

CHAPTER ONE

Globalization, Neoliberalism, and Their Discontents

Why are you so afraid of the word “Fascism”? Just a word—just a word! And might not be so bad, with all the lazy bums we got pan-handling relief nowadays, and living on my income tax and yours—not so worse to have a real Strong Man, like Hitler or Mussolini—like Napoleon or Bismarck in the good old days—and have ‘em really run the country and make it efficient and prosperous again. . . .

Country’s too big for a revolution. No, no! Couldn’t happen here!

—Sinclair Lewis, *It Couldn’t Happen Here*

I entered academic life as a college freshman in 1971. I retired as a professor in 2020. What changed in almost a half-century? Don’t worry. This is not yet another elegiac academic memoir. I have no interest in recalling the “good old days,” as if when I was a college student everything was great and today everything is terrible. Times change. Contexts change. People change. What I will explore is how those times and contexts and people have changed. Because of these changes, I intend to put forward a new way to position higher education in what I have come to think of as a globalized economy.

When I graduated from Tufts University in 1975, I did not worry very much about finding work; jobs were plentiful for someone with a college degree. I joined the Peace Corps, learned Arabic, and spent two years in Morocco. A large part of my decision to join the Peace Corps was not only my Irish Catholic family background, in which volunteer

work was encouraged, but also because I got a college degree during the Vietnam War. I had a great many discussions in and out of class about what our obligations were as citizens. I worked at a homeless shelter during college to earn some money. I picked up a lot at the Pine Street Inn in Boston's red-light district. I learned not only from the guys who were homeless, but also from the hard-scrabble men who worked there, most of whom were veterans, and the police who worked to make extra cash in their off-hours in the cavernous lobby trying to maintain a semblance of peace among 300 homeless men. All the police disagreed with me—they hated my long hair, my left-leaning views, my protest against the Vietnam War. We also all got along. One cop drove me home after our shift; we argued the whole way, and we shook hands as I got out of the police car every week.

I came back from the Peace Corps, picked up a master's degree at Harvard, worked for two years at a Native American community college in North Dakota, went west to earn a PhD at Stanford, and then held a postdoctoral position in Boulder, Colorado. The rest of my adult life has been as a professor, first at Penn State and then at the University of Southern California, punctuated by time spent abroad.

It is commonplace to say that universities are among the oldest organizations in the world. India, Morocco, Italy, and the United Kingdom, to name but a few countries, have had storied institutions of higher education for several hundred years. American higher education came of age in the late nineteenth century, and only became the envy of the world after World War II. Many observers might suggest that I entered academe at the beginning of the end of its golden era. Finances are now in disarray. The workforce is undergoing a sea change in terms of desired skills and workplace benefits. Technology and social media have disrupted how one teaches and does research. What one says and does on a college campus today are under greater scrutiny than at any time in the last half-century.

The trends that are apparent in the United States are also clear in other countries and regions. I intend to discuss those developments with a special focus on Los Angeles, Hong Kong, and New Delhi. Since the pandemic hit, many in higher education have claimed that a revolution is about to occur on our campuses—that all of our 4,000 institutions will close and online behemoths will take over. My goal is not to be an academic doomsayer claiming that the end is near. Rather, I have been wondering, as I have traveled the world trying to figure out what's going on, what we might do to help higher education get its groove back.

As I will discuss, I don't think making our postsecondary institutions more productive is simply a concern to those of us who work in higher education. I link higher education to what I shall call the democratic project. The democratic project pertains to enabling individuals to have a voice about the future of their country and to reject those fascist tendencies currently at work. As I shall elaborate, that future pertains not only to material goods and services, but also to cultural and social ones. Here's the conundrum: academe reflects the tenor and events in the larger society, but our colleges and universities also have the opportunity to change those events and the discourse that surrounds them. Democracy and higher education are inextricably linked. Even in fascist countries, where universities have been a tool, not to promote democracy, but rather to distort and mute it, education plays an important role. In a democratic environment, however, universities have the ability, not only to be key arbiters of how one advances democracy, but also to reflect democratic values in their practices, objectives, and goals.

Societal changes of the twenty-first century necessitate changes to higher education—not simply to adapt to the marketplace, but also to help the larger society adhere to the democratic project. Before I flesh out what I mean by the democratic project, however, let me consider the changes that are occurring and what those changes have portended for academe.

Considering Globalization and Neoliberalism

Globalization is transforming virtually all of modern life. Goods, services, jobs, technology, and information have changed in developed and developing countries. Many scholars have argued that current economic strategies have enabled transnational corporations to gain an enormous competitive advantage in the global marketplace. The by-products of globalization are the homogenization of culture, the reduction of full-time employment, the insertion of business practices into not-for-profit and public organizations, and most important for my purposes here, the rise of a populist movement that has enabled nationalistic politicians to gain power by employing privatization as the scaffolding to construct policies (Cantwell & Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009; Diamond, 2019; Fuchs & Klingemann, 2019; Gutek, 2006).

These forces and their impacts, however, are neither well understood nor well examined, particularly in terms of how they have impacted

tertiary education. Although globalization certainly has its intellectual roots in various international transformations that have occurred over the last two centuries (e.g., the rise and fall of colonialism), what many scholars mean by globalization in the twenty-first century is a relatively new phenomenon that has been shaped by advances in technology and the decline of the public sphere (Kaul et al., 1999). Indeed, change occurs so quickly now that what one meant by “globalization” at the turn of the century differs from the meanings that are evoked by the term today. For example, whereas “globalization” was, at one point, frequently employed as little more than a synonym for American imperialism, today scholars have a more sophisticated understanding of the manifold ways in which culture, technology, politics, and the market interact to create new relationships that have both positive and negative impacts on a society and its people. Nevertheless, because these changes are taking place so quickly, and because their manifestations vary so significantly across regions and by country, “globalization” remains a nebulous term (Tierney & Lanford, 2021). One result is that policies that deal with these forces quickly become irrelevant or of little use, or even worse yet, dysfunctional.

While globalization has afforded great opportunity, it also has brought about great inequality. Americans, for example, will trumpet that more individuals participate in higher education than a generation ago; college students also graduate with greater debt, encounter greater uncertainty in the job market, and face greater inequality in wealth accumulation (Baum, 2015; Berliner, 2013; Fry, 2014; Piketty, 2014; Saez, 2018). The entrepreneurial ambition and grit of some people mask the stratification and shortchanging of opportunity for many others. One can no longer ignore the diminished opportunities for the least privileged among us when contrasted with the expanding economic, human, and social capital of the most privileged (Hartmann, 2008; Thurow, 2000). As I shall elaborate, such a point can be made whether we are talking about Los Angeles (LA), Hong Kong, or New Delhi.

We also can acknowledge that poverty, hunger, and child mortality have decreased worldwide. Half a billion people escaped extreme poverty between 1990 and 2011. The child mortality rate has gone down by over 50 percent (Ebner, 2017, p. 15). However, coupled with positive news are worrying trends about the erosion of civil rights, a greater sense of economic insecurity among the middle classes, and a rise on the attacks of civic organizations such as the judiciary and the press.

Hand in hand with globalization has been the idea of neoliberalism. Although there are certainly many ways in which one might interpret

globalization, the dominant interpretative framework has been neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has been around for over a century and currently is the primary mode of thought in the United States. Neoliberals believe ardently, and some would say rigidly, in free market capitalism. As I shall elaborate, privatization, deregulation, and a narrow definition of public goods have framed how governments approach globalization. Free trade and reduced spending by central governments presumably provide greater freedom to individuals. From this perspective, this is the aim of society. Whenever government intercedes in a manner that restricts choice, then individual liberty is at risk.

Chris Lorenz (2012) has nicely summarized the neoliberal ideology by stating, “The dogma of the free market can best be expressed by a formula: free market = competition = best value for the money = optimum efficiency for individuals as both consumers and owners of private property” (p. 601). Such a dogma has taken hold on institutions whether in LA, Delhi, or Hong Kong. The result has significant ramifications for primary actors within the organizations. Members of the administration, for example, becomes more important insofar as they are the individuals who can create efficiencies and lead the charge up the rankings. Educational organizations are also impacted.

Globalization, Neoliberalism, and Education

Education, in general, and higher education, in particular, are also not immune from the effects of globalization and neoliberalism (Brown et al., 2010; Findlay & Tierney, 2010). Economies cannot be separated from sociocultural contexts in which educational institutions are embedded. Numerous scholars have pointed out how various forces have shaped universities in developed countries. Simon Marginson (2007), for example, has argued that academic governance has been transformed in Australia as the government and universities attempt to position higher education in a global context. David Kirp (2003) has done a similar study in the United States and argued that markets and technology are supplanting traditional academic values. Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades (2004) have critiqued neoliberalism by writing about emerging forms of “academic capitalism” throughout the industrialized world. I have written about the various forms of neoliberal privatization in India as well as how the definition of quality in Central America is in constant tension with how it is defined on the world stage (Tierney, 1994, 1995; Tierney & Sabharwal, 2018; Tierney et

al., 2019). Gerard Postiglione and Ailei Xie (2018) have pointed out how the pressures of being “world class” has driven an academic arms race in China and Hong Kong. Peter Scott’s (2005) observation is that universities in the United Kingdom are increasingly unable to remain relevant because of erosions caused by the reconfiguration of the labor market.

What seems to be taking place is a myriad of interconnected changes: conventional academic disciplines are falling by the wayside, the traditional role of the academic is being redefined as tenure is being eliminated, research is increasingly corporatized, public funding is decreasing or awarded in a radically different manner from the past, and competition is increasing from education providers that did not even exist a decade or two ago. Coursera, for example, started in 2012 and claims that 40 million students have taken its courses,¹ even though it still has not perfected a business plan and has lost much of its initial luster. While for-profit education providers such as the Corinthian Colleges and Argosy University either have gone out of business or seen their market shares evaporate, other entrants, such as the for-profit Columbia Southern University and the nonprofit Western Governors University, are growing rapidly—in a manner that, according to some, heralds Clayton Christiansen’s argument about “disruptive technology” (see Christensen, 1997; Christensen & Eyring, 2011). Christiansen has argued that radical inventions such as the telephone and the internet spring from start-up companies that show enormous growth and quickly force traditional companies out of business. And yet, Christiansen’s prediction that half the colleges and universities in the United States will disappear in a decade has proven to be false (Lederman, 2017). Further, during the pandemic, when all of higher education turned to online education, one prevalent comment was that many students preferred in-person classes with other students and a professor. Zoom was an exciting innovation, and then found to be exhausting. Even though the end may not be near, the future is dramatically different from the past. Most observers of higher education agree that the recipe for tomorrow is not based on yesterday’s ingredients. All these changes and suggestions for reform work within the neoliberal paradigm, and the pandemic only accelerated these sorts of recommendations as funding declined.

Not unlike the marketplace, academe has seen salaries rise for chief executives of universities—and fall for those who do the labor. Faculty positions are scarcer, and the quest for the “best” students—as defined by quantifiable outcomes such as scores on standard examinations like the SAT—becomes paramount. On the reverse side, issues such as equity or

advancing a diversity agenda become less important, and full-time faculty are seen as inefficient.

Students have always been at the center of the higher education enterprise, but recent changes bring even that assumption into question. Whereas a postsecondary degree was once the province of wealthy men, the United States has struggled with equal opportunity since Morrill's Land Grant Act of 1862. India had an underdeveloped tertiary education system as a colony, and although the country has dramatically increased participation rates over the last 20 years at its universities and institutes, the children of the poorest families remain significantly underrepresented (Kumar, 2016; Tilak, 2013). The wealthiest students in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Turkey, and Malaysia always have studied abroad, which speaks volumes about issues surrounding the quality and capacity of these countries' postsecondary systems. Hence, while significant strides have been made for everyone, the challenges of poverty might seem intractable to the pessimist. The likelihood of entry into the labor market on graduation has become harder rather than easier as the twenty-first century progresses, and the democratic role of a postsecondary education has all but been eliminated. Employment was once a by-product of a college education; today, students go to college or university simply to remain competitive (Douglass, 2009).

The Rise of Populism and the Attack on Democracy

One outcome of all these changes is the rise of populist movements throughout the world that have antidemocratic and fascist strains in their strategies and beliefs. A great deal of emergent literature is following changes in Hungary, the United Kingdom, Italy, Greece, and elsewhere in Europe (Furedi, 2017; Hawkins & Littvay, 2019; Mondon & Winter, 2018; Stavrakakis & Katsambekis, 2019; Verbeek & Zaslove, 2016). The obliteration of the Republican Party and the rise of Trumpism in the United States have evoked a great deal of analysis. In India, the emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its emphasis on Hindu nationalism anticipated Donald Trump's message to his own constituencies. And even though China has never had a tradition of democracy, its moves are more in the direction of "strongmen" regimes, which has significant consequences for democratic outposts such as Hong Kong.

For my purposes here, I think of democracy as a system whereby a state's citizens are able to participate in choosing and replacing their leaders

by election. The idea of democracy that I am working from assumes that human rights are essential; that is, individuals are free to express their opinions without fear of reprisal. As I shall discuss, electoral democracy finds its counterpoint in fascism, which appeals to the masses' need for a leader to solve their problems.

My goal is less to add to the overall literature pertaining to the rise of an antidemocratic nationalist agenda with fascist overtones, but instead to consider academe's role in advancing and supporting democracy. I am asking, What might academic institutions do to bolster and foment democracy and defeat fascism? What sorts of changes need to occur so that colleges and universities model the best practices of democratic life and aid in securing democracy in society? As a recent report from the Brookings Institute noted, "Democracy's fate rests in the hands of people, and securing it begins at home" (Eisen et al., 2019, p. 13). As I elaborate, what concerned me about the Brookings report was that it offered several useful suggestions about how societies might bolster democracy, yet higher education was largely overlooked. Democracy is at the heart of civil society. Robust organizations in a civil society keep democracy strong. These organizations provide citizens with information to make informed decisions, and they are meeting grounds on which we may hash out differences of opinion. Colleges and universities are one of these civic organizations that help preserve and advance democracy in civil society.

The twenty-first century has led to many changes with regard to higher education—both caused by and resulting from globalization and neoliberalism—that are not yet well understood. If academe is to be a progenitor in the advancement of democracy, then we need to consider five changes that have been significant across national contexts: inequality, privatization, identity, academic freedom, and the public good.

Inequality

Wealth accumulation among the richest individuals across the globe continues, even as poverty remains an intransigent problem. During the twentieth century, attempts were made to increase college-going throughout the world, as education was once seen as the route out of poverty. This effort continues globally, whether it is the "college for all" movement in the United States, India's desire to have more individuals attending universities than any other country in the world, or even tiny Sri Lanka's effort to

increase its university enrollment by 10 percent a year for several years. The challenge is that, all too often, jobs do not exist for students upon graduation, the skills students learned at the university are irrelevant for the marketplace, or the value of the liberal arts is eliminated such that colleges and universities become vocational schools rather than centers of learning. Indeed, a liberal education in Hong Kong is not only viewed as irrelevant for future employment; the government considers what professors teach in such courses as the groundwork for the protests that have occurred.

The result is that whereas education was once seen as the “great equalizer,” in the twentieth century, wealth discrepancy between the wealthiest and the poorest countries, and between the wealthiest and poorest individuals in those countries, continues to grow rather than decline. When the crushing debt burden that many students and their families accumulate is factored in, postsecondary education can be seen as creating greater inequality rather than equality (Auguste et al., 2009).

Who the poor are also varies, not only by race and gender, but also by categories that are unique to different societies. Since its founding, the United States has struggled with issues of equity pertaining to Native Americans, Latinxs, and African Americans. Although racism exists in India and one’s skin color is a marker that has the potential to lead to discrimination there, the larger issue pertains to the pernicious influence of caste, which still has a significant impact on the kind of education one receives and on participation and graduation rates from higher education (Pathania & Tierney, 2018). Isabel Wilkerson has written how caste occurs not only in India, but how it is also a force for understanding race in the United States (Wilkerson, 2020). In Hong Kong, caste does not exist and race is an issue on a much smaller scale; inequality has more to do with class, as Hong Kong has no affirmative action system (Kwan & Wong, 2016; Y-L. Wong, 2019; Y-L. Wong & Koo, 2016). Affirmative action has existed in the United States for a half-century and has been under attack for the last quarter-century. India has an extensive framework that includes various castes and indigenous people in its affirmative action system. In all three locations, class frames inequality but does so in different ways, based on additional markers. Education, in all three locations, is still presumed to be a primary vehicle to improve one’s social and economic well-being, and increasingly, higher education is viewed as a necessary ticket to the middle class.

Privatization

Private higher education has increased throughout the world. Whether the institution is a for-profit institution such as DeVry University in the United States or Raffles College in Singapore or a nonprofit such as Bilkent University in Turkey or O. P. Jindal Global University in India, one of the larger changes to these countries' postsecondary systems has been the movement away from the monopoly of public systems on tertiary education. To wit, Bilkent is commonly thought of as one of Turkey's best institutions. However, the expansion of private higher education has been remarkable, especially in Latin America and Asia. The private sector serves approximately 80 percent of the students in Japan and South Korea;² private institutions enrolled 75 percent of all tertiary-level students in Brazil, and around half of those students are enrolled in a for-profit institution (Knobel & Verhine, 2017). Major shifts are happening in the United States, too. For-profit colleges and universities have existed for over a century, but until recently, they were relatively small companies that offered one specific skill or trade, such as secretarial training, cosmetology, or welding. Now these institutions have vastly expanded their offerings—and their reach. As of the 2016–2017 academic year, 342 for-profit providers participated in federal financial aid programs in California; estimates are that for-profit accredited and unaccredited providers enroll more than 200,000 Californian students (Willis & Allen, 2018). As a result, the very definition of “public” and “private” university has come under debate. The state's obligation to educate its citizens and the recognition of higher education as a public good are under significant reassessment.

What one means by a “public” university and how one defines a “private” university have significant public policy implications (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Kaul et al., 1999). One derivative of globalization has been a neoliberal reliance on market initiatives as preferable to government intervention. India and the United States parallel one another, yet in different ways. Both countries have extensive networks of private colleges and universities; in India, more students attend private institutions than public ones. In the United States, however, attendance at a four-year public college or university is now expected to necessitate student loans. The assumption is that the state no longer should provide free postsecondary education to consumers. The same is true to a lesser extent in India, where student costs are on the rise. In Hong Kong, however, the government still largely covers the cost of higher education for the university system and

the institutions are overwhelmingly public, although regionally there is a great deal of private, entrepreneurial activity. To get into an elite public institution, however, parents need to be able to pay for private schooling. Public high school education is generally poor, and the wealthy pay for private high school so that their children have the ability to get admitted to a public university or to study abroad.

Identity

Perhaps no idea has been more fraught with contestation in the late twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century than that of identity. We have changed in ways that are not very comforting. At one point, two large philosophical groups existed with regard to national identity, one of which aimed for assimilation to a universal norm, while the other sought to claim their own unique identities regardless of factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, differences in ability, and the like. Now, in locations such as Hong Kong, New Delhi, and Los Angeles, all people have differentiated identities, assimilation is seen as impossible (or worse, malicious), and communication across difference is seen as a fool's errand. The idea of intersectionality has fractured identities even more. As poet and civil rights activist Audre Lorde (2009) perceptively commented in a 1985 lecture to Medgar Evers College, "Some of the ways in which I identify myself make it difficult for you to hear me" (p. 57). She was speaking to black women who found it hard to hear her lesbian voice, and to white lesbians who could not hear her blackness.

The assumption, however historically wrong, in the United States is that immigrants prefer to retain their initial identity and do not want to become American. From this perspective, identity is fixed and unchanging. Similarly, some will argue that Muslims should not be allowed into the country because they are not Judeo-Christian. More conservative white and Christian citizens harken back to a 1950s version of America where the lines were clearly drawn to show who was who.

In India, differences largely are based on religion and caste. For example, those who are born Dalits may convert to Buddhism, but for upper-caste Hindus, however, Dalits will always be untouchables. Muslims may lay claim to a treasured history in India, but to others, that history is to be denigrated and denied, not celebrated. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his second inauguration speech, alluded to the fact that minorities "feel" they are discriminated against, thereby suggesting, of course, that

they are not. Even different sports can lay claim to a religious identity such that when a sport becomes popular, it is seen as a reaffirmation of Hinduism. From this perspective, yoga is distinctively Hindu and symbolizes an affirmation of one's identity. When a popular Muslim actor criticized the government, many people placed a bounty on his head and called for him to leave the country. Moreover, the newspapers remain filled with marriage proposals stating the caste that a prospective bride or groom requires.

Hong Kong once had an identity at arm's-length from China, but now the rulers in China have all but absorbed the city. The discussion about identity in Hong Kong is a central point of debate but entirely different from what gets discussed in Los Angeles or New Delhi. A Hong Kong identity does not consider skin color or caste based on religion. Cantonese and English were once the primary languages on the island; now there is a push for students to learn and speak Mandarin. Students from the mainland regularly attend universities in Hong Kong, and even though all students may be Chinese, the culture is now very different. Students and faculty are less willing to be forthcoming in class because they fear reprisals for being "Anti-China," and there is a great deal of commentary about students who secretly record professors and fellow students in class and report back to the government. The protests in 2019 led to many mainland students returning home. Some felt worried about speaking Mandarin in the streets. A Hong Kong identity is, in some form, tied up with the idea of democracy. Speaking English was once identified with colonialism and today it has more to do with Hong Kong's democratic tradition.

A nationalist identity was once used to think well of democratic nations. A common platitude about the United States is that we are bound by an "idea"—democracy—and our fidelity to the idea is part and parcel of a national identity. Today, however, nationalism is a synonym for xenophobia. Nationalism in India is not the hope for a secular country but instead speaks to Hindus' desire to place their religion at the core of the nation. In Hong Kong, nationalism to the Chinese government means that the city needs to conform to the central government's definition of identity. Trumpism is a clarion call for returning the United States to a simpler time, when white male dominance was paramount.

Postsecondary institutions play a critical role in the examination of identity. Education brings out in individuals an opportunity for reflection about who they are and how they fit into the grand scheme of things.

An education can create the atomization of identity whereby individuals think of themselves as individuals who identify with a group and have no sense of communal fraternity beyond that group, or whereby claims can be made about a national identity that reaffirms standards and denies those who are different from the norm. Just as the college years have the potential to enable individuals to come to grips with their multiple pasts, there is also the possibility for understanding difference in a way that bridges identities rather than isolates them. Discussions about identity are central to academic life.

I do not think we can simply return to the “good old days,” as if the past was a utopia and its re-creation will solve the problems that currently exist. And yet, I also do not think we must enter a brave new world that is entirely void of any historical contingencies. We need to consider how these five ideas have been constituted, reconstituted, and defined today. Of consequence, I am seeking a framework to think about these five issues so that we might have a guide for those of us concerned about how higher education might be used to support a broader democratic initiative in which we lead by example through our own internal policies and actions, and our postsecondary institutions also explicitly work toward fomenting change in the larger society. Although these are broad trends, they obviously are articulated in different ways based on the national identities of particular countries.

As I shall expand on in Chapter 3, I intend to honor individuals’ identity, but I equate the struggle for public life with the narrowly defined interests of the group. In a previous work (Tierney, 1993), I talked about how we might build “communities of difference,” and I return to that idea in these pages. We have to think about ways in which these issues that confront us bring us together in advancing the democratic project rather than ignoring or refuting it.

Academic Freedom

As I elaborate in Chapter 4, what we expect of academic staff—the faculty—is also changing throughout the world. During much of the twentieth century in the United States, professors were largely autonomous agents able to define the nature of their working conditions; today, the largest number of faculty is part-time and contingent. An increasing number of full-time faculty need a second (and third) job to make ends meet. Research was once a critical component of many institutions and an aspiration for many

others; currently, there is more interest in teaching, in general, and online learning, in particular. In all cases, the academic workforce is undergoing seismic shifts accompanied by growing complexity.

There is an odd dualism at work in the United States. The erosion of academic freedom's protector—tenure—has meant that academic freedom is at greater risk today than at any point in its history. Structural reforms to shared governance, tenure, and hiring practices suggest that a sea change in academic practices is afoot, and we see the consequences whether we look at New Delhi, Hong Kong, or Los Angeles.

However, what passes for academic freedom—always a topic of dialogue and debate—is also under reformulation. Ardent supporters of academic freedom have had to rethink its meaning and definition in an era when people invent facts and put forward conspiracies with no basis in reality. To enable discussions about whether the shooting of school-children at Sandy Hook, Connecticut, in 2012 occurred, for example, is not an act in support of academic freedom. I have a wide definition of academic freedom, but its limits have been met over the past few years (Tierney, 2020).

Of consequence, what was once seen as the *raison d'être* of the academy in the twentieth century—academic freedom—is undergoing significant reexamination and reformulation. Tenure came about to protect academic freedom. If most positions in the academy are no longer tenure track, there's the tacit implication that academic freedom—and relatedly, the search for truth—is no longer a central totem of the academy.

Governments need to respect autonomy; when governments believe that professors are little more than public servants, then what gets said will be constrained and muted. Hong Kong has an academic tradition rooted in the mores of the United Kingdom, where academic freedom and job security were seen as interrelated and essential for academic excellence. Today, however, academics are routinely cautioned not to speak against the state or for independence; if they do, they will lose their employment. The governing board of the universities has exerted its authority in a manner that many see as undermining the power of the vice chancellor and making a mockery of shared governance and free speech. The law that China passed in 2020, ostensibly on national security, has all but eliminated academic freedom in Hong Kong.

Faculty and students have come in for criticism since the Occupy Central movement, and even more so during the prolonged protests that closed campuses in fall 2019. With the first protest, faculty initially sug-

gested that all Hong Kongers should occupy the central area of the city in protest against the encroachment of China on Hong Kong. Students then took over the movement and occupied the center of Hong Kong for roughly three months. One fallout from that activism is that China's central government has taken a much more assertive role in events on campuses and in the city, which partially led to the more extensive protests in 2019 and the passage in 2020 of the National Security Law. The law created a vast security apparatus in Hong Kong and gave China broad powers to crack down on, arrest, and imprison individuals who disagreed with China's various policies. The result is that now if faculty protest, they will be jailed and expelled from the university.

In India, faculty and students face violent attacks when they choose to put forward ideas that run contrary to the established order. The conservative governing party, BJP, has repeatedly condemned universities as allowing anti-Indian discourse. Numerous movies, plays, and books have been banned. Students and faculty have been dismissed and imprisoned. If students or faculty try to discuss the fate of Kashmir, they are likely to face repercussions. The result in many instances has been violence against anyone espousing a controversial view. Dalits and Muslims, in particular, have been targeted. Further, those who wish to give prominence to Hinduism also put forward myths as fact—that Hindus conducted open heart surgery thousands of years ago, for example, or that they invented flying aircraft in the distant past.

The Public Good

A final change pertains to the oversight and financing of public- and private-sector institutions. The state is refashioning its role in relation to the financial support and regulation of public institutions as they become more dependent on external (nongovernmental) funding and more independent from the government agencies that created them. Consequently, how state institutions might be more effectively governed and organized have become key policy questions throughout the world. For similar reasons, private institutions also require new forms of oversight to ensure that consumers are protected (Hentschke et al., 2010; Tierney & Hentschke, 2007).

One might think that a decrease in funding makes a public institution less dependent on state demands. Yet in the United States, as state funding has decreased as an absolute percentage of overall revenue, state

regulatory control at public institutions has increased. Meanwhile, oversight of for-profit institutions has been inadequate and tied up in partisan politics (Angulo, 2016); the Democratic administration of Barack Obama sought to increase oversight, while the deregulation of the sector was a key goal for the Trump administration. In India, fully two-thirds of all students attend private institutions; how these institutions are regulated has become a national conversation because of the subpar quality of the education provided. How Hong Kong's universities interact with the Hong Kong government has become a major topic of debate insofar as institutional autonomy appears to have been eliminated as China asserts greater control with the National Security Law. Although privatization is not a point of discussion in Hong Kong, the autonomy that universities once enjoyed is now undergoing a reformulation as government regulation increases and faculty autonomy is eliminated.

The global move away from the creation, sustenance, and support of a public good reflects shifts with other goods and services. These philosophical shifts are such that the state no longer sees itself as a purveyor of public goods. The turn toward enabling the private sector to grow—whether as for-profit institutions in the United States or ostensibly nonprofit institutions in India—suggests that postsecondary institutions are going through a significant change with regard to the state's role in oversight and governance. On the one hand, the autonomy of public universities in Hong Kong is being rethought. On the other hand, the public funding of higher education in the United States and India is largely decreasing, and regulation has become a major topic of debate in both countries (Kapur, 2010; Kapur & Perry, 2015; Tierney & Sabharwal, 2017).

If the role of higher education is to create a more equitable society, the role of regulation necessitates continued examination as a public-policy issue (Salmi, 2011). Both states are increasingly playing a role of oversight and monitoring. India has significant oversight of the public and private sectors, although corruption pervades the system. Just as all prime ministers bemoan the level of corruption in the government, so too is corruption endemic in all aspects of higher education. Regulation is increasingly strict in Hong Kong as China asserts control; the boards of trustees and the senior administrations are less willing to defer to academics or students at the university, and more likely to carry out the desires of the government. Different states in the United States have increased oversight by implementing policies such as Performance Based Funding (PBF), but the positive outcomes appear negligible while the

negative outcomes may disadvantage historically underserved students, as well as the institutions they typically attend (Hillman & Corral, 2017; Li et al., 2018; Li & Kennedy, 2018).

Governance within the university systems is also going through significant changes. Shared governance largely came about in the twentieth century in the United States with vestiges of a European influence from the nineteenth century (Tierney & Lanford, 2014). The rise of non-tenure track faculty and the neoliberal environment that prizes the speed that decisions can be made rather than the process of deliberation about issues, has fractured the idea of shared governance (Tierney, 2020). In both India and Hong Kong, faculties think of themselves more as public servants than independent intellectuals who are free to speak out on critical issues in society or at the institution. Deliberation about internal issues that are not politically charged may remain in the hands of the faculty, but informed discussions about the future of the institution are increasingly rare; instead, strategic plans about the future are seen as the province of the senior administration and governing boards. Students in India and Hong Kong have historically had more voice than their counterparts in the United States, but the extent of their power is as much at risk today in Hong Kong and New Delhi as it is in Los Angeles.

The Logic of the Locations

The text highlights the trends that are taking place in three metropolitan areas—Los Angeles, New Delhi, and Hong Kong. I have spent a quarter of a century in Los Angeles. I also have been an Interdisciplinary Research Fellow in Hong Kong for parts of each of the last six years. I had a year-long Fulbright Scholarship in New Delhi in 2015–2016 and returned for follow-up interviews in 2019. The text utilizes data not only from national archives but also from interviews with scores of individuals—students, faculty, senior executives, and policy makers. I am not using these three cities as case studies, which would involve a much more extended discussion. Rather, they are exemplars of what I find taking place, or needing to take place, if we are to protect democracy and defeat fascism.

The kaleidoscopic history of the recent past and current events shaping higher education affords the opportunity to see similarities and differences across metropolitan areas and institutions. Information and stories framed by national data sets have the potential to illuminate

trends and hopefully provide material for reflection about what kind of higher education we want to offer in the twenty-first century and what role universities should assume in helping advance a democratic society.

The rise of populism and the demise of democracy is occurring in various locations throughout the world. I have chosen three metropolitan areas in democratic nations (or city-states) to compare and contrast similarities and differences.

Los Angeles

Since World War II, the United States has arguably had the best system of higher education in the world, and California, with its Master Plan for Higher Education, has stood as the exemplar for public support of universal access. Nonetheless, privatization, declining state financing of higher education, and the casualization of academic labor have created questions about the future direction of higher education. With the dramatic increase of non-tenure track faculty has come a reticence of the faculty to speak out on crucial issues for fear that they will be fired. The election of Donald Trump has only increased arguments pertaining to the import and definition of identity. The search for “truth”—once an axiom of academic life—is now derided as fake news. Even though there was no evidence of a rigged election, Trump’s claims convinced 75 percent of Republicans that the results were fraudulent.

New Delhi

With 1.2 billion people, India is the world’s largest democracy. Although the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) are considered centers of excellence, the system is troubled and beset by challenges over funding, regulation, and lack of opportunity for its poorest citizens. The reservation system (affirmative action), the rapid increase in privatization, the corruption that has come along with privatization, and the government’s intrusion on campuses have raised equally significant questions about what the country should expect of its tertiary educational system. The rapid increase in offering higher education throughout the country has led to the diminution of scarce public resources and a decrease in the system’s quality precisely when these institutions also want to improve their rankings in league tables. The number of degreed citizens needed

by the country has become a significant question, as have the rights and responsibilities of faculty to conduct research that, according to some, challenge the assumptions of the government.

New Delhi is emblematic of the challenges that India faces. Home to some of India's most respected postsecondary institutions, the city is also beset with political and social turmoil. Faculty and students are regularly threatened either with sanctions or physical violence for hosting events that the government sees as problematic. Corruption is rampant. The University Grants Commission (UGC) coordinates all higher education activity in the country and is one of the most centralized academic bodies in the world. Affirmative action provides a level of support to members of lower castes but they are still grossly underrepresented, as are women in prestigious institutions such as the IITs (Deshpande & Palshikar, 2008). As I shall elaborate, privatization is a particularly vexing aspect of a system that ostensibly has been devised to support knowledge production but actually does the opposite. Employment upon graduation is often unlikely (Fernandes, 2006). The government also has put forward a vigorous nationalism defined by Hinduism where Islam is often vilified and Dalits (untouchables) are blamed for many of the ills of society.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong's universities are ranked as among the best in the world and have been at the epicenter of democratic reform. Honk Kong University is considered one of the top five universities in Asia and is over a century old; Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) is the newest university in the top 100 universities in the world. Today, however, academic staff throughout Hong Kong worry about their ability to conduct research and participate in university governance given the tempestuous relationship Hong Kong has had with mainland China.

Hong Kong is in a troubled situation with the country within which it ostensibly resides. When Britain handed over Hong Kong to China in 1997, Deng Xiaoping developed the idea of "one country, two systems," which seemed to work modestly well. China absorbed Hong Kong, but the city was to be a distinct Chinese region with its own economic and administrative system. Hong Kong was to maintain its own governmental, legal, economic, and educational systems. At the handover, Hong Kong contributed 25 percent of China's GDP; today Hong Kong contributes less

than 3 percent of the mainland's GDP. Hong Kong still plays a central role in China's economy because of foreign investment, but its centrality to China has lessened.

Over time, China has asserted more authority in both quiet and dramatic ways. A particular arena of contention has been the universities. Those who claim a Hong Kong identity that is distinct from the mainland run the risk of censure or imprisonment. To speak of some issues, such as independence, is now forbidden. Regulation is high, and autonomy is low. Hong Kong is struggling to define how it is to move forward in these new circumstances, and the universities are at the center of the turmoil (Mok, 2005). Although the Umbrella movement and then the protests of 2019 boasted of being "leaderless," faculty, and in particular, students, played central roles in orchestrating citizens' responses to the government. The campuses became a flashpoint in 2019, and several closed to avoid further mayhem. As they have reopened after the pandemic, the ability of faculty and students to speak out has been curtailed in the classroom and on the campus generally.

I have chosen these three democratic cities because they each face the issues I have raised, and they are also framed by what I have defined as globalization, and relatedly, neoliberalism. One might think that the United States is immune to external forces, or that India's size in general and New Delhi in particular makes it so different from Hong Kong that comparisons are impossible. Hong Kong is a city of 7 million that is struggling to find its way as a democracy within a country that is not, whereas the United States has elected someone as president who many believe threatens the foundations of democracy even in democratic strongholds such as Los Angeles. And yet, all three sites are located in democracies that have had shared assumptions about what it expects of their systems of higher education. Education has been seen as a liberalizing force for society and as a route out of poverty for its poorest citizens. Their faculties have had a protected, even privileged, status, and the institutions have been seen as spaces where the search for truth should be protected and nurtured.

These sites also have had different trajectories. There are obvious differences between the American postsecondary system and the British systems. There also are differences between what takes place in Hong Kong as opposed to New Delhi, given their different paths over the last half-century. However, I have not chosen to explore these cities because of their similarities. Rather, I have asked how three different postsecondary