



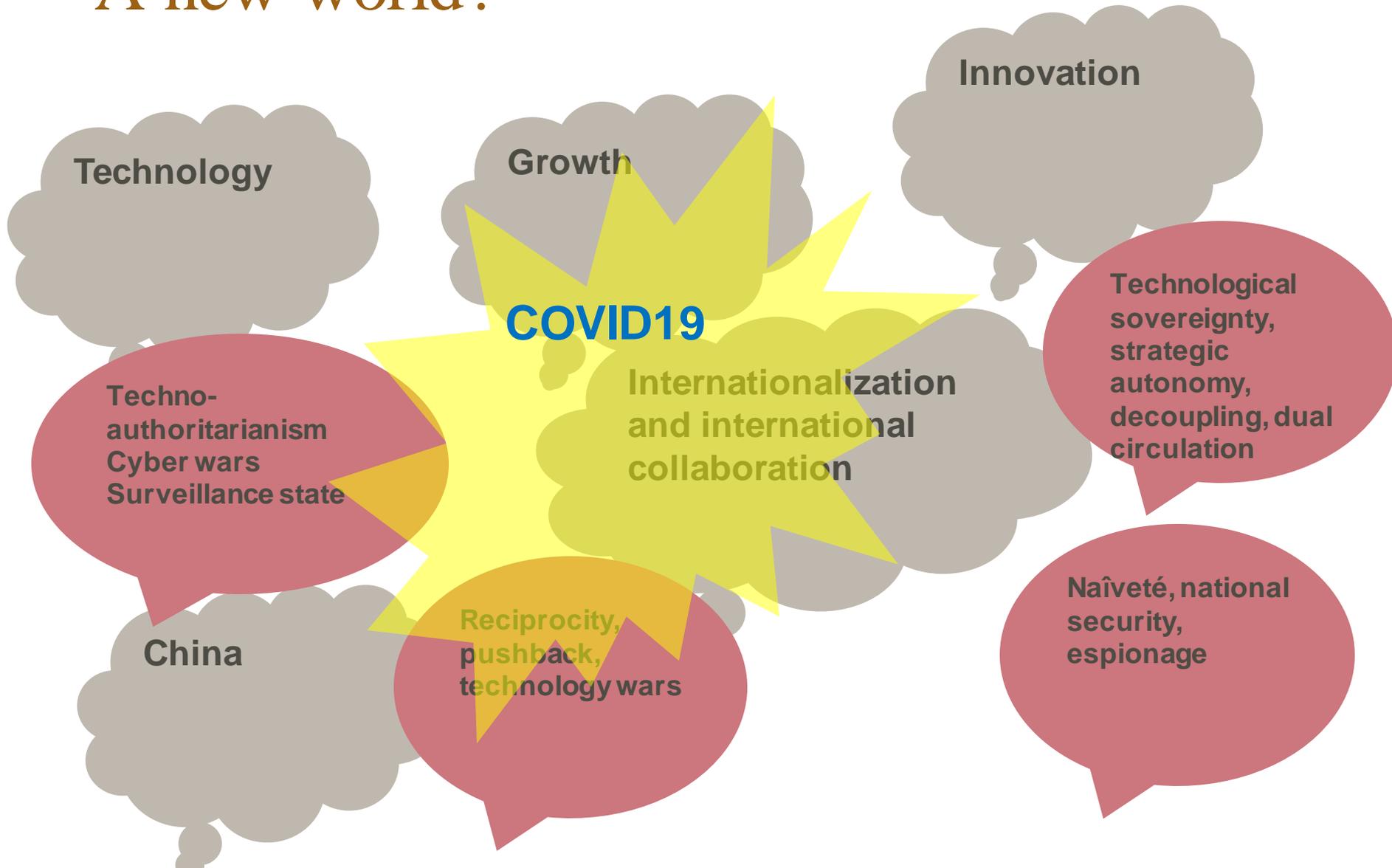
LUNDS
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*Higher education in times of uncertainty and
turbulence: leadership, innovation,
transformation*

SYLVIA SCHWAAG SERGER, NOVEMBER 4, 2020

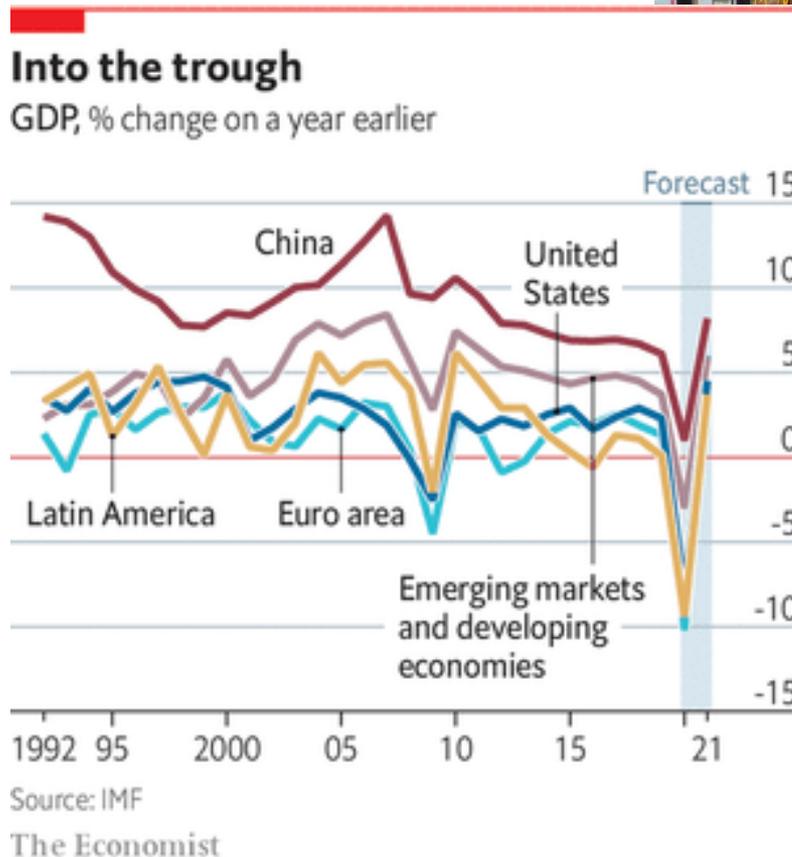


A new world?





Source: University of Florida



Source: qz



Source: The Toronto Star



Source: CNN



Source: Columbia University



Source: New York Times

- Inequality
- Polarization
- Nationalism
- Geopolitical tensions

International higher education in turmoil

Briefing

Aug 8th 2020 edition >

Uncanny University

Covid-19 could push some universities over the brink

Higher education was in trouble even before the pandemic



Australian universities risk catastrophe due to over-reliance on Chinese students, expert warns

AM | By national education reporter [Natasha Robinson](#)
Updated 21 Aug 2019, 12:43am



PHOTO: Chinese nationals now account for 10 per cent of students at Australian universities. (ABC News: Danielle I)

A downturn in the number of students from China could be "catastrophic" for some Australian universities and may force taxpayers to prop up the budgets of some of the nation's oldest sandstone institutions.

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NEWS FEATURE · 01 JUNE 2020

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Alexandra Witze



Stanford | Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR)

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Recession Graduates: The Long-lasting Effects of an Unlucky Draw

Apr 2019 Policy Brief

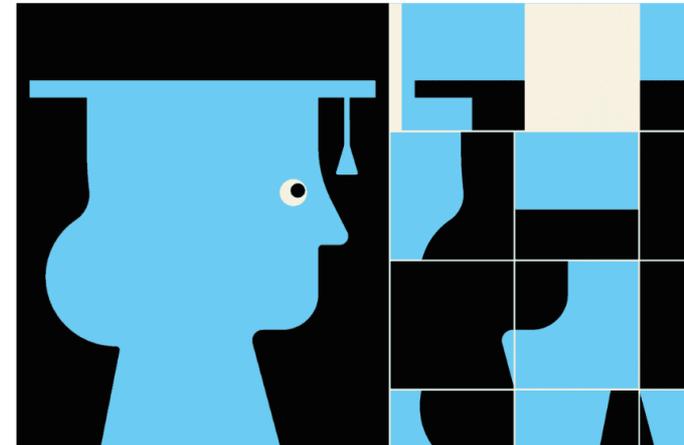
By Hannes Schwandt

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Research shows that college

<https://siepr.stanford.edu/research/publications/recession-graduates-effects-unlucky>



Changing and uncertain context



Runaway world

- Knowledge generation and learning happening increasingly outside universities
- Increasingly urgent societal challenges and 'wicked problems'
- Complexity and uncertainty
- Rise of new actors in research, higher education and innovation
- Democracy, science and international collaboration are being questioned and threatened
- **Covid has accentuated many of our problems and frictions (not caused them)!!**



Before Covid

- Increasingly urgent societal challenges (eg climate change) => Need for transformative / systemic change => increasing directionality in innovation policy (incl missions)
 - Disruptive technologies and related uncertainties
 - Science and technology increasingly linked to and interacting with other policy areas (geopolitics, trade, security, democracy, ethics, privacy and human rights...) => increasing complexity
 - Increasing international friction, decoupling, concerns re. technological sovereignty...
 - Increasing inequalities/polarization within democracies
- => Covid further underlined and reinforced these trends (did not cause them)



Covid and its consequences



Covid and its consequences

- Tragedy and severe disruptions to daily life, economy, society
- Risk of long-term economic crisis (unemployment, public finances) and social upheaval
- The first of a succession of crises? Ushering in an era of uncertainty and instability?
- BUT: many problems existed before!



Possible positive consequences

- Digitalization of higher education
- More support for science (for now?)
- Hightened sense of urgency promotes necessary and transformative change
- Crisis to propel certain sectors / policy areas forward? (eg public sector, academia, healthcare, digitalization, sustainability)



PROFESSIONAL JOBS EVENTS RANKINGS STUDENT



Is this the crisis higher education needs to have?

The Covid-19 pandemic offers universities a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put their dysfunctional strategies behind them, argue Timothy Devinney and Grahame Dowling

May 14, 2020

Short term effects of Covid: academia

- Increasing focus on and support for science and education (temporary or long-term?)
- Increases in public spending, recovery & stimulus measures
- Concern over future funding and students (with much more severe effects in Anglo-Saxon countries)
- Does not encourage risk-taking or ambition?
- Individual vs. organizational level

⇒ What response to the next crisis?

⇒ Increasing funding for healthcare, research and higher education: risk of further postponing necessary reforms?

⇒ **Importance of leadership**



Medium-term effects

- Covid, crisis and complexity
 - reveals challenges for science communication and policy advice (lack of translational, multidisciplinary abilities)
 - Further accentuates tensions stemming from different timeframes for academia and surrounding society
 - Calls for more agile decision-making
- Funding:
 - R&D and education budgets?
 - International students and tuition income?
- Support for, focus / expectations on science
- Continuous crisis?
- Leadership and institutional agility



Colleges Slash Budgets in the Pandemic, With 'Nothing Off-Limits'

Liberal arts departments, graduate student aid and even tenured teaching positions are targets as the coronavirus causes shortfalls.

	Increase in student places in 2020 (%)
Denmark	6.8
Finland	6.8
Norway	6.6
Sweden	4.0



Ohio Wesleyan is eliminating or phasing out majors in urban studies, journalism, comparative literature and 15 other subjects. Andrew Spear for The New York Times

Sweden:

- significant increase in public research funding
- Increase in international students

BUT

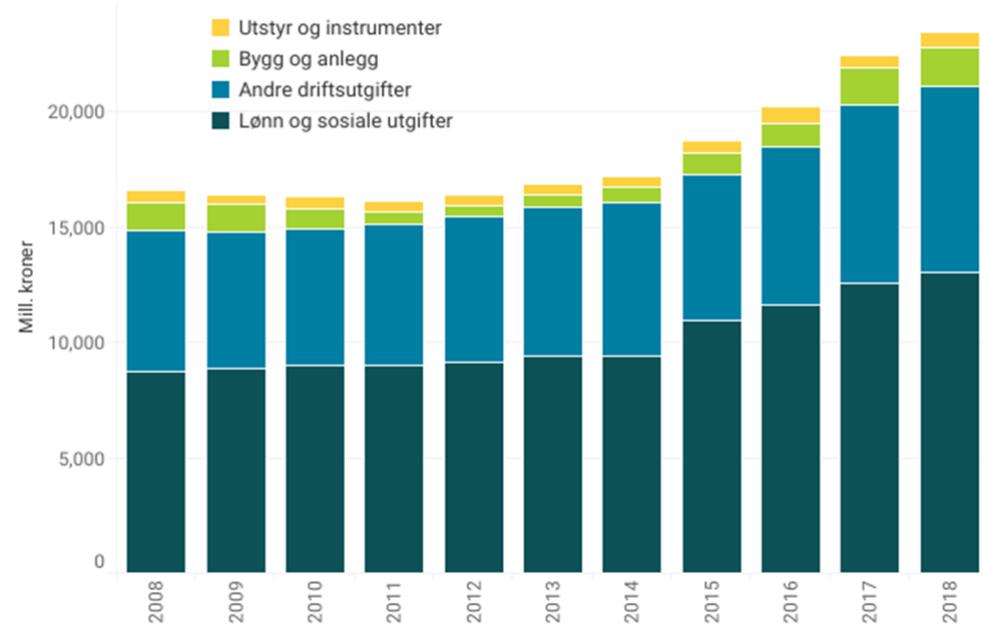
- Signs that government is no longer looking primarily to universities to provide the education society needs!

US (and to some extent UK, Australia, Canada):

- Freshmen enrolment down 16% (undergrad -4%), International students: down 11% (undergraduate)
 - Huge revenue losses
 - Loss of faith in higher education institutions
- ⇒ ***Are these challenges endemic to the US or warning signs of things to come?!***
- ⇒ ***How will we utilize our advantageous position?***

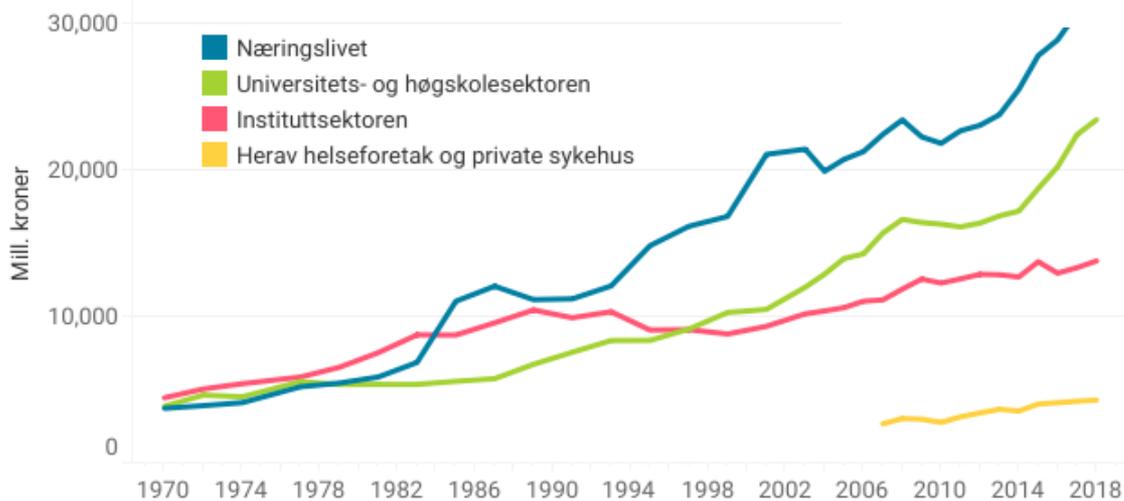
FoU-utgifter i universitets- og høyskolesektoren etter utgiftstype

Løpende eller faste
 ● Faste 2015-priser
 ○ Løpende priser



FoU-utgifter i Norge etter sektor

Faste 2015-priser

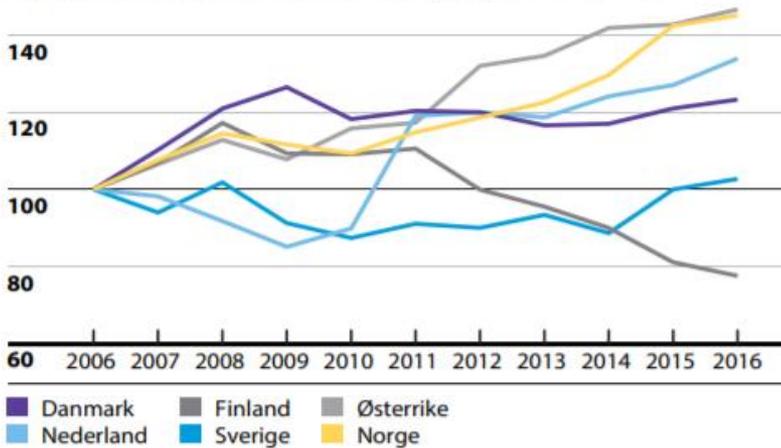


Source: Forskningsradet
 Indikatorrapporten 2020

3 Hvordan har FoU-investeringene utviklet seg?

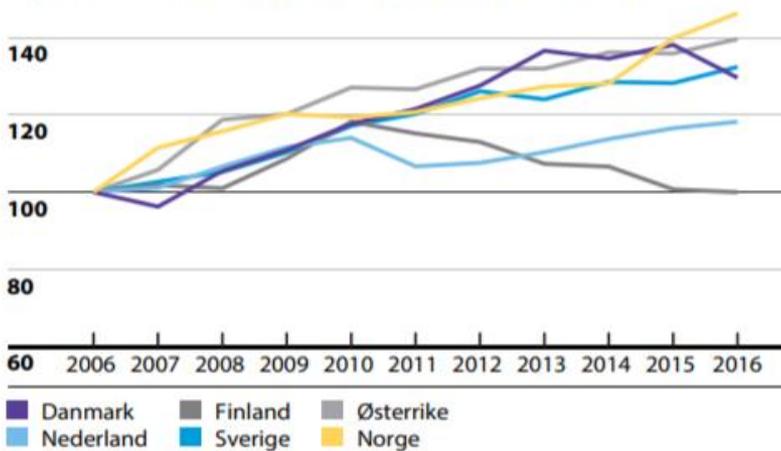
a) Kilde: OECD Main Science and Technology Indicators 2017:2

Utgifter til FoU utført i foretakssektoren i faste priser, indeks 2006 = 100



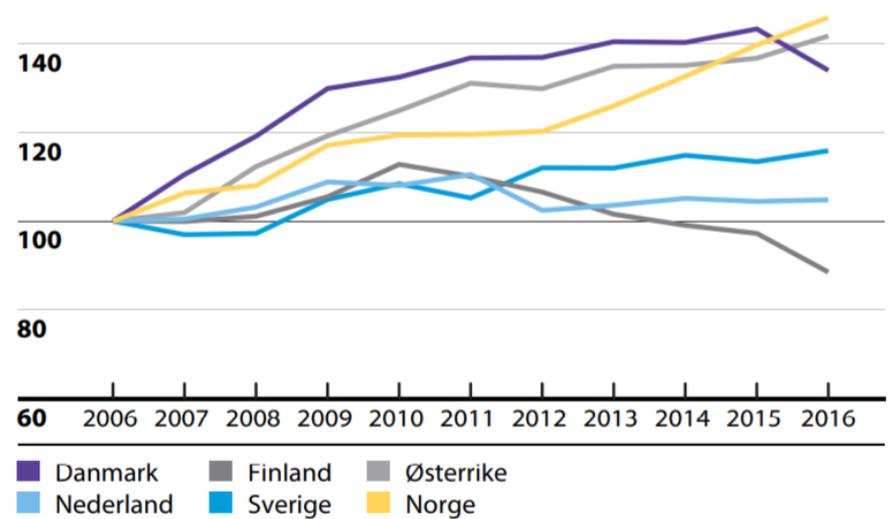
b) Kilde: OECD Main Science and Technology Indicators 2017:2

Utgifter til FoU utført utenfor foretakssektoren i faste priser, indeks 2006 = 100



c) Kilde: OECD Main Science and Technology Indicators 2017:2

Bevilgninger til FoU over statsbudsjettet i faste priser, indeks 2006 = 100



European (Nordic?) universities: time to shine?

- Stable (increasing?) funding (national and European)
- Strong public support and interest in science
- Less bad at increasing inequality (than US?)

BUT:

- "we are doing the same as everyone else so we must be doing the right thing"
- "we are not so far behind the leaders... but we are not as good at planning for the future"
- Example Högskoleprovet
- Have not shown agility, leadership, ambition to assume a leading role in shaping our society?



How are universities responding?

- Slowly, and defensively (defending academia against society)?
 - Lifelong learning
 - Digitalization
 - Diversity
 - Multi- and interdisciplinarity
 - Strategic renewal of education
 - Societal interaction
- Advances in digitalization and pace of change in response to Covid – change driven by necessity, urgency, crisis
- **Protect-prepare-transform?**

“The 21st century is going to be increasing in speed in terms of acceleration of change, globalisation, and disruption of all types – social, economical, technological, biological... And you tell me whether the average college [where] faculty sit around in rooms and [wear] dark robes [is] going to be the best way to educate in a full-scale democracy going forward”. (Michael Crow, President ASU)

How are universities preparing society for complexity, crisis, uncertainty and transformation?

- Education?
- Research?
- Policy advice?
- Collaboration?



What will happen?

- The strong universities will emerge even stronger (in terms of funding, branding and educational offering), others will struggle and perhaps even disappear (part. in the UK and the US)
- Initial increase in funding for research and education not certain/likely to continue as governments have to fight continuous crises



Long-term consequences?

- **Threat to the global enterprise of science and an international science system based on openness, reciprocity, excellence?**
- **”Global crises are generally followed by sudden, sharp reconfigurations of global power associated with technological mastery” (Naughton 2020)**
- **Universities’ ability to respond will affect their legitimacy, identity and autonomy in a turbulent world**



Crisis, complexity and uncertainty: challenge and opportunity?!

- Many problems (in society and in academia) are not new... What is new is **uncertainty combined with complexity and crisis**
- Uncertainty is not the same as inability to know or prepare: Importance of linking S&T policy and foresight
- **A significant opportunity?**
 - Increasing interest in science
 - Stronger mandate to take informed risks and to exercise leadership
 - Sense of urgency promotes agility (without necessarily undermining accountability)
 - Broad consensus to **build back better**, drive overdue change and transformation
- **A historic opportunity to shape the future we want?**



Is there anything we can predict?

Urgency, growing challenges and conflicts, and continual crises (climate change, disasters, economic crises) but also unique window of opportunity

⇒ Increasing focus (incl resources) and demands on higher education, possibly followed by...

⇒ ...reduced budgets for research and innovation?

⇒ Transformation driven more within respective policy areas, rather than through research and innovation policy (eg healthcare, environment & climate, social policy)?

⇒ New and greater demands on science and higher education to support and advise policy in the face of complexity, urgency and crisis!

⇒ **More important than ever that we try to take charge of our future now!**



Conclusions

- As crises and turbulence deepen we can expect increasing pressures on universities to contribute more visibly and quickly to tackling societal challenges and transformation
- Risk of reduced international cooperation and mobility, and growing geopolitical friction and nationalism
- Potential for European (Nordic) universities to strengthen their role in internationalization, policy advice, curating knowledge for society and development, preparing students (and society) for complexity
- Significant immediate and long-term consequences universities and their interaction with society
- From 'parking people' to 'shaping society'?

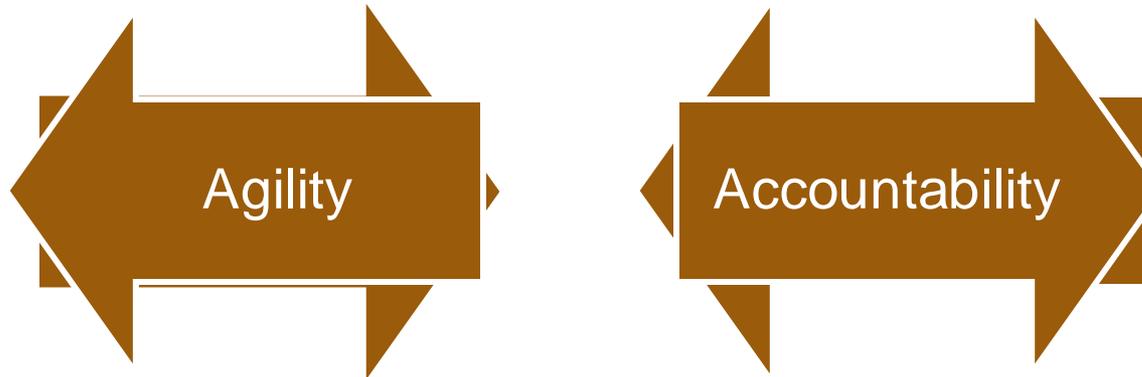


Nordic (European?) universities

- Function solidly (well?) in times of stability, popular support and continuous budget increases
 - Find it hard to prioritize (particularly 'down-prioritize'), position or differentiate themselves (particularly internationally);
 - Are not known for being 'agile organizations';
- ⇒ Little internal or external pressure or mandate for change
- ⇒ What happens in times of crisis and uncertainty (both for the sector and the country)? Are universities up to the task?



- ***Navigating and helping societies navigate in times of uncertainty and crisis***
- ***Securing universities' long-term identity, legitimacy and autonomy***



Finding a good union between these two has become even more important in these times of uncertainty, complexity and turbulence



Ways to the 21st century university

- Increasing **cooperation** (education and research) and **differentiation**
- **Digitalization** for excellence, accessibility, personalized education and competitiveness
- **Strategic renewal of education**: preparing students for **complexity, leadership and transformation**
- Seriously embracing online **lifelong learning**
- Generating and **curating** knowledge for society
- Moving in and out of university throughout one's life and career (students and staff): from the 5-year program to the 50-year curriculum



“The way we are functioning now as a society is not sustainable. There is too much potential for addressing that issue in higher education for us not to do that. As we are evolving I think we are going to have to take ownership of our role in repairing our society” (Michael Sorrell, President Paul Quinn College, October 14, 2020 Milken Institute)



Thank you!

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