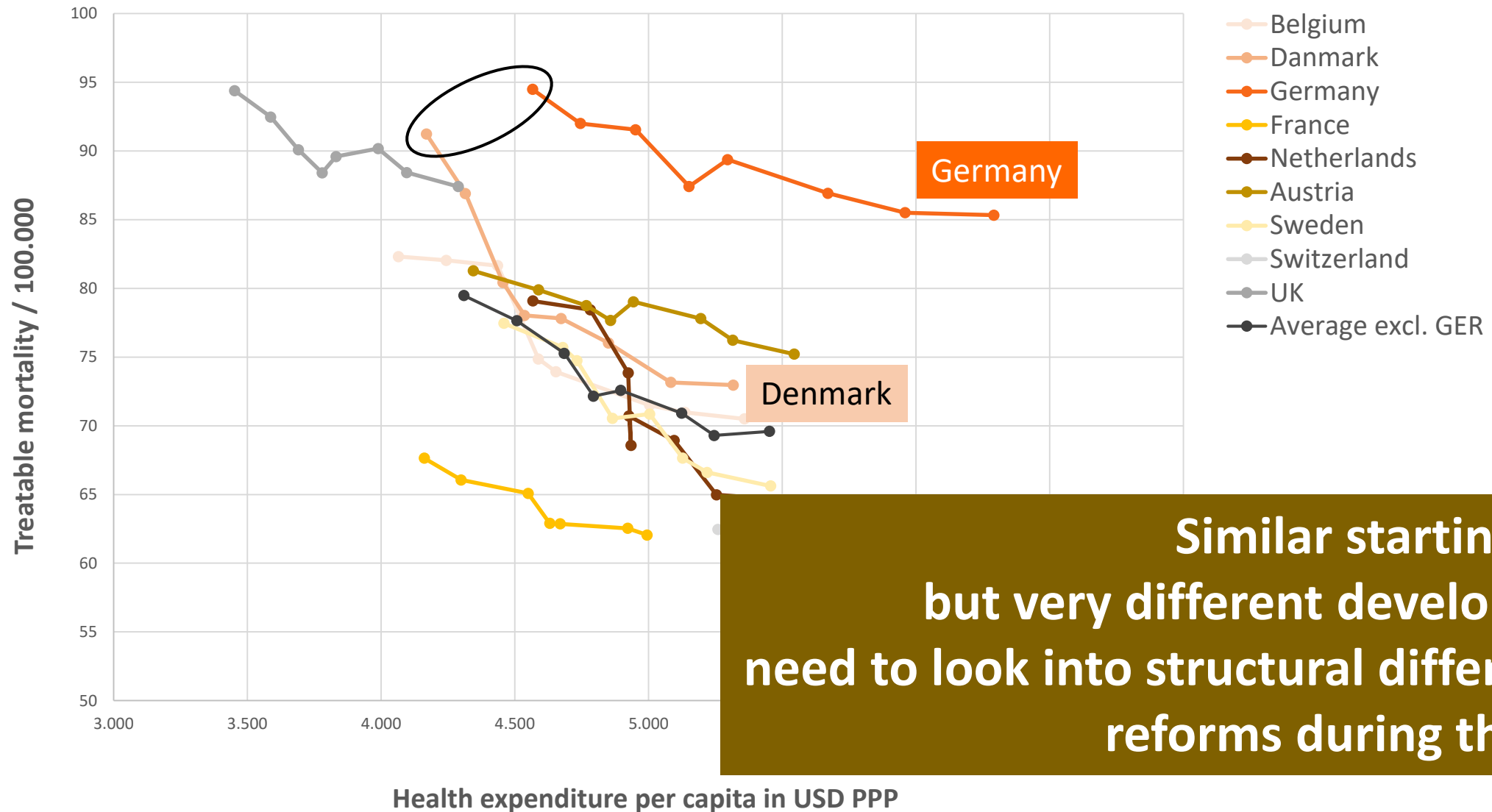

Most likely not a real decline but due to a changed phrasing of the question in German

Data source: EU-SILC

Equity – of high political relevance but need for good presentation: here an example from Belgium

Efficiency – of high political relevance but no/ few accepted indicators: here an example from Germany

Similar starting point, but very different development: need to look into structural differences/ reforms during that time

For discussion

1. How can we interpret HSPA outcomes to determine what requires change and reform?

2. How can we effectively compare performance between countries to learn from best practice?

3. How can we use the HSPA arsenal to measure resilience and prepare for future shocks?