Universities and Democracy?

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THE NEW INSTITUTE

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A bumpy ride – A Democracy Depression? Or Worse?

Liberal democracy, 2021

Based on the expert assessments and index by V-Dem. It combines information on voting rights, the freedom and fairness of elections, freedoms of association and expression, civil liberties, and executive constraints. It ranges from 0 to 1 (most democratic).
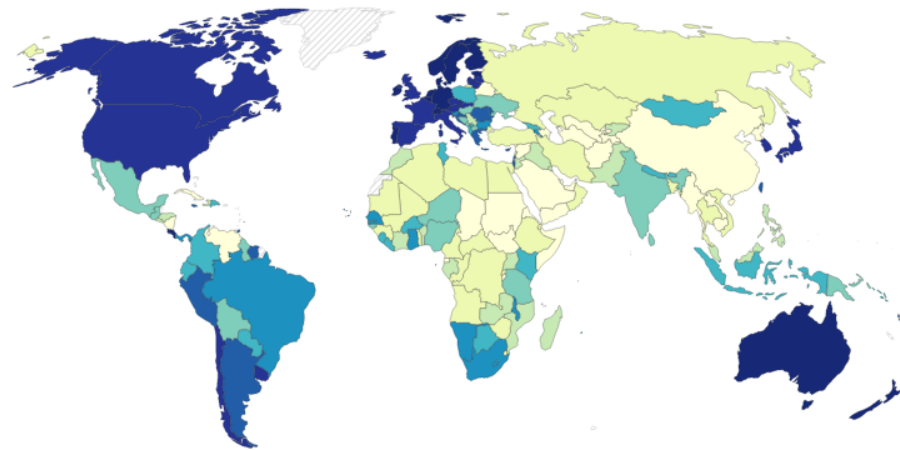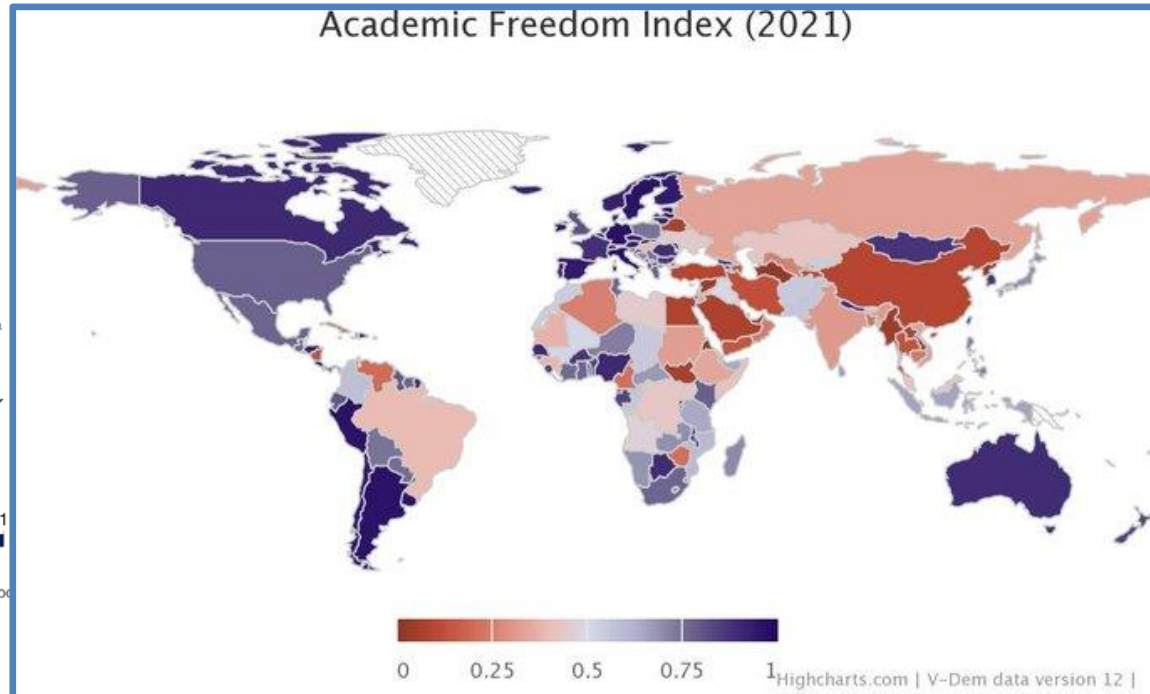
Source: OWID based on V-Dem (v12)

OurWorldInData.org/democ

Academic Freedom Index (2021)

Highcharts.com | V–Dem data version 12 |

Universities are the canary in the coal mine!

Student Demographics = rate of socioeconomic mobility

Governance and Management – Autonomy or lack thereof

Extent of Civil Liberties/Free Speech – or lack thereof

Research Profile – reflects priorities related to national needs

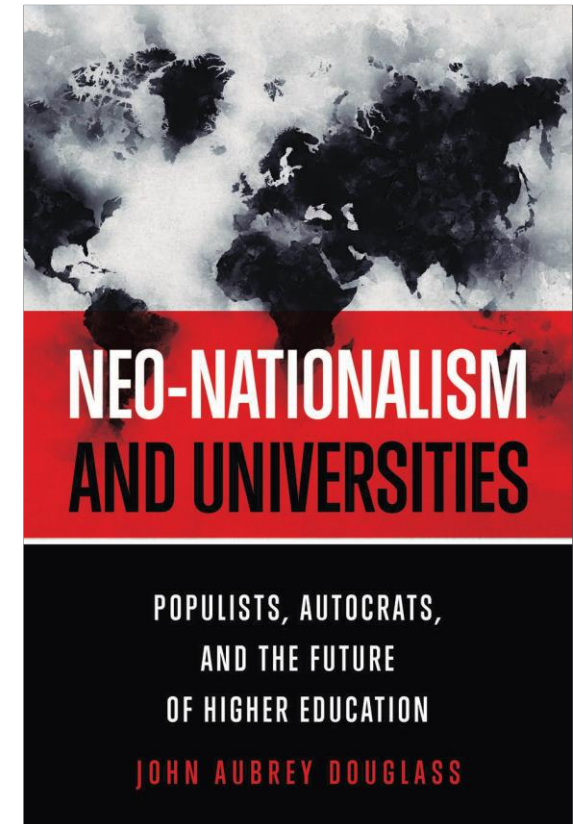Economic Players – how do they match labor needs/markets/IP

International Engagement – the extent of the free flow of talent+

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We lean toward analysis of what is happening and why

But what can universities do to promote and Sustain democracies and the values of open societies?

Building on the comparative analysis of the book - case studies

NEO-NATIONALISM AND UNIVERSITIES

POPULISTS, AUTOCRATS, AND THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

JOHN AUBREY DOUGLASS

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A Political Determinist Viewpoint

- That the ***national political history and contemporary context is the dominant factor for shaping the role of universities in society***

- That there is a ***"spectrum" of the national or geopolitical environments university must operate in with a focus on right-wing neo-nationalist movements***
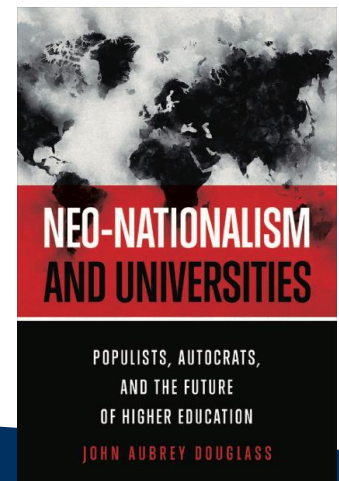
A Spectrum of Neo-Nationalism – A Conceptual Window
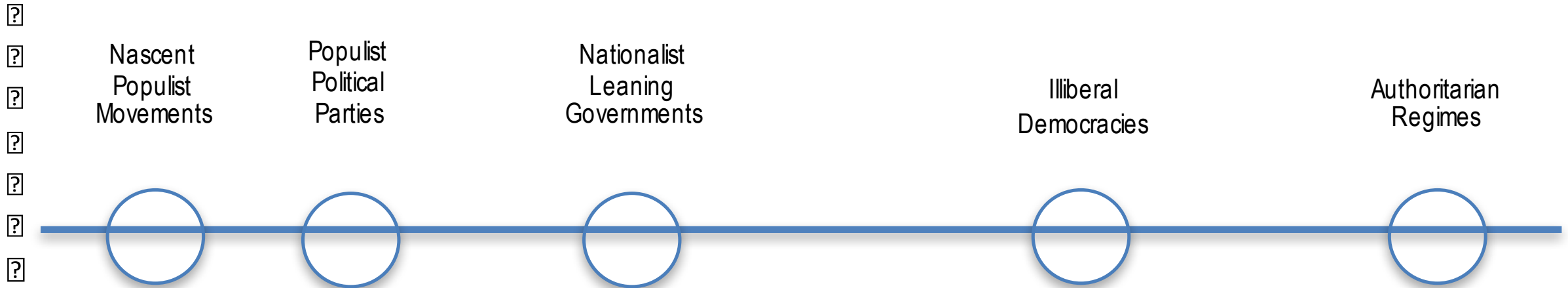
Nascent Populist Movements

Populist Political Parties

Nationalist Leaning Governments

Illiberal Democracies

Authoritarian Regimes

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A Spectrum of Neo-Nationalism – A Conceptual Window

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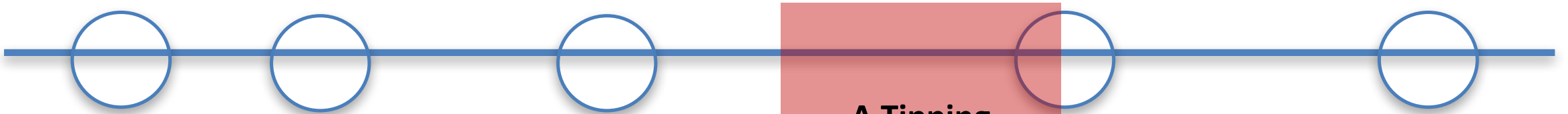Authoritarian Regimes

A Tipping Point?

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Neo-National Spectrum and Impact on Universities

Nascent Populist Movements/Political Parties

- Anti-Immigrant
- Anti-International students
- Anti-Globalism
- Doubt about Value of HE

Nationalist Leaning Governments

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- Restrict Student and Faculty Visas
- Restrict Path to Citizenship for Academics
- Battles Over Freedom of Speech
- Increased Focus on IP and National Security
- Threaten Reductions in Funding
- Restrictions on International Cooperation

Illiberal Democracies

+

- Restrictions on Free Speech
- Firing of Academics
- Controls on Management
- Restrictions on the admissions of immigrant/foreign nationals
- Restrictions on Travel for Academics
- Targeting Nationals in Forign Universities for Sedition

Authoritarian Regimes

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- Limits or Censorship of Social Cititicism
- Ministerial Monitored Curriculum
- Ministerial Controls on Leadership and Faculty Hires and Advancement
- Internet Communication Firewall
- Arrest of Academics for Sedition

Universities as Leaders or Followers or Intermediaries

Tier ONE - Basic Societal Role
- Educating a Talented Labor Force and Citizenry
- Technological Innovation and Economic Development
- Preservation and Study of Art, History and Culture

Tier TWO
- Socio-Economic Mobility
- Global Engagement

Tier THREE
- Public Service Engagement
- Research Related to Social Problems

Tier FOUR - Highest Societal Role
- Critical Analysis of Society

Academic Freedom

Institutional Autonomy & Governance

Funding

Credibility Empathy Socioeconomic Engagement

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How might universities innovate and become more systematic in their efforts to promote democracy?

Leaders Intermediates Followers
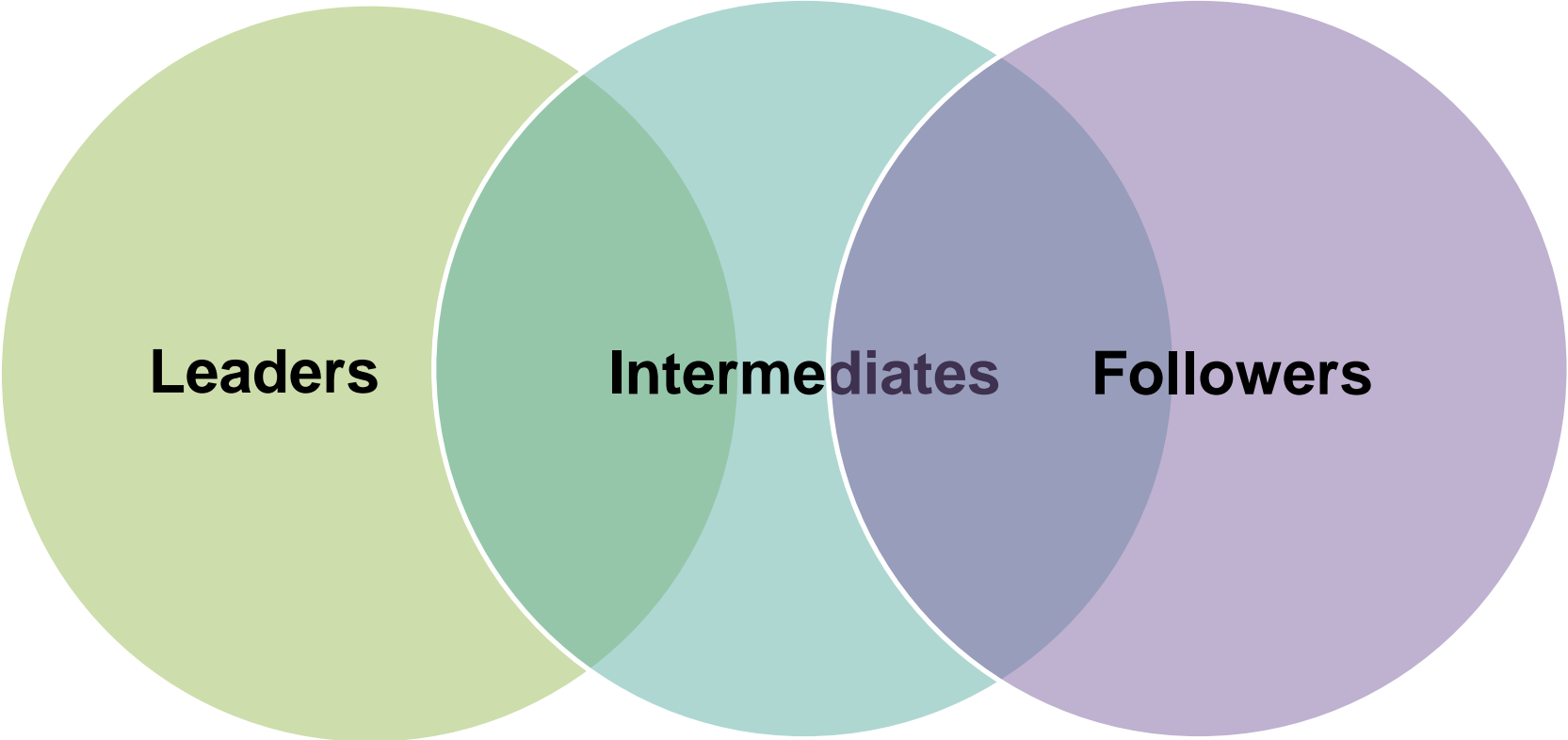
In Liberal Democracies/Leaders and Intermediate Leaders?

Three general observations are offered in the essay:

1. *Universities have few direct and immediate paths for promoting democracy,* broadly defined - there are limits to their ability to promote democracy and civil society

2. *That any significant impact needs to be holistic and focused on meaningful interaction of universities with the societies they serve*

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In Liberal Democracies/Leaders and Intermediate Leaders?

3. *That this long-term project needs to include . . .*

   a. *Further developing an internal culture and organization that seeks greater engagement with the public;*

   b. *Seek strategic efforts of engagement focused on a university's research, teaching and public service mission;*

   c. *Pursue new efforts to increase the credibility and reputation of universities as sources of factual research and information, and expertise – as legitimate and influential sources of truth and knowledge;*

   d. *Targeted approaches to promoting democracy.*

In Liberal Democracies/Leaders and Intermediate Leaders?
A Taxonomy of forms of University Engagement for Promoting Democracy

Internal Life of Universities

- Enrollment -Socioeconomic Goals
- Curriculum/Teaching
- Diverse Faculty and Staff
- Promoting Academic Freedom and Civil Discourse
- Research for the Public Good
- Institutional Organization and Behaviors
- Governance, Management and Resource Allocation

External Life Universities

- Educational Programs
- Policy Research Supporting Democracy/Open Societies
- Public Services/Community Engagement
- Stakeholder Input and Advisory Role
- University Communications and Community Relations

In Liberal Democracies/Leaders and Intermediate Leaders?

What can universities do? Focus: EU

UNIVERSITY CULTURE AND PRACTICES

- Scholarship of Engagement and Public Service as Component of Faculty Hiring and Promotion

- Awards for Public Service Activities of Faculty, Students and Staff

- Systematic Input/Advisory Role of Stakeholders in University Management and Programs

PROGRAMMATIC

- Fund Research and Public Service Programs that Serve Local/Regional Needs

- Curricular Addition and Micro-Degrees Focused on Civic Education and Citizenship

- Adult Continuing Education/Life Long Learning Courses, credentials and Events

- Support Services to Local Schools and Local Government

- Develop Research Collaborations Local/Regional Universities on Regional Social and Public Health Issues

PROFILE/CREDIBILITY/TARGETED

- Communication Strategies that are Constituency Designed and Linked to Research/Public Service Strategy

- Expand and Advertise University Programs, Facilities and Resources Accessible to the Public

- Assess/Research a University's Socioeconomic Impact and Public Engagement Strategy

- Voter Participation Programs

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In Illiberal Democracies and Autocracies/ Intermediate Leaders and Followers?

For discussion:

Russia? Neo-Cold War?
Iran?
China/Hong Kong?
Turkey?
Hungary?

Ergo – what can or should universities in liberal democracies do?