

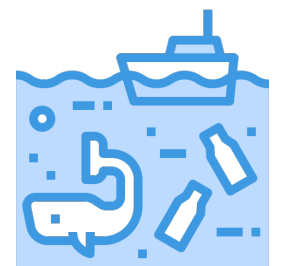
What statistics tell us about international trade of plastics?

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Motivation

- **Governing Plastic: The Global Political Economy and Regulation of Plastic Production and Pollution**
 - Launched in early 2019
 - Project for research and policy dialogue hosted by the **Graduate Institute's Global Governance Centre**
 - Bringing together a group of leading experts from academia, international organizations and stakeholder groups to focus on the **'supply side' of plastic production and pollution** at the global level
 - **Involved partners:** Institute's Centre for Trade and Economic Integration and Centre for International Environmental Studies, along with UNCTAD and four Swiss Universities



Creation of the UNCTAD plastic trade dataset

- **Data source:** UN Comtrade
- Individual goods are classified according to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS)
- Data are reported in value (US Dollars) and quantity
- Commodities are described in a hierarchy of codes of 2, 4 or 6 digits where longer codes provide more detail
- [Data set](#) still labeled as experimental

Use of HS codes to identify plastic products

- **Advantages:** Detailed list of commodities
- **Disadvantages:** HS codes are primarily designed to classify goods for customs purposes (such as the administration of tariffs and quotas at the border) rather than for purposes related to tackling the environmental implications of trade



Ketchup Dispensers
HS Code: 3924101000

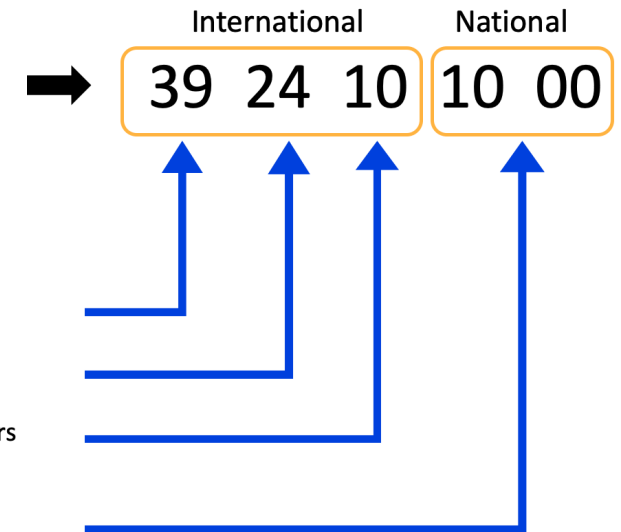
Section VII: Plastics and Rubber articles

Chapter 39: Plastics and articles thereof

Heading 24: tableware and kitchen ware

Subheading 10: Salt, pepper, ketchup dispensers and similar dispensers

Country Specific Divisions



Methodology

Trade flows of plastics:

- **Input flows** - flows in feedstocks, precursors and additives used in production of primary plastics;
- **Non-hidden flows** - those included in **HS Chapter 39** Plastics and articles thereof, as described above;
- **Semi-hidden flows** - those plastic products that can be readily identified under other chapters of the HS, such as synthetic textiles and rubber;
- **Hidden flows** - products with embedded or associated plastics where the volume and value of plastics is not readily identifiable or traceable).
 - packaging associated with specific products (pre-packaged food and beverages) (e.g., not empty packaging);
 - packaging used in the distribution and transportation of products;
 - plastic embedded in household and consumer goods

Methodology

Plastic trade categories:

Total plastics	
P1	Plastics in primary forms
P2	Intermediate forms of plastic
P3	Intermediate manufactured plastic goods
P4	Final manufactured plastics goods
P5	Plastic waste
Total associated trade relevant to the life cycle of plastics	
P6	Feedstocks and precursors used in plastics
P7	Additives used in plastics
Selected topics in plastics trade	
P8	Synthetic textiles
P9	Plastic packaging
P10	Synthetic rubber



Plastics in primary forms



Intermediate forms of plastic



Intermediate manufactured plastic goods

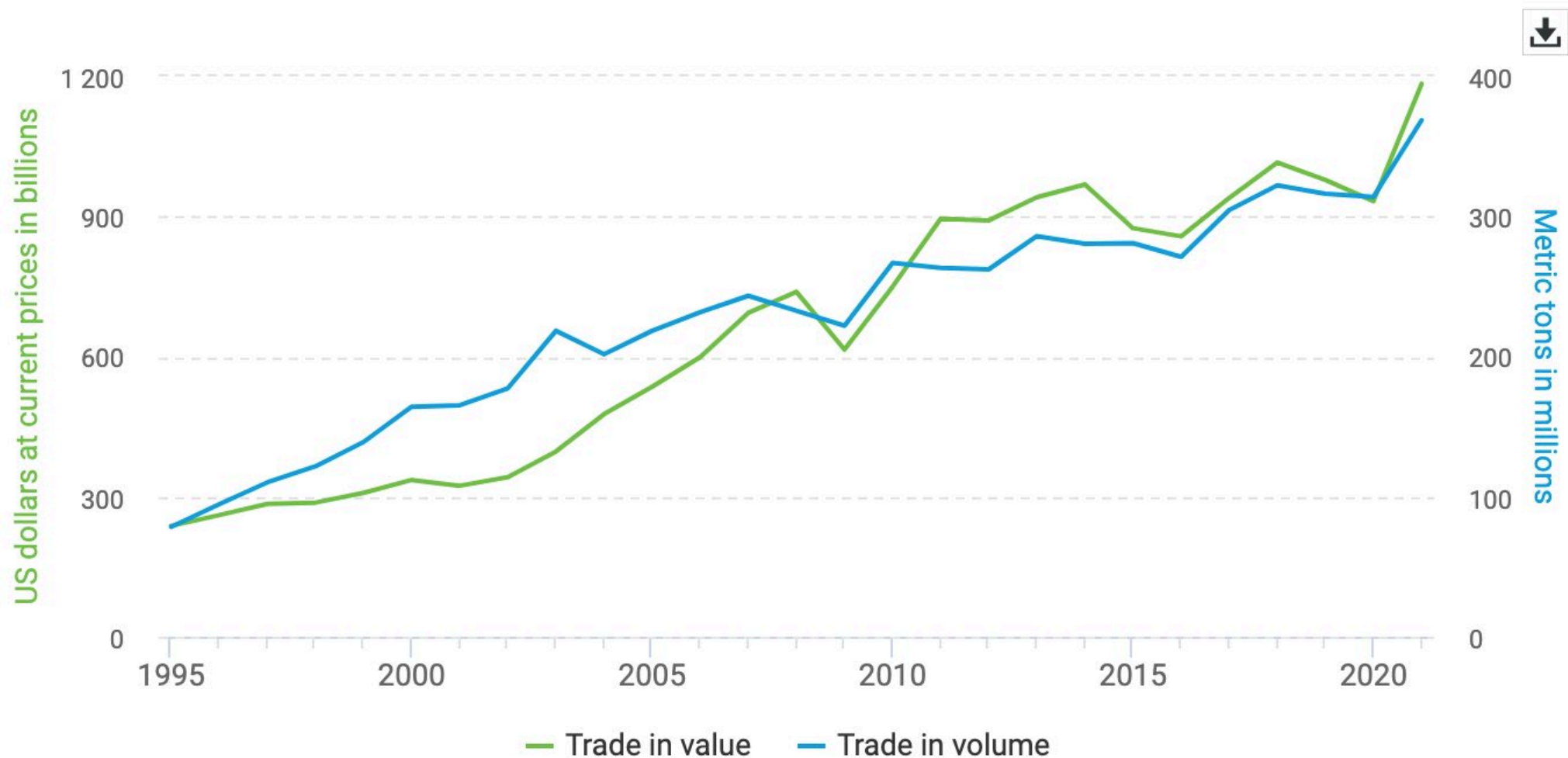


Final manufactured plastics goods

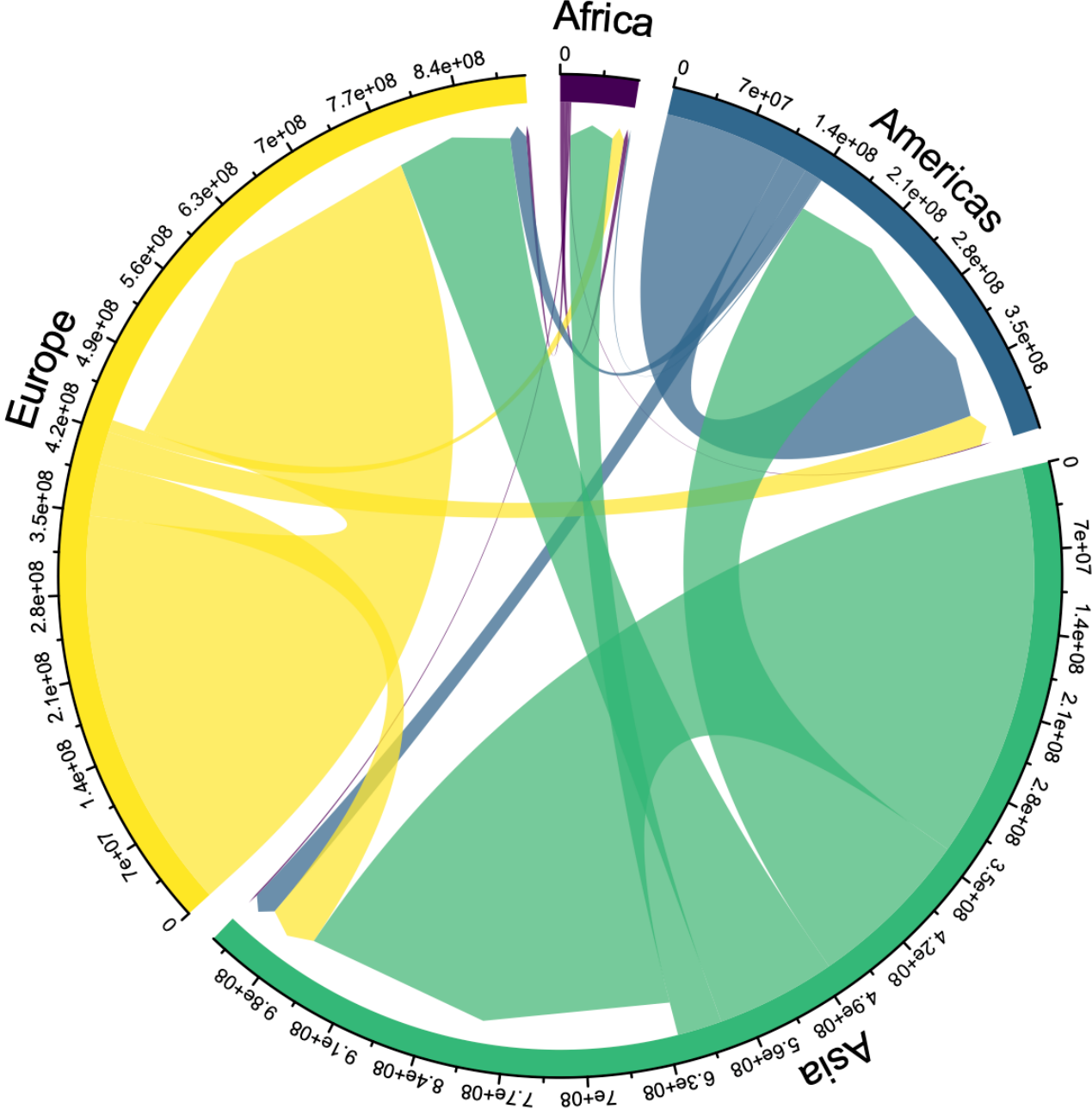


Plastic waste

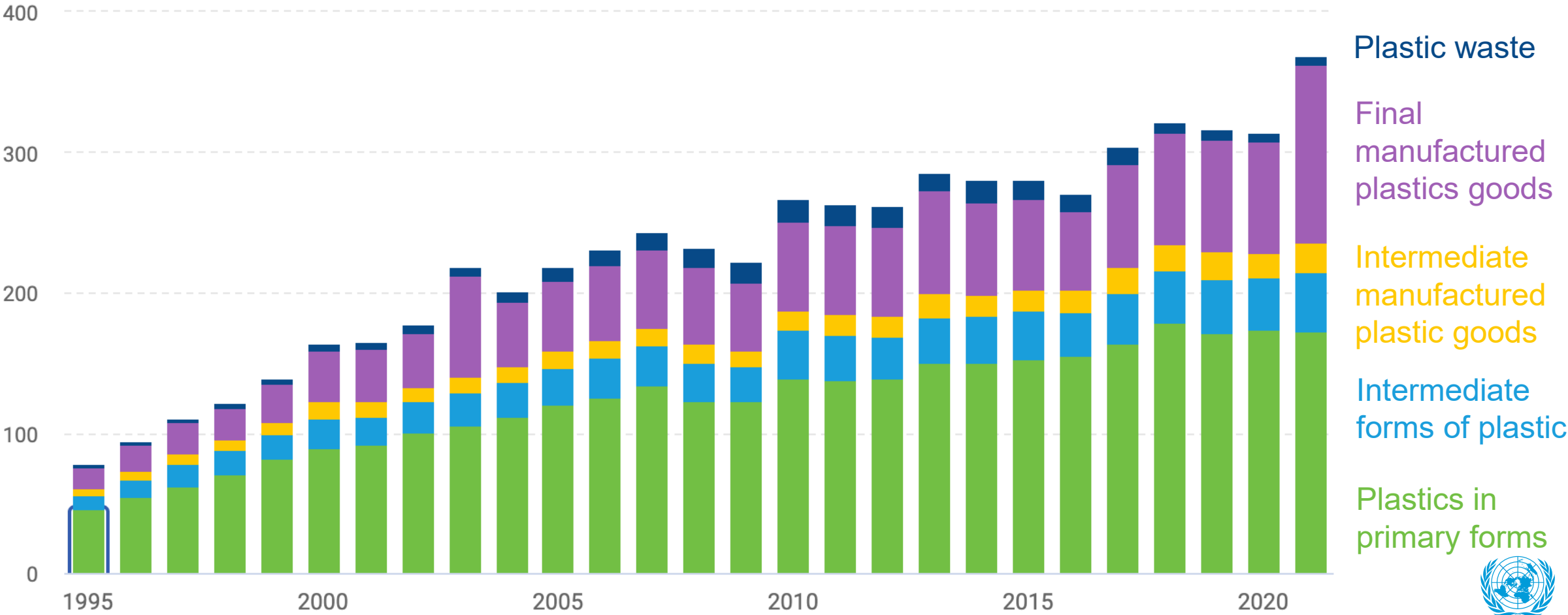
Global plastics trade continues to thrive



Plastics trade highly concentrated regionally

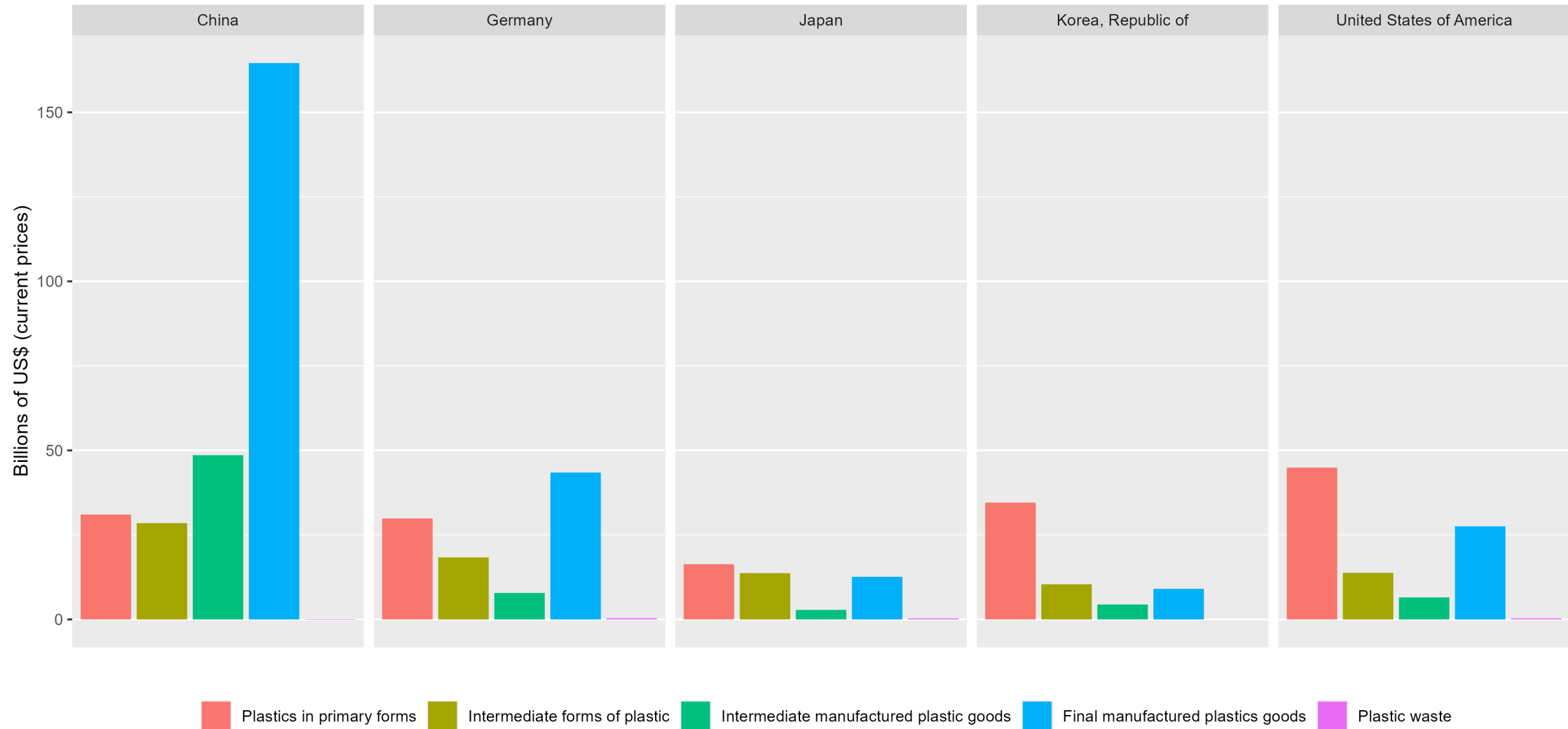


Half of global exports of plastics consist of primary forms, but manufactured plastics is booming



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Top 5 exporters in total plastic trade (US\$)



Ongoing work on plastic substitutes data

- Finding material alternatives and substitutes to plastic material has gained urgency
- Total of 282 HS codes for materials and products which can perform similar functions to plastics have been identified
- It is estimated that trade of plastic substitutes accounted for **\$388 billion in 2020**



Thank you!

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